

SOUTH WHITEFISH TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROJECT

LONG RANGE RESOURCE DOCUMENT

CITY OF WHITEFISH, MONTANA

OCTOBER, 1999



**ENGINEERING
SURVEYING
PLANNING**

RESOLUTION NO. 00-04

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEFISH, MONTANA, ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT TO THE SOUTH WHITEFISH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN, WHICH IS AN ADDENDUM TO THE WHITEFISH CITY-COUNTY MASTER PLAN YEAR 2020.

WHEREAS, the Whitefish City-County Master Plan Year 2020 currently contains, as an Addendum, the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation No. 4 of the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan called for the preparation of a major street alignment study for streets and bike and pedestrian ways within the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan; and

WHEREAS, in October, 1998, the City of Whitefish hired WGM Group of Missoula to undertake a specific street alignment study for the purpose of refining the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan. WGM Group held a community forum in Whitefish on February 24, 1999, to receive input from affected property owners. In September, 1999, a final draft document was presented to the City at which time a public hearing was held before the City Council. Based on the hearing, the Whitefish City Council directed staff to begin the process of amending the City-County Master Plan to incorporate the transportation findings prepared by WGM Group; and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed public hearing was held by the Whitefish City-County Planning Board on September 16, 1999. Prior to the hearing a notice of the proposed amendment was sent as a courtesy to every property owner within the South Whitefish Neighborhood. The Whitefish City-County Planning Board took public comment, reviewed the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan Amendment, considered FRDO Staff Report No. WMPA-99-4, and thereafter unanimously adopted a motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Whitefish City Council held a duly noticed public hearing on January 3, 2000, at which it took public comment and considered and reviewed the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan Amendment as well as the FRDO Staff Report No. WMPA-99-4; and

WHEREAS, at its January 18, 2000 meeting the City Council adopted Resolution No. 00-02, a resolution of intent to adopt the proposed amendment to the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan;

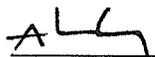
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, that the City Council adopts the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan Amendment, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A, as an amendment to the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan, which is itself an addendum to the Whitefish City-County Master Plan.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Whitefish City Council adopts the following amendments to the Whitefish City-County Master Plan and the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan;

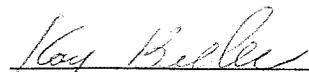
1. Chapter 9 of the City-County Master Plan entitled Transportation adds a new policy adopting the WGM Study dated October 1999 and entitled SOUTH WHITEFISH TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROJECT - Long Range Resource Document as a resource aid to the plan.
2. In addition, Exhibit B (attached) entitled "The Conceptual Major Street System for South Whitefish" replace the existing Exhibit B as found in the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan.
3. RECOMMENDATION #4 of the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan shall be edited as follows to reflect the implementation of this recommendation:

The City has prepared a major street alignment study for the streets and bike and pedestrian ways proposed in Policies 1 and 2, as shown in Exhibit B. Exhibit B is hereby adopted as a policy statement to this plan. Determination of right-of way locations were premised on minimizing encroachment upon existing buildings, uses, and significant improvements. The exact location of these future major streets or cross connecting streets will be subject to the Major Street Alignment Study and in particular Exhibit B and negotiations with individual property owners as they develop their properties.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEFISH, MONTANA, ON THIS 7TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2000.


MAYOR

ATTEST:


City Clerk

Flathead County
Board of Commissioners

(406) 758-5503

Howard W. Gipe
Robert W. Watne
Dale W. Williams



February 11, 2000

Mr. Gary Marks, City Manager
City of Whitefish
P. O. Box 158
Whitefish, Montana 59937

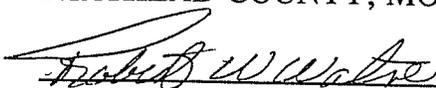
RE: South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan Text Amendment/
Whitefish City-County Master Plan

Dear Mr. Marks:

On February 3, 2000, the Board of Flathead County Commissioners adopted the final resolution regarding the above-stated text amendment. Please find enclosed a photocopy of the minutes from that meeting.

Please contact this office if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA


Robert W. Watne, Chairman

Not Available for Signature

Howard W. Gipe, Member


Dale W. Williams, Member

FCBC:ecm

Enc: As stated

c: Flathead Regional Development Office

COMMISSIONERS' JOURNAL 00222

February 3, 2000
(Continued)

00°13'51" W, 574.49 feet along said Westerly line to the point of beginning; containing 10.00 acres more or less.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the change to the Columbia Falls Master Plan shall not take effect until approved by both the Board of Commissioners and the City Council of Columbia Falls, Montana.

DATED this 3rd day of February, 2000.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Flathead County, Montana

By: /s/Robert W. Watne
Robert W. Watne, Chairman

By: Howard W. Gipe, Member

By: /s/Dale W. Williams
Dale W. Williams, Member

ATTEST:
Susan W. Haverfield, Clerk

By: /s/Beverly J. Goettlich
Deputy

Consideration of Adoption of Final Resolution: South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan/Whitefish City-County Master Plan

Present at the 9:15 A.M. Meeting were Chairman Watne, Commissioner Williams, and Clerk Goettlich.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to adopt the Final Resolution No. 677 K for the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan/Whitefish City-County Master Plan. Chairman Watne seconded the motion. Aye ■ Watne and Williams. Motion carried by quorum.

RESOLUTION NO. 677 K

WHEREAS, the Whitefish City-County Planning Board has recommended that the Board of Commissioners and the Whitefish City Council revise the Whitefish City-County Master Plan by adding the "South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project" Report to Chapter 9 of that Master Plan, and would replace Exhibit B, "The Conceptual Major Street System for South Whitefish," with a new Exhibit B which is based upon the South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project Report to that Plan;

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners reviewed the proposed revision of the Whitefish City-County Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution of intent (Resolution No. 677 J, dated January 20, 2000) to consider the adoption of the amendment to the Whitefish City-County Master Plan, as proposed by the Whitefish City-County Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has considered the comments presented to the Board since the adoption of that resolution of intent and has found that the revision of the Whitefish City-County Master Plan is appropriate.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to Section 76-1-604, M.C.A., by the Board of Commissioners of Flathead County, Montana, that it hereby adopts the amendment to the Whitefish City-County Master Plan, as recommended by the Whitefish City-County Planning Board, to add the "South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project" Report to Chapter 9 of that Master Plan, and to replace the former Exhibit B titled "The Conceptual Major Street System for South Whitefish," with the new Exhibit B which is based upon the South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project Report.

DATED this 3rd day of February, 2000.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Flathead County, Montana

By: /s/Robert W. Watne
Robert W. Watne, Chairman

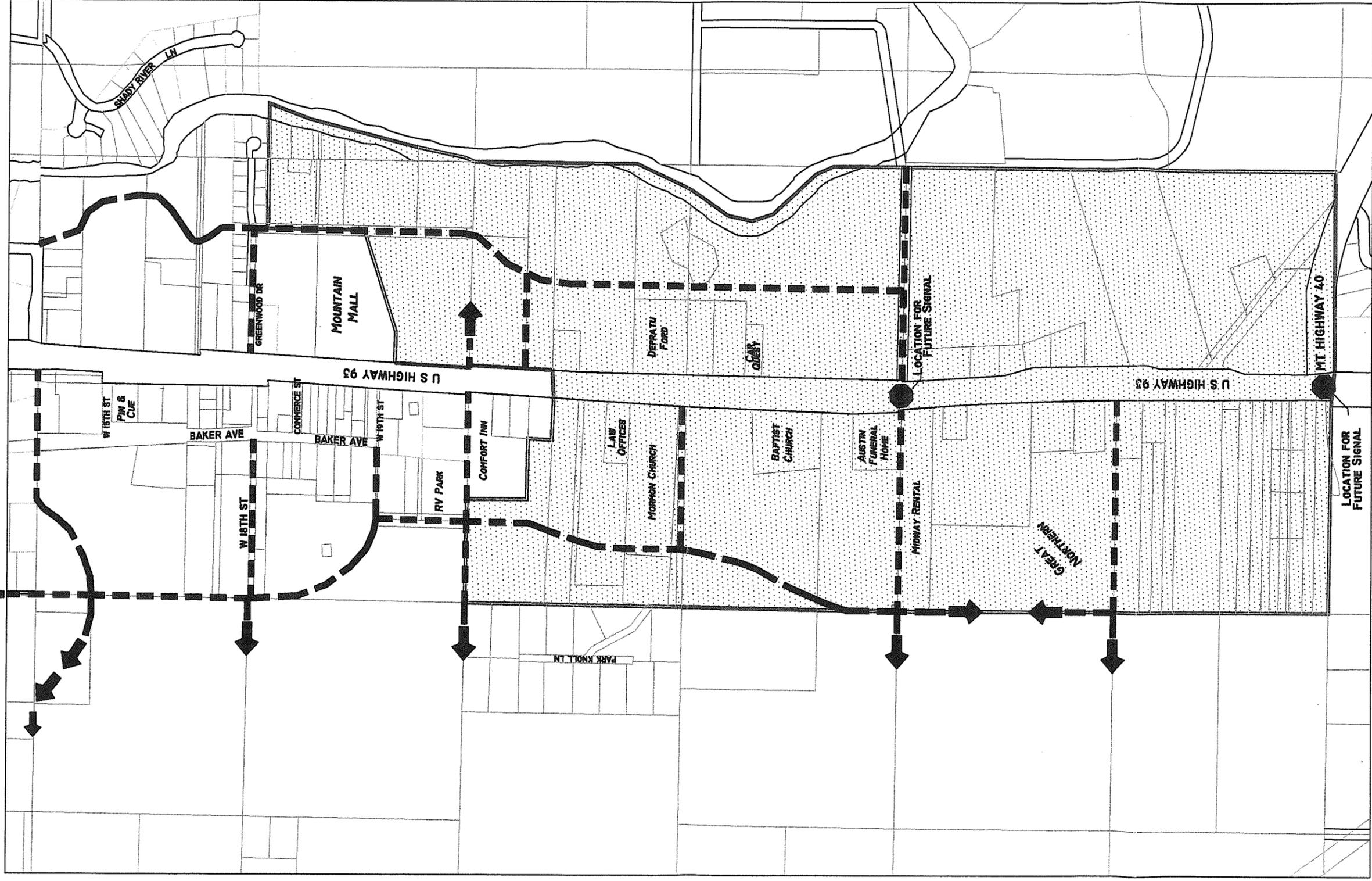
By: /s/Dale W. Williams
Dale W. Williams, Member

By: Howard W. Gipe, Member

ATTEST:
Susan W. Haverfield, Clerk
By: /s/Beverly J. Goettlich
Deputy

EXHIBIT B

SOUTH WHITEFISH NEIGHBORHOOD & CONCEPTUAL MAJOR STREET SYSTEM



Adopted 2/7/00 City Res#00-04 County Res#677K

- NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
- - - - PROPOSED MAJOR STREET ALIGNMENT

MAP CREATED 5/11/00
BY FLATHEAD REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
H:\GIS\NEIGH_PL\SO\FB01A.DWG

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY STAFF

John Wilson P.E., City Engineer

Karin Hilding P.E., Assistant City Engineer

Greg Acton, Utilities Supervisor

COUNTY STAFF

Tom Jentz, Director, Flathead Regional Development Office

Cookie Davies, GIS Technician, Flathead Regional Development Office

PROJECT STAFF

ENGINEERING AND PLANNING

Woody Germany P.E., Project Manager, WGM group

Nicholas Kaufman, Project Planner, WGM group

DRAFTING AND GRAPHICS

Carlos Godina, WGM group

SECRETARIAL

Karen Wilson, WGM group

SOUTH WHITEFISH TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROJECT

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<u>South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan, Addendum To The Whitefish City County Master Plan. June 1, 1998</u>	

Chapter 1 Introduction

General. In June of 1998, the City of Whitefish adopted the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan as an addendum to the Whitefish City-County Master Plan. See Appendix B. This document acknowledges the need for the pro-active development of a transportation network in the South Whitefish planning area.

On Page 5, the Plan states:

- The lack of alternative routes on either side of Highway 93, makes circulation very inconvenient for multiple-stop shopping and service operations such as delivery trucks and recyclable collection which have to mix with highway traffic after each stop.
- The lack of an expanded street system impedes the development of the commercial district and development of residential neighborhoods behind the commercial corridor, thereby encouraging a linear strip of growth pattern along the existing thoroughfare.
- Highway commercial developments in semi-rural areas often lack a traditional grid townscape and pedestrian friendly design. These design features provide important economic advantages for commercial districts: convenient circulation; multiple-stop shopping trips that benefit small businesses located near anchors; a local customer base of nearby employees and residents; broader sharing of infrastructure costs; and appealing urban design.
- The existing development pattern provides few design features to attract and provide safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists, such as interconnected pathways separated from traffic, variety of shopping destinations with a short walk, windows facing pedestrian areas, landscaping, seating, pedestrian signs, bike racks and crosswalks. The intent of the WB-2 Zoning District is automobile oriented; however, the design of the Highway 93 reconstruction incorporates provisions to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians, albeit in a different manner than provided in the WB-2 Zoning District.
- Municipal lack of planned alignments for a grid street system will reduce or preclude options for street construction in the future as development encompasses potential right-of-way locations.

A detailed transportation plan and road alignment study were not undertaken with the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan. The Plan does contain the following Recommendation:

The City shall prepare a major street alignment study for the streets and bike and pedestrian ways proposed in Policies 1 and 2 and Map Exhibit B for the South Whitefish Neighborhood within twelve (12) months. Determination of the right-of-way locations should give consideration to minimizing encroachment upon existing buildings, uses and significant improvements. Accomplishment of this street alignment study should not delay adoption of this neighborhood plan. The exact locations of these future major streets or cross-connecting streets will be subject to the Major Street Alignment Study and negotiations with individual property owners as they develop their properties.

In September of 1998, the City of Whitefish began a selection process to hire a consultant to prepare the South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project.

Authorization. The City of Whitefish hired WGM group in December of 1998 to prepare the South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project. WGM group has been working with the City for the intervening months to prepare the study.

Scope of Study. The study consists of the following components:

- I. Preliminary research, field surveys, evaluation and review of existing reports.
- II. Evaluation of existing and anticipated land use patterns.
- III. Identify and evaluate environmental, topographical and geographical issues pertinent to the future street development.
- IV. Conduct a public meeting, one-on-one interviews and respond to public inquires.
- V. Prepare maps and reports, including findings, conclusions and recommendations for transportation improvements within the study area.
- VI. Presentation of the draft report to the City Council and incorporation of comments into a final report.

Background. The proposed expansion and improvements to Highway 93 from Whitefish south to Highway 40 provided the catalyst for the City and County to focus on land use planning and the extension of capital facilities including sewer, water and streets in the neighborhood affected by the proposed highway expansion. This effort on the part of the community to be pro-active in the approach to planning and extension of capital facilities will preserve utility and transportation corridors, encourage development patterns that create neighborhoods and reduce the public cost of services. As a part of this planning effort a number of studies have been prepared. Some of the studies focus on the South Whitefish Neighborhood while others address the broader community but influence the potential transportation system for the South Whitefish Neighborhood.

Previous Reports. A number of existing studies contain information vital to understanding the development trends and patterns as they relate to the future transportation plans in the South Whitefish Neighborhood.

- *South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan, Addendum To The Whitefish City County Master Plan* was adopted by the City of Whitefish on June 1, 1998, and by the Flathead County Commissioners on July 16, 1998. The plan provides clear and detailed direction for the development of the South Whitefish Neighborhood and was prepared in response to requests for the extension of capital facilities south from the current city limits to serve the area influenced by the improvements to Highway 93.

The South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan is located on the southern approaches to the City of Whitefish and is bisected from north to south by Highway 93. Starting at the south, the neighborhood extends northerly with varying widths on both sides of Highway 93 from the intersection of Highway 40 with Highway 93 to Pizza Hut on the west side of Highway 93 and to Mountain Mall on the east side of the highway.

The plan contains a number of policies and recommendations for land use, extension of capital facilities and the need for a detailed transportation plan to preserve future corridors as the neighborhood develops.

- *The Highway 93 South Water And Sewer Special Improvement District*, October, 1998. This preliminary engineering report was prepared by WMW Engineering PC. The report presents information regarding the potential creation of a Special Improvement District to provide financing for the extension of water and sewer south along Highway 93 from the city limits to the junction of Highway 40. The study contains projections on residential and commercial development in the South Whitefish Neighborhood. The passage of CI-75 in the last State Legislative Session delayed the initiation of this

Special Improvement District. The State Supreme Court subsequently overturned the legislation enacted by CI-75. The extension of sewer and water into the South Whitefish Neighborhood will increase the growth potential of this neighborhood.

- *The Transportation And Storm Drainage Master Plan*, Whitefish, Montana, Robert Peccia and Associates, July, 1998. This plan provides a tool for the city in prioritizing its street and utility improvements and storm water management. The Master Plan summarized past transportation studies and provides a prioritized list of street improvement projects. Local drainage problem areas are identified and recommendations for eliminating the problems are presented. The study area is the Whitefish city limits as they existed at the time of the study.
- *Standards For Design And Construction*, Whitefish, Montana, Public Works Department, December, 1997. This document provides standards of design and construction of infrastructure in the City of Whitefish and contains standards for future street widths, grades and right-of-way widths.
- *Whitefish, Zoning Jurisdiction Regulations*, Whitefish Municipal Code, Title 17, October 21, 1996. This document provides performance standards for the development of property in the zoned areas of the City of Whitefish. This document provides a guide to the type of development that will occur in the northern portion of the study area.
- *Whitefish Traffic Operations Study*, Carter and Burgess, December, 1994. This document provides an overview of the traffic and transportation system as it existed in 1994 and was prepared to assist the Flathead Regional Development Office in updating the Whitefish City-County Master Plan.
- *Flathead County Zoning Regulations*, September 27, 1993. This document provides performance standards for the development of property in the zoned areas of Flathead County. This document provides a guide to the type of development that will occur in the southern portion of the study area.

The above-mentioned studies provide base material and information for the preparation of the South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project.

Chapter 2 Current Conditions

Study Area Boundaries. The study area for the South Whitefish Transportation Planning Project encompasses the area of the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan and a portion of the area surrounding the Neighborhood Plan. The city limits generally form the north boundary of the study area and Highway 40 forms the south boundary. Karrow Road forms the west boundary and the Whitefish River forms the eastern boundary except where the river turns easterly near the corner of Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8, the study area continues south parallel to Highway 93 staying about one-quarter of a mile east until it reaches the southerly study area limits at Highway 40.

The study area is larger than the area of the Neighborhood Plan. This allows the study of potential connections of grid system roads to the existing major north-south routes.

Geographical Setting. Whitefish is located in a mountainous area of northwestern Montana. Whitefish Lake forms the northwestern boundary of the community. Big Mountain, a popular winter recreation resort, is also located north of town. Whitefish lies south of the Canadian border and north of Kalispell. The community is not far from Glacier National Park.

Whitefish Lake and Glacier Park are major tourist attractions that bring visitors to Whitefish in the summer months. Big Mountain is a major ski resort and attracts visitors from throughout the region in the winter months. Because of its proximity to Canada, Whitefish is an international resort destination. Highway 93 bisects the community and is a major highway that runs between Mexico and Canada. This highway provides a major transportation corridor for vehicles passing through Whitefish to other destinations. The highway is also used to transport lumber and raw materials, tourists and commuters who live in Whitefish but work in Kalispell or outlying communities.

Because of the traffic exposure, Highway 93 is a major attractor for businesses. As businesses continue to locate along Highway 93, the opportunity for east-west transportation corridors will diminish. Additionally the increased driveway access points will diminish the carrying capacity of the highway. Additional transportation corridors that parallel Highway 93 must be planned to provide local access and to preserve the capacity of Highway 93.

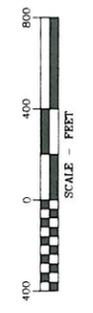
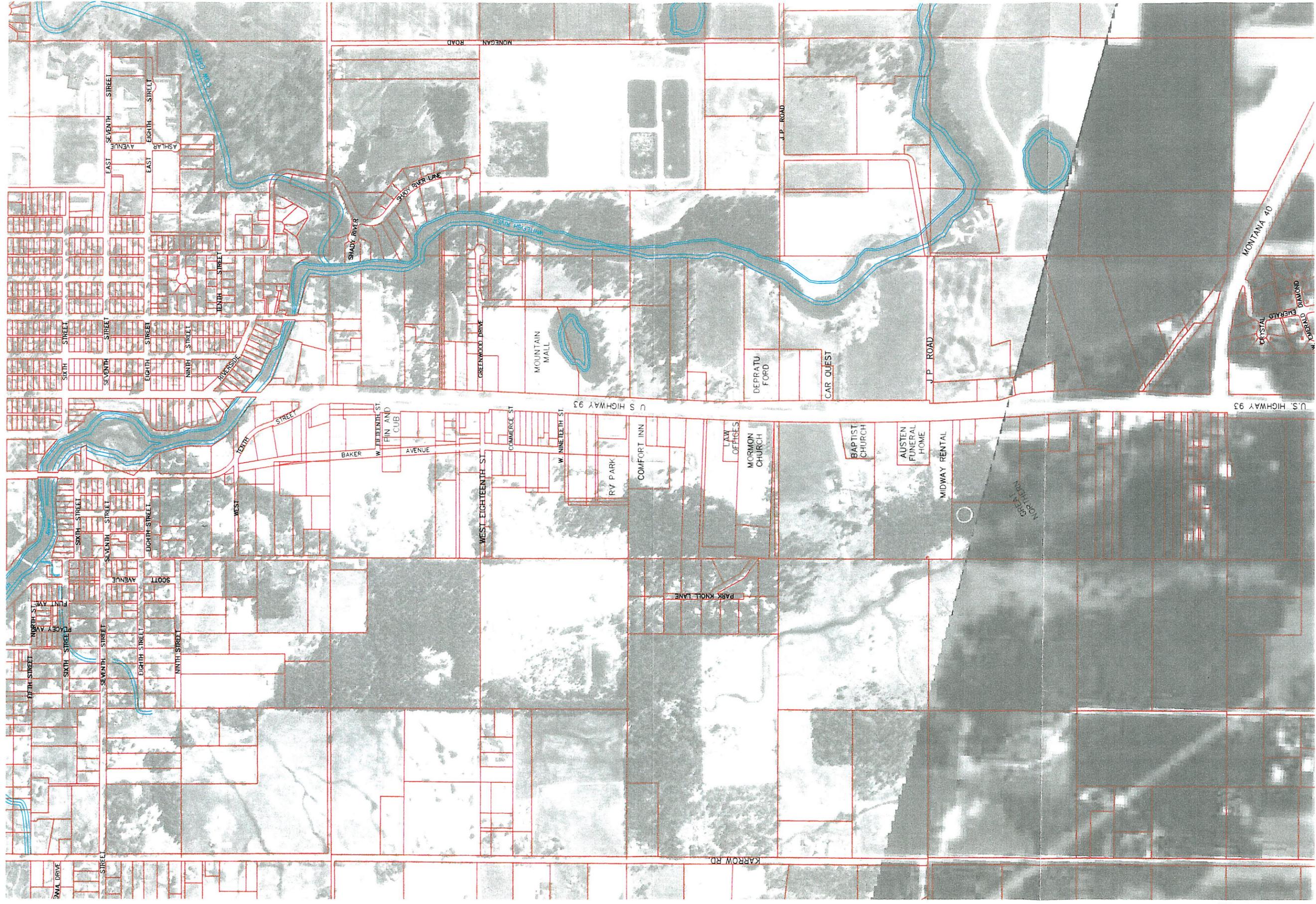


FIGURE 2-1
STUDY AREA
WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WGM group
ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING
3021 Palmer • (406) 728-4611
P.O. Box 16027 • Missoula, MT 59808

PROJECT: 98-10-05
FILE NO: 9810065A.DWG
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DESIGN: ---
DRAFT: ---
DATE: OCTOBER 11, 1999
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Geology. The city is located in a glacially formed valley and is surrounded by mountains. Whitefish Lake is located at the north end of town. The Whitefish River runs south through town and through the eastern portion of the study area. The Whitefish River is a significant physical factor in planning for transportation corridors because of the tremendous added cost of constructing bridges at potential river crossings.

The portion of the community that is located in proximity to the Whitefish River sits on an outwash plain. Stream terraces form benches above the floodplain. These benches consist of undifferentiated, poorly sorted parent material formed in glacial outwash. The remainder of the study area is composed of ground moraine and terminal moraines. These moraines were formed as the glaciers receded and their sediment load was deposited as they retreated.

Ground moraines are formed as glaciers melt in place and have little topographic relief. Terminal moraines form when the end of the glacier is melting but the glacier is still moving. The sediment dropped from the melting ice at the terminus of the glacier piles up as more sediment laden ice moves forward to melt at the same terminus point. Silty soils overlay the silty glacial deposits. The study area has an elevated moraine that forms a ridge between Karrow Road and Highway 93 in the western portion of the study area.

Soils. Glacial soils are typically non-porous and do not freely drain. Glacial deposition is not sorted. That is, as glaciers melt and recede the soil and mineral aggregate locked in the ice simply falls out as the ice melts. Thus, there is a combination of different sized particles from fine silts to large boulders all packed together. There are few voids through which water can flow and the soils are referred to as poorly drained. Poorly drained soils have special considerations for road construction. Table 2-1 provides the name and symbol for the soil types found in the study area.

Table 2-1
Study Area Soils

<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>NAME</u>
Aa	Alluvial land, poorly drained
Ab	Alluvial land, well drained
De	Depew silty clay loam
Ha, Hb	Half Moon silt loam
Hc, Hd, He, Hf	Half Moon very fine sandy loam
Md, Me	McCaffery loamy fine sand
Ms	Muck and Peat
Ra	Radnor silt loam, 0-3 percent slopes
Rb	Radnor silty clay loam, 0-3 percent slopes
Sk	Stryker silt loam, 0-3 percent slopes
Wm, Wn	Waits and Krause stony loams
Wr, Ws, Wt	Whitefish cobbly silt loam
Wv	Whitefish gravelly silt loam
Wza, Wzb, Wzc	Whitefish silt loam
Wzg, Wzh	Whitefish stony silt loam

SOURCE: *Upper Flathead Area Soil Survey, 1958.*

Table 2-2, provides information about the soil types in the study area. The soils provide an indication of limitations for building local roads and streets. The information aids engineers and planners as to what type of constraints might be encountered as transportation corridors are planned.

Table 2-2
Soil Features

SOIL SYMBOL	LEGEND	WATER FEATURES (FLOODING)	BLDG. SITE DEV. (LOCAL ROADS/STREETS)	HYDRIC SOILS
Aa	S ^F	Frequent	Severe – Flooding	Poorly Drained
Ab	S ^F	Frequent	Severe – Flooding	Poorly Drained
De	S	None	Severe	Nonhydic
Ha	S ^S	None	Severe – Large Stone	Nonhydic
Hb	S ^S	None	Severe – Large Stone	Nonhydic
Hc	S ^S	None	Severe – Large Stone	Nonhydic
Hd	S ^S	None	Severe – Large Stone	Nonhydic
He	S ^S	None	Severe – Large Stone	Nonhydic
Hf	S ^G	None	Severe – Slope	Nonhydic
Md	SL	None	Slight	Nonhydic
Me	M	None	Moderate	Nonhydic
Ms	S ^W	None	Severe – Subsides, Wetness & Frost Action	Nonhydic
Ra	S ^{CL}		Severe – Low Strength	Nonhydic
Rb	S ^{CL}		Severe – Low Strength	Nonhydic
Sk	S ^W	None	Severe – Wetness	Nonhydic
Wm	M ^S	None	Moderate – Large Stone	Nonhydic
Wn	S ^G	None	Severe – Slope	Nonhydic (Poorly Drained)
Wr	M ^S	None	Moderate – Large Stone	Nonhydic
Ws	M ^S	None	Moderate – Large Stone	Nonhydic
Wt	S ^G	None	Severe – Slope	Nonhydic
Wv	M	None	Moderate – Small Stone	Nonhydic
Wza	M	None	Moderate	Nonhydic
Wzb	M	None	Moderate	Nonhydic
Wzc	M ^G	None	Moderate – Slope	Nonhydic
Wzg	S ^G	None	Severe – Slope	Nonhydic
Wzh	S ^G	None	Severe – Slope	Nonhydic

SOURCE: Upper Flathead Area Soil Survey, 1958.

Note, according to the USDA, a hydric soil is a soil that is saturated, flooded or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part of the soil profile. Hydric soils are indicators of prolonged ponding, flooding or saturation. These conditions increase road costs and are indicators of possible wetlands. Soils that are nonhydic do not exhibit characteristics of prolonged flooding, saturation or ponding. Public involvement in the scoping portion of the project indicated likely potential for prolonged flooding, ponding or saturated areas between Highway 93 and Karrow Road. The soils survey, which is a good indicator of soil conditions, provides general information that prolonged flooding, ponding or saturation may not be a significant issue for route planning. This does not mean that further investigation or analysis is not needed as routes are further defined and evaluated.

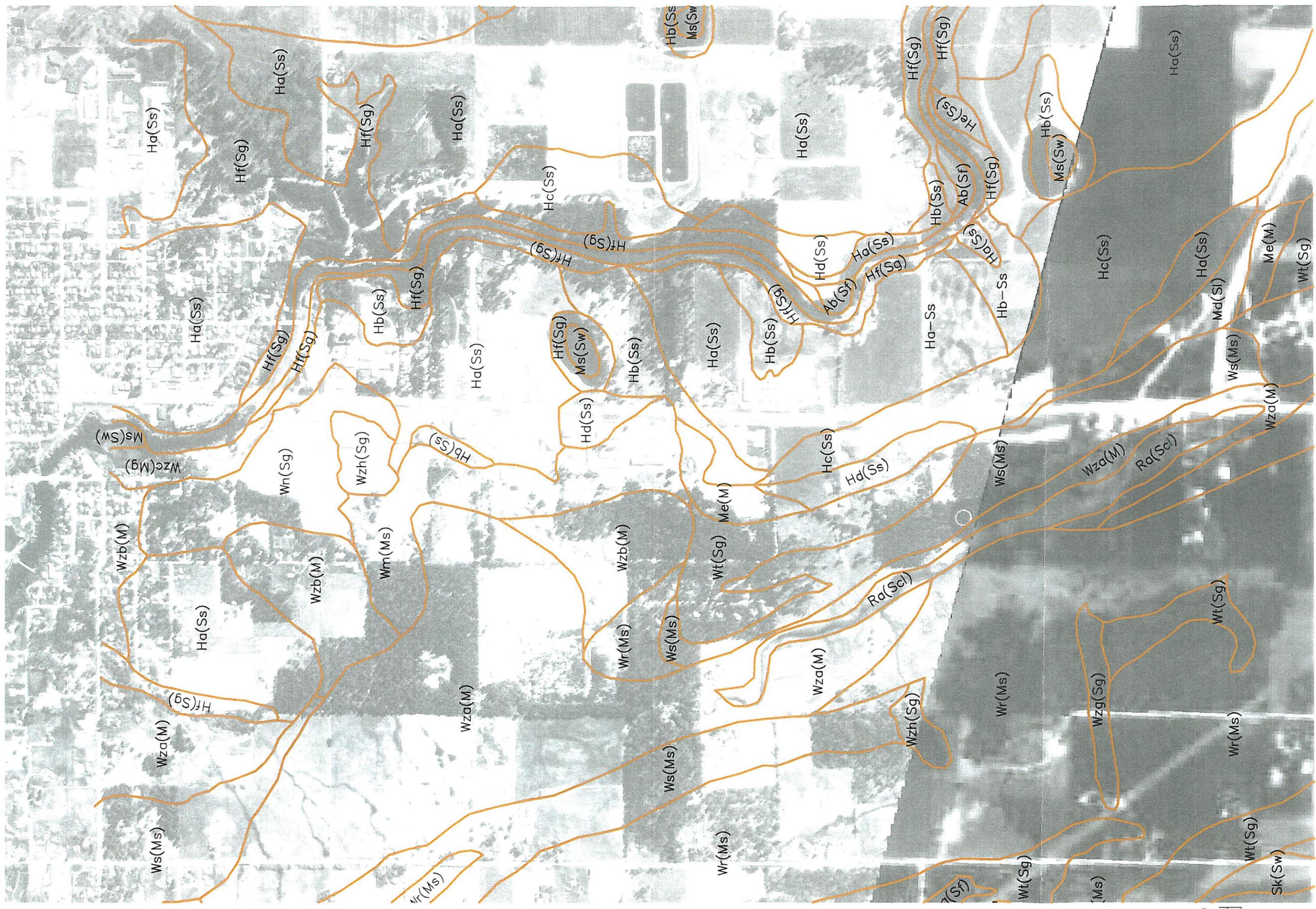


FIGURE 2-2
SOILS MAP
WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WGM group
ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING
3021 Palmer • (406) 728-4611
P.O. Box 16027 • Missoula, MT 59808

PROJECT: BR-10-05
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APPROVE: ---
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SHEET: 1 of 1 SHEETS

Surface Water. There are numerous surface water features in the area. We will discuss those surface water features that affect the study area.

The Whitefish River runs parallel to Highway 93 on the east side of the study area. The river poses a major cost constraint for future bridge construction.

Surface water drains slowly from glacial soils. The study area contains several potential wetland areas that can be identified on Figure 2-2, the Soils Map, as Ra, Radnor silt loam and MS, muck and peat. In the southeast corner of the study area is a large pond. During intense periods of spring runoff, this pond can flood. The pond tends to collect storm water. Also in the eastern portion of the study area, on the east side of Highway 93, between the Ford dealership and the river is a Montana Department of Transportation storm water detention area.

Topography. The eastern portion of the study area has little relief except along the banks of the Whitefish River. The western portion of the study area has a glacial moraine deposit that rises fifty to sixty feet above the elevations at Highway 93. This topographic feature is a constraint to transportation corridors without the integration of curves and cut and fill into the road section to bring road grades into acceptable limits. Refer to Figure 3-3 for topographic information within the study area.

Land Ownership. The City of Whitefish provided a land ownership map for the study. The map provides the names of most of the landowners in the eastern portion of the study area and that portion of the western study area proximate to Highway 93. The ownership map was originally prepared as part of the research for the previously discussed Special Improvement District for the extension of sewer and water into the South Whitefish Neighborhood. Please refer to Figure 3-4 for land ownership.

Existing Land Use. The South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan contains a map of the existing land uses in the eastern portion of the study area and along Highway 93 in the western portion of the study area. Land uses between Karrow Road and the commercial land uses shown in the South Whitefish Land Use Plan are generally residential and agricultural. Please refer to Exhibit 2, the land use map in the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan and Figure 2-3, the topographic map with air photo that illustrates the land uses in the study area.

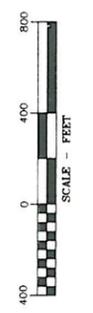
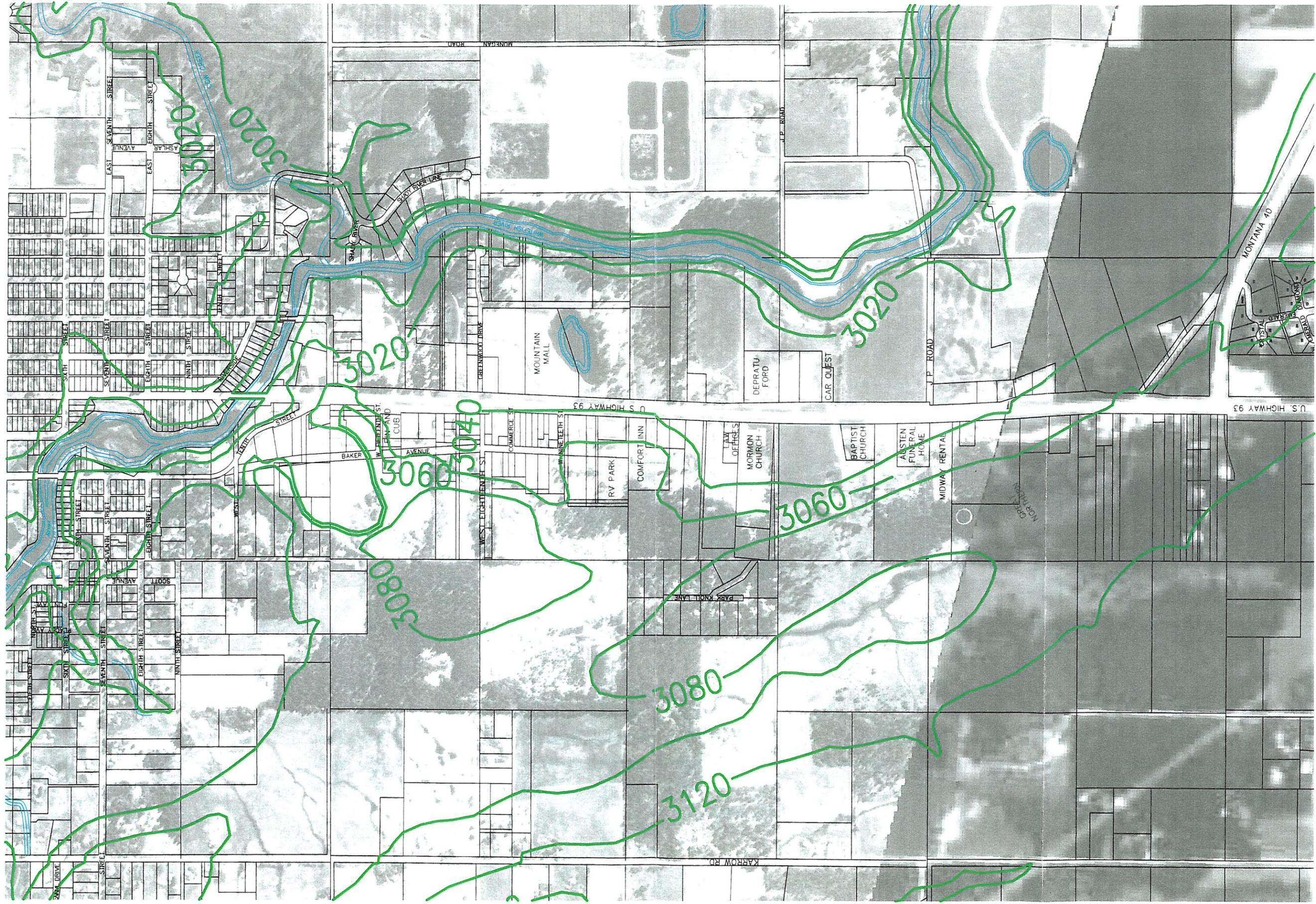


FIGURE 2-3
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WGM group
ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING
3021 Palmer • (406) 728-4611
P.O. Box 16027 • Missoula, MT 59808

PROJECT: 98-10-05
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DATE: OCTOBER 11, 1999
SHEET: 1 of 1 SHEETS

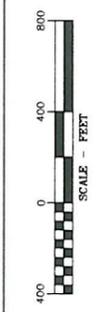


FIGURE 2-4
LAND OWNERSHIP
WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WGM group
ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING
3021 Palmer • (406) 728-4611
P.O. Box 16027 • Missoula, MT 59808

PROJECT: 98-10-05
FILE No: 981005LO.DWG
SURVEYED: ---
DESIGN: CC
APPROVE: NPK
DATE: OCTOBER 11, 1999
SHEET: 1 of 1 SHEETS

Land Use Plans. South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan and the Whitefish City-County Master Plan are the official planning documents for the study area. The land use plans project growth within the study area. The goals of the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan include:

- Development and growth of viable commercial, industrial and residential districts to enhance the entire community.
- A comprehensive circulation system providing safe and efficient access to all land uses and avoiding undue congestion of Highway 93.
- Encourage commercial growth on Highway 93 South which complements downtown and the community as a whole.

Policies contained in the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan include:

- As substantial development occurs in the neighborhood, concurrent construction of an expanded street system including bike and pedestrian routes are encouraged, to include parallel north-south collectors, periodic cross connectors and local streets as needed.
- The neighborhood street system should include southward extensions of Baker Avenue and Columbia Avenue as back streets parallel to Highway 93, designed to function as continuous collector streets. These proposed collector streets should be fronted on both sides with commercial uses, backed by residential uses on the outer fringes of the neighborhood, improving circulation within the business district without encroaching into residential areas. In appropriate areas, some properties may require rezoning to accomplish the desired objective of broadening the commercial districts or enabling the alignment of the major collector streets. Where feasible, new residential development should front on local streets radiating out from or parallel to Baker and Columbia avenues, rather than fronting on these collector streets. The street system should also include cross streets and provide for bike and pedestrian routes.

Site design of future development should reduce dependence on Highway 93 for circulation within the business district. For example, primary driveway approaches into side and back streets are encouraged. Driveway approaches onto Highway 93 have been established by MDT as part of the highway reconstruction, and few, if any, additional curbcuts will be approved in the future.

Chapter 3 Future Conditions

Planning Period. This study has the same planning period as the South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan and should serve the community through the year 2006, when updates to the comprehensive land use plan and this study should be made. During this time the community will see increased pressure for development. The corridors are designed to be reasonable and feasible routes. Actual road location will have to be based upon conditions that exist at the time of right-of-way acquisition.

Development Trends. Adopted planning documents recognize the growth potential within the study area. The City of Whitefish has annexed the land along both sides of Highway 93. The community is actively pursuing the extension of sewer and water to serve this area. The creation of a special improvement district to fund the extension of sewer and water is expected to occur in August, 1999, with construction beginning in the year 2000. The extension of sewer and water will undoubtedly increase the rate of development in the South Whitefish Neighborhood.

Currently, there are two major developments under consideration in the study area. *Great Northern Center*, is a mixed use development located on the west side of Highway 93 near JP Road. *Riverside*, is a proposed development in the southeastern portion of the study area. This development received governing body approval in July of 1999. The plans call for 260 single family housing units, ten acres of assisted living, fifty-three acres of youth sports fields, a 3,000 foot long linear park along the Whitefish River and ten acres of city park.

It is imperative that the city actively pursue acquisition of the right of way corridors needed to provide suitable transportation to the commercial and residential development that is occurring in the South Whitefish Neighborhood.

Chapter 4 System Analysis

Route Selection. Initial route selection was made based upon physical characteristics within the study area, the existing street system, projected growth, existing buildings and improvements and field reconnaissance.

East Side. On the east side of Highway 93, the initial routes selected included a north-south collector parallel to Highway 93 extending between JP Road and Greenwood on the north side of Mountain Mall. Two additional connections to Highway 93 were planned for this north-south collector. Hospital construction and planned improvements at the hospital prevent the northerly extension of this north-south collector beyond Greenwood.

West Side. On the west side of Highway 93 a north-south collector was planned between Baker Avenue and a westerly extension on JP Road. Two additional north-south collectors were proposed on the quarter section lines westerly of Highway 93.

East-west routes between Highway 93 and Karrow Road were proposed along the extended alignments of Thirteenth, Eighteenth, JP Road and along the mid-section line of Section 1, south of the RV park.

The proposed road alignments were presented at a public meeting and then reviewed with the City of Whitefish engineering staff. The modifications included refining the location of the proposed routes to minimize the affects on existing structures and land uses and the removal of north-south routes on the west side of Highway 93. The routes were modified as shown on Figure 4-1.

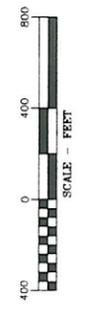
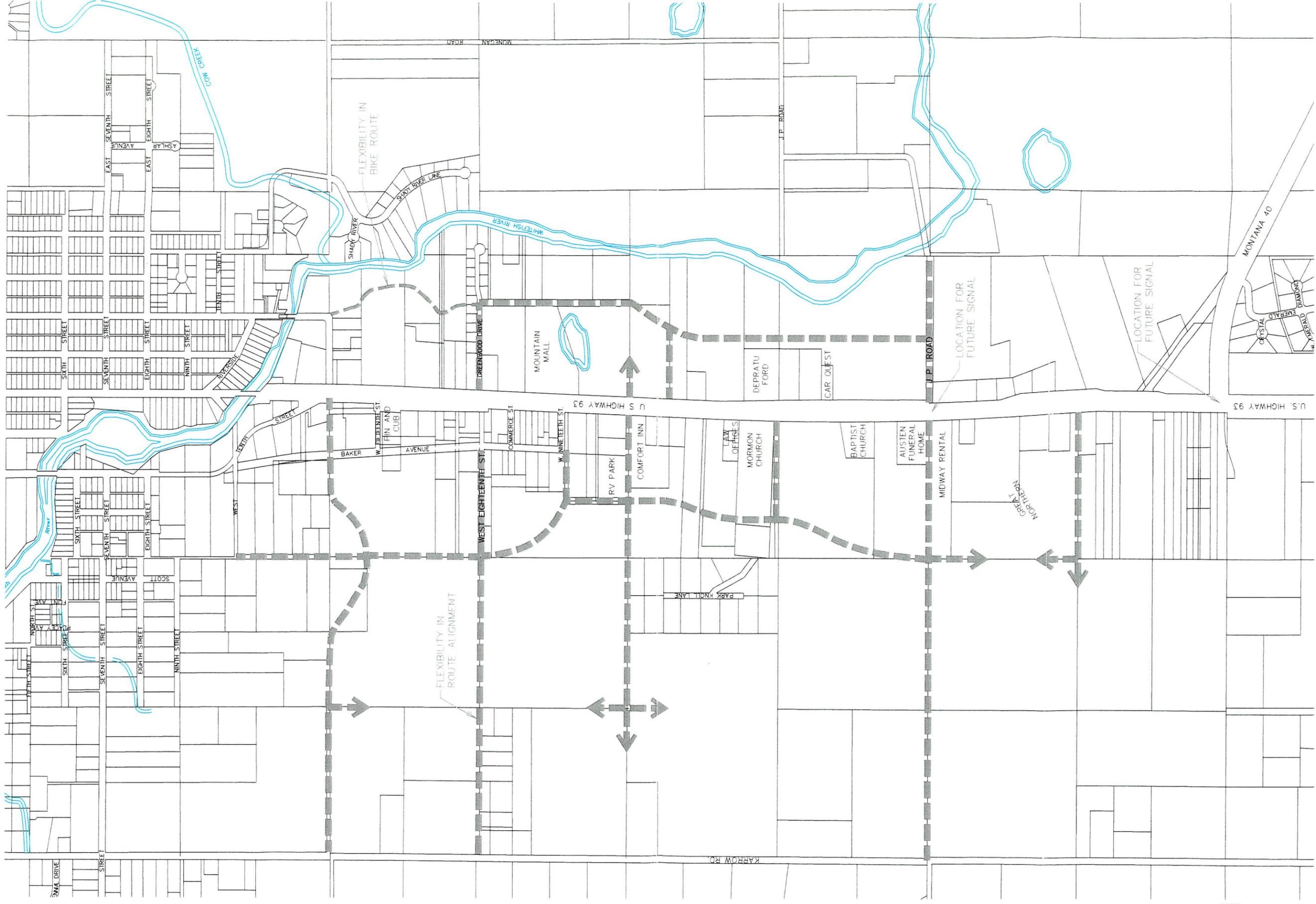


FIGURE 4-1
 PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS
 WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WGM group
 ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING
 3021 Palmer • (406) 728-4611
 P.O. Box 16027 • Missoula, MT 59808

PROJECT: 98-10-05
 FILE No: 981005PT.DWG
 SURVEYED:
 DESIGN:
 DRAWN: CEC
 CHECKED: CEC
 DATE: OCTOBER 11, 1999
 SHEET: 1 of 1

Public Involvement. On February 24, 1999, a public meeting was held in the South Whitefish Neighborhood. Just over twenty citizens attended the meeting. Also in attendance were the Planning Director for Flathead County, the City Engineer, the Assistant City Engineer and the Utilities Supervisor for the City of Whitefish and a representative of WGM group. The public reviewed a number of route options in an open house prior to the formal meeting. The routes were explained and the public comments were recorded. The major concern was for the number of routes proposed and how the routes might affect existing roads and buildings. Modifications were made to the proposed routes in response to public comments. Please refer to Appendix A for attendees and comments.

JP Road. JP Road is located on the east side of the study area, one-half a mile north of Highway 40. JP Road runs east from Highway 93, crosses the Whitefish River and connects to Monegan Road. Monegan Road is a collector street that carries east-west as well as north-south traffic. JP road and Monegan Road have the potential to be minor arterials as growth continues in the southwestern portion of the community. Improvements should be made to JP Road At its intersection with Highway 93 and widening should continue east to the bridge over the Whitefish River.

Great Northern Center is a proposed mixed-use development on the west side of US Highway 93. JP Road should be extended westerly through this development. The alignment will have to cross up and over the moraine that is located west of and parallel to Highway 93. Figure 5-2 shows the feasibility of this road extension. The road could be built to a city collector standard within a sixty foot (60') right-of-way with construction easements for the required cut and fill. JP road should be planned for extension westerly to Karrow Road.

30 FOOT OFFSET ALIGNMENT

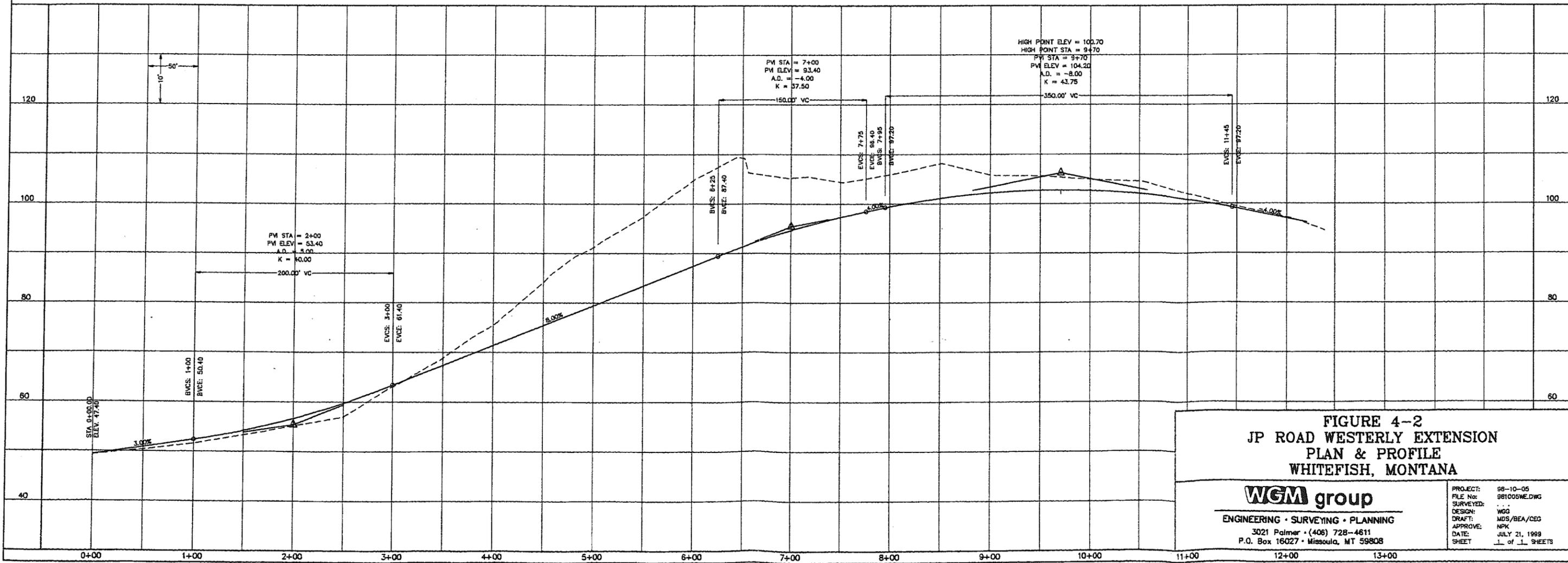
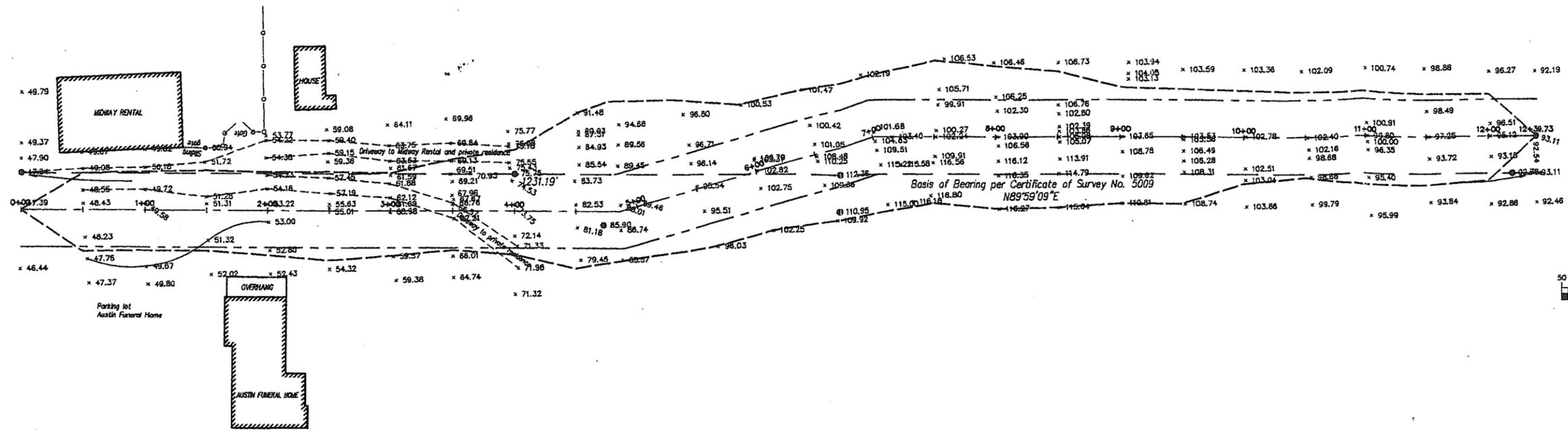


FIGURE 4-2
JP ROAD WESTERLY EXTENSION
PLAN & PROFILE
WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WGM group
 ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING
 3021 Palmer • (406) 728-4611
 P.O. Box 16027 • Missoula, MT 59808

PROJECT:	98-10-05
FILE No:	981005WE.DWG
SURVEYED:	...
DESIGN:	WGM
DRAFT:	MDS/BEA/CEG
APPROVE:	MPK
DATE:	JULY 21, 1999
SHEET:	1 of 1 SHEETS

Recommended Street Widths. Street width is a function of many factors. These include adequate number of lanes to carry the expected traffic, additional turn lanes at intersections, parking on the street, bike lanes, curbs, sidewalks and landscaped boulevard between the sidewalk and curb.

**Table 4-1
Components of Street Width**

Component	Width
Driving Lanes	11 Feet
Turning Lanes	11 Feet
Parking	8 feet
Curbs ¹	1 Foot
Sidewalks	5 Feet
Bike Lanes	5 Feet
Comb. Bike Lanes & Parking	13 Feet
Boulevard Landscaping	5 Feet

¹ Curbs are generally made of concrete and are poured with an integral gutter. The gutter is functional as lane or parking width. Curbs on both sides of the street add about one foot of additional width.

The City of Whitefish publication, *Standards For Design and Construction*, contains construction standards for a variety of street classifications including arterials, collector streets without parking, collector streets with parking and local streets. Right-of-way standards are eighty feet (80') for arterial streets and sixty feet (60') for collector and local streets. Streets parallel to Highway 93 should be constructed to the city collector standard as should other streets in the proposed grid system. Street widths should be added as a function of specific design to accommodate turn lanes at intersections.

The need for a continuous two-way left turn lane is a critical issue affecting the widths of both collectors and arterials. The density of access points drives the need for a continuous left turn lane. As a general guideline, a continuous two-way left turn lane is required on a two lane collector when access spacing is less than 200 feet for a continuously developed roadway. A three lane roadway with a continuous two-way left turn lane can accommodate on the order of 15,000 to 20,000 cars per day, depending primarily on the spacing of signalized intersections. A continuous two way left turn lane on a five lane roadway operates well for traffic volumes up to 25,000 vehicles per day and access spacing on the order of 300 - 400 feet. Larger traffic volumes and greater access density than these guidelines warrants consideration of a continuous raised median on a five lane arterial. The Montana Department of

Transportation guidelines call for consideration of a raised median when volumes exceed 30,000 vehicles per day. Continuous street lighting should be provided any time a raised median is present.

Right-Of-Way Widths. The City of Whitefish publication, *Standards For Design and Construction*, contains right-of-way standards for different street classifications. These right-of-way standards are a good starting point but should be considered as minimum requirements. Right-of-way widths may need to increase as a function of terrain. The study area does contain topographic relief that will necessitate a wider right-of-way or easement to accommodate road construction. A minimum of 25 foot radius should be plated at the intersection of the right-of-way for collectors and arterials. This allows for adequate turning radii to be accommodated when the street is developed.

Bicycle Facilities. The identification of intended users is a critical issue in planning for bicycle facilities. Highly skilled riders are comfortable riding with traffic and can efficiently use the arterial and collector system for circulation. Skilled riders are the most likely to use the bicycle as a primary mode of transportation. Less skilled or confident riders should be accommodated on other routes and are less likely to use a bike as a primary mode of transportation unless other safe routes are provided. Critical transportation routes for children to and from schools and parks should be accommodated on separate facilities, preferably off-street. It is also important to distinguish between recreational riders and the commuter or functional riders.

Separate designation of on-street bike lanes is an appropriate level of development for collectors and arterials. Bike lanes provide clear delineation for both the bicyclist and driver, especially in congested areas and at intersections. The intended user is the highly skilled rider who is using the bike a primary transportation and is comfortable with riding in traffic. Alternative routes should be planned for cyclists who are less comfortable or skilled, and for children.

Separate route designation for cyclists on lower volume back streets is mainly intended for the less skilled rider and is being done less frequently throughout the country. Skilled riders will tend to continue to use the fastest route that is generally the arterials and collectors. The result is that the separate route designation is sparsely used and is often abandoned as the maintenance costs start to exceed the benefits.

Two-way bike paths are important facilities for bikes and pedestrians. Careful planning and application of these facilities is required. Separate paths adjacent to arterials and collectors should only be considered for specific locations where children or a high number of recreational riders are present and no other route exit. The number of access points and turning traffic volumes should also be at a minimum. Separate path facilities adjacent to high volume streets creates a conflict point with driveways. Drivers are not expecting bicycles coming from the opposite direction as traffic. Path users must cross behind stopped vehicles waiting to enter the roadway, creating a sight obstruction for vehicles turning into driveways. Skilled riders operating at higher speeds will also tend to avoid the path facility and continue to ride in the roadway. Paths intended for shared bicycle and pedestrian use should provide a minimum 8 foot paved surface with 2 foot gravel shoulders on each side. A 10 foot paved surface is desirable.

Greenways with paved bike and pedestrian facilities are highly desirable in new residential developments where large number of children and recreational riders are present. This type of facility allows children to ride and walk safely to school and parks. It also accommodates and encourages bicycling as a recreational

use is these areas. These facilities connect neighborhoods and can contribute significantly to the livability and desirability of a residential neighborhood.

Bike lanes can be accommodated adjacent to the driving lanes until such time as the City of Whitefish formulates a formal bicycle transportation system. Bike lanes should be provided on those routes that are part of an adopted non-motorized plan. Greenway planning is an important transportation issue that should be integrated with planning for parks and schools.

Location of Sidewalks. Sidewalks should be located along all selected street routes. Landscaped boulevards are recommended to provide a buffer between traffic on the street and pedestrians. Boulevards also provide a critical snow storage area for street plowing operations. The boulevard also helps to create an aesthetically pleasing "street scape" that can have a calming effect on traffic. Minimum width for low volume and boulevard sidewalks is 5 feet. Sidewalks directly adjacent to arterials and collectors should be a minimum of 8 feet wide. Four foot tree pits are desirable in this situation and can be paved with concrete or asphalt until trees are added.

Transit. Transit service is not currently available in the Whitefish area. Because of the small population base and relatively light population densities, fixed route transit service is not likely to be cost effective in the foreseeable future. A demand responsive van service is appropriate for a community the size of Whitefish and is provided in many small communities throughout Montana. This type of demand responsive service, or "dial-a-ride," is primarily oriented to serving the elderly and individuals without access to a motor vehicle. The demand for this type of service is anticipated to increase as our population ages. A portion of the funding for this type of service is available through the Montana Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration. Sidewalks at both the origin and destination are key components of transit supportive infrastructure. Benches and shelters are also important features for seniors at high use locations like assisted living centers and at shopping centers.

Recommendations for Signalization. A traffic signal should be planned at all locations where a collector intersects with another collector or arterial. Traffic signals provide important controlled pedestrian crossing opportunities and should be considered in carefully thought out non-motorized transportation planning. Consideration should be given to future interconnection of traffic signals on arterial and collector streets were a series of signals occur with spacing of less than 800 feet.

Traffic signals exist at Thirteenth and at the entrance to Mountain Mall. The signal at Mountain Mall severely restricts the potential for a signal, in the future, at Eighteenth Street. To better serve the future transportation needs of the community the signal at Mountain Mall could be re-located to Eighteenth Street.

MDT prefers to have at least one-quarter mile spacing for signals on large volume highways.

The Community should plan for a signal at JP Road and Highway 93. This signal location must be preserved and approval of other traffic signals on Highway 93 that would preclude the signal at JP Road should not be allowed.

Alternative Intersection Control - The use of round-a-bouts has recently increased as a method of intersection control throughout the United States. Round-a-bouts are a very viable method of intersection control. In specific situations and, when appropriately applied, round-a-bouts can have equal or greater traffic movement capacity than a conventional traffic signal. Round-a-bouts have also been shown to reduce traffic crashes by 50-75 percent when replacing a conventional traffic signal. Round-a-bouts have been shown to cost the same to construct as a traffic signal and long term operating costs are lower. Careful study and implementation is required if this form of intersection control is to be considered.

Traffic Calming. Traffic calming is an issue that is increasingly important to member of the public. Active traffic calming involving traffic circles, diverters, bulb-outs and other physical features appropriately applied to residential streets. These facilities are generally not recommended on collector and arterial streets. Traffic calming, when applied on a grid street system can help achieve the same goals as the traditional cul-de-sac influenced residential layout. It is important to distinguish between a traffic circle and a round-a-bout. A traffic circle is a simple raised island located in a conventional residential intersection. A round-a-bout is a single or multi-lane traffic control facility with diverter islands and greater right-of-way requirements.

Implementation. Right-of-way corridors identified in this study should be preserved. There are a number of options available. As development proposals are reviewed by the city, right-of-way for transportation corridors needs to be preserved through dedication. For vital corridors threatened with encroachment, the governing body may need to purchase right-of-way.

The South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan states:

- Extension of arterial or collector streets may be partially funded by the community, depending upon city policy at the time of development and availability of funds. A partial funding formula may be structured with the property owner or developer paying for design and the cost of constructing a typical street with the community paying the cost of upsizing to an appropriate arterial or collector street.

- As subdivisions and conditional uses occur on lands where new streets are proposed (in the study area), right-of-way for the proposed streets should be reserved, where necessary, to provide safe and efficient access or avoid undue traffic congestion. Subdividers and conditional use applicants may be required to dedicate right-of-way and construct or upgrade these streets.
- Property owners requesting annexation, municipal sewer, municipal water, subdivision approval or conditional use approval for new development that would benefit from the construction of proposed streets identified (in this study), may be required to waive their protest to the future creation of a special improvement district to construct those streets or local streets directly serving their development property.

Implementation policies and procedures should be enacted with the participation of property owners in the South Whitefish Neighborhood. Care should be taken to ensure that final design of road alignments minimizes encroachment on existing buildings, uses and significant improvements.

REFERENCES

1. Highway 93 South Water And Sewer Special Improvement District, Whitefish, Montana, WMW Engineering PC, October, 1998
2. South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan, Addendum To The Whitefish City County Master Plan. June 1, 1998.
3. Transportation And Storm Drainage Master Plan, Whitefish, Montana, Robert Peccia And Associates, July, 1998.
4. Standards For Design And Construction, Whitefish, Montana, Public Works Department, December, 1997.
5. Whitefish, Zoning Jurisdiction Regulations, Whitefish Municipal Code, Title 17, October 21, 1996.
6. Whitefish Traffic Operations Study, Carter And Burgess, December, 1994.
7. Flathead County Zoning Regulations, September 27, 1993
8. Upper Flathead Area Soil Survey, 1958.
9. Flood Insurance Rate Map, Flathead county, 1997.
10. Whitefish Pedestrian and Bikeway master Plan, 1998.
11. Transportation Planning Handbook, Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1992.
12. Residential Street Design & Traffic Control, Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1989.
13. Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, August 1991.
14. Design & Safety of Pedestrian Facilities, Institute of Transportation Engineers Technical Committee 5A-5, December 1994.

15. Access Management for Streets and Highways, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, FHWA-IP-82-3, June 1982

APPENDIX A:

Attendees and Public Meeting Notes from February 24, 1999.

MEETING ATTENDEES

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
Howard Hamilton	PO Box 961	862-6162
Jessie Deats	6080 Hwy 93 S	862-5569
Mike Wade, First Baptist	6232 Hwy 93 S	862-4318
Dave Morris	6260 Hwy 93 S	862-4024
Leonard Howke	180 JP Rd	862-4091
David V. Kaufman, MD	100 Wild Rose Ln	862-3961
Mark Johnson	1000 S Ave	892-7601
Karen Giesy	Box 4712	862-6082
Becky & Ken Platou	117 Park Knoll	862-0697
Jerry Buker	120 Park Knoll	862-0047
Linda May	139 Old Morris Trl	862-5223
Jody Fonner	6050 Hwy 93 S	862-4447
Dick Garden	1550 W Lakeshore (145 Old Morris Trl)	862-7517
Velma & Bryan Luke	144 Old Morris Trl	862-0045
Clif Neil	705 Blanchard Lake Rd	862-3101
Kurt Lewis	367 Blanchard Lake Dr	862-5224
Melvin Norgaard	6141 Hwy 93 S	862-4179
Jeff Jensen	320 Blanchard Hollow	862-2848 250-4690
Gary Elliott	PO Box 756	862-4035
Frank Newbury	Box 1031	862-3883
Jake Hiebert	1305 Karrow Ave	
Lydia Bailey	1345 Karrow Ave	862-4389

COMMENTS:

Make sure the Park Knoll access road works for grade.

Connect a north-south street west of the RV park.

Extending Great Northern makes some sense.

Extending 18Th Street makes some sense.

Extending 18th past parcels 2ABC and 2BCA would inconvenience land owners and it is too steep and too narrow.

West of Baker, start at 10TH and come down the east side of Park Knoll half way between Karrow Road and Highway 93. Having the road within 600 feet of Highway 93 is too close.

Kalner Lane was once proposed to connect JP Road.

There is no need for planning in his area, it all agricultural and forest, etc.

We are concerned that having roads marked, will cause development to happen.

The golf course route is not feasible.

Baptist Church: Eliminate route splitting their property – instead follow 1/4 section line with the north-south road.

Zoning, except for highway, frontage is W.A. (agriculture). the zoning would have to change for higher density to happen

Extend Baker south of Nineteenth.

Why so many connections to Karrow Road?

Prefer to have the extension of Baker moved further west.

Get as much public input as early and as often as possible.

Include noise barriers for road extensions next to residential development.

Extending Baker between motels and south side of RV park must consider signs and motel parking.

There is no need for two north-south roads so close on the west side.

Provide service roads instead of the road 600' back from Highway 93.

We need a truck route around Whitefish.

Housing will occur east of Karrow.

Use 600' west road and delete next road to west.

Road dropping off Highway 93 north of par 3 golf course is too high of a slope.

Road connecting JP Road to Highway 40 along riverside's west boundary would work well.

Evaluate and be aware of wetlands west of highway through GNC, Morris and Luke property.

Be aware of high groundwater in area of par 3.

Road as shown goes through a house. Road along west property line makes more sense.

Old dump (18th Street) route would impact less people as road exists

Concern for fact that a line drawn will take on a permanence, remove all proposed roads west of Baker.

Look at options for additional access to the hospital.

Park Knoll – why have roads either side of their subdivision so close together?

Concern for intersecting roads on steep grade coming down out of subdivision.

Likes proposed route between LDS church and Park Knoll.

Get rid of road on 1/4 section line.

What is happening west of Karrow?

Too many north-south routes.

If it will happen, let it happen. Planning is not needed.

**SOUTH WHITEFISH
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

**ADDENDUM TO THE WHITEFISH CITY COUNTY
MASTER PLAN**

**Adopted
City of Whitefish
Resolution #98-24
June 1, 1998**

**Flathead County
Resolution 677I
July 16, 1998**

SOUTH WHITEFISH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN ADDENDUM TO THE WHITEFISH CITY COUNTY MASTER PLAN

I. PREFACE

The Neighborhood Plan is a tool to coordinate and clarify the development of a specific portion of a community, a neighborhood. The Neighborhood Plan focuses on a specific area in order to provide clear and detailed direction for the future development of that area. The Neighborhood Plan is developed within the overall framework of the City-County Master Plan and is adopted as a sub-element to that plan. While the City-County Master Plan is very broad in its analysis and guidance for the community, the Neighborhood Plan serves to refine this overall plan by expanding on the issues, goals, and policies germane only to the specific area included, and providing guidance at the neighborhood or project level.

II. BACKGROUND

A. INTRODUCTION

The South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan was initiated at the request of the City of Whitefish in response to a request for extension of municipal utilities to serve the subject area. In response to the initial request for municipal services, the City of Whitefish has amended its Extension of Services planning for this area and has annexed the Highway 93 right-of-way corridor to Highway 40.

With the pending completion of the Highway 93 reconstruction and installation of sidewalks and landscaping, it is critical that this area be serviced with municipal water and sewer and a network of arterial and collector streets serving the community to allow this neighborhood to grow and develop orderly.

B. LOCATION

The South Whitefish Neighborhood Plan is located on the southern approaches to the City of Whitefish, and is bisected in a north-south manner by Highway 93. Part of this neighborhood currently lies outside the corporate limits of the City of Whitefish. All of the properties fronting on Highway 93 about the City Limits. The neighborhood extends northerly with varying widths from the Highway 40 Junction to the Pizza Hut on the west side of Hwy. 93, and to Mountain Mall on the East, excepting therefrom individual businesses which may have already annexed to the City. The easterly boundary extends north from Highway 40 along the quarter-section boundary located approximately 1300 feet east of Highway 93, to the westerly end of the Whitefish River bridge at JP Road, thence continues northerly along the Whitefish River to its intersection with the southerly boundary of Greenwood Terrace Subdivision, thence west to the Mountain Mall property, thence south to the northeasterly corner of Tract II, thence along the easterly boundary of Hwy. 93 back to Highway 40, excluding any properties presently incorporated into the City of Whitefish. The westerly boundary of the neighborhood extends northerly from a line extending west from the Highway 40 Junction, along the quarter-section boundary located approximately

1300 west of Highway 93, until it intersects with the northern boundary of Tract 3ABM (Sec. 01 30 22), thence east approximately 300 feet to the west boundary of Tract 3ABC, thence south and east along the boundary of Tract 3ABC to Tract 3ABL, then south and east following the boundary of 3ABL to the point of intersection with Highway 93, thence south along Highway 93 to the point of origin.

C. OVERVIEW

The linear-shaped neighborhood is approximately one mile long, centered along Highway 93. Attached is neighborhood map indicating the area included in the neighborhood plan and the existing land uses (Exhibit A), and a conceptual map indicating the need for north-south streets parallel to and on either side of Highway 93 (Exhibit B). Development is concentrated near the highway and is very sparse on lands more than 600 feet from the highway.

The character of the neighborhood derives primarily from its southwardly developing highway-commercial district. Highway frontage along the entire length of the neighborhood has commercial zoning, typically 400 feet deep; a couple of properties are commercially zoned approximately 1300 feet deep. The neighborhood is an urbanizing fringe area, having a mix of predominantly businesses, housing, churches, farms, and undeveloped land.

The present zoning was adopted for this area in 1982, and the WB-2 portion of this neighborhood was designated suitable for retail sales and services typically characterized by the need for large display or parking areas, large storage areas, and by outdoor commercial amusement or recreational activities, dependent on proximity to a highway or arterial street.

III. ISSUES

A. UTILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Municipal sewer, water, and other city services are generally not available in roughly the south half of the WB-2 district which lies outside of city limits; all properties abutting Highway 93 are, however, adjacent to the city limits.
2. Some owners in the southern part of the district favor immediate extension of sewer and water service to Highway 40 (approximately one mile) to enable development of their properties, as well as to provide sewer service to existing uses and thus better protect water quality. Several existing business properties have failed or failing septic systems, and desire to eliminate these systems in favor of the municipal collection and treatment system.
3. Many of these property owners petitioned the City of Whitefish in 1995 to initiate an SID to fund this extension of utilities; the City refused to consider an SID until a neighborhood plan for the area was adopted.
4. Utilities extension and annexation would improve the level of public services available to this area, which is zoned for urban-density commercial development. All properties fronting on Highway 93 with WB-2 zoning could fully develop without municipal utilities, subject to septic approval,

upon receipt of a building permit. It would be beneficial in the long-term to prevent a proliferation of commercial and/or residential development in this area on individual wells and septic systems.

5. Extension of municipal utilities prior to the completion of the highway reconstruction currently under way would be advantageous and cost effective, benefiting both the City and the property owners.
6. The City amended its extension of services plan in February 1995 to address the south half of the South Whitefish Neighborhood. Among other improvements, the plan proposes extension of sewer and water facilities and other municipal services to Highway 40, to be done either incrementally or in large sections. Improvements would be funded by SID or other owner/developer contribution. Incremental extension of utilities through a series of SIDs rather than a single SID, however, would be prohibitively expensive to establish and administer.
7. In August 1995, the City annexed the Highway 93 right-of-way extending to Highway 40, anticipating future annexation and extension of sewer and water facilities into this area.
8. The amount of existing commercially zoned land would accommodate significant growth in the Whitefish area. Nevertheless, it is widely perceived that the amount of improved commercial land and facilities available for new businesses is lacking, and that this circumstance is due in part to the development regulatory process and the lag time between new development and rapid market growth. Additional constraints on availability of existing zoned commercial land rests with Individual property owner decisions to neither develop nor sell their lands in the foreseeable future.
9. Extension of municipal sewer and water to the Highway 40 intersection would nearly double the amount of commercially zoned land (WB-1, VVB-2, or WB-3) in the Whitefish Zoning Jurisdiction with immediately available sewer and water service. The availability of these utilities and cost of resulting assessments may accelerate commercial development along this corridor, although the market place will have a strong influence. The commercially zoned properties can develop in accordance with existing zoning without municipal utilities.
10. Storm water drainage and collection facilities are lacking in the neighborhood. Those storm drainage facilities located within the Highway 93 right of way as part of the Highway 93 rebuild are not available to private property owners. It is anticipated that storm drainage collection and conveyance facilities will be extended into the neighborhood with the construction of the collector/arterial road system and that such drainage facilities, from a practical standpoint, would extend outward from the city limits. Storm water management currently is limited to on-site detention and disposal in lieu of any public or community system.

11. Whitefish has two major commercial districts, the Central Business District (WB-3), which is predominantly pedestrian oriented, and the Secondary Business District (South Whitefish), which is predominantly automobile oriented. These two districts exist in a tightly knit symbiotic relationship, and the health of each contributes heavily to the success of the other. Appropriate *commercial growth in the South Whitefish Neighborhood* will compliment Whitefish's downtown business district, and stimulate a positive business climate throughout the community.
12. The downtown and highway commercial districts are interdependent. Stimulating highway commercial growth may have positive and negative impacts on the downtown economy, by both expanding and dispersing commercial development in Whitefish. Like downtown, the highway commercial district is an integral component of the Whitefish economy, and its strength contributes to the vitality of the entire community.

B. CIRCULATION

1. The majority of properties in the neighborhood are accessed by private driveways onto Highway 93. Estimates of summer highway traffic volume range from 19,100 (1994 estimate of 3-month average, Montana Department of Transportation, taken South of JP Road) to 25,500 average daily trips (1993 estimate of 30th busiest hour of the year, Carter & Burgess, Inc., taken south of Greenwood Drive). The highway speed limit is 45 m.p.h. south of the Greenwood Drive, covering most of the district.
2. Highway 93 from the Highway 40 Junction north to the Whitefish River is currently under reconstruction, to a five lane configuration, which should drastically improve the free flow of traffic in the area. As a part of this reconstruction plan, the MDOT has negotiated and fixed curb cut access to adjoining properties, reducing to some degree the proliferation of ingress/egress opportunities previously existing.
3. During peak periods, severe congestion and hazards are created by conflicts between high-speed highway traffic and cross-traffic from multiple uncontrolled driveways. A grid circulation system with additional traffic lights may be needed in locations to be determined by a Major Street Alignment Study to alleviate these potential traffic conflicts.
4. Improvements to upgrade Highway 93 include widening to a five-lane design, storm drainage, and sidewalks, which will significantly improve circulation within the neighborhood. The City has moved forward with its plans for extensive landscaping in the highway right-of-way, extending to Highway 40. The construction of Highway 93 within the neighborhood is scheduled to be completed by mid-summer 1998; completion of the landscaping should follow shortly.

5. The lack of alternative routes on either side of Highway, 93 makes circulation very inconvenient for multiple-stop shopping and service operations such as delivery trucks and recyclable collection which have to mix with highway traffic after each stop.
6. The lack of an expanded street system impedes the development of the commercial district and development of residential neighborhoods behind the commercial corridor, thereby encouraging a linear strip growth pattern along the existing thoroughfare.
7. Highway commercial development in semi-rural areas often lack a traditional grid townscape and pedestrian friendly design. These design features provide important economic advantages for commercial districts: convenient circulation; multiple-stop shopping trips that benefit small businesses located near anchors: a local customer base of nearby employees and residents; broader sharing of infrastructure costs; and appealing urban design.
8. The existing development pattern provides few design features to attract and provide safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists, such as interconnected pathways separated from traffic, variety of shopping destinations with a short walk, windows facing pedestrian areas, landscaping, seating, pedestrian signs, bike racks, and crosswalks. The intent of the WB-2 Zoning District is automobile oriented; however, the design of Highway 93 reconstruction incorporates provisions to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians, albeit in a different manner than provided in the WB-3 zoning district.
9. Coordination and interconnection of parking lots would create significant opportunities for improved commercial access to the highway and shared parking.
10. Municipal lack of planned alignments for a grid street system will reduce or preclude options for street construction in the future as development encompasses potential right-of-way locations.

C. APPEARANCE AND DESIGN

1. South Highway 93 is the primary entrance to Whitefish. The appearance and the scenic views of surrounding forest land, farmland, and mountains represent significant values for the community and local tourism.
2. In a community-wide survey conducted in 1993 by the Whitefish Community Development Corporation, "business appearance" ranked third (among 24 choices) as the greatest local concern for the future, behind water quality and road maintenance.
3. Whitefish commercial districts have been criticized by some individuals for aesthetically detracting from the community, citing excessive linear sprawl, overhead utilities and a rather generic architectural appearance, including unattractive parking lots and pole signs.

4. Automobiles dominate the area visually and physically by the size, traffic volume, and noise of the highway; oversized parking lots fronting the highway; scattered, automobile-dependent development; and lack of pedestrian facilities and orientation. However, the intent of the WB-2 Zoning District establishes that this will be the predominant character of this area. Appropriate landscaping can mitigate the impact created by this type of development.
5. Landscaping, including tree planting, offers a relative low-cost method to dramatically improve the attractiveness of the area, but is generally lacking at this time.

D. DEVELOPMENT LIMITATIONS

1. Property owners in the WB-2 zoning district have expressed strong support for allowing a wider range of retail and other commercial uses in the district. Zoning regulations generally limit commercial uses in the WB-2 district to land-intensive types of businesses.
2. The cost of developing a secondary street system and related infrastructure will be burdensome on developers and property owners at the relatively low commercial densities that are anticipated to prevail in the district for many years.
3. Environmental limitations for development in portions of the district include the Whitefish river and adjacent riparian areas, a pond south of the Mountain Mall, a hillside bluff along the southwest part of the district, and wetlands west of this bluff.
4. Disincentives for development of residential neighborhoods, particularly adjacent to the highway, include the area's highway commercial character; lack of residential streets, lack of pedestrian orientation and parks- and highway-associated problems with congestion, noise, and hazards for children.

IV. GOALS

- A. Development and growth of viable commercial, industrial, and residential districts to enhance the entire community.
- B. A comprehensive circulation system providing safe and efficient access to all land uses and avoiding undue congestion on Highway 93.
- C. High quality building and site design to improve the entrance to Whitefish and the economic vitality of the community.
- D. Encourage commercial growth on Highway 93 South which complements downtown and the community as a whole.

- E. Develop and implement a plan to resolve the issues identified.

V. POLICIES

1. As substantial development occurs in the neighborhood, concurrent construction of an expanded street system including bike and pedestrian routes is encouraged, to include parallel north-south collectors, periodic cross-connectors, and local streets as needed. Map Exhibit B proposes a conceptual plan of new major streets, which is intended to neither indicate exact street locations nor a complete street system. Design and construction of local streets should be funded by the property owner or developer. Extension of arterial or collector streets may be partially funded by the community, depending upon city policy at the time of development and availability of funds. A partial funding formula may be structured with the property owner or developer paying for design and the cost of constructing a typical local street with the community paying the cost of upsizing to an appropriate arterial or collector street.
2. The neighborhood street system should include southward extensions of Baker Avenue and Columbia Avenue as back streets parallel to Highway 93, designed to function as continuous collector streets. These proposed collector streets should be fronted on both sides with commercial uses, backed by residential uses on the outer fringes of the neighborhood, improving circulation within the business district without encroaching into residential areas. In specific areas where it is inappropriate to have commercial development on both sides of Baker and Columbia streets, such as when bordering Park Knoll Estates, a landscaped strip, park or buffer should be provided. In appropriate areas, some properties may require rezoning to accomplish the desired objective of broadening the commercial districts or enabling the alignment of the major collector streets. Where feasible, new residential development should front on local streets radiating out from or parallel to Baker and Columbia Avenues, rather than fronting on these collector streets. The street system should also include cross streets and provide for bike and pedestrian routes.
3. As subdivisions and conditional uses occur on lands where new streets are proposed in an adopted Future Major Street Alignment Study, right-of-way for the proposed streets should be reserved. Where necessary to provide safe and efficient access or avoid undue traffic congestion, subdividers and conditional use applicants may be required to dedicate right-of-way and construct or upgrade these streets.
4. Property owners requesting annexation, municipal sewer, municipal water, subdivision approval, or conditional use approval for new development that would benefit from the construction of proposed streets identified in an adopted Future Major Street Alignment Study, may be required to waive protest to the future creation of a special improvements district to construct those streets or local streets directly serving their development or property.
5. Site design of future development should reduce dependence on Highway 93 for circulation within the business district. For example, primary driveway approaches onto side and back streets are encouraged. Driveway approaches onto Highway 93 have been established by MDOT as a part of the highway reconstruction, and few, if

any, additional curbcuts will be approved in the future. Over time, in fact, some existing approved curbcuts may be shifted, combined, or eliminated. Whenever feasible, curbcuts should be shared between properties. Interconnection of parking lots between commercial properties is encouraged. Placement of commercial buildings to front along side or back streets is encouraged.

6. Provide landscaping in accordance with the requirements of the Whitefish Zoning Regulations to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the business district, the entrance to Whitefish, and the visual connection with surrounding lands.
7. Site and building design should serve to minimize visual impacts, while accommodating the automobile oriented aspect of future commercial development. For example, most off-street parking and particularly large parking lots are encouraged to be placed behind buildings, and, if not, should be screened by berms, walls, or hedges. Separation of parking into small lots placed near destinations is preferred of expansive lots. Design pedestrian corridors to be safe, attractive, and linked to the sidewalks of adjacent streets.
8. Signage design should be integrated and in harmony with overall architectural and site design. Ground-mounted and wall signs are preferred over pole signs.
9. Any building served by an on-site septic system shall be required to be connected to municipal sewer upon failure of that on-site system, or when the existing uses or commercial improvements are changed which would require expansion of the onsite system, provided that municipal sewer facilities are available within 200 feet of the building, except where the sewer connection would require crossing the highway or the river.
10. All provisions of the City of Whitefish Zoning Jurisdiction Regulations applicable to properties in the South Whitefish Neighborhood, including landscaping provisions, will be conformed to appropriately, including any future revisions or amendments to those regulations.
11. Storm water will be required to be retained and disposed of on-site for any future development in the absence of any public or community collection and disposal system for the neighborhood.
12. The City of Whitefish should not annex land nor should it extend municipal water and sewer facilities (excluding water storage facilities necessary for the development of the South Whitefish neighborhood) south of Highway 40 and in particular south of the Highway 40 and 93 intersection.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The City of Whitefish should support prompt extension of municipal sewer and water facilities southward on both sides of the highway to the south end of the WB-2 district near the Highway 40 intersection, particularly in the light of their a) amendment to the City's Extension of Services Plan, b) their annexation of the Highway 93 corridor south to Highway 40, and c) the

pending completion of construction on Highway 93, including the extensive landscaping being funded by the City. Improvements may be funded by a Special Improvement District (SID) or some other suitable funding mechanism by those property owners desiring service.

2. Improvements to be included in the SID are presented in the 1992-1997 "Preliminary Plan for Highway 93 South Sewer and Water Extension" by WMW Engineering including a water storage tank. Portions of the required improvements may have a benefit for the community beyond the South Whitefish Neighborhood boundaries, and costs should be pro-rated amongst those benefiting this would include cost of the reservoir and associated infrastructure.
3. All properties to which the extended services are connected shall be required to be annexed to the city, or may be required to sign a Waiver of Protest of Annexation and a signed petition to annex if they are not contiguous to the City's corporate limits .
4. The City shall prepare a major street alignment study for the streets and bike and pedestrian ways proposed in Policies 1 and 2 and Map Exhibit B for the South Whitefish Neighborhood within twelve (12) months. Determination of right-of-way locations should give consideration to minimizing encroachment upon existing buildings, uses, and significant improvements. Accomplishment of this street alignment study should not delay adoption of this neighborhood plan. The exact location of these future major streets or cross connecting streets will be subject to the Major Street Alignment Study and negotiations with individual property owners as they develop their properties.
5. Establish a design review program to foster high quality design and enhance the south entrance to Whitefish. A program of voluntary compliance is encouraged, achieving design objectives through dialogue, coordination, and education in a timely process.

CONCEPTUAL PLAN OF PROPOSED MAJOR STREET SYSTEM SOUTH WHITEFISH NEIGHBORHOOD

