



**AGENDA**  
**HIGHWAY 93 SOUTH CORRIDOR PLAN**  
**STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**February 11, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Highway 93 South Corridor Plan Steering Committee will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Webex.

*To attend the Meeting and provide live comment via WebEx on your computer, tablet, or smartphone, go to the following web address and join the meeting 5 minutes prior to its scheduled start:*

<https://cityofwhitefish.webex.com/cityofwhitefish/j.php?MTID=m84f3daa6237ac10b512b650a9f68b353>

*Meeting Number: **187 725 3243***

*Password: **93Corridor!***

- **For the Audio Conference Call option:** call one of the numbers below and enter the access code.
    - *United States Toll call-in number: **1-408-418-9388***
    - *United States Toll Free: (From a land line phone) **1-844-992-4726***
- Access code: 187 725 3243**

*We encourage individuals to provide written public comment to the Planning & Building Department [hlindeh@cityofwhitefish.org](mailto:hlindeh@cityofwhitefish.org) or deliver by 12:00 p.m. February 11, at City Hall in the Utility Drop Box. Written comments should include name and address, and be short, concise, and polite. All written comments received by 12:00 p.m. will be provided to the Committee members. At the end of "live" public comment, city staff will read the name and address of individuals providing written comments and their comments.*

The agenda for the meeting will be:

- A.** Call to Order
- B.** Approval of Minutes from January 4, 2021 Meeting
- C.** Review Chapter 7 of Draft Plan
- D.** Public Comment
- E.** Discuss Features to be Included in New Segment A Rendering
- F.** Public Comment
- G.** Next Meeting
- H.** Adjournment

## Principles for Civil Dialogue



- We provide a safe environment where individual perspectives are respected, heard and acknowledged.
- We are responsible for respectful and courteous dialogue and participation.
- We respect diverse opinions as a means to find solutions based on common ground.
- We encourage and value broad community participation.
- We encourage creative approaches to engage public participation.
- We value informed decision-making and take personal responsibility to educate and be educated.
- We believe that respectful public dialogue fosters healthy community relationships, understanding, and problem-solving.
- We acknowledge, consider and respect the natural tensions created by collaboration, change and transition.
- We follow the rules and guidelines established for each meeting.



# Highway 93S Corridor Steering Committee

## DRAFT Meeting #23 Minutes

January 4, 2021

2:00 pm, WebEx Virtual Meeting

### **In Attendance:**

Committee Members: Mark Pascoli, June Hanson, Steve Kane, John Muhlfeld, Scott Freudenberger, Marilyn Nelson, Roger Sherman (Ryan Hennen, Justin Lawrence absent)

Rhonda Fitzgerald, Mayre Flowers also present

Staff: Dave Taylor, Hilary Lindh

### **A. Meeting called to order at 2:03 pm**

### **B. Approved December 7, 2020 meeting minutes with addition of public comment**

### **C. Committee Review Segment C Draft Plan Chapter 6**

Staff reviewed the goals and objectives for Segment C. Committee members asked some clarifying questions about some of the land use goals. M. Nelson suggested a goal or more emphasis be added about the spacing or frequency of bus shelters and stops that would allow for hop on/hop off trolley-like service since distances between businesses make pedestrian/bicycle access challenging. However, she noted that might be more relevant to Segments A and B than to Segment C. There was some discussion about how the service could be a private business effort since Eagle Transit has a different approach. Staff provided some information about current City coordination with Eagle Transit, the SNOW Bus, and the effort to increase the local service options. M. Pascoli suggested an implementation activity for developing bus pull-outs and shelters be added to the list at the end of the chapter, as well as the implementing activities for Segments A and B.

The committee discussed in some detail the Goal 8 objective relating to a roundabout at the Highway 40 intersection. M. Pascoli, S. Kane, and J. Hanson were not convinced a roundabout would work here and it should be moved further down the list of objectives; J. Muhlfeld, R. Sherman, and M. Nelson believed it is a viable alternative and were very supportive of keeping that option on the table. J. Muhlfeld mentioned that as property develops around this intersection, City Council is looking for ROW dedication to accommodate a potential future roundabout. M. Nelson noted a roundabout would also provide an opportunity to create a gateway entrance to town if no land acquisition is successful. Goal 12 language about drought resistant landscaping was also discussed. Use of native species that are drought tolerant should be used (juniper or ponderosa pines, for example) rather than southwest style plants.

### **D. Public Comment Segment C Draft Plan Chapter 6**

M. Flowers had several comments on Segment C goals, as follows:

Goal 1- broaden to also be consistent with City policy and goals. Add goal about compatible development.

Goal 2, Objective 1 – make part of City policy. Add objective to develop information sheets for County to provide to Segment C developers including advantages of annexation. Add objective to closely monitor and comment proposed rezoning in the County in coordination with City of Kalispell. Add objective to

work with Columbia Falls and Kalispell to create criteria for zone changes along highway corridors in the County. Add objective for City policy regarding tree retention.

Goal 3 and its objectives – include light industrial to what is discouraged, not just commercial.

Goal 4 – reconsider. City may not want infill if insufficient infrastructure to handle it. Add objective to create and maintain a map of areas available for infill to direct development.

In the transitional statement about the Urban Growth Boundary between goals 4 and 5, add goal to Growth Policy about developing criteria for annexations

Goal 5- broaden Objective 1 so not just highway frontage. Provide example of zone to be created in Objective 2. Add timeline to Objective 3 and include language about coordinating with other cities.

Goal 6 – clarify if DEQ policy overrides City policy.

Goal 7 – add objective to oppose reducing these standards and to maintain Scenic Corridors.

Goal 8 – agreed roundabout is viable. Clarify County’s involvement in Objective 7 regarding expanding road network.

Goal 9 – include info on how Kalispell planned for bus shelters, but do not allow advertisement. Create map of where bus pull-outs and shelters should go so developers know what is expected. In Objective 1 indicate how far from the highway shoulder the separated path should be.

Future Land Use Map – Business Service Center is shown as a solid block, show as allowing islands of development, not a strip. Consider reducing depth of Highway Transition designation on west side of highway.

R. Fitzgerald also made several comments:

Since public transit requires federal funding and only one transit provider can be funded in a region, City needs to work with Eagle Transit. She had concerns about a hop on/hop off trolley that would mostly serve tourists; she has heard from visitors that what they like most about Whitefish is it does not seem touristy, so she did not like the idea.

Supported M. Flower’s comments about working in the County.

Wanted language to be more forceful about what the City wants of the County.

Goal 4 – there may be unintended consequences of encouraging infill. Agreed with concept but did not want it to be a free-for-all.

Goal 8 – roundabouts work, keep it where it is in the list.

Transitional Zoning District sidebar – delete personal services from list of permitted uses. In last paragraph, separate first sentence into two to distinguish between building footprint and setbacks.

Goal 10- supported Objective 3 but wanted stronger language.

Goal 12 – agreed that landscaping should be a mix of species that could include drought resistant and/or native species.

Implementing Activities – move items 4 and 5 to bottom of list since further out in timeline, if ever.

#### **E. Additional Committee Comment Segments A and B Chapter 6**

M. Nelson had comments pertaining to Segment B:

Goal 4 Objective 4 – signal spacing, moving light to Greenwood has many difficulties.

Goal 5 Objective 5 – said we are a tourist town and would be beneficial to move people between corridor and downtown with a trolley type of service.

Goal 8 – revise drought resistant statement to include or focus on native species.

Implementing Activity 4 – her business has needed all the parking they were required to provide.

In general, she said the committee needs to keep the public comments in mind and to make sure the plan reflects those comments.



# Highway 93S Corridor Steering Committee

## DRAFT Meeting #23 Minutes

January 4, 2021

2:00 pm, WebEx Virtual Meeting

### **F. Public Comment**

R. Fitzgerald noted that Goal 7 Objective 2 in Segment B about incentivizing tree retention needs more heft. She suggested a larger setback like the 50 feet mentioned for the potential the Highway Transition Zone.

M. Flowers stated everyone will need more than a week to review the full draft plan. The committee was interested in holding another meeting in the next month prior to receiving the full draft plan to stay engaged.

### **G. Next Meeting**

Review of Chapter 7 Implementation Activities to be scheduled for first half of February pending availability of committee members.

### **H. Adjournment – 4:03 pm**

DRAFT

## 7.0 Introduction

The community vision, goals, and objectives for this plan will help inform future decisions made by the City of Whitefish, as well as Flathead County, and Montana Department of Transportation within the Highway 93 South Corridor. The Action Items in this chapter will help implement the goals and objectives of this plan over time. Action items are grouped by the entity best positioned to take the action. For example, zoning code amendments will be undertaken by City staff, while transportation improvements on Highway 93 South will ultimately depend on action by the Montana Department of Transportation. Several actions must be taken cooperatively by the City and the County, while others will only come to fruition through public-private partnerships.

Once adopted, the implementing actions in this plan will become City Council goals assigned to the department responsible for taking the action. As part of that process, Department staff provide quarterly updates to City Council on the status of each goal. In this manner, the City will be held accountable for and able to track progress towards implementing this plan.

### City Actions: Regulatory and Administrative

#### **Tool: Zoning Amendments**

The development and addition of new or revised standards and potentially new transitional or overlay districts to the zoning code will help achieve some of the plan's goals. City planning staff will draft zoning code amendments with input from stakeholders, and public hearings will be held at both the Planning Board and City Council to solicit further input and refine the changes. The Whitefish City Council will then ultimately vote on whether to adopt the proposed amendments.

### City - County Coordination: Land Use Planning

#### **Tool: Facilitation**

The University of Montana's Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy or other facilitator could be engaged to initiate a dialogue, improve the working relationship, and foster joint planning between the City

of Whitefish and Flathead County with the intent of achieving Segment C goals and objectives. Ideally, planning for transition areas between cities and counties should be done with cooperation between jurisdictional entities. Many Montana cities and counties have interlocal agreements to help facilitate coordination. Unfortunately, no such agreement exists between Whitefish and Flathead County, nor is such an agreement required under Montana State Law. The State requires municipalities to have an Extension of Services plan and define an urban growth boundary to which city services could be extended. Whitefish has adopted such a plan, and it shows significant areas outside of city limits that will eventually annex into the city. Under State land use law, counties must consider and be consistent with adjacent municipal zoning and follow their own growth policy, but not necessarily comply with the municipal growth policy. This has resulted in some County zoning south of Whitefish inconsistent with the City's Growth Policy. In addition to land use, transportation planning for areas outside City limits could also benefit from greater intergovernmental cooperation.

### City - County - MDT Coordination: Transportation Improvements

#### **Tool: Corridor Plan Adoption**

Transportation improvements within the highway right-of-way, whether for improved safety, traffic flow, bike and pedestrian facilities, or aesthetics, will depend on decisions and actions by Montana Department of Transportation. This plan includes numerous goals and objectives for transportation improvements. Adoption of this plan provides information on the community's vision and goals for the corridor which should help guide transportation project decision making and future actions.

#### **Tool: Funding Sources**

Most funding sources for improvements to the Highway 93 South corridor are managed by Montana Department of Transportation. Projects have to be scheduled in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program book

to be funded. An exception is the Montana Air and Congestion Initiative (MACI) grant. The City could apply for a MACI grant to fund improvements on Highway 93 to reduce vehicle emissions. Such improvements might include bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, raised median, signal, and transit improvements.

## Public-Private Partnership Actions: Land Acquisition and Expansion of Road and Trail Networks

### **Tool: Funding Sources**

There are several funding sources potentially available to the City for land acquisition and parks or trail development. These funding sources could be combined in partnership with funding sources from other entities as described below to help realize some of the goals of the Highway 93 South Corridor Plan.

The City has a three-percent Resort Tax collected from lodging, retail, bars, and restaurants. Authorized by Montana Code Annotated §7-6-1501, the resort tax was originally approved by Whitefish voters in 1995 and extended in 2004 through January 2025. Assuming another extension is approved with allocation changes by 2024, 10 percent of the collected tax could be allocated to the Parks Department and would allow for acquisition of land for open space and trail easements. However, these additional funds would not start being collected until February 2025 and it will take many years to build enough to purchase land considering there are other competing Parks projects.

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a tool the City has used since 1987 to spur growth, provide public infrastructure and facilities, and eliminate blight. The original TIF expired in 2020, but the City is evaluating feasibility of an additional TIF district or districts from which to collect property tax in excess of its base valuation. While TIF funds can be used for land acquisition, it is unlikely such funds would be immediately available as it takes many years to build incremental value.

The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a potential source for land acquisition for public parks, trails, and preservation of open space. It generally includes a variety of federal, state, and local funding sources designated to fund improvements with priorities and criteria for allocations established by the City in its

annual budget document.

General Obligation bonds are funded by a property tax levy approved by voters. Income from the tax levy is used to retire the bonds. They are usually used for larger projects and could be considered for land and open space acquisition. However, since voters must approve the levy and any bonds, the funds may not be available to respond quickly to a land acquisition opportunity.

Finally, grants may be awarded by federal and state agencies for public improvements that meet the guidelines for specific programs such as the State's Recreation Trails Program (recreational trails), the Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program (new trails and shared-use paths), or the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Grants Program (acquisition and development of public parks and other outdoor recreation sites).

### **Tool: Partnership with Other Entities**

The Trust for Public Lands, Flathead Land Trust, Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside, and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks are among potential entities with which the City could partner on land acquisition efforts. Alternatively, or in parallel, citizens could lead an initiative to raise funds which could then be used in combination with City funds for land acquisition.

The City often partners with private developers when projects are proposed involving subdivision, the planned unit development (PUD) process, or conditional use permits (CUPs). As the project is reviewed against approval criteria, City staff and elected officials have an opportunity to ask for or require new public infrastructure be constructed to offset future impacts of the project as long as a nexus can be shown. This is typically how expansion of the public road network through private property is achieved. For example, Whitefish Avenue was recently extended south from Akers Lane as part of a residential PUD. Once the developer builds the road extension, the road right-of-way is dedicated to the City of Whitefish and it becomes public property. Private developers could also dedicate open space near the highway or the Whitefish River corridor or complete public use trails as part of a major development proposal.

## 7.1 Action Items

### City Action:

#### **Revise landscaping standards.**

Landscaping standards should be revised to require variation in plant heights, massing, and colors, and limit the amount of turf or grass used. Better buffering between residential and commercial uses is needed. Retention of healthy, mature trees should be better incentivized, and wider areas of landscaping with public amenities should be encouraged. The exemption for landscaping for automotive sales lots should also be removed, and the use of planter boxes in parking lots allowed. Use of native species that minimize irrigation water use for commercial properties should be incentivized.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent businesses, and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff drafts revisions, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goals:** A.10, B.1, B.7, and B.8

### City Action:

#### **Review parking standards.**

National standards for commercial parking requirements should be reviewed and compared to current Whitefish standards; minimum parking requirements for some commercial uses should be reduced. Additionally, adjacent commercial parking lots should be connected to each other where possible to facilitate movement between them without having to re-enter the highway. Parking standards for multiple commercial uses on the same lot should also be revised. The standards should also consider accommodation of electric vehicles and ride-share services.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent businesses, and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff reviews standards and drafts revisions, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goals:** B.1 and B.5

### City Action:

#### **Develop outdoor storage screening standards for light assembly and manufacturing.**

To encourage a diverse economy in Whitefish, light assembly and manufacturing was recently made an administrative conditional use in the WB-2 Secondary Business zoning district. To ensure compatibility with existing and surrounding businesses, standards need to be developed for screening of outdoor storage of materials and equipment.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, WB-2 and WI businesses, and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff drafts standards, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goal:** B.3

### City Action:

#### **Revise sign district along Baker Avenue north of East 13th Street.**

The sign standards should better reflect the smaller lot sizes, narrower right-of-way, and slower speed limits in this portion of the corridor. Review appropriateness of the Resort Community Business and Old Town sign districts as potential replacement of the Highway Commercial sign district in this area. Review the existing sign district boundaries.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent businesses, and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff reviews sign districts, drafts revised sign district boundaries or new district, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goals:** A.2 and B.1

**City Action:**

**Update architectural review standards for multi-tenant commercial buildings.**

Development and businesses in the corridor should be encouraged to help diversify the Whitefish economy, provide higher wages and salaries, and support existing and new housing and employment in the corridor. Multi-tenant commercial buildings can help reduce costs for start-up businesses needing smaller spaces, but linear strip malls can be very unattractive. The architectural review standards should ensure future multi-tenant buildings are visually consistent with the vision for the corridor.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Architectural Review Committee, residents, WB-2 businesses, and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff works with Architectural Review Committee to revise standards for multi-tenant commercial buildings, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goal:** B.3

**City Action:**

**Develop new transitional zone, overlay, or sub-district within Secondary Business district for Segment A.**

To account for character differences due to smaller lot sizes, narrower road right-of-way, slower vehicle speeds, proximity to the river, downtown, and direct adjacency to a residential neighborhood, the development standards in Segment A should be differentiated from those in the remainder of the WB-2 Secondary Business zoning district.

**Timeframe:** In tandem with development of a new zone, overlay, or sub-district for the WR-4 High-density Multi-family Residential District as recommended by the Downtown Business District Master Plan.

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, residents, business and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff drafts new zones, overlays, or sub-districts for Segment A business district and residential areas to the north in consultation with interested stakeholders, gains stakeholder support, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goal:** A.3

**City Action:**

**Revise the Special Provisions for Lots.**

A conditional use permit is currently required for multiple uses on the same lot. To encourage the addition of smaller commercial buildings to overly large parking lots of existing commercial structures fronting the highway, the special provisions for lots should be revised to allow multiple commercial uses on the same lot in Segment B with an administrative conditional use permit.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent businesses, and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff revises special provisions, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goal:** B.1

**City Action:**

**Revise WB-2 zoning district.**

The Secondary Business zoning district currently requires a 20-foot setback from the front property line. However, not all lots adjacent to the highway have their “front” facing the highway. To ensure a consistent landscaped setback along the highway and to encourage the retention of existing mature trees along the highway, add a 25-foot landscaping setback from Highway 93 South specific to the WB-2 Secondary Business zoning district between East 13th Street and the Highway 40 intersection.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent businesses, and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff revises landscaping setback, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**Goal:** B.1

**City Action:**

**Create a highway transition zoning district.**

To ensure properties at the entrance to Whitefish that annex into the City in the future are developed in a manner consistent with the community’s vision for Segment C, and to better buffer adjacent residential properties from negative impacts, a new transitional zoning district should be created to apply to annexations in areas currently zoned by the County as Secondary Business. Traffic intensive uses should be moved from permitted to conditional uses. While this new zoning district is being created, developers petitioning for annexation of commercial properties should be encouraged to use the Planned Unit Development process or propose conditional zoning for the property consistent with the community’s vision for the gateway to Whitefish.

**Timeframe:** Dependent on, and only if City policy changes with regards to the urban growth boundary.

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent County businesses, and County property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff drafts transitional zone, invites feedback from stakeholders, and presents to Planning Board and City Council for approval

**City Action:**

**Amend annexation policy.**

Amend the annexation policy to encourage owners or developers of County zoned commercial property who petition for annexation to use the Planned Unit Development process or propose conditional zoning for the property to be consistent with the community’s vision for the gateway entrance to Whitefish.

**Timeframe:** Dependent on, and only if City policy changes with regards to the urban growth boundary.

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent County businesses and property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff drafts policy statement, presents to City Council and stakeholders in a work session, amends as directed, and works with developers to understand the community vision

**Goal:** C.5

**City Action:**

**Further develop Whitefish River Trail and Canoe Park to be more accessible.**

To improve access to and visibility of the Whitefish River in Segment A, both the trail along the river and Canoe Park that provides public access to the river could both be further developed.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years, trail development contingent on replacement of Spokane Avenue culverts with a bridge

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, adjacent businesses and property owners, and City residents

**Resources:** Parks and Public Works staff coordinate to develop capital improvement projects for their respective Department budgets

**Goal:** A.9

**City Action:**

**Oppose expansion of commercial zoning in Segment C.**

To be consistent with the City’s vision for this segment of the corridor, all future commercial and light industrial development must be limited to properties currently zoned Secondary Business and Business Service District. The City will oppose any expansion or parcel-by-parcel creep of the commercial zoning districts beyond current limits.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish and Flathead County

**Resources:** City Planning Director, Planning Board, and Elected Officials to communicate and work with County Planning Director, Planning Board, and Elected Officials

**Goal:** C.3

**City Action:**

**Discourage any proposed projects in Segment C inconsistent with the City’s vision for this segment of the corridor or with the goals, policies, and statements of the Flathead County Growth Policy; support those which are consistent.**

The vision for Segment C includes better buffering of commercial uses, use of commercial building materials that blend well with natural surroundings, and commercial uses that do not generate frequent vehicle trips. The Flathead County Growth Policy has many goals and policies related to development in the Highway 93 South corridor south of City limits including consideration of scenic resources, community character, existing neighborhood plans, traffic safety and flow, and the geographic, cultural, and historic heritage of the City.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Flathead County

**Resources:** City Planning Director and Elected Officials to communicate and work with County Planning Director and Elected Officials

**Goal:** C.2

**City - County Action:**

**Petition and Encourage Flathead County to develop a zoning compliance permit.**

Flathead County has limited ability and staff resources available to enforce and ensure compliance with its development standards. The City should petition or otherwise encourage the County to develop a zoning compliance permit as a tool to improve compliance in the Highway Overlay Zone. The extent of commercial zoning along Highway 93 south of Whitefish should not be expanded.

**Timeframe:** Two to five years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Flathead County, developers

**Resources:** City Planning Director and Elected Officials to communicate and work with County Planning Director and Elected Officials

**Goal:** C.1

**City - County Action:**

**Foster dialogue and coordinated planning between the City of Whitefish and Flathead County.**

The City of Whitefish must start a dialogue with the City of Columbia Falls, City of Kalispell, and Flathead County to achieve future cooperation on planning initiatives that affect the City and to realize the goals and objectives outlined in this plan for Segment C of the highway corridor. As a first step, the City should coordinate with Columbia Falls and Kalispell to open a dialogue with Flathead County about regional transportation planning issues. The objective is to build a working relationship with Flathead County which could then facilitate coordinated land use planning .

**Timeframe:** Initiate within one year of plan adoption and continue relationship building on an ongoing basis

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, City of Columbia Falls, City of Kalispell, and Flathead County

**Resources:** City Planning Director and Elected Officials to communicate and work with County Planning Director and Elected Officials

**Goal:** C.4

**City - MDT Action:**

**Replace Spokane Avenue culverts with a bridge on Spokane Avenue.**

As part of any Spokane Avenue improvement project, the City of Whitefish will request Montana Department of Transportation remove the culverts under Spokane Avenue and replace with a bridge. The bridge and any new or widened bridge in the corridor should be designed attractively as a gateway entrance to downtown Whitefish compatible with adjacent neighborhoods. Bridges should accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists over the river, as well as extension of the Whitefish River trail under the bridge. Bridges should facilitate views of and access to the river and accommodate seasonal flowers or landscaping.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, MDT, residents, and business associations

**Resources:** Planning and Public Works staff communicate and work with MDT and stakeholders to prioritize, fund, design, and construct project

**Goal:** A.6

**City - MDT Action:**

**Design and construct a Spokane Avenue cross section to improve capacity, reduce demand, and improve aesthetics.**

As part of any Spokane Avenue improvement project, the City will work with Montana Department of Transportation to achieve the community vision for Segment A. The cross section should include protected bike lanes, continuous sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, more frequent and safer pedestrian crossing opportunities, pedestrian-scale lighting, decorative highway lighting, and more trees and landscaping in boulevards. A project is needed in the relative near term to address a leaking City water main and poor quality road surface.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, MDT, residents, and corridor business owners

**Resources:** Planning and Public Works staff communicate and work with MDT and stakeholders to prioritize, fund, design, and construct project

**Goals:** A.4 and A.5

**City - MDT Action:**

**Extend East 7th Street from Spokane Avenue to Kalispell Avenue.**

To any Montana Department of Transportation reconstruction project on Spokane Avenue, the City will add a project to extend East 7th Street from Spokane Avenue to Kalispell Avenue.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years, in tandem with Spokane Avenue improvement project

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish and MDT

**Resources:** Public Works staff communicate and work with MDT and stakeholders to prioritize, fund, design, and construct project

**Goal:** A.4

**City - MDT Action:**

**Consider speed limit reduction on Spokane Avenue in Segment A and on Highway 93 South in Segment B.**

For Montana Department of Transportation to consider reducing speed limits through the corridor, the City should formally request a speed study be conducted on Highway 93 South between Highway 40 and Greenwood Drive and on Spokane Avenue between the Whitefish River and East 6th Street.

**Timeframe:** One to two years.

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish and MDT

**Resources:** Planning and Public Works staff and elected officials formally request speed studies in the corridor

**Goals:** A.4 and B.4

**City - MDT Action:**

**Design and construct a Highway 93 South cross section between East 13th Street and Highway 40 to improve capacity, reduce demand, and improve aesthetics.**

As part of any Highway 93 South improvement project, the City will work with Montana Department of Transportation to achieve the community vision for the segment. Improvements should include a raised, landscaped center median, protected bike lanes, more frequent and safer pedestrian crossing opportunities, transit pull-outs and shelters, combined access drives, more trees and landscaping in the boulevard, pedestrian-scale lighting, and decorative highway lighting in place of Cobra-style lights. Traffic volumes in the near future may trigger installation of a raised median, which would be the impetus for more comprehensive improvements.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, MDT, residents, and corridor business owners

**Resources:** Planning and Public Works staff communicate and work with MDT and stakeholders to prioritize, fund, design, and construct project

**Goal:** B.4

**City - MDT Action:**

**Construct intersection improvements on East 13th Street at Baker Avenue and at Highway 93 South.**

As part of any Spokane Avenue/Highway 93 South or Baker Avenue improvement project, the City will work with Montana Department of Transportation to improve the function of East 13th Street intersections. Preliminary traffic simulations indicate the addition of a second southbound lane on Highway 93 South at East 13th Street would improve the Level of Service at that intersection. Improvements at the intersection of East 13th Street and Baker Avenue might include signalization or installation of a roundabout.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, MDT, residents, and corridor business owners

**Resources:** Public Works staff communicate and work with MDT and stakeholders to prioritize, fund, design, and construct project

**Goal:** B.4

**City - MDT Action:**

**Designate Baker Avenue between East 13th and East 2nd Streets as the truck route through downtown Whitefish.**

As part of any Spokane Avenue/Highway 93 South improvement project, the City will work with Montana Department of Transportation to designate Baker Avenue as the truck route through downtown Whitefish, while mitigating potential impacts to existing uses. Road widening to accommodate truck traffic may require acquisition of right-of-way, a process that will likely add years to the timeline.

**Timeframe:** Ten to twenty years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, MDT, residents, and corridor business owners

**Resources:** Public Works staff communicate and work with MDT and stakeholders to prioritize, fund, design, and construct project

**Goal:** A.4

**City - MDT Action:**

**Better delineate driving lanes on Highway 93 South between Highway 40 and East 13th Street.**

To improve night-time visibility on the highway, the City will request that Montana Department of Transportation improve delineation of the driving lanes through Segment B. This may involve more frequent painting of lines, installation of recessed reflectors, or some other method MDT identifies.

**Timeframe:** Two to three years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish and MDT

**Resources:** Public Works staff work with MDT to prioritize and construct project

**Goal:** B.4

**City - County and MDT Action:**

**Develop a separated shared-use path, park-and-ride lot(s), and bus stops along the highway in Segment C.**

The Highway 93 South corridor south of City limits is under the jurisdiction of Flathead County and Montana Department of Transportation. The City should work with the County and Montana Department of Transportation to develop a separated shared-use path, park-and-ride lot(s), and bus stops in Segment C. In addition to identifying a funding source for these facilities, the City and County should develop a joint operation and maintenance agreement for the shared-use path with Montana Department of Transportation. The City should also work with transit providers to increase service.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Flathead County, MDT, residents, and business owners

**Resources:** Planning and Public Works staff work with MDT, County, and stakeholders to prioritize, fund, design, and construct project

**Goal:** C.9

**City - County - MDT Action:**

**Improve intersection safety at Blanchard Lake Road and the entrances to North Valley Hospital.**

The City will encourage Montana Department of Transportation to improve intersection safety at the entrance to North Valley Hospital from Highway 93 South and Highway 40, as well as at Blanchard Lake Road. The City will request Montana Department of Transportation consider installation of acceleration and deceleration lanes on Highway 93 south of Highway 40 at intersections where warranted.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Flathead County, MDT, residents, and corridor business owners

**Resources:** Public Works and Planning staff to work with MDT and stakeholders to design, fund, and construct improvements

**Goals:** B.4 and C.8

**City - County - MDT Action:**

**Create park-and-ride lot(s) near Highway 93 South/ Highway 40 intersection.**

The City will identify existing parking lots with potential for part-time use as park-and-ride lots and request Montana Department of Transportation consider new park-and-ride lots near the Highway 93 South and Highway 40 intersection as part of any highway improvement project. For example, large parking lots associated with churches in the area could potentially provide part-time public park-and-ride use during times and days when they are otherwise vacant.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Flathead County, MDT, transit providers, residents, and corridor business owners

**Resources:** Public Works and Planning staff to work with MDT, property owners, and stakeholders to identify locations, develop parking agreements, or fund and construct new lots

**Goal:** C.9

**City - County - MDT Action:**

**Consider speed limit reduction on Highway 93 South in Segment C.**

Since Segment C is outside of City limits, Flathead County must request a speed study be conducted by Montana Department of Transportation south of the Highway 40 intersection. The City should ask the County to make this request.

**Timeframe:** One to two years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Flathead County, and MDT

**Resources:** Planning and Public Works staff and elected officials in Whitefish initiate the request with Flathead County staff and elected officials; the County would then ask MDT to conduct the study

**Goal:** C.8

**City - County - MDT Action:**

**Consider roundabout at Highway 93 South and Highway 40 intersection.**

Initial traffic modelling suggests installation of a roundabout at the Highway 93 South/Highway 40 intersection will improve Level of Service. As part of any Highway 93 South or Highway 40 improvement project, Montana Department of Transportation will consider and analyze the effect of replacing the existing signal with a roundabout. The City supports and encourages this consideration and analysis.

**Timeframe:** Ten to twenty years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, Flathead County, MDT, residents, and business owners

**Resources:** Public Works and Planning staff to communicate with and support MDT analysis of intersection improvements and consult with stakeholders

**Goal:** C.8

**City - MDT Action:**

**Establish a continuous count station to collect traffic data specific to Whitefish.**

The closest Montana Department of Transportation continuous count station is on Highway 2 east of Columbia Falls, which does not adequately capture the traffic volumes and patterns unique to Whitefish. The City will request and encourage Montana Department of Transportation to establish a continuous count station closer to Whitefish to capture more relevant traffic data.

**Timeframe:** Two to three years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish and MDT

**Resources:** Public Works staff to communicate and work with MDT to identify an appropriate location and develop a nearby station

**Goal:** B.4

**Public-Private Partnership Action:**

**Acquire property or obtain permanent easements along Whitefish River and around the Highway 40 intersection.**

The City should engage with public land trusts, local philanthropists, and engaged citizens to purchase land or obtain permanent easements to be used for trails, public parks, and access to the river, natural areas, and green space.

**Timeframe:** Five to ten years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, public land trusts, state agencies, residents, City and County property owners

**Resources:** Planning staff and elected officials engage with public land trusts and local philanthropists to identify parcels and funding source, purchase, and conserve land

**Goals:** A.9 and C.10

**Public-Private Partnership Action:**

**Develop frequently spaced bus pull-outs and shelters with hop on/hop off bus service within and between Segment B and downtown.**

A future on-demand bus service, Flathead County's Mountain Climber, will provide hotel guests and restaurant patrons with an option for transit between the corridor and downtown. The City should continue to work with transit providers, whether publicly or privately funded, and Montana Department of Transportation to locate and develop bus pull-outs and shelters along Segment B and to establish and/or expand hop on/hop off bus service within and between Segment B and downtown.

**Timeframe:** Two to five years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, MDT, public transit providers, business associations, and other private sources of funding for hop on/hop off bus service

**Resources:** Planning and Public Works staff to continue working with the Mountain Climber to improve local and regional service, consult with stakeholders to identify potential private funding sources for more frequent local service, and work with MDT to develop pull-outs/shelters.

**Goal:** B.5

**Public-Private Partnership Action:**

**Increase the frequency of Adopt-a-Highway litter pick-up efforts (April - October) along Highway 93 South.**

Montana Department of Transportation has an Adopt-a-Highway program that connects volunteer groups with litter pick-up efforts on their transportation corridors. While there is already an organization volunteering to pick up litter along the Highway 93 South corridor, efforts have been limited to a one-time event in the spring. The City should work with Montana Department of Transportation, corridor businesses or business associations, volunteer organizations, and interested individuals to increase the frequency of litter pick-up along the highway.

**Timeframe:** Two to five years

**Stakeholders:** City of Whitefish, MDT, corridor businesses or associations, volunteer organizations, and other interested individuals

**Resources:** Planning and Parks staff to solicit interested volunteer groups and coordinate with MDT to increase frequency of litter pick-up.

**Goal:** B.7