

March 26, 2007

Since experiencing some difficulties with the design files prepared under a previous contract, the Russell/South 3rd Street Project has been making good progress over the past few weeks.

The design team has been very busy working on necessary revisions to the Preliminary Preferred Alternative to ensure that it meets current design standards and achieves the goals outlined through the public process. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is also progressing. Chapter 1 - Purpose and Need has been reviewed by the City and will be reviewed by the Montana Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration over the next few weeks. HKM made substantial edits to the previous Preliminary Draft to make the project intent more clear and the text more understandable. Chapter 3 - Affected Environment will be submitted to the City Wednesday of this week for review. Chapter 2 - Alternatives, includes much of the conceptual design information that HKM is revising and updating. We hope to make required changes and finalize the conceptual design within the next three weeks. Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences will document the impacts that result from the Preliminary Preferred Alternative which will be the last chapter prepared before submittal for internal review at the City.

The Team is still on track to submit the internal draft for City review by the end of April. The Montana Department of Transportation is currently outlining their anticipated review periods for the Internal, Draft, and Final versions of the Environmental Impact Statement. Once we have a better idea of their expectations, we will be able to set a target date for a Public Hearing.

Once the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is approved by the City, Montana Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration, the document will be available for public review on the project website, or in hard-copy format at City offices and the library. The public will have a minimum of 45 days to review the document and provide comments. The Project Team will respond to all public comments received on the document and at the Public Hearing to be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

We are still anticipating that this process can be completed by the end of the calendar year.

I am adding new names to the mailing list every week - so please let me know if there is someone else who is interested in the project.

Thanks!

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