



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2005 Butte Transportation Plan Update is intended to provide a unified transportation vision that supports future growth in the Butte-Silver Bow area. Long-range transportation planning in an urban area typically involves the following elements:

- Interpretation of current development trends.
- Prediction of future trends in order to identify the projected transportation demands of persons and goods.
- Assessment of the transportation network and services available to satisfy those needs.
- Meaningful public involvement.
- Identification and prioritization of the most reasonable solutions to address current and future transportation needs.

This Plan Update contains analysis of existing traffic operations, roadway networks, transit systems, non-motorized transportation systems, and other transportation systems in the Butte-Silver Bow area. Additionally, the document examines current socioeconomic conditions and projected trends, identifies needed improvements to the transportation system, provides an alternatives analysis, and offers a set of recommendations to address the changing transportation needs of the community. Implementation of specific elements of the 2005 Transportation Plan Update will help to improve and sustain an integrated and efficient transportation system for the Butte-Silver Bow area.

1.1 Project Background

Butte-Silver Bow initiated long-range transportation planning in 1970 with its original Transportation Plan. The 1970 Plan was subsequently updated in 1986 and 1996. Many of the short-term and long-term traffic improvements recommended in these previous Plans have now been or will soon be implemented. Accordingly, it is appropriate to again review and update the Transportation Plan to address the changing transportation needs of the Butte-Silver Bow area. The 2005 Transportation Plan Update serves as a continuation of this transportation planning process.

In the spring of 2004, the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Department, in cooperation with the Montana Department of Transportation, solicited proposals to update the 1996 Transportation Plan. HKM Engineering was subsequently selected to develop the Plan in 2004-2005.

Transportation in the Butte-Silver Bow area is overseen and guided by the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Department / Board, the Butte Transportation Coordinating Committee (BTCC), and the Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners. The BTCC is comprised of private citizens, representatives from local government, and the Montana Department of Transportation.



1.2 Study Area

Figure 1.1 illustrates the Study Area for this project. The study area generally extends from west of the Rocker Interchange to east of the I-15 and I-90 Interchanges east of Butte. The north boundary is north of Walkerville and the south boundary is located south of the Butte Airport. The 2005 study area encompasses all of the area included in the 1996 Transportation Plan Update and was enlarged to include areas along Little Basin Creek Rd., Beef Trail Rd., Moulton Rd., and Bull Run Rd..

1.3 Status of Projects Recommended from Previous Reports

The 1986 and 1996 Transportation Plan Updates provided recommendations for improvements that were categorized into major projects, minor/traffic system management projects, site improvement projects and major maintenance commitments. These projects were to meet the greater Butte area transportation demands. The previous Transportation Plan Updates contained estimated costs to complete the recommended projects. The estimated costs were presented in the dollars relative to the date that the report was prepared. The 1996 Update identified a total budget exceeding \$43 million over the 20-year span of the plan. The level of investment significantly out-paced the expected funding reported to be about \$10 million over the same time period. Table 1-1 lists the number of projects by category, as recommended by the 1986 and 1996 Transportation Plan Updates and also identifies the number of projects Butte-Silver Bow has been able to either entirely or partially complete.

Table 1-1 Status of Previously Proposed Transportation System Improvement Projects						
Category	Number of Projects	Estimated Cost in Planning Year Dollars	Projects Fully Completed		Projects Partially Completed	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1986 TPU Recommended Improvements						
Minor Projects/Traffic System Management	15	\$ 212,500.00	9	60%	3	20%
Committed Major Projects	5	\$ 9,727,400.00	3	60%	1	20%
Recommended Major Projects	11	\$ 7,933,000.00	1	9%	3	27%
1986 Totals	31	\$ 17,872,900.00	13	42%	7	23%
1996 TPU Recommended Improvements						
Minor Projects/Traffic System Management	22	\$ 1,023,500.00	11	50%	2	9%
Committed Major Projects	2	\$ 5,800,000.00	2	100%	N/A	N/A
Recommended Major Projects	13	\$ 30,835,000.00	2	15%	4	31%
Recommended Site Projects	6	\$ 840,000.00	1	17%	1	17%
Maintenance Projects	4	\$ 4,750,000.00	0	0%		
1996 Totals	47	\$ 43,248,500.00	16	34%	11	23%

Table 1-1 clearly shows that Butte-Silver Bow has been active in pursuing available funding and has made significant advances in completing the recommended projects.



1.4 Previous Planning Studies

In the course of data collection, past plans and studies were obtained. These documents were reviewed and incorporated into this 2005 Transportation Plan Update, where applicable. The contributing documents include:

1970 Transportation Plan set forth an improvement plan for the major street system to the year 1990, the majority of which has been implemented.

1979 Airport Master Plan evaluated the operation of the Bert Mooney Airport and recommended that the existing airport site be retained. Future airport use was also estimated and incorporated into the ground transportation plan.

1982 Harrison Ave. Corridor Study analyzed the traffic and operational characteristics of the Harrison Ave. corridor extending from FAS 393 (Basin Creek Rd.) to the B.N. overpass just north of the Civic Center. The findings of this study were incorporated into the 1996 recommended improvements for Harrison Ave. This Plan utilizes information from the 1996 Update for Harrison Ave.

1985 Butte-Silver Bow Master Plan projected land use for Silver Bow County and set forth general planning goals to the year 1995.

1985 Socioeconomic Study Prepared detailed population, employment, housing, vehicle ownership, and commercial floor space projections.

Other transportation planning efforts are also documented in the *1986 Transportation Study Update*, the *1996 Butte-Silver Bow Transportation Plan Update*, and the *2002 Butte-Silver Bow Area Comprehensive Master Plan* which were referenced in the preparation of the 2005 Update.