

North Sheridan Interchange

Finding of No Significant Impact





**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FHWA-WY-FONSI 12-02**

Wyoming Department of Transportation Project
0901091

**North Sheridan Interchange
Sheridan County, Wyoming**

Submitted Pursuant to:
42 USC 4332(2)(c)
and 49 USC 303

by the

US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

and

Wyoming Department of Transportation

June 2012

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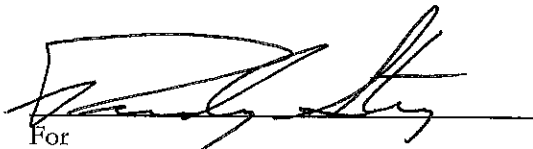
North Sheridan Interchange Sheridan County, Wyoming

June 2012

US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that Modified Alternative 4 of this proposed project will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. This finding of no significant impact is based on the North Sheridan Interchange Environmental Assessment (FHWA-WY-EA-12-02) and subsequent comments, which have been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. The environmental assessment provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the environmental assessment.

Approved by:



For
Federal Highway Administration
2617 E. Lincolnway Suite D
Cheyenne, WY 82001-5662

6/19/2012
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

INTRODUCTION

The Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have evaluated the impacts of making improvements to the North Main Street/Interstate 90 (I-90) interchange, also known as the North Sheridan Interchange. The impacts and mitigation measures are described and documented in an environmental assessment (EA) dated April 2012. The EA was approved on April 9, 2012. The 30-day public and agency review period began on April 25, 2012, and ended on May 25, 2012.

The EA and this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were prepared in compliance with The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable laws, Executive Orders, and related requirements. As required by NEPA, an environmental analysis was conducted, potential impacts associated with the proposed Project were documented, and mitigation measures were determined. No significant impacts were identified during the course of this environmental analysis.

PURPOSE AND NEED

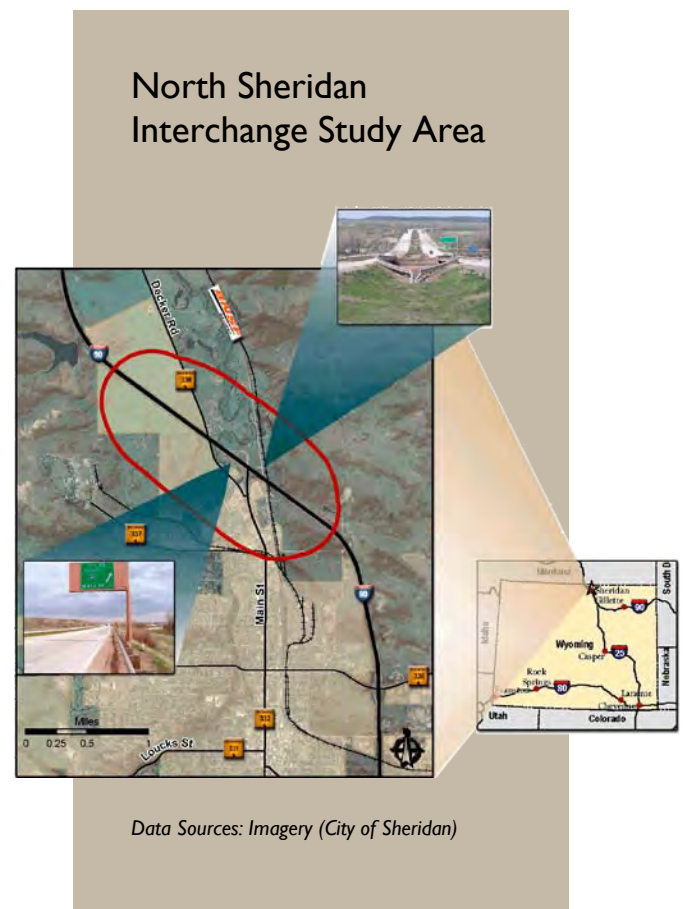
The Project is being proposed to provide safe, direct regional access from I-90 to the north Sheridan area in support of local land use plans, and to improve deteriorating segments of I-90 and North Main Street. The Project must comply with current design standards and with FHWA's interstate access policy.

The need for this Project is demonstrated by the following major issues:

- **Interchange Deficiencies:** Existing geometric conditions of the interchange include substandard horizontal curves, excessive grades, and insufficient acceleration and deceleration lanes that contribute to safety hazards.
- **System and Regional Connectivity:** Regional and system connectivity are limited to the south side of the interstate with no direct access provided

north of the interstate to support existing uses or long-range planning and expected growth.

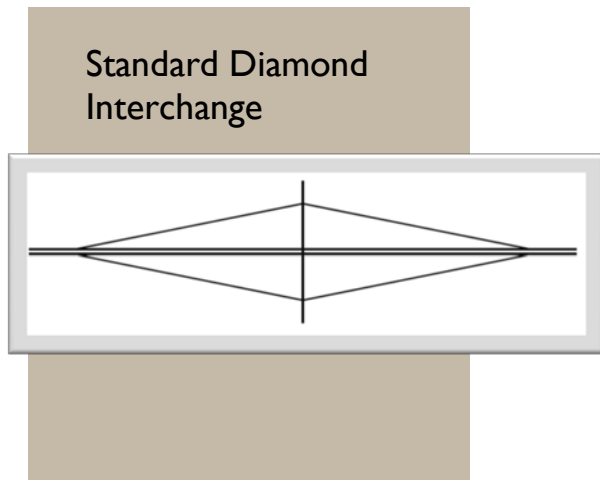
- **Deteriorating Roadway Segments:** The current pavement section has outlived its design life and is in disrepair.



PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE – MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE 4

The proposed Project would construct a diamond interchange about 2,300 feet west of existing Decker Road and about 4,560 feet northwest of the existing interchange. The “straight through” alignment of Decker Road would be eliminated, and traffic would flow along a realigned North Main Street/Decker Road that would cross I-90 perpendicular.

It would be necessary to widen the bridge on North Main Street over Goose Creek and to construct a new bridge over the I-90 mainline. The proposed interchange could be constructed while leaving the existing North Sheridan Interchange in place.



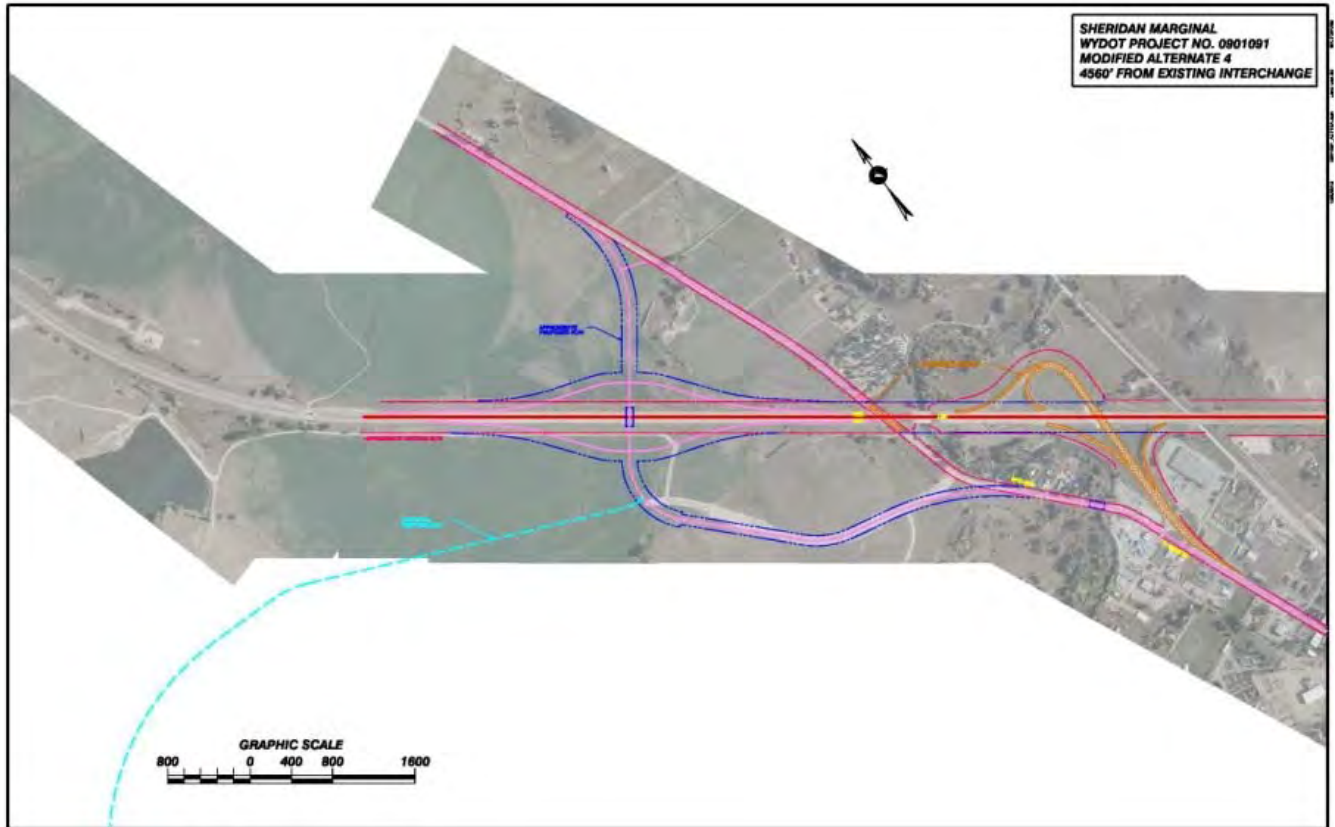
As noted in the EA, WYDOT and FHWA identified Modified Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative. Modified Alternative 4 would not have significant adverse impacts to the natural, cultural, or social environments as noted in the following table. WYDOT and FHWA believe that Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solution with the least impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environments thereby best serving the greater public good. It serves the needs of local, regional, and interstate traffic for the reasonably foreseeable future, and provides efficient traffic operations.

Modified Alternative 4 would support the City of Sheridan’s planned growth areas—Wrench Ranch and the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park—but would not preclude future land use decisions by the City. Modified Alternative 4 would conform to FWHA’s interstate access policy and allow adequate spacing for a new interchange (for the planned West Corridor) farther northwest, if such a project is warranted by future travel demand or growth

areas. Residential and commercial relocations would not be necessary under Modified Alternative 4 and WYDOT is working with the United States Forest Service regarding the land transfer at their work area. Modified Alternative 4 avoids impacts to Doubleday Park. Modified Alternative 4 would have fewer impacts and less disruption to the traveling public and business during construction. Long-term economic impacts to existing business projected for Modified Alternative 4 are within normal operating fluctuations. Modified Alternative 4 provides the opportunity for the City of Sheridan to enhance its gateway vision through lands freed up by removal of the existing interchange.

Modified Alternative 4 would affect fewer acres of wetland and other waters of the United States, and would be the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEPDA) under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Because there are impacts to waters of the United States, a permit to construct the project from the United States Army Corps of Engineers would be required. Under the provisions of the Clean Water Act, the Corps can only issue a permit for the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative. Modified Alternative 4 would cost \$5.2 million dollars less to construct than Alternative 2. This is a substantial cost savings and an important consideration for the use of public funds.

Preferred Alternative Interchange Close to Decker Road



SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND EVALUATION MEASURES – PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

| Resources | Impacts | Mitigation |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Surface water, floodplains, and wetlands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would result in 1.5 acres of wetland impacts • Existing bridge over Goose Creek would be widened; no additional bridge structures needed. • Would cross 2 acres of Goose Creek floodplain, but no rise in flood levels would occur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion-control measures and best management practices would be implemented during construction. Further avoidance and minimization of impacts during final design, and compensatory mitigation of the remaining impact. WYDOT will comply with conditions of Section 404 permit. • WYDOT would reexamine flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) during final design to ensure no impact would occur |
| Air quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential temporary impacts from fugitive dust and emissions from construction vehicles • Local increases in MSATs possible, especially along areas of new construction • Not expected to cause or contribute to violation of PM₁₀ NAAQS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dust-control best management practices would be implemented during construction • Future MSAT emissions are expected to be substantially lower than today because of the implementation of EPA's vehicle and fuel regulations |
| Cultural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be located adjacent to Wrench Ranch farmstead and would be located within the viewsheds of the Wrench Ranch farmstead and Fort Mackenzie • No adverse effect to these properties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, the federal agency and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff contacted. The materials be evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, September 1983) • Interchange lighting will be painted with non reflective paint and natural vegetation planted on interchange ramp slopes. Final details will be coordinated with SHPO. |
| Right-of-way | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 35 acres of new right-of-way would be needed to accommodate the new interchange; almost 25 acres could be used for other public purposes after the existing interchange is removed. • No residential relocations necessary • Right-of-way may be needed from near the stormwater management facilities in the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park. • Right-of-way may be needed from the United States Forest Service work area and storage location. • No commercial relocations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WYDOT will provide compensation to landowners under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act (URAA) and WYDOT policies. • WYDOT will coordinate with the Forest Service under the existing Memorandum of Agreement between FHWA, WYDOT, and USFS. |

| Resources | Impacts | Mitigation |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Visual and aesthetics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No trees would be removed from the viewshed overlooking Goose Creek. New North Sheridan Interchange would be visible in the agricultural viewshed west of Decker Road; however, the current agricultural area has been proposed for long-term urban development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of visually pleasing design features Reclaim land under existing interchange to support City’s planned community gateway |
| Transportation and traffic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative would be located 4,560 feet west of the existing Main Street interchange. Access to areas north of I-90 and Wrench Ranch development area would be improved compared to existing conditions. Overall travel time would be greater for Modified Alternative 4 compared to the No-Build Alternative. Travel time varies between one and three minutes of additional travel time and one to four minutes of travel savings depending location of travel to/from I-90. Travel distance varies depending on location of travel to/from I-90. Annually travelers would see an increase of 1,395,711 (13 percent) in overall vehicle miles traveled when compared to the No-Build Alternative. New intersections would eventually need traffic control signals Greater separation between intersections improving travel efficiency. Addresses the <i>Sheridan Joint Area Land Use Plan</i> because its location would support new and proposed land use (the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park proposal and Wrench Ranch development area proposal). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs similar to those at the existing interchange will be installed to notify travelers of businesses accessible at the new interchange. |
| Land use and zoning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closer to the development area of the <i>Sheridan High-Tech Park Conceptual Plan</i>. Closer to the development area of the <i>Wrench Ranch Phase I Master Plan</i>. Former North Sheridan Interchange would be removed and would provide additional open space.* Modified Alternative 4 is farther from the Gateway Node outlined/illustrated in the <i>North Area Master Plan</i>. Would not preclude land use decisions that are under the jurisdiction of the City of Sheridan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design elements could be incorporated into the Project to complement the entryway into Sheridan that is being planned. Land would be available for development of the Gateway Node. |

| Resources | Impacts | Mitigation |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The entire proposed interchange could be constructed while leaving the existing interchange in place, resulting in fewer traffic control and access issues during construction. Based on the survey conducted for this environmental assessment, 78 percent of drivers on I-90 would continue to exit and visit businesses in north Sheridan. The decrease in patrons could decrease sales, but the amount of decreased business is within normal operating fluctuations. Moreover, as the planned Wrench Ranch development is built out, the existing businesses could see an increase in patrons. Visibility of existing businesses is limited at existing interchange. This condition is not expected to change under Modified Alternative 4. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During construction detours and ramp closures, directional signs would be used to guide traffic to local businesses. Development of the gateway and Wrench Ranch area could attract additional vehicle stops and enhance local businesses. Signs similar to those at the existing interchange will be installed to notify travelers of businesses accessible at the new interchange. |
| Noise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WYDOT noise threshold would not be exceeded. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mitigation recommended |

* Following removal of the interchange, WYDOT has made no determinations for how this land might be used.

EA REVIEW AND AVAILABILITY

The EA was made available beginning April 25, 2012, for a 30-day public and agency review that concluded May 25, 2012. Letters were mailed to resource agencies on April 25, 2012 to announce the availability of the EA and seeking comments on the EA from these agencies.

The availability of the EA was announced in the local newspaper and as part of local radio announcements. A paid ad was placed in the local newspaper on April 25, May 2, May 9, and May 14, 2012. The local media ran articles on April 25 and 26, 2012 to announce the EA availability and the public hearing. The radio spots ran between May 7 and May 15, 2012 on KROE, KLGT, KZWY, and KHRW. Notices (newspaper ads) were also mailed to individuals and businesses in the vicinity of the Project. Copies of these materials are included in this document in the section titled Public Notification.

An open forum public hearing was held on May 15, 2012, at the Historic Sheridan Inn in Sheridan. A total of 88 individuals signed in at the hearing.

COMMENT RESPONSES

Twenty-four public and four agency comments were received during the 30-day public and agency review

period. Comments were split between those that opposed and those that supported the Project and the Preferred Alternative. Public and agency comments and responses follow. Comments with similar responses have been cross referenced. The agency comments follow the public comments and are identified by agency. Copies of the actual comments received are included in the section titled Comments Received.

Comment 1: *I think leaving the exit where it is, is for the best for the businesses in that area now. No more land would need to be torn up. The only thing would be to maybe straighten things out a little.*

Response 1: Because of the physical constraints that exist at this interchange (e.g., Goose Creek, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway tracks, and topography), combined with the skewed angle of North Main Street at I-90, it would be difficult to increase the acceleration and deceleration lanes or improve the sharp horizontal curves at the existing interchange without substantial right-of-way acquisition, potential business impacts, or filling wetlands regulated under the Clean Water Act. Additionally, longer lanes would necessitate widening, at least minimally, existing structures over the railroad tracks and Goose Creek.

Under Alternative 2, the interchange would have been constructed in part of the area used for the existing interchange. As noted in Chapter 3 (pages 3-44 to 3-50) and the Socioeconomic Technical Memorandum (available

at: http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed), North Main businesses could see between a 34 percent and 86 percent decline in revenue during construction because of the disruption during construction of this alternative in the same general location as the existing interchange. As discussed in the EA, while the estimated revenue declines for existing businesses are projected to be larger with Modified Alternative 4 than Alternative 2, the declines are within normal operating fluctuations for most businesses. Further, Modified Alternative 4 supports the land use plans and annexations by the City of Sheridan. The future growth laid out in the *Sheridan High-Tech Park Conceptual Plan* and the *Wrench Ranch Master Plan – Phase 1* could offset the declines in revenue at existing business by generating additional vehicle trips in the north area of Sheridan.

Unlike Modified Alternative 4, Alternative 2 would have necessitated acquisition of residential properties and potentially one business. It would have had larger impacts to wetlands and floodplain resources, including the removal of trees and shrubs along Goose Creek. Alternative 2 would cost approximately \$5.2 million more to construct than the Preferred Alternative.

Comment 2: *This is a bad outcome for Sheridan. I fear it will hurt our North Main and Downtown businesses. I fear it will promote sprawl and excessive driving in what should be a pedestrian friendly community. I also believe that WYDOT should have analyzed an alternative that assumed the railroad had been moved – a reasonably foreseeable outcome. That may have allowed a rebuild of the interchange in the current location.*

Response 2: Relocating the railroad is an expensive proposal. While there have been articles discussing the potential for relocating the railroad tracks, no entity responsible for relocating the tracks, including the BNSF railway, presented plans or funding that would indicate that relocating the railroad tracks is reasonably foreseeable.

As noted in Chapter 1 of the EA, the existing interchange needs to be replaced. Alternative 2 was developed to be located as close to the existing interchange as possible. However, as noted in Chapter 3, Alternative 2 has more overall impacts than Modified Alternative 4 and would not provide the same transportation benefits. It would necessitate residential relocations and potentially one commercial relocation. Alternative 2 would have larger impacts to wetlands and floodplain resources, and would necessitate removal of trees and shrubs along Goose Creek. It would not be the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative under the Clean Water Act. To issue a permit, the U.S. Corps of Engineers must select the least environmental damaging practicable alternative.

Specific land use decisions are under the jurisdiction of the City of Sheridan using its zoning and development

regulations. The City has adopted two plans—Sheridan High-Tech Park Conceptual Plan and the Wrench Ranch Master Plan – Phase 1—for development northwest of the existing North Main businesses, in addition to its North Main Master Plan. These plans outline the City’s direction for land use such as infill and pedestrian accommodations. WYDOT believes Modified Alternative 4 would not preclude the land use proposed in the City’s land use plans nor does it conflict with the Gateway Zoning District where the alternative would be located.

Comment 3: *I would like to see the data that classifies current interchange dangerous. I was not in town when process began, so haven’t seen the justification & statistics. Seems like Bozeman, MT E offramp is same design – they have same problems? \$ What has been done to make current design safer? Rumble strips, signage, traffic slowing mechanisms etc. Building at great expense is easier to justify after trying other options to improve safety. Designated open space/parks will be a great thing at city entrance.*

Response 3: The detailed operational and crash analysis, summarized in Chapter 1 of the EA, can be found in the *Purpose and Need Technical Memorandum* prepared for the project and available at: http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed

The existing interchange deficiencies include: substandard horizontal curves, excessive grades, and insufficient acceleration and deceleration lanes. These deficiencies at the current interchange have led to an average number of crashes that is higher than the statewide average for interstate routes.

Most crashes along the ramps involved only one vehicle, which indicates that the geometry of these ramps is not consistent with driver speeds and expectancy. The existing deceleration lanes and the existing acceleration lanes do not meet the required length outlined in the AASHTO standards. The result is that the on-ramps do not provide enough room for exiting traffic to slow down and the off-ramps do not provide enough distance for traffic entering I-90 to come up to speed. The result is unsafe driving conditions along the existing NSI ramps, which are indicated by the higher number crashes that occurred along the on-ramps and at the merge points on westbound and eastbound I-90.

The upgrading the existing interchange alternative, such as adding additional signs or other safety warning devices was not carried forward. During the previous study, it was determined to be a marginal improvement to the existing condition. It would not provide acceptable horizontal curves or acceptable up/down grades, nor would it provide full direct access to Main Street and Decker Road. This alternative did not meet the current purpose of, need for, or goals of the project.

Comment 4: *Looks like a great improvement to North Main.*

Response 4: Comment noted.

Comment 5: *Preference is to leave interchange where it is currently located. Recommendation to add a culvert under the interstate for walkers & bikers on Decker Road to connect with the newly added bike path.*

Response 5: Please see response provided for comment 1 regarding leaving the interchange in its current location. A connection under I-90 is under consideration and will be evaluated for feasibility during final design.

Comment 6: *Assuming the Option 4 plan goes through our concerns would include:*

- *Cutting off traffic flow. Current interchange practically in our parking lot.*
- *Cutting off access to customers at KOA and residents north of the interstate.*
- *How the land between the new interchange and Kmart would be platted. This opens up possibility of new competitors picking up customers off the interstate before they get to our business, and how that would affect job stability for 70 employees.*
- *BNSF is looking at moving their line which seems to open the possibility of changing the current locations (interchange's) structure. Safety could be improved w/o negatively impacting established businesses. I don't think that is even being taken into consideration.*

Response 6: Traffic will not be cut off from existing businesses. The relocated interchange will change the point where traffic accesses North Main Street but will not cut off traffic flow. The number of cars north of the Canfield Street intersection is projected to be greater (2,600 cars daily) while the number south of the Canfield Street intersection is projected to be less (1,600 cars daily) under Modified Alternative 4. Conversely, the amount of traffic at the Canfield Street intersection is projected to much less if the West Corridor is constructed compared to the changes with Modified Alternative 4. The number of cars north of the Canfield Street intersection would drop by 5,600 cars daily while the number of cars south of the Canfield Street intersection would drop by 2,600 cars daily if the West Corridor is constructed. More information about traffic projections can be found on pages 3-28 and 3-29 of the EA.

The City, not WYDOT, has jurisdiction over local land use decisions involving subdivision plats and zoning, such as how land is developed between the new interchange and Kmart.

Regarding the BNSF proposal, please see response provided for comment 2.

Comment 7: *I find the data in crash rate table on 3-23 to be consistent with data not fitting the measurement. What is the statistical deviation for this? Use or preservation issues immediately north of I90 X need to be addressed. I find the EA significantly lacking in discussion of development pressure the proposed X places on historic ranch and residential properties. The noise level data presented in table on page 3-54 seems to only account for straight line distance. With new location would not increased noise levels due to acceleration & deceleration in direct line-of-sight to residences be a consideration calculation? Mitigate with trees?*

Response 7: The data in the table on page 3-23 of the EA identified the number of crashes by year, before and after the relocation of the port-of-entry. The table presents the number of times the crash rate for NSI exceeded the statewide crash rate. A statistical comparison was not completed.

Development north and west of the existing interchange is identified in the *Wrench Ranch Master Plan Phase 1* and *Sheridan High-Tech Park Conceptual Plan*. As noted in these plans and through annexation of this area, the City determined that the area would be a future growth area for the community. Growth in this area is expected to occur with or without construction of the Preferred Alternative (Modified Alternative 4). WYDOT located the Modified Alternative 4 to avoid adverse impacts to the historic ranch and State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the determination that the ranch would not be adversely affected. Modified Alternative 4 shifts the interchange farther west of the historic ranch and existing residential properties. By closing the segment of Decker Road under I-90, cut through traffic and noise will be shifted farther from the existing residential properties.

The traffic noise model allows the speed to be adjusted for each segment of the alignment. Acceleration (for example, away from an intersection) and deceleration (for example, slowing for a roadway curve or when approaching a stop-controlled intersection) speed adjustments were included in the noise model and are reflected in the results discussed on pages 3-51 through 3-54. As noted in the EA, none of the noise receptors modeled would exceed the noise abatement criteria.

Comment 8: *What percent of respondents to Sep 2009 meeting were present in comments received in June 2010? If this is less than 75% then how can the June 2010 comments be considered as resolving concerns raised in 2009? Especially since "proposal 4A" was not even included in 2009? I am confused by EA page 3-21. Specifically the excuse used to justify not place I90 X further west is that it would preclude an I90 X for west corridor. Isn't that backwards? Wouldn't you try to serve both purposes with a single X?*

Response 8: There is no way to determine what percent of respondents that provided comments following the August 2009 scoping meeting also provided comments following the June 2010 public meeting. Not all respondents provided names or addresses with their comments. WYDOT responded to the comments provided in 2009 by completing additional traffic analyses and refining the preliminary alternatives, which were presented at the 2010 meeting and in the EA. Following the 2010 meeting, WYDOT incorporated input received at that meeting into the EA analysis and identification of a Preferred Alternative.

The purpose of and need for the NSI Project is to correct the issues associated with the existing North Sheridan Interchange, while the West Corridor project has the purpose and need of providing a north to south transportation connection on the western side of Sheridan. The study completed for the West Corridor identified multiple locations where this transportation project could connect with I-90, including locations farther west than Modified Alternative 4. The City has not made a decision on the West Corridor/I-90 interchange location, and the project is currently unfunded. According to FHWA's interstate access policy, the relocation of the existing North Main Interchange must take into account potential future interstate interchanges. Therefore, the NSI Project analyzed whether a future West Corridor interchange could be located between Modified Alternative 4 and the port-of-entry interchange should the City select such a location for the West Corridor interchange and should the project be funded.

Comment 9:

1. *Cul-de-sac, can the cul-de-sac be designed for a large RV to be able to turn around at the end if they pass the campground. ex: 43' motor home towing a 30' vehicle.*
2. *Future public use land – make it a no camping area.*

Response 9: During final design WYDOT will look at the radius of the cul-de-sac at the end of the existing Decker Road north of I-90. It is anticipated that the cul-de-sac can be designed to allow large RV vehicles to turn around.

When the new interchange is constructed the land under the existing interchange will be made available to the City of Sheridan. The land must remain in public use, but the City will determine what public uses are allowed on the parcel.

Comment 10:

1. *What are the impacts on business for the KOA campground – during construction and after?*
2. *All of the billboards & signage will be incorrect once construction is done. How will this be addressed?*
3. *Why was the KOA not surveyed or contacted about the final draft?*
4. *What about upgrading the current infrastructure for the area on Decker Road, water, sewer, cable, fiber optics?*
5. *What about traffic flow during summer months coming and going from the KOA?*
6. *Environmental – water wells are drying up, how will construction impact existing wells?*

Response 10: WYDOT considered impacts to the North Main business and determined that construction impacts were substantially greater to existing business under Alternative 2 than the Preferred Alternative (Modified Alternative 4) because the new interchange could be constructed while the existing interchange remains operational. Following construction, the economic analysis showed a potential decline in revenue of 13 percent for lodging. More information can be found on page 3-47 and 3-48 of the EA.

WYDOT will work with businesses following construction to ensure the billboard and signage will be correct.

Surveys were conducted at Kmart, McDonalds, and Common Cents. Visitors staying at the KOA were interviewed as they visited the other North Main businesses.

The notice of the EA availability was provided in the local media and via letters mailed to persons or organizations that provided addresses to WYDOT through earlier comments on the Project.

Upgrades of current infrastructure including water, sewer, cable and fiber optics are under the City of Sheridan jurisdiction and future growth plans. They are not part of the WYDOT project.

Traffic analyses were based on average annual daily traffic (ADT) counts consistent with analysis completed for transportation infrastructure projects. It did not account for season fluctuations for specific businesses. More on the traffic analysis can be found in the EA on pages 3-19 through 3-30 and in the *Purpose and Need Technical Memorandum*, which can be downloaded at: http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed

Construction is not expected to affect existing wells. As noted on page 3-6 of the EA, the Project would not affect the quality or quantity of groundwater.

Comment 11: *This would be devastating to all 4 of our businesses. We have invested in N. Main, Sheridan has invested considerable in N. Main. We have other new business opening on N. Main. To move the change you are creating dangerous traveling conditions on the old Decker Rd. N. Main residents use that exit extensively. They don't want to drive through town, wait at 5th for a train! KMART will close!! We need KMART. Inconvenience traveling to Billings.*

We are investing considerable in a outdoor amphitheatre. We need the tourism traffic that the exit brings. We will lose that commerce. There has to be a alternative plan, or redo that exit if needed.

Response 11: According to the economic analysis completed for the project, there would be a long-term decrease in revenue for businesses in the North Main area. See pages 3-44 through 3-50 of the EA for more information. The extent of the impact is dependent on the business sector. Lodging could expect up to a thirteen percent decline while Kmart could see could expect up to a nine percent decline. The potential long-term declines in revenue represent the worst case as the surveys were conducted at the peak of the tourist season and the number of individuals exiting I-90 to gain access to businesses is likely to be higher. Seventy-eight percent of individuals indicated that they would continue to exit at the interchange if it were relocated. As the Wrench Ranch area continues to develop, additional vehicle trips to and from the North Main area would likely increase and could offset the loss in revenue by bringing new customers to the area.

Comment 12: *To get an exit and entrance to the interstate at the real north end of Sheridan tying into North Main via Yellowtail Drive is a significant progress for the future of Sheridan. Yellowtail Drive will in time become part of the West Beltway connection Northern towns like Ranchester and Dayton to the hospital.*

Response 12: Comment noted. Modified Alternative 4 would allow for construction of the City's future West Corridor and be consistent with the FHWA's interstate access policy.

Comment 13: *I like the proposed modified alternative. This preferred alternative is just what the north of town needs. Great Job!*

Response 13: Comment noted.

Comment 14: *I couldn't understand why the existing 120' right of way is not used and forest service land needs to be taken? Couldn't the crossing be slightly skewed.*

Response 14: The conceptual design shows a perpendicular bridge crossing I-90, which allows for the smallest bridge and makes it the most cost effective solution. During final design, a skew of the crossing may be considered to determine feasibility, cost savings, and

potential reduction in the minor impact to Forest Service land.

Comment 15: *After reviewing the EA and discussing the Alternatives with several people present, I have to say I still am partial to Alternative 2. The interchange should just be rebuilt at the existing sight. There would be less impact all the way around and the existing businesses near the interchange would have a chance to survive. Thank you for the chance to comment on this project.*

Response 15: As disclosed in the EA, there are fewer overall impacts with Modified Alternative 4. WYDOT and FHWA must look at the extent of impacts before identifying a preferred alternative. Modified Alternative 4 would have fewer impacts to wetland and floodplain resources, and would not require removal of trees and shrubs along Goose Creek. It is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative under the Clean Water Act. To issue a permit, the U.S. Corps of Engineers must select the least environmental damaging practicable alternative.

As discussed in the EA, while the estimated revenue declines for existing businesses are projected to be larger with Modified Alternative 4, the declines are within normal operating fluctuations for most business. Further, this alternative supports the City's land use plans and annexations. Future growth as laid out in the *Sheridan High-Tech Business Conceptual Plan* and the *Wrench Ranch Master Plan*, could offset the declines in revenue at existing businesses by generating additional vehicle trips in the north area of Sheridan. Modified Alternative 4 would not require relocation of any residences or commercial businesses, and would cost approximately \$5.2 million less to construct than Alternative 2.

Comment 16: *Modified Alternative 4 provides a safe and improved entry into North Sheridan. It is well designed and provides safe traffic flow through a visually positive area. Heavy truck traffic from the Decker Road is managed efficiently and more safely with this design. Modified Alternative 4 is cost-effective and fulfills the needs of the Sheridan Community.*

Response 16: Comment noted. WYDOT and FHWA believe that Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solution with the least impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environments thereby best serving the greater public good.

Comment 17: *A Sheridanite since 1950. There is one vitally important thing that must be done no matter what is done. Get rid of the signal light at the north end of Main as there is absolutely no reason for it since the weigh station has been moved.*

Response 17: WYDOT conducts periodic traffic warrant analyses to determine the need for traffic signals. Through these analyses, WYDOT determines if a signal at a particular intersection is necessary. WYDOT will continue

to complete periodic warrant analyses at the Canfield Street intersection to determine if the signal should be removed.

Comment 18: *Looks like a good proposal. I see favorable aspects for all of North Main. Great forward looking plan to tie into rest of long range planning. Thank you for good, thorough information.*

Response 18: Comment noted. Also, please see the responses provided for comments 16 and 19.

Comment 19: *Forward Sheridan's Board of Directors supports the decision implemented for the North Sheridan Interstate. As reported via the media (Sheridan Press-April 25, 2012) the selection was for alternative 4, or the NW option. Our belief is that this option represents the best opportunity for continued development of the Wrench Ranch. This enables legitimate options for the utility infrastructure for VAMC and for the connections to 5th and Highland; most importantly as another piece in the framework for recruitment and development of new light manufacturing and technology businesses. Forward Sheridan has been involved in the support of the many options at the Wrench Ranch and Hi-Tech Park. This decision provides a stronger development option. Let us know if we can be of assistance in the planning and implementation of this alternative.*

Response 19: Comment noted. WYDOT and FHWA believe that Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solution with the least impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environments thereby best serving the greater public good. It serves the needs of local, regional, and interstate traffic for the reasonably foreseeable future and would operate more efficiently than Alternative 2. Modified Alternative 4 would support the City of Sheridan's planned future growth areas – Wrench Ranch and the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park – but would not preclude land use decisions by the City.

Comment 20: *WYDOT wants to build a new I90 interchange at the north end of Sheridan. No reasons, however weak, have been given as to why this is necessary. These funds could be much better used patching and upgrading highways. What Sheridan does need is a pedestrian crossing light on 5th St. at the hospital, but WYDOT seems to drag their feet on this.*

Response 20: Detailed response provided directly to respondent through Governor's office procedures as comment was submitted to the Governor's office

Comment 21: *As you requested a comment, me and others I've talked to, do not feel you have chosen the best alternative. You are taking good land out of other productive uses, by not using mostly what land you already have. Also running a state highway plus all the off/on ramps of the interstate 90 past the entry of a ball park doesn't make much sense. Rebuilding the underpass at Decker Road would take up a lot less new land and less environmental impact and not be as far out of town. Alternative # two would also fit the above assessment. You will be routing south bound traffic thru Main St to*

5th Street Interchange as most people Do Not want to drive two plus miles out of their way to go in that direction.

Response 21: WYDOT and FHWA believe that Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solution with the least impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environments thereby best serving the greater public good. It serves the needs of local, regional, and interstate traffic for the reasonably foreseeable future and would operate more efficiently than Alternative 2. WYDOT considered an alternative at Decker Road (Alternative 3). However, as discussed in Chapter 2, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration in the EA because it did not meet purpose and need.

As noted on pages 3-29 and 3-30 of the EA, Modified Alternative 4 would be relocated approximately 2,300 feet west of Decker Road, which means shorter or longer travel distances to and from I-90 and destinations in the study area depending on direction of travel and intended travel location. For example, vehicles traveling to destinations west of the existing interchange, such as the Wrench Ranch development area, would experience a shorter travel distance compared to existing conditions and Alternative 2 or the existing interchange location. Westbound I-90 traffic traveling to the North Main area would experience increased travel distance. In terms of travel time, the changes equate to between one and three minutes of additional travel time or one and four minutes travel savings depending on destination compared to the existing interchange.

Comment 22: *I am in favor of the Modified Alternate #4 for the North Sheridan Interchange. The purpose of considering changes to the existing interchange probably revolves more around safety than anything else. But we have an opportunity to greatly improve not only the interchange functionality, but also incorporate future plans that will enhance Sheridan's prospects for economic development for many years to come. In addition it will provide a very pleasing first impression to the traveling public. The icing on the cake is having a much-needed project that provides for safety, economic development and is the low cost alternate. The only change or encouragement I would offer is to try to fast track the EIS, design and ROW acquisition so we have a true shovel-ready project should the opportunity arise.*

Response 22: Comment noted. As disclosed in the EA, there are fewer overall impacts with Modified Alternative 4, would provide the best transportation solution, and would cost approximately 5.2 million dollars less to construct than Alternative 2. The design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction are dependent on available funding. WYDOT is developing the project so that it can be constructed as funding is available.

Comment 23: *We wish to express our gratitude to the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WyDOT) for all of the diligent work that has been done to consider alternatives to Sheridan's north interchange which allow for Doubleday Park to become a reality. Neltje's generous gift of fourteen (14) acres to the Sheridan Baseball Academy for the development of Doubleday Park will meet the growing needs of baseball in Sheridan for decades to come. With your thoughtfulness and Neltje's philanthropy the youth of our community who will play baseball and softball will have a special atmosphere to play which will only enhance their love of the game. This project can now move forward in earnest.*

Response 23: As noted in Chapter 2 of the EA, Alternative 4 was modified to avoid impacts to Doubleday Park and avoid impacts to the Wrench Ranch farm buildings that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The resulting configuration is Modified Alternative 4.

Comment 24:

1. *FHWA has encouraged, and many state DOT's have adopted an open house form to receive input on anticipated projects. The intent of this open house is to receive any and all comment and not provide a forum to grandstand a particular point of view. (By example, a leading individual in the community stands up and states..."this idea is so wrong, and anyone that thinks this is a good idea must be stupid." Hence discouraging anyone else to stand up and speak.)*

It appears the "speech" by John Schiffer was just that, politically motivated to present a specific point of view, to those in attendance, to generate additional input from them in the same vein, to the project team. This goes against the "open house" format and should not be allowed to happen.

2. *It appears this solution addresses immediate access to several adjacent (in the planning stages) developments. Rather, a new interchange on the interstate network, and the significant taxpayer expense (\$25M) should rather address long term regional transportation network needs.*
3. *Although I haven't researched thoroughly, I am aware that the current North Main Interchange does not meet some current FHWA safety geometric standards. For SAFETY reasons, the New Deitz Interchange and the accompanying Port of Entry significantly reduced truck traffic to the existing North Main Interchange; hence greatly reducing the safety concerns. I am curious as to the number of accidents occurring at the North Main Interchange, since the completion of the Deitz Interchange, if this is indeed the case, and are the current safety concerns that demonstrable.*
4. *By way of example, I was significantly involved with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), with the planning and environmental assessment of a new*

interchange in Pocatello, Idaho. In the early 1990's, Idaho received Federal funds (\$12M) to address congestion relief in Bannock County, Idaho. The then President of the State Senate Transportation Committee, was involved with a significant development in the vicinity of a potential new interchange, and obviously thought this new interchange would benefit the development. The solution that provided the most effective augmentation to the regional transportation network, was not to add another interchange; however to add a third lane, in each direction, on the interstate, between two existing interchanges. Throughout this process, I was impressed with the professional integrity of all of the significantly impacted "players"; as the solution was based on the science and engineering of transportation planning; not several specific political or financial development agendas.

I believe long term regional transportation network enhancements would be better served, and should consider a new arterial roadway extending west of Sheridan, from the Big Horn community to the new Deitz Interchange. This concept has been given several names, and I believe the same consultant providing EA services for this project, has previously provided concept plans for this arterial. As a taxpayer, I believe this area would receive significant increased value for the financial investment. AND for the \$25M estimated for this new interchange, I believe the measure is not to bring the most money to Sheridan County, rather the "wisest and most beneficial" use of the money; which may be in another area of the state.

5. *I believe, most Sheridan County residents are aware of and don't agree with the specific political and development agendas associated with this project; and as has been said "you can't fight city hall", have opted to not "get involved".*

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. If there is anything further, of benefit, you think I could provide, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Response 24: WYDOT utilizes the open house format to receive comments and answer questions from meeting participants. WYDOT received a request from Senator Schiffer to say a few words at this meeting. The Senator became very active in the Project working with all the stakeholders in the North Main area to ensure concerns were expressed and addressed within the NEPA framework. He brought issues forward that were not otherwise brought forward during previous public outreach and core group meetings. He was not present to motivate any particular comments for or against the project, but to acknowledge the issues that were raised by various stakeholders and how those issues were addressed.

As noted in Chapter 2 and the *Alternatives Technical Memorandum* (available at: http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_pr

ograms/environmental_services/proposed), several alternatives were considered as part of this Project and at the time the port-of-entry was relocated. Two alternatives were carried forward that met the purpose and need of the project. WYDOT and FHWA believe that Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solution. It serves the needs of local, regional, and interstate traffic for the reasonably foreseeable future and would operate more efficiently than Alternative 2.

The Transportation and Traffic section of Chapter 3 summarizes the results of the analysis before and after the port-of-entry was relocated. Safety concerns continue to be present following relocation of the port-of-entry. The detailed analysis can be found in the *Purpose and Need Technical Memorandum* (available at: http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed) prepared for the project.

As noted in the response to comment 8, the purpose of and need for the NSI Project is to correct the issues associated with the existing North Sheridan Interchange with I-90 while the West Corridor project has the purpose and need of providing a north to south transportation connection on the western side of Sheridan. The analysis completed as part of this Project and those conducted prior to the relocation of the port-of-entry studied multiple options to improve safety and serve the regional traffic. Modified Alternative 4 was identified as the best solution. This project does not prohibit the future north to south transportation facility should the City select such a location for the West Corridor and should the project be funded. For more information, please refer to Chapters 1 and 2 of the EA and the *Purpose and Need and Alternatives Technical Memorandums*.

The project is being proposed to provide safe, direct regional access from I-90 to the North Sheridan area. The project is needed to address interchange deficiencies that contribute to safety hazards, to improve current limitations in regional and system connectivity—particularly to the north of the interstate—and to improve deteriorating sections of pavement that have outlived the design life and are in need of repair. Consistent with all transportation infrastructure improvement planning and NEPA analyses, WYDOT and FHWA studied options that would support long-range planning and expected growth patterns of the City. The NEPA process required consideration of the on-going and planned growth occurring in the area annexed by the City in 2009. It should be noted, however, that as outlined in the *Wrench Ranch Master Plan* and *Sheridan High-Tech Conceptual Plan*, growth is expected to occur in this area with or without the NSI improvements.

USFS Comment: To read the entire USFS letter, please see Appendix D – Agency Comments.

The wording below is out of the EA for North Main Interchange. Gayle and I thought the following changes would help things read better. Let me know if you have questions.

“The acquisition of the ROW ~~property~~ from the United States Forest Service has been coordinated with the Bighorn National Forest. The ROW ~~property~~ will be appropriated and transferred in accordance with the Section 317 of U.S.C. 23 and 23 CFR 710 right-of-way and real estate procedures. The Forest Service will issue a Letter of Consent to the Wyoming Department of Transportation and ~~that~~ will include any construction and mitigation stipulations deemed necessary for the adequate protection and utilization of the National Forest. An easement for highway purposes will be issued to the Wyoming Department of Transportation from the Federal Highway Administration”

USFS Response: The wording suggestions have been incorporated into the EA through the EA Errata section of the FONSI.

WGFD Comment: To read the entire WGFD letter, please see Appendix D – Agency comments. Specific project comments are listed below.

Terrestrial Considerations:

We recommend that any fences associated with this project be either three or four-wire designs, to better allow wildlife to move out of the right-of-way.

Aquatic Considerations:

To minimize impacts to the aquatic resources of nearby waterways, we recommend the following:

- *Accepted best management practices be implemented to ensure that all sediments and other pollutants are contained within the boundaries of the work area. Disturbed areas that are contributing sediment to surface waters as a result of project activities should be promptly re-vegetated to maintain water quality.*
- *Equipment should be serviced and fueled away from streams and riparian areas. Equipment staging areas should be at least 300 feet from riparian areas.*
- *Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a priority for the State of Wyoming, and in many cases, the intentional or unintentional spread of organisms from one body of water to another would be considered a violation of State statute and Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulations. To prevent the spread of AIS, we recommend the following:*

If equipment has been used in an area known to contain aquatic invasive species or suspected to contain aquatic invasive species, the equipment will need to be inspected by

an authorized aquatic invasive species inspector certified in the state of Wyoming prior to its use in any Wyoming water. If aquatic invasive species are found, the equipment will need to be decontaminated.

Decontamination may consist if either 1) Drain all water from equipment and compartments, Clean equipment of all mud, plants, debris, or animals, and Dry equipment for 5 days in summer (June, July & August); 18 days in spring (March, April & May) and Fall (September, October & November); or 3 days in Winter (December, January & February) when temperatures are at or below freezing, or (2) Use a high pressure (3500 psi) hot water (140 °F) pressure washer to thoroughly wash equipment and flush all compartments that may hold water.

WGFD Response: For interstate highways in urban, developing areas, WYDOT's standard practice is to install woven wire fences to exclude game movement. Specific fence designs will be determined during final design.

NRCS Comment: To read the entire NRCS letter, please see Appendix D – Agency comments. Specific project comments are listed below.

The Preferred Alternative includes some areas of Prime Farmland if irrigated. The EA states that this area is not presently irrigated and that the Prime Farmland area is included in lands with residential and urban development plans. NRCS and the Sheridan County Conservation District are concerned about any action that converts areas of Prime Farmland soils to permanent urban use and discourage this practice where possible. We acknowledge that this area of the County is presently under increasing urban development pressure and conversion of the Prime Farmland areas is likely inevitable in this case.

We also appreciate that the Preferred Alternative is the least impactful to wetlands and floodplains of the evaluated Alternatives and that open space is a consideration in the evaluation of the Alternatives.

NRCS Response: WYDOT understands the importance of protecting prime farmlands. WYDOT and FHWA selected Modified Alternative 4 because it had the fewest impacts to natural, cultural, and social environments. Alternative 4 was modified to avoid impacts to Doubleday Park and the ranch buildings that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In doing so, a small amount of land that is considered Prime Farmland if irrigated would be affected. The area is not currently irrigated and is not expected to be irrigated in the future. As acknowledged in your comment, this area is likely to be converted to urban use with or without the Project.

USFWS Comment: To read the entire USFWS letter, please see Appendix D – Agency comments. The letter outlined protection measures and background information

on species and resources. Project-specific project comments are listed and addressed below.

You have requested information regarding species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.* In response to your request, the Service is providing recommendations for protective measures for threatened and endangered species in accordance with the Act.

Federally-listed Species and Critical Habitats

In accordance with Section 7(c) of the Act, we have determined that the following species or their designated habitat may be present in the proposed project area. Please note that the species in the Project area may have changed since our last coordination (ES061411/W.38/WY09SL0305, dated June 26, 2009). We would appreciate receiving information as to the current status of each of these species with the proposed project area.

Ute Ladies'-tresses

Species or Resources of Concern

Migratory Birds

Bald Eagle/Raptor

...the Service understands that 6 other raptor nests may occur in close proximity to the site. The Service appreciates that a raptor survey is included in your EA and will be completed prior to construction. We strongly encourage project proponents to fully implement the protective measures described in the enclosures in order to help ensure compliance with the MBTA and BGEPA.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

It is important to note that there is a current breeding population approximately 1.5 miles north of the construction site and a viable population approximately 5 miles to the east. We encourage the conservation of prairie dog colonies for their value to the prairie ecosystem and the many species that rely on them... we do encourage evaluating black-tailed prairie dog colonies for the potential reintroduction of black-footed ferrets.

Wetland/Riparian Areas

Modified Alternative 4 will only affect 1.5 acres of wetlands and 2 acres of floodplain. If wetlands could be destroyed or degraded by the proposed actions, wetlands in the Project area should be inventoried and fully described in terms of their functions and values...In view of their importance and relative scarcity, impacts to riparian areas should be avoided. Any potential, unavoidable encroachment into area should be further

avoided and minimized. Unavoidable impacts to streams should be assessed in terms of their function and values, linear feet and vegetation type lost, potential effects on wildlife and potential effects on bank stability and water quality. Measures to compensate for unavoidable losses of riparian areas should be developed and implemented as part of the project ... Plans for mitigating unavoidable impacts to wetland and riparian areas should include mitigation goals and objectives, methodologies, time frames for implementation, success criteria, and monitoring to determine if mitigation is successful. The mitigation plan should also include a contingency plan to be implemented should the mitigation not be successful.

The Service appreciates that the EA includes several Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid and minimize impacts to Goose Creek and wetlands in the vicinity as well as efforts to restore the Project area. Recommended BMPs include, but are not limited to, the following: installation of sediment and erosion control devices (e.g., silt fences, hay bales, temporary sediment control basins, erosion control matting); adequate and continued maintenance of sediment and erosion control devices to insure their effectiveness; minimization of the construction disturbance area to further avoid streams, wetlands, and riparian areas; location of equipment staging, fueling, and maintenance areas outside of wetlands, streams, riparian areas, and floodplains; and re-seeding and re-planting of riparian vegetation native to Wyoming in order to stabilize shorelines and streambanks.

Based on our interpretation of the EA and due to lesser impacts of the projected alternatives on Service trust resources, the Service supports Modified Alternative 4. For our internal tracking purposes, the Service would appreciate notification of any decision made on this project (such as issuance of a permit or signing of a Record of Decision or Decision Memo). Notification can be sent in writing to the letterhead address or by electronic mail to FW6.Federal.Activities.Cheyenne@fws.gov.

USFWS Response: Since the last agency coordination, Ute Ladies'-tresses remains on the Federally-listed Species and Critical Habitats list. It was addressed in the EA and will be addressed in the 2015–2019 Programmatic Biological Assessment. The wildlife/plant survey report prepared for the project provides more information on raptors. Habitat was observed. The report can be found at: http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_proposals/environmental_services/proposed

As noted in the EA, WYDOT will conduct a survey to identify active raptor nests. During the survey, other migratory birds will also be considered including those identified in the Service's Birds of Conservation Concern

2008. WYDOT will implement protective measures, including construction timing as appropriate.

The breeding and viable populations are outside the project area. In earlier studies, as noted in Chapter 2 of the EA, prairie dog colonies and the potential for black-footed ferrets was analyzed. At that time, a prairie dog colony was observed south of Modified Alternative 4. The colony was not in good shape, and now the area has been annexed by the City of Sheridan and is being developed.

As noted in the letter and documented in the EA, Modified Alternative 4 will only affect 1.5 acres of wetlands and 2 acres of floodplain, which is less than the impacts on these resources by Alternative 2. During final design WYDOT will further minimize impacts to these resources to the extent possible. WYDOT will implement best management practices to prevent sediments and pollutants from entering surface waters consistent with its standard construction specifications and in accordance with the permits, which will be obtained prior to construction.

WYDOT is drafting a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Notification of completion of the FONSI will be sent to your office as requested.

EA ERRATA

Based on comments received as part of the public availability of the EA, WYDOT has amended the following sections of the EA.

RIGHT-OF-WAY

The United States Forest Service requested the third paragraph of the EA read as follows:

“The acquisition of the **right-of-way** from the United States Forest Service has been coordinated with the **Bighorn National Forest**. The right-of-way will be appropriated and transferred in accordance with the Section 317 of U.S.C. 23 and 23 C.F.R. 710 right-of-way and real estate procedures. The Forest Service will issue a **Letter of Consent to WYDOT** and will include any construction and mitigation stipulations **deemed necessary for the adequate protection and utilization of the National Forest**. **An easement for highway purposes will be issued to WYDOT from FHWA.**”

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FONSI – APPENDIX A

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

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PRESS RELEASE AND AD

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For Immediate Release

April 25, 2012

North Sheridan Interchange Environmental Assessment Notice of Availability and Public Open House

The Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced today that they have completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the proposed improvements to I-90, North Main Street, and relocation of the North Sheridan Interchange. Following a detailed environmental impact analysis and opportunities for public and agency input WYDOT and FHWA identified Modified Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative. Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solutions with the least impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environments serving the greater public good.

Modified Alternative 4 avoids impacts to Doubleday Park and other proposed future development. It serves the needs of local, regional and interstate traffic for the reasonable foreseeable future. Modified Alternative 4 supports the city of Sheridan's planned future growth areas – Wrench Ranch and the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park – but would not preclude land use decisions by the city. It also conforms to the FHWA's interstate access policy and allows adequate spacing for a new interchange (for the planned West Corridor) farther northwest, if warranted by future travel demand and growth areas.

WYDOT invites you at a public open house regarding the North Sheridan Interchange EA to be held on Tuesday, May 15, 2012 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Historic Sheridan Inn, 856 N Broadway, Sheridan, Wyoming.

Copies of the EA are available for public review at the following locations beginning April 25, 2012:

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| WYDOT – Sheridan | Sheridan County | WYDOT – Cheyenne |
| 10 East Brundage Lane | Fulmer Public Library | 5300 Bishop Boulevard |
| Sheridan, WY 82801 | 335 West Alger | Cheyenne, WY 82009 |
| | Sheridan, WY 82801 | |

Or online at

http://www.dot.state.wy/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed

Written comments can be submitted to:

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.

Wyoming Department of Transportation

Environmental Services Engineer

5300 Bishop Blvd.

Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340

Fax: 307 777-4193

Email: dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov

Comments must be postmarked by May 25, 2012.

For more information contact Ronda Holwell, District 4 Public Involvement Specialist at 307 674-2300.



North Sheridan Interchange
Environmental Assessment

**Notice of Availability
and Public Open House**

The Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the proposed improvements to I-90, North Main Street, and relocation of the North Sheridan Interchange. Following a detailed environmental impact analysis and opportunities for public and agency input WYDOT and the FHWA identified Modified Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative. Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solutions with the least impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environments by best serving the greater public good. Public comments on the EA are requested. Comments must be postmarked by May 25, 2012.

Public Open House
 Tuesday, May 15, 2012
 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
 Historic Sheridan Inn
 856 N Broadway, Sheridan, Wyoming

Copies of the EA are available for public review at the following locations beginning April 25, 2012:

WYDOT - Sheridan
10 East Brundage Lane
Sheridan, WY 82801

**Sheridan County
Fulmer Public Library**
335 W Alger
Sheridan, WY 82801

WYDOT - Cheyenne
5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, WY 82009

http://www.dot.state.wy/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed



Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:
 Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
 Wyoming Department of Transportation
 Environmental Services Engineer
 5300 Bishop Blvd.
 Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340
 Fax: 307 777-4193
 Email: dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov



RADIO SPOT

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30: spot
North Sheridan Interchange

The Wyoming Department of Transportation invites you to a public open house to give you the opportunity to learn about and provide input on the environmental assessment that was prepared for the proposed improvements to the North Sheridan Interchange Project. The project will include reconstructing Main Street from the railroad track crossing north to the interstate and also relocating the North Sheridan Interchange. The open house will be on Tuesday, May 15 from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Historic Sheridan Inn. Plan to attend the open house and learn more about this upcoming project. For more information contact Ronda Holwell at 307 674-2300.

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FONSI – APPENDIX B

PUBLIC HEARING MATERIALS

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BOARDS

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Welcome!

Tonight you have the opportunity to learn about and provide input on the environmental assessment that was prepared for the proposed improvements to Interstate 90 (I-90), North Main Street, and the North Main Street/I-90 Interchange also known as the **North Sheridan Interchange**.

This is an open-house style meeting. After a brief presentation, representatives from the Project Team will be available to answer questions and take comments.



WYDOT prepared an **environmental assessment (EA)** on the North Sheridan Interchange. WYDOT and FHWA identified Modified Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative.



What has been done on the Project to date?

1998–2005

WYDOT considered improvements to the North Sheridan Interchange along with improvements to the port-of-entry in the late 1990s. The port-of-entry project advanced through construction, but the interchange improvements were postponed. Prior to being postponed, multiple conceptual alternatives for the interchange were developed and presented to the public.



Port-of-Entry

2009

WYDOT began the EA, which considered improvements to I-90, North Main Street, and the North Sheridan Interchange in order to address interchange deficiencies, increase safety, and accommodate long-range transportation needs of the Sheridan community. Six preliminary alternatives were presented to the public. Based on public feedback, five alternatives were refined and considered in more detail.



Preliminary Alternatives

2010

WYDOT and FHWA used a two-step screening process to evaluate the refined alternatives and determine which alternatives should be carried forward for a more detailed environmental and engineering analysis in the EA. Two alternatives were carried forward and presented to the public for input.

| Alternative | Disposition Following Public and Agency Scoping |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 - No-Build | Carried forward for two-step screening evaluation. |
| 2 - Reconstruct interchange at existing location | Refined alternative carried forward for two-step screening evaluation. |
| 3 - Interchange at Decker Road | Carried forward for two-step screening evaluation. |
| 4 - Interchange east of Decker Road | Refined alternative carried forward for two-step screening evaluation. |
| 5 - Interchange north of Decker Road | Eliminated because this alternative is similar to refined Alternative 4. |
| 6 - Interchange farther south of Decker Road | Reformed (Alternative 3), carried forward for two-step screening evaluation. |

Screening Results

2011

WYDOT and FHWA analyzed impacts to natural, social, and cultural resources for Alternative 1 (No-Build), Alternative 2, and Alternative 4.

2012

WYDOT refined Alternative 4 to avoid impacts to the newly approved Doubleday Park. The modified alternative was analyzed for impacts to natural, social, and cultural resources. Modified Alternative 4 was identified as the Preferred Alternative.



Modified Alternative 4



North Sheridan Interchange
Environmental Assessment



What resources are in the study area?

Water Resources

Prime Farmlands

Biological Resources

Views and Visibility

Community Facilities and Recreation

Air Quality

Land Use

WYDOT looked at several natural, cultural, and social resources in the study area that could be affected by the proposed improvements. Some of these resources are protected by other environmental laws such as the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Air Quality Act, and Historic Preservation Act. The analysis focused on resources that would be affected by the alternatives carried forward in the EA.

Resources continued

Local Establishments and Economy

Directions from which survey respondents came

| Resource | Number of Responses |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Local Establishments | 12 |
| Economy | 8 |
| Transportation | 15 |
| Historic Properties | 5 |
| Noise | 10 |

Transportation

Noise

Historic Properties

Summary of Resource Evaluation

| Resources | Does this resource exist within or adjacent to the study area? | Would this resource be affected by Alternative 2? | Would this resource be affected by Modified Alternative 4? |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environmental | | | |
| Surface water, floodplains, and wetlands | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Cultural* | Yes* | No | No |
| Visual and aesthetics | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wildlife | Yes | No | No |
| Threatened/endangered species | No | No | No |
| Air quality | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Climate change | Yes | No | No |
| Prime and unique farmlands | Yes | No | No |
| Noise | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Economic | | | |
| Transportation and traffic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Land use and zoning | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Economics | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Right-of-way | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Social | | | |
| Social conditions | Yes | No | No |
| Hazardous materials | Yes | No | No |
| Existing parks and recreation | No | No | No |
| Section 4(f) (parks, wildlife preserves, and historic properties) | Yes | No | No |

*Cultural resources are included because SHPO concurred that there is no adverse effect rather than no effect to historic properties in the study area.

What is the Preferred Alternative?

WYDOT and FHWA have identified Modified Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative was identified following a detailed environmental impact analysis of Alternative 1 (No-Build), Alternative 2, and Modified Alternative 4, and opportunities for public and agency input completed as part of the Environmental Assessment. Modified Alternative 4 provides the best transportation solution with the least impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environments thereby best serving the greater public good.

Modified Alternative 4 meets purpose and need

- By serving the needs of local, regional, and interstate traffic for the reasonably foreseeable future and providing efficient travel operations.
- Modified Alternative 4 would support the City of Sheridan's planned future growth areas—Wrench Ranch and the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park—but would not preclude land use decisions by the City.
- Modified Alternative 4 would conform to FHWA's interstate access policy and allow adequate spacing for the planned West Corridor, if warranted by future travel demand or growth areas.

Modified Alternative 4 is the best land use option

- Residential and commercial relocations would not be necessary under Modified Alternative 4.
- Modified Alternative 4 avoids impacts to Doubleday Park.
- Modified Alternative 4 would have fewer impacts and less disruption to the traveling public and business during construction. Long-term economic impacts to existing business projected for Modified Alternative 4 are within normal operating fluctuations.
- Modified Alternative 4 provides the opportunity for the City of Sheridan to enhance its gateway vision through lands freed up by removal of the existing interchange.

Modified Alternative 4 satisfies the requirements of the Clean Water Act

Modified Alternative 4 would have fewer acres of wetland and other waters of the United States impacts, and would be the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEPDA) under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

Because there are impacts to waters of the United States, a permit to construct the Project from the United States Army Corps of Engineers would be required. Under the provisions of the Clean Water Act, the Corps can only issue a permit for the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative.

Modified Alternative 4 is the least costly build option

Modified Alternative 4 would cost \$25.5 million to construct, which is \$5.2 million dollars less than Alternative 2. This is a substantial cost savings and an important consideration for the use of public funds.



Modified Alternative 4

Relocated Interchange Close to Decker Road

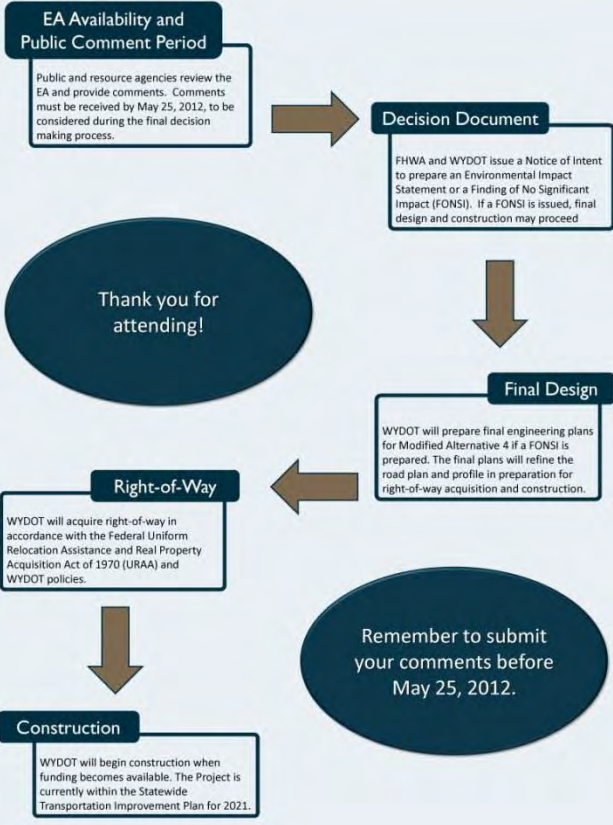


Features

- Interchange would be relocated about 2,300 feet west of existing Decker Road and 4,560 feet northwest of existing interchange.
- "Straight through" alignment of Decker Road would be eliminated near existing homes.
- Existing interchange would carry traffic until construction of the relocated interchange is complete. When the existing interchange is removed, land under the existing interchange would be available for public use.
- Limited enhancement funds would be available to the City to support gateway concepts such as entry sign.
- Right-of-way would be needed from currently undeveloped land.
- No residential or commercial relocations would be necessary.

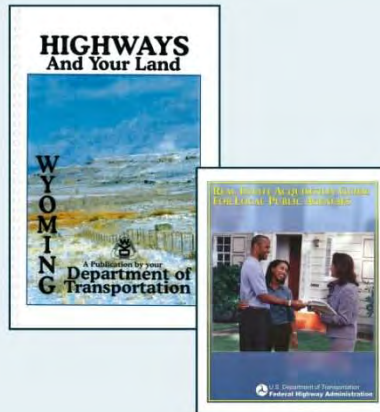


What are the next steps?



Right-of-Way

WYDOT right-of-way staff are here to answer your questions about WYDOT right-of-way and land acquisition process and procedures.



Please see a Project Team member if you have any questions about the Project.



HANDOUTS

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North Sheridan Interchange Environmental Assessment

North Sheridan Interchange Environmental Assessment

MAY 15, 2012

TONIGHT YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO:

- View the Preferred Alternative, Modified Alternative 4.
- Speak to WYDOT, FHWA, and City of Sheridan representatives.
- Comment on the Preferred Alternative and potential impacts to community and natural resources.

Why are we here tonight?

Tonight WYDOT and FHWA are presenting the Preferred Alternative for improvements to the Main Street/Interstate 90 (I-90) Interchange also known as the North Sheridan Interchange. These improvements have been studied over the last few years by WYDOT, and are presented in the environ-

mental assessment (EA), which is now available for public review. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an environmental document if federal funds are used to construct the project.

The project includes re-constructing and potentially relocating the North Sheridan Inter-

change, improvements to mainline I-90 and improvements to Main Street.

WYDOT is asking the public and agencies to comment on the EA findings including the environmental analysis and the Preferred Alternative. Comments should be submitted to WYDOT by May 25, 2012.



What is the North Sheridan Interchange Preferred Alternative?

Following a detailed environmental impact analysis of Alternative 1 (No-Build), Alternative 2, and Modified Alternative 4, and opportunities for public and agency input, the City of Sheridan's planned future growth areas—Wrench Ranch and the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park—but would not preclude land use decisions by the City. Modified Alternative 4 would conform to FWHA's interstate access policy and allow adequate spacing for a new interchange (for the planned West Corridor) farther northwest, if warranted by future travel demand or growth areas. Residential and commercial relocations would not be necessary under Modified Alternative 4 and WYDOT is working with the United States Forest Service regarding the land transfer at their work area for this alternative. Modified Alternative 4 avoids impacts to Doubleday Park.

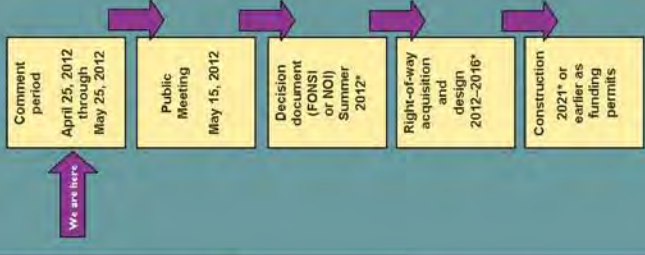
Modified Alternative 4 would have fewer impacts and less disruption to the traveling public and business during construction. Long-term economic impacts to existing business projected for Modified Alternative 4 are within normal operating fluctuations. Modified Alternative 4 provides the opportunity for the City of Sheridan to enhance its gateway vision through lands freed up by removal of the existing interchange. Modified Alternative 4 would have fewer acres of wetland and other waters of the United States impacts, and would be the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEPDA) under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Because there are impacts to waters of the United States, a permit to

construct the project from the United States Army Corps of Engineers would be required. Under the provisions of the Clean Water Act, the Corps can only issue a permit for the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative. Modified Alternative 4 would cost \$25.5 million to construct, which is \$5.2 million dollars less than Alternative 2. This is a substantial cost savings and an important consideration for the use of public funds. At this time, WYDOT and FHWA anticipate a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) depending on the comments received during the comment period, which started April 25 and will end May 25, 2012.

construct the project from the United States Army Corps of Engineers would be required. Under the provisions of the Clean Water Act, the Corps can only issue a permit for the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative. Modified Alternative 4 would cost \$25.5 million to construct, which is \$5.2 million dollars less than Alternative 2. This is a substantial cost savings and an important consideration for the use of public funds. At this time, WYDOT and FHWA anticipate a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) depending on the comments received during the comment period, which started April 25 and will end May 25, 2012.



What are the next steps?



*Note: Dates are subject to change and are based on funding availability.



Drop your comments in the box located in the front of the room tonight OR mail them to:

Timothy Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340

Comments should be submitted by
May 25, 2012.



Existing North Main Street Interchange with I-90




E-mail Comments to:
dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov

Where can I view the EA?:

The EA can be viewed at the Sheridan County Fulmer Library (335 West Alger Street), the WYDOT office (1949 Sugarland Drive), or can be downloaded from the WYDOT Environmental Services webpage at: www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed. If you prefer a CD of the EA, please contact Laura Lutz-Zimmerman at HDR Engineering (303-318-6344 or via e-mail: laura.lutz-zimmerman@hdrinc.com).

If you have questions regarding the EA or the North Sheridan Interchange Project, please contact:

Ronda Holwell
WYDOT—Public Involvement Specialist
(307) 674-2300
ronda.holwell@wyo.gov



The logo features a stylized white mountain range on a dark blue background. To the right of the mountains, the text "North Sheridan Interchange" is written in white, with "Environmental Assessment" in a smaller font below it. A white compass rose icon is positioned to the right of the text.

To view the complete Environmental Assessment online go to: http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/proposed

FONSI – APPENDIX C

MEDIA ARTICLES

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I-90 Interchange Area - Alternative 4

By Stan Wolnoski on Wed 04/25/2012 05:27pm

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The proposed relocation of the North Main Street & Interstate 90 interchange is one step closer to reality. The Federal Highway Administration has completed an environmental assessment and WYDOT has identified "Alternative 4" as the preferred option. In the very center of this Wednesday photo is the "Alternative 4" area. To the left of the center is the Sheridan Big Horn Mountain KOA area and off to the right is the new Wrench Ranch Hills - Commercial & Multi-Use Park. This alternative would construct a diamond interchange about 500 feet west of the existing Decker Road overpass - about one-half mile northwest of the existing interchange. A public meeting with regard to relocation of the North Sheridan Interchange is scheduled for May 15th at the Historic Sheridan Inn - 5:30-7:30pm. For more see: <http://www.sheridanmedia.com/new...> and <http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot...>



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face d

Really, we are how many billion in the hole and we need to move the interstate. Yep we can afford that. I wonder who is going to reap the benefits of this project.

3 weeks ago 3 Likes

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dutchcreek

Faced: Your short sightedness is showing.
Look at the stats from WYDOT about the number of crashes that occurred on the north bound off ramp.

Then consider the long range benefits to the community (forget about focusing on an individual as a windfall beneficiary) and compare your recalcitrance on this issue to the opposition of the original West Belt proposal. NOW the consensus is that it would have been a good idea but 10 times more difficult since the present buildup in the affected area has happened.

The same attitude shot down the Little Horn stored water power generation project. Energy was cheap then! How about now?

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North Sheridan Interchange EA Complete

By Ron Richter on Wed 04/25/2012 12:32pm

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The Wyoming Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration have announced that they have completed an Environmental Assessment on the proposed improvements to Interstate 90, North Main Street, and the relocation of the North Sheridan Interchange. WYDOT Public Involvement Specialist Ronda Holwell.

Holwell says that the public will have an opportunity to comment on the preferred alternative over the next month.

Copies of the EA are available for public review at the following locations:

WYDOT- Sheridan
 10, East Brundage Lane
 Sheridan, WY 82801

Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library



335 West Alger
 Sheridan, WY 82801

WYDOT- Cheyenne
 5300 Bishop Boulevard
 Cheyenne, WY 82009

Or it can be reviewed online by clicking the link below:
<http://www.dot.state.wy/wydot/en...>



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 - o Open House Held Wednesday Night For Public Comment On The Lewis Street Bridge Project

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WYDOT Completes "EA" on North I-90 Interchange

Written by Justin Wolffing

Wednesday, 25 April 2012 07:00



WYDOT (Wyoming Department of Transportation) along with the Federal Highway Administration have completed an Environmental Assessment on the proposed improvements to the north interchange in Sheridan, including I-90, North Main Street, and a relocation of the interchange itself. Following a detailed environmental impact analysis which included public and agency input, WYDOT and the FHWA have chosen modified alternative four. Ronda Holwell, Public Information Specialist with WYDOT...

Modified alternative four provides the best transportation solution with the least impact to natural, cultural, and social environments. It avoids impacts to Doubleday Park, and proposed future development on the City's north side, including Wrench Ranch Hills. The alternative allows for adequate spacing for a proposed West Corridor farther northwest, if travel demand increases in that area. The environmental assessment has been delayed due to new development says Holwell...

She says they've made it fit for what is planned in the future on the north end of town. Again, the open house regarding the North Sheridan Interchange is to be held on Tuesday, May 15th, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Historic Sheridan Inn.

Click on the map below for the full size image.





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Copies of the EA are available for public review at the following locations beginning today.

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10 East Brundage Lane

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WYDOT – Cheyenne
5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, WY 82009

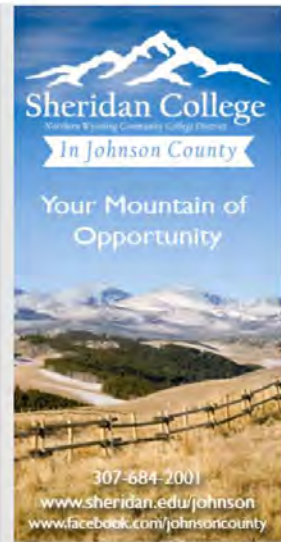
Information in this report is courtesy a press release from WYDOT.



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WYDOT Completes "EA" on North I-90 Interchange



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http://www.bighornmountainradio.com/..._content&view=article&id=1954;wydot-completes-gaq-on-north-i-90-interchange&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=58[5/22/2012 11:15:25 AM]

WYDOT finalizing plans for I-90 interchange

Staff reporter | Posted: Wednesday, April 25, 2012 11:45 am

SHERIDAN — After months of delay and efforts to build support for the project, the Wyoming Department of Transportation is one step closer to finalizing plans for the proposed relocation of the North Main Street/Interstate 90 interchange.

The WYDOT announced Tuesday afternoon that it has, in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, completed an environmental assessment on the proposed improvements and relocation of the interchange.

As a result of the assessment, WYDOT has identified a modified version of “Alternative 4,” one of its original proposals, as the preferred option for the project.

The proposed relocation moves the interchange slightly farther north to avoid impacts to Doubleday Park — land donated last year to the Sheridan Baseball Academy by Neltje.

“(It) provides the best transportation solutions with the least impacts to the natural, cultural and social environments serving the greater public good,” a press release from WYDOT stated.

Since WYDOT and the FHA started their review and public involvement process for the interchange relocation in 2009, portions of the Wrench Ranch such as Doubleday Park have been planned for development. The baseball facility conflicted with the location of the original Alternative 4 proposal.

WYDOT has since reevaluated Alternative 4 and modified it to accommodate the park.

The agency has also been working to build support for the alternative with stakeholders over the past few months.

Members of the North Main Neighborhood Association have expressed concerns about moving the interchange too far north, fearing such a move would undermine efforts to revitalize that portion of the city.

“We support the move north,” NMNA board president Shelleen Smith said this morning.

“Anything that creates traffic flow in that area will be good for the North Main neighborhood.”

Smith added that she has attended some of the stakeholder meetings regarding the proposed interchange move with WYDOT and state representatives.

“The Wrench Ranch is a new part of the picture, but having access to that area will be helpful to growth in the North Main area,” Smith said. “And that really is the key — growth.”

Smith wouldn’t say which state representatives have been involved in the project.

<http://www.thesheridanpress.com/news/local/wydot-finalizing-plans-for-i-90-interchange/arti...> 4/26/2012

According to the WYDOT press release, the modified Alternative 4 will provide the most benefit for the community.

“(The modified alternative) serves the needs of local, regional and interstate traffic for the reasonable foreseeable future,” the WYDOT press release states. “(It) supports the city of Sheridan’s planned future growth areas — Wrench Ranch and the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park — but would not preclude land use decisions by the city.

“It also conforms to the FHA’s interstate access policy and allows adequate spacing for a new interchange (for the planned West Corridor) farther northwest, if warranted by future travel demand and growth areas.”

WYDOT plans to hold a public meeting regarding the environmental assessment from 5:30-7:30 p.m. May 15 at the Historic Sheridan Inn.

Copies of the assessment are available for review at WYDOT’s Sheridan office on Brundage Lane, the Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library, the WYDOT office in Cheyenne and online at http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services/propos

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Wyo and the West

Wyoming WYDOT finalizing plans for I-90 interchange

SHERIDAN - The Wyoming Department of Transportation is one step closer to finalizing plans for the proposed relocation of an Interstate 90 interchange in Sheridan.

WYDOT says it has, in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, completed an environmental assessment on the proposed improvements and relocation of the North Main Street/I-90 interchange. The proposed project would move the interchange slightly farther north. Area residents support the project.

Publisher's Notebook

Cade makes history; Lunch with 'old' pals, Troopers, Jets ready

Retirement, defined: Sometimes I wake up grumpy. Other days, I let him sleep in.

Susan and I lunched last Tuesday at the Rib & Chop House on Main & Fifth, catching up with longtime (at a certain point in your life, you don't write "old" anymore) friends, Jim & Mary Hicks of Buffalo. We first met in 1976 while I was in Lander and Jim was the second generation of the Buffalo publisher of the Buffalo Bulletin. (Their son Robb is the current publisher and is also a friend.) The Sheridan Press prints the Bulletin weekly.



Stephen Woody
Publisher
Sheridan Press

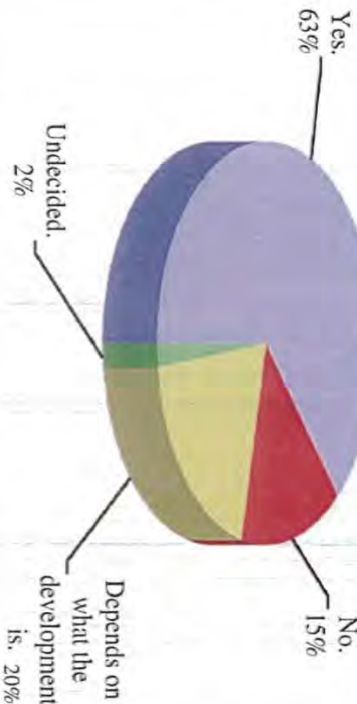
Jim and I have swapped jokes and stolen from each other's columns since we first met. I always thought he should write a book about Wyoming humor. Jim's always upbeat and in good cheer. Mary's the best animal lover I know. Both involved deeply in the betterment of Buffalo, always.

Four family members of the Hicks family have been presidents of the Wyoming Press Association. (Frank Hicks, Jim, Mary, Robb). Jim was president of the WPA when I was in Wheatland and it just seemed like there was more "hospitality" in the hospitality suites at the WPA meetings. These days, everyone's older and seemingly better behaved, but we're not at the big or kanake stage just yet.

There's a good picture of us in 1988 after Jim and I and then-Lander publisher Bill Griffin had finished a round of golf at the Buffalo Golf Club. The photo puts us inside Jim's boat on a summer day on Lake Desmet, posing no threat to fish, but enticing the brewery folks from St. Louis and Golden, Colo.

The WPA is having its summer convention here June 7-9. Press managing editor Patrick Murphy is the current president of the organization.

The Wyoming Department of Transportation has announced its preferred alternative for the relocation of the North Main Street/Interstate 90 interchange. Since the public process began, WYDOT altered its preferred alternative to accommodate development in the area. Should WYDOT consider proposed future development when deciding where to put the interchange?



A total of 107 votes were cast for this Sheridan Press online poll. This week's poll asks what is your favorite place to golf in the Sheridan area. Vote at www.thesheridanpress.com

Letter

Enviros blocking development, jobs with over regulation

Editor:
Environmentalists have very loud voices and hefty agendas these days, and their ideals are dominating all aspects of our lives.
They are attacking fossil fuels through emission regulation, blocking forest sales, coal leases, grazing, oil/gas permits, and more. If we can't log and manage our forests, mine and burn our coal, drill and use our oil, and gas, then what are people supposed to do? Sit in a circle, hold hands and sing Kumbaya?
There are two sides to every story, and balance is the important key. The use of resources can be balanced with the environment.
Most industries seek, develop and implement ways to be harmonious with the environment. Forest/land

The EPA is ignoring clean coal technology and the fact that the newest coal-fired power plants have the latest and greatest emission technology. The EPA should not be easing rules to eliminate state-of-the-art coal-fired power plants and our Energy Department should be finding ways to encourage construction of them with the same gusto they have for so-called green energy.
Over-regulation to the point of killing thousands of coal and related jobs and an industry that has enough reserves to economically power the country for centuries is not following an "all of the above energy strategy."
The earth has experienced many natural warming and cooling periods and will continue to do so.
This ruling is a blatant attempt to control something the EPA has absolutely no power over: Mother Nature. No one can control the weather.
Our country must have an affordable energy source

Judging unions, the U.N. on what they actually do

Labor unions, like the United Nations, are all too often judged by what they are envisioned as being — not by what they actually are or what they actually do.
Many people, who do not look beyond the vision or the rhetoric to the reality, still think of labor unions as protectors of working people from their employers. And union bosses still employ that kind of rhetoric. However, someone once said, "When I speak I put on a mask, but when I act I must take it off."

That mask has been coming off, more and more, especially during the Obama administration, and what is revealed underneath is very ugly, very cynical and very dangerous.

First there was the grossly misnamed "Employee Free Choice Act" that the administration tried to push through Congress. What it would have destroyed was precisely what it claimed to be promoting — a free choice by workers as to whether or not they wanted to join a labor union.

Ever since the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, workers have been able to express their free choice of joining or not joining a labor union in a federally conducted election within a secret ballot.
As workers in the private sector have, over the years, increasingly voted to reject joining labor unions, union bosses have sought to replace secret ballots with signed documents — signed in the presence of union organizers and under the pressures, harassment or implicit threats of those organizers.

Now that the Obama administration has appointed a majority of the members of the National Labor Relations Board, the NLRB leadership has imposed new requirements that employers supply union organizers with the names and home addresses of every employee. Nor do employees have a right to decline to have this personal information given out to union organizers, under NLRB rules.
In other words, union organizers will now have the legal right to pressure, harass or intimidate workers on the job or in their own homes, in order to get them to sign up with the union. Among the conse-



Thomas Sowell
Columnist

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TODAY'S NEW HIT COUNTRY

Public Meeting on "EA" Goes Well

Written by Justin Wolfing
Wednesday, 16 May 2012 06:00



Tuesday evening, several hundred interested individuals gathered at the Historic Sheridan Inn to take a gander at the North Interchange project WYDOT has been working on for the past several years. Recently the department completed an environmental assessment (or EA) on the interchange, and the meeting was showcasing the preferred alternative chosen.

The project includes re-constructing, and potentially relocating the North Sheridan Interchange. It will also allow for improvements to the I-90 corridor and North Main Street. As for the meeting, Ronda Holwell with WYDOT has more...

Comments are being accepted in written form to the WYDOT offices or via email. The first public meeting on the North Interchange was held in 2009, in which six alternatives were presented. Those alternatives were narrowed down to three in 2010. Due to the addition of Doubleday Park, WYDOT has created alternative four.

According to WYDOT, the process will move to a "decision document" this summer, and then to right of way design between 2012-2016. Construction dependent on funds will commence in 2021 or earlier. Click on the picture (courtesy WYDOT) below for the full size version.

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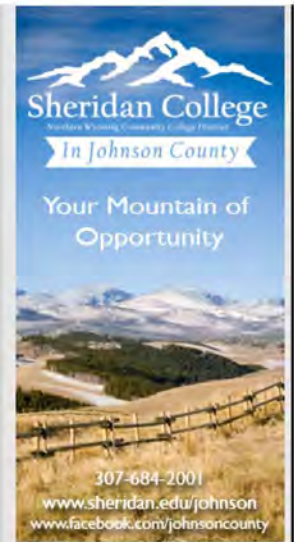
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Safety concerns could speed up funding for North Main interchange

Staff reporter | Posted: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 11:30 am

SHERIDAN — While the reconstruction and relocation of the North Main Street/Interstate 90 interchange is not planned for funding until 2021, state Sen. John Schiffer, R-Kaycee, suggested Tuesday that the project could move forward sooner.

“WYDOT — just like every other state agency — is going to see some funding cuts. I believe we’re going to look at their budget,” Schiffer said. “Right now, if you just took this project on the face of it, right now it’s like 2021.

“A project where you have an unsafe interchange,” Schiffer shrugged, “it isn’t written in stone.”

Schiffer made his comments Tuesday during a public open house regarding the WYDOT and Federal Highway Administration project.

Schiffer is chair of the Transportation, Highways and Military Affairs Committee in the Wyoming Legislature.

WYDOT and the FHA started their review and public involvement process for the interchange relocation in 2009.

Since that time portions of the Wrench Ranch — such as the yet undeveloped Doubleday Park — have been planned for development. The baseball facility conflicted with the location of the original Alternative 4 proposal, therefore WYDOT reevaluated Alternative 4 and modified it to accommodate the park.

The modified Alternative 4 moves the interchange approximately 2,300 feet west of the existing Decker Road and approximately 4,560 feet northwest of the existing interchange.

Tuesday’s meeting was meant to answer questions on the environmental assessment completed on Alternative 4 and accept comment on the proposed plan.

According to WYDOT, “Modified Alternative 4 serves the needs of local, regional and interstate traffic for the reasonably foreseeable future, would operate more efficiently than (other alternatives) and costs less to construct.”

The plan presented Tuesday would cost approximately \$25.5 million and would be constructed while the existing interchange remains functional. Once the new interchange is developed, WYDOT would remove the current interchange and the space would be made available, first to the city of Sheridan, for development as open space.

<http://www.thesheridanpress.com/news/local/safety-concerns-could-s...> 5/16/2012

Safety concerns could speed up funding for North Main interchange ... Page 2 of 2

Comments on the environmental assessment must be submitted to WYDOT by May 25. The assessment is available for review at WYDOT's Sheridan office on Brundage Lane, the Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library, the WYDOT office in Cheyenne and online at http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wydot/engineering_technical_programs/environmental_services

<http://www.thesheridanpress.com/news/local/safety-concerns-could-s...> 5/16/2012



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Road And Travel

North Sheridan Interchange Open House Well Attended

By Ron Richter on Wed 05/16/2012 06:13am

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The Wyoming Department of Transportation hosted an open house Tuesday night at the Historic Sheridan Inn that gave people an opportunity to view the preferred alternative, modified alternative 4, and to offer comment and ask questions regarding the proposed North Main Interchange.

Several months ago, State Senator John Schiffer got involved in the process and has been working diligently with WYDOT to move the project forward. He also spoke briefly at the meeting.

WYDOT Public Involvement Specialist Ronda Holwell says that even if you didn't attend the open house, you still have some time to submit comments on the the Environmental Assessment.

You can submit written comments, or electronically by email by no later than Friday, May 25th. Written comments can be sent to Timothy Stark, P.E. Wyoming Department of Transportation 5300 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340, or you can email them to dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov



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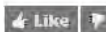


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FONSI – APPENDIX D

COMMENTS

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AGENCY COMMENTS

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From: [Kevin Powell](#)
To: [McClung, Clarke -FS](#)
Cc: [Clark, Richard A -FS](#); [Laurent, Gayle -FS](#); [Lutz-Zimmerman, Laura R.](#)
Subject: Re: N. Main Interchange Project
Date: Thursday, May 24, 2012 10:42:18 AM

Clarke,

Thanks for the comments. We will note the comment received and incorporate the wording changes into the decision document. Cheers - Kevin

On Thu, May 24, 2012 at 9:45 AM, McClung, Clarke -FS <cmclung@fs.fed.us> wrote:

Kevin,

The wording below is out of the EA for North Main Interchange. Gayle and I thought that the following changes would help things read better. Let me know if you have questions.

“The acquisition of the **ROW property** from the United States Forest Service has been coordinated with the **Bighorn** National Forest. The **ROW property** will be appropriated and transferred in accordance with the Section 317 of U.S.C 23 and 23 CFR 710 right-of-way and real estate procedures. The Forest Service will issue a **Letter of Consent to the Wyoming Department of Transportation and that** will include any construction and mitigation stipulations **deemed necessary for the adequate protection and utilization of the National Forest. An easement for highway purposes will be issued to the Wyoming Department of Transportation from the Federal Highway Administration”**

These are our only comments on the EA.

Have a good one!

Clarke M. McClung
District Ranger
Tongue Ranger District
Bighorn National Forest
2013 Eastside Second St.
Sheridan, WY 82801

[\(307\) 674-2680](tel:3076742680)

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Kevin Powell
Natural Resources Program Supervisor
WYDOT, Environmental Services
307-777-3997
kevin.powell@wyo.gov

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1949 Sugarland Drive, Suite 102, Sheridan, WY 82801 Telephone: (307)672-5820 Fax: (307)672-0052

24 May 2012

Mr. Timothy Stark
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Blvd
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Mr Stark.

Thank you for the notification of the release of the North Sheridan Interchange EA and the opportunity to comment. In discussion with the Sheridan County Conservation District Board we would like to offer the following comments.

The Preferred Alternative includes some areas of Prime Farmland if irrigated. The EA states that this area is not presently irrigated and that the Prime Farmland area is included in lands with residential and urban development plans. NRCS and the Sheridan County Conservation District are concerned about any action that converts areas of Prime Farmland soils to permanent urban use and discourage this practice where possible. We acknowledge that this area of the County is presently under increasing urban development pressure and conversion of the Prime Farmland areas is likely inevitable in this case.

We also appreciate that the Preferred Alternative is the least impactful to wetlands and floodplains of the evaluated Alternatives and that open space is a consideration in the evaluation of the Alternatives.

Sincerely,



Andrew Cassidy
District Conservationist
USDA NRCS
Sheridan Field Office



Carrie Rogaczewski
District Manager
Sheridan County Conservation District



WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82006

Phone: (307) 777-4600 Fax: (307) 777-4699

Web site: <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>

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May 25, 2012

WER 11529.01
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Assessment
North Sheridan Interchange, Sheridan, Wyoming
Sheridan County

Timothy Stark
Engineering Services Engineer
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340

Dear Mr. Stark:

The staff of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has reviewed the environmental assessment for the North Sheridan Interchange in Sheridan Wyoming. We offer the following comments for your consideration.

Terrestrial Considerations:

We recommend that any fences associated with this project be either three or four-wire designs, to better allow wildlife to move out of the right-of-way.

Aquatic Considerations:

To minimize impacts to the aquatic resources of nearby waterways, we recommend the following:

- Accepted best management practices be implemented to ensure that all sediments and other pollutants are contained within the boundaries of the work area. Disturbed areas that are contributing sediment to surface waters as a result of project activities should be promptly re-vegetated to maintain water quality.
- Equipment should be serviced and fueled away from streams and riparian areas. Equipment staging areas should be at least 300 feet from riparian areas.
- Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a priority for the State of Wyoming, and in many cases, the intentional or unintentional spread of organisms from

"Conserving Wildlife - Serving People"

Mr. Timothy Stark
May 25, 2012
Page 2 - WER 11529.01

one body of water to another would be considered a violation of State statute and Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulations. To prevent the spread of AIS, we recommend the following:

If equipment has been used in an area known to contain aquatic invasive species or suspected to contain aquatic invasive species, the equipment will need to be inspected by an authorized aquatic invasive species inspector certified in the state of Wyoming prior to its use in any Wyoming water. If aquatic invasive species are found, the equipment will need to be decontaminated.

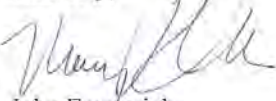
Decontamination may consist if either 1) Drain all water from equipment and compartments, Clean equipment of all mud, plants, debris, or animals, and Dry equipment for 5 days in summer (June, July & August); 18 days in Spring (March, April & May) and Fall (September, October & November); or 3 days in Winter (December, January & February) when temperatures are at or below freezing,

Or

2) Use a high pressure (3500 psi) hot water (140°F) pressure washer to thoroughly wash equipment and flush all compartments that may hold water.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tim Thomas, Sheridan Region Wildlife Biologist, at 307-672-7418.

Sincerely,



John Emmerich
Deputy Director

JE/mf/gb

cc: USFWS
Lynn Jahnke, Sheridan Region
Tim Thomas, Sheridan Region
Paul Mavrakis, Sheridan Region



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 308A
Cheyenne, WY 82009



In Reply Refer To:
06E13000/WY12TA0243

MAY 30 2012

Timothy L. Stark, Engineering Services Engineer
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3340

Dear Mr. Stark:

Thank you for your letter dated April 25, 2012, received in our office on April 27, regarding the request for information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on the proposed North Sheridan Interchange Project (Project) Environmental Assessment (EA). The Service previously provided a species list for this Project, referenced as ES1411/W.3/WY09SL305, on June 26, 2009. The Project area is located in the city and county of Sheridan along I-90 and consists of the coordination of the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to prepare an EA to study the potential environmental impacts associated with the reconstruction of the Main Street/Interstate – 90 (I-90), also known as the North Sheridan Interchange. The Project will be included in the 2015-2019 Programmatic Biological Assessment. WYDOT is seeking comments from Federal, State, and local resource agencies concerning information contained in the EA.

In the EA process, WYDOT and FHWA have identified two alternatives, Proposed Alternative 2 and Modified Alternative 4, to carry through the analysis. The construction of Proposed Alternative 2 maintains the intersection at its existing location but will include construction impacts of two new bridges over Goose Creek, a tributary of the Tongue River. Additionally, 3 acres of wetlands and 12 acres of floodplains would be impacted during the construction of this alternative. Only 1 acre of a new right-of-way (ROW) would be needed for this Project alternative.

The construction of Modified Alternative 4, identified as the preferred alternative by WYDOT and FHWA, would move the intersection 4,560 feet to the west of the existing intersection. Construction activities would include the widening of one bridge with impacts to 1.5 acres of wetlands and 2 acres of the floodplain. Total new ROW impacted from this Project would include 35 acres, and the old intersection would be left in place during construction.

You have requested information regarding species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.* In response to your request, the Service is providing recommendations for protective measures for threatened and endangered species in accordance with the Act. We are also providing recommendations concerning migratory birds in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), 16 U.S.C. 703, and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA), 16 U.S.C. 668. Wetlands are afforded protection under Executive Orders 11990 (wetland protection) and 11988 (floodplain management), as well as section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Other fish and wildlife resources are considered under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*, and the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 742a-742j.

Federally-listed Species and Critical Habitats

In accordance with Section 7(c) of the Act, we have determined that the following species or their designated habitat may be present in the proposed project area. Please note that species in the Project area may have changed since our last coordination (ES-61411/W.38/WY09SL0305, dated June 26, 2009). We would appreciate receiving information as to the current status of each of these species within the proposed project area.

Ute Ladies'-tresses: Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) is a perennial orchid, 8 to 20 inches tall, with white or ivory flowers clustered into a spike arrangement at the top of the stem. Ute ladies'-tresses typically blooms from late July through August. However, it may bloom in early July or still be in flower as late as early October, depending on location and climatic conditions. The closest known population is over 100 miles from the construction site, however, suitable habitat for Ute-ladies'-tresses may be found in or around the Project site. Ute ladies'-tresses is endemic to moist soils near wetland meadows, springs, lakes, and perennial streams where it colonizes early successional point bars or sandy edges. The elevation range of known occurrences is 4,200 to 7,000 feet (although no known populations in Wyoming occur above 5,500 feet). Soils where Ute ladies'-tresses have been found typically range from fine silt/sand, to gravels and cobbles, as well as to highly organic and peaty soil types. Ute ladies'-tresses is not found in heavy or tight clay soils or in extremely saline or alkaline soils. Ute ladies'-tresses typically occurs in small, scattered groups found primarily in areas where vegetation is relatively open. Many orchid species take 5 to 10 years to reach reproductive maturity; this appears to be true for Ute ladies'-tresses (FR 57 2048). Furthermore, reproductively mature plants do not flower every year. For these reasons, 2 to 3 years of surveys are necessary to determine presence or absence of Ute ladies'-tresses. Surveys should be conducted by knowledgeable botanists trained in conducting rare plant surveys.

Species or Resources of Concern

Migratory Birds: Under the MBTA, BGEPA and Executive Order 13186, 66 Fed. Reg. 3853 (January 17, 2001), Federal agencies have an obligation to protect all species of migratory birds, including eagles and other raptors, which may occur on lands under their jurisdiction. Of particular focus are the species identified in the Service's Birds of Conservation Concern 2008. In accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 USC 2912 (a)(3)), this report identifies "species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without

additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing” under the Act. This report is intended to stimulate coordinated and proactive conservation actions among Federal, State, and private partners and is available at: http://library.fws.gov/bird_publications/bcc2008.pdf.

The MBTA, enacted in 1918, prohibits the taking of any migratory birds, their parts, nests, or eggs, except as permitted by regulations, and does not require intent to be proven. Section 703 of the MBTA states, “Unless and except as permitted by regulations ... it shall be unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to ... take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture, or kill, or possess ... any migratory bird, any part, nest, or eggs of any such bird...” The BGEPA prohibits knowingly taking, or taking with wanton disregard for the consequences of an activity, any bald or golden eagles or their body parts, nests, or eggs, which includes collection, molestation, disturbance, or killing. Work that could lead to the take of a migratory bird or eagle, their young, eggs, or nests (e.g., if you are going to erect new roads, or power lines in the vicinity of a nest), should be coordinated with our office before any actions are taken.

Removal or destruction of such nests, or causing abandonment of a nest, could constitute violation of one or both of the above statutes. Removal of any active migratory bird nest or nest tree is prohibited. For golden eagles, inactive nest permits are limited to activities involving resource extraction or human health and safety. Mitigation, as determined by the local Service field office, may be required for loss of these nests. No permits will be issued for an active nest of any migratory bird species, unless removal of an active nest is necessary for reasons of human health and safety. Therefore, if nesting migratory birds are present on or near the project area, timing is a significant consideration and needs to be addressed in project planning.

If nest manipulation is proposed for this project, the project proponent should contact the Service’s Migratory Bird Office in Denver at 303-236-8171 to see if a permit can be issued for this project. No nest manipulation is allowed without a permit. If a permit cannot be issued, the project may need to be modified to ensure take of a migratory bird or eagle, their young, eggs or nest will not occur.

Bald Eagle/Raptor: Enclosed are general recommendations for the protection of bald eagles and other raptor species. Your EA states there is a known Bald Eagle nest recorded 0.9 miles from the construction site, and the Service understands that 6 other raptor nests may occur in close proximity to the site. The Service appreciates that a raptor survey is included in your EA and will be completed prior to construction. We strongly encourage project proponents to fully implement the protective measures described in the enclosures in order to help ensure compliance with the MBTA and the BGEPA. We are also available to assist you in developing a project specific plan to address the MBTA and BGEPA concerns.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog: The range of the black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) once spanned the short and mixed grass prairies of North America east of the Rockies from southern Canada to northern Mexico. This species still occurs over much of its historic range; although, in more widely scattered large colonies. Black-tailed prairie dogs occur within the eastern third of Wyoming. A population thought to have been intentionally introduced outside of this range also occurs in the Bighorn Basin. It is important to note that there is a current breeding population approximately 1.5 miles north of the construction site and a viable

population approximately 5 miles to the east. We encourage the conservation of prairie dog colonies for their value to the prairie ecosystem and the many species that rely on them. Threats that may be significant to conserving black-tailed prairie dog populations include disease (sylvatic plague) and some control programs (poisoning). Prairie dogs serve as the primary prey species for the black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) and several raptors, including the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*). Prairie dog colonies and burrows also provide shelter or nest sites for species like the mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). Because black-tailed prairie dog colonies in Wyoming do not currently support any ferret populations, black-footed ferret surveys are not necessary within Wyoming. However, we do encourage evaluating black-tailed prairie dog colonies for the potential reintroduction of black-footed ferrets.

Wetlands/Riparian Areas: Wetlands perform significant ecological functions that include: (1) providing habitat for numerous aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species, (2) aiding in the dispersal of floods, (3) improving water quality through retention and assimilation of pollutants from storm water runoff, and (4) recharging the aquifer. Wetlands also possess aesthetic and recreational values. Due to the addition of two new bridges across Goose Creek, Proposed Alternative 2 will impact 3 acres of wetlands and 12 acres, and due to the widening of the bridge across Goose Creek, Modified Alternative 4 will only affect 1.5 acres of wetlands and 2 acres of floodplain. If wetlands could be destroyed or degraded by the proposed actions, wetlands in the Project area should be inventoried and fully described in terms of their functions and values. Acreage of wetlands, by type, should be disclosed and specific actions should be outlined to avoid, minimize, and compensate for all unavoidable wetland impacts.

Riparian or streamside areas are a valuable natural resource and impacts to these areas should be avoided whenever possible. Riparian areas are the single most productive wildlife habitat type in North America. They support a greater variety of wildlife than any other habitat. Riparian vegetation plays an important role in protecting streams, reducing erosion and sedimentation as well as improving water quality, maintaining the water table, controlling flooding, and providing shade and cover. In view of their importance and relative scarcity, impacts to riparian areas should be avoided. Any potential, unavoidable encroachment into these areas should be further avoided and minimized. Unavoidable impacts to streams should be assessed in terms of their functions and values, linear feet and vegetation type lost, potential effects on wildlife, and potential effects on bank stability and water quality. Measures to compensate for unavoidable losses of riparian areas should be developed and implemented as part of the project. According to your EA, direct impacts to Goose Creek will be avoided by both alternatives, though indirect effects, such as pollution from vehicles and deicers, will be associated with both alternatives.

Plans for mitigating unavoidable impacts to wetland and riparian areas should include mitigation goals and objectives, methodologies, time frames for implementation, success criteria, and monitoring to determine if the mitigation is successful. The mitigation plan should also include a contingency plan to be implemented should the mitigation not be successful. In addition, wetland restoration, creation, enhancement, and/or preservation does not compensate for loss of stream habitat; streams and wetlands have different functions and provide different habitat values for fish and wildlife resources.

The Service appreciates that the EA includes several Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid and minimize impacts to Goose Creek and wetlands in the vicinity as well as efforts to restore the Project area. Recommended BMPs include, but are not limited to, the following: installation of sediment and erosion control devices (*e.g.*, silt fences, hay bales, temporary sediment control basins, erosion control matting); adequate and continued maintenance of sediment and erosion control devices to insure their effectiveness; minimization of the construction disturbance area to further avoid streams, wetlands, and riparian areas; location of equipment staging, fueling, and maintenance areas outside of wetlands, streams, riparian areas, and floodplains; and re-seeding and re-planting of riparian vegetation native to Wyoming in order to stabilize shorelines and streambanks.

Based on our interpretation of the EA and due to lesser impacts of the projected alternatives on Service trust resources, the Service supports Modified Alternative 4. For our internal tracking purposes, the Service would appreciate notification of any decision made on this project (such as issuance of a permit or signing of a Record of Decision or Decision Memo). Notification can be sent in writing to the letterhead address or by electronic mail to FW6_Federal_Activities_Cheyenne@fws.gov.

We appreciate your efforts to ensure the conservation of endangered, threatened, and candidate species and migratory birds. If you have any questions regarding this letter or your responsibilities under the Act and/or other authorities, please contact Julie Proell of my office at the letterhead address or phone (307) 772-2374, extension 232.

Sincerely,



For R. Mark Sattelberg
Field Supervisor
Wyoming Field Office

Enclosure (1)

cc: FHWA, Pavement and Structures Engineer, Cheyenne, WY (M. Boushele)
HDR, Inc., Environmental Scientist, Denver, CO (L. Lutz-Zimmerman)
WGFD, Non-game Coordinator, Lander, WY (B. Oakleaf)
WGFD, Statewide Habitat Protection Coordinator, Cheyenne, WY (M. Flanderka)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office**Protections for Raptors**

Raptors, or birds of prey, and the majority of other birds in the United States are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. 703 (MBTA). A complete list of migratory bird species can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 50 CFR 10.13. Eagles are also protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 (Eagle Act).

The MBTA protects migratory birds, eggs and nests from possession, sale, purchase, barter, transport, import, export, and take. The regulatory definition of take, defined in 50 CFR 10.12, means to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect a migratory bird. Activities that result in the unpermitted take (e.g., result in death, possession, collection, or wounding) of migratory birds or their eggs are illegal and fully prosecutable under the MBTA. Removal or destruction of active nests (i.e., nests that contain eggs or young), or causing abandonment of an active nest, could constitute a violation of the MBTA, the Eagle Act, or both statutes. Removal of any active migratory bird nest or any structure that contains an active nest (e.g., tree) where such removal results in take is prohibited. Therefore, if nesting migratory birds are present on or near a project area, project timing is an important consideration during project planning. As discussed below, the Eagle Act provides additional protections for bald and golden eagles and their nests. For additional information concerning nests and protections under the MBTA, please see the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Migratory Bird Permit Memorandum, MBMP-2.

The Service's Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office works to raise public awareness about the possible occurrence of birds in proposed project areas and the risk of violating the MBTA, while also providing guidance to minimize the likelihood that take will occur. We encourage you to coordinate with our office before conducting actions that could lead to the take of a migratory bird, their young, eggs, or active nests (e.g., construction or other activity in the vicinity of a nest that could result in a take). If nest manipulation is proposed for a project in Wyoming, the project proponent should also contact the Service's Migratory Bird Office in Denver at 303-236-8171 to see if a permit can be issued. Permits generally are not issued for an active nest of any migratory bird species, unless removal of the nest is necessary for human health and safety. If a permit cannot be issued, the project may need to be modified to ensure take of migratory birds, their young or eggs will not occur.

For infrastructure (or facilities) that have potential to cause direct avian mortality (e.g., wind turbines, guyed towers, airports, wastewater disposal facilities, transmission lines), we recommend locating structures away from high avian-use areas such as those used for nesting, foraging, roosting or migrating, and the travel zones between high-use areas. If the wildlife survey data available for the proposed project area and vicinity do not provide the detail needed to identify normal bird habitat use and movements, we recommend collecting that information prior to determining locations for any infrastructure that may create an increased potential for avian mortalities. We also recommend contacting the Service's Wyoming Ecological Services office for project-specific recommendations.

Additional Protections for Eagles

The Eagle Act protections include provisions not included in the MBTA, such as the protection of unoccupied nests and a prohibition on disturbing eagles. Specifically, the Eagle Act prohibits knowingly taking, or taking with wanton disregard for the consequences of an activity, any bald or golden eagle or their body parts, nests, chicks or eggs, which includes collection, possession, molestation, disturbance, or killing. The term "disturb" is defined as "to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, (1) injury to an eagle, (2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or (3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior" (50 CFR 22.3 and see also 72 FR 31132).

The Eagle Act includes limited exceptions to its prohibitions through a permitting process. The Service has issued regulations concerning the permit procedures for exceptions to the Eagle Act's prohibitions (74 FR 46836), including permits to take golden eagle nests which interfere with resource development or recovery operations (50 CFR 22.25). The regulations identify the conditions under which a permit may be issued (i.e., status of eagles, need for action), application requirements, and other issues (e.g., mitigation, monitoring) necessary in order for a permit to be issued.

For additional recommendations specific to Bald Eagles please see our [Bald Eagle information web page](http://www.fws.gov/wyominges/Pages/Species/Species_SpeciesConcern/BaldEagle.html) (http://www.fws.gov/wyominges/Pages/Species/Species_SpeciesConcern/BaldEagle.html).

Recommended Steps for Addressing Raptors in Project Planning

Using the following steps in early project planning, agencies and proponents can more easily minimize impacts to raptors, streamline planning and permitting processes, and incorporate measures into an adaptive management program:

1. Coordinate with appropriate Service offices, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Tribal governments, and land-management agencies at the earliest stage of project planning.
2. Identify species and distribution of raptors occurring within the project area by searching existing data sources (e.g., Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Federal land-management agencies) and by conducting on-site surveys.
3. Plan and schedule short-term and long-term project disturbances and human-related activities to avoid raptor nesting and roosting areas, particularly during crucial breeding and wintering periods
4. Determine location and distribution of important raptor habitat, nests, roost sites, migration zones and, if feasible, available prey base in the project impact area.
5. Document the type, extent, timing, and duration of raptor activity in important use areas to establish a baseline of raptor activity.
6. Ascertain the type, extent, timing, and duration of development or human activities proposed to occur, and the extent to which this differs from baseline conditions.
7. Consider cumulative effects to raptors from proposed projects when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. Ensure that project mitigation adequately addresses cumulative effects to raptors.
8. Minimize loss of raptor habitats and avoid long-term habitat degradation. Mitigate for unavoidable losses of high-valued raptor habitats, including (but not limited to) nesting, roosting, migration, and foraging areas.
9. Monitor and document the status of raptor populations and, if feasible, their prey base post project completion, and evaluate the success of mitigation efforts.
10. Document meaningful data and evaluations in a format that can be readily shared and incorporated into wildlife databases (contact the Service's Wyoming Ecological Services office for details).

Protection of nesting, wintering (including communal roost sites), and foraging activities is considered essential to conserving raptors. In order to promote the conservation of migratory bird populations and their habitats, Federal agencies should implement those strategies directed by [Executive Order 13186, "Responsibilities of Federal Agencies To Protect Migratory Birds"](#) (66 FR 3853).

Recommended Seasonal and Spatial Buffers to Protect Nesting Raptors

Because many raptors are particularly sensitive to disturbance (that may result in take) during the breeding season, we recommend implementing spatial and seasonal buffer zones to protect individual nest sites/territories (Table 1). The buffers serve to minimize visual and auditory impacts associated with human activities near nest sites. Ideally, buffers would be large enough to protect existing nest trees and provide for alternative or

replacement nest trees. The size and shape of effective buffers vary depending on the topography and other ecological characteristics surrounding the nest site. In open areas where there is little or no forested or topographical separation, distance alone must serve as the buffer. Adequate nesting buffers will help ensure activities do not take breeding birds, their young or eggs. For optimal conservation benefit, we recommend that no temporary or permanent surface occupancy occur within species-specific spatial buffer zones. For some activities with very substantial auditory impacts (e.g., seismic exploration and blasting) or visual impacts (e.g., tall drilling rig), a larger buffer than listed in Table 1 may be necessary, please contact the Service's Wyoming Ecological Services office for project specific recommendations on adequate buffers.

As discussed above, for infrastructure that may create an increased potential for raptor mortalities, the spatial buffers listed in Table 1 may not be sufficient to reduce the incidence of raptor mortalities (for example, if a wind turbine is placed outside a nest disturbance buffer, but inadvertently still within areas of normal daily or migratory bird movements); therefore, please contact the Service's Wyoming Ecological Services office for project specific recommendations on adequate buffers.

Buffer recommendations may be modified on a site-specific or project-specific basis based on field observations and local conditions. The sensitivity of raptors to disturbance may be dependent on local topography, density of vegetation, and intensity of activities. Additionally, individual birds may be habituated to varying levels of disturbance and human-induced impacts. Modification of protective buffer recommendations may be considered where biologically supported and developed in coordination with the Service's Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office.

Because raptor nests are often initially not identified to species (e.g., preliminary aerial surveys in winter), we first recommend a generic raptor nest seasonal buffer guideline of January 15th – August 15th. Similarly, for spatial nesting buffers, until the nesting species has been confirmed, we recommend applying a 1-mile spatial buffer around the nest. Once the raptor species is confirmed, we then make species-specific and site-specific recommendations on seasonal and spatial buffers (Table 1).

Activities should not occur within the spatial/seasonal buffer of any nest (occupied or unoccupied) when raptors are in the process of courtship and nest site selection. Long-term land-use activities and human-use activities should not occur within the species-specific spatial buffer of occupied nests. Short-term land use and human-use activities proposed to occur within the spatial buffer of an occupied nest should only proceed during the seasonal buffer after coordination with the Service, State, and Tribal wildlife resources management agencies, and/or land-management agency biologists. If, after coordination, it is determined that due to human or environmental safety or otherwise unavoidable factors, activities require temporary incursions within the spatial and seasonal buffers, those activities should be planned to minimize impacts and monitored to determine whether impacts to birds occurred. Mitigation for habitat loss or degradation should be identified and planned in coordination with applicable agencies.

Please contact the Service's Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office if you have any questions regarding the status of the bald eagle, permit requirements, or if you require technical assistance regarding the MBTA, Eagle Act, or the above recommendations. The recommended spatial and seasonal buffers are voluntary (unless made a condition of permit or license) and are not regulatory, and they do not supersede provisions of the MBTA, Eagle Act, Migratory Bird Permit Memorandum (MBMP-2), and Endangered Species Act. Assessing legal compliance with the MBTA or the Eagle Act and the implementing regulations is ultimately the authority and responsibility of the Service's law enforcement personnel. Our recommendations also do not supersede Federal, State, local, or Tribal regulations or permit conditions that may be more restrictive.

Table 1. Service's Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office's Recommended Spatial and Seasonal Buffers for Breeding Raptors

| Raptors of Conservation Concern (see below for more information) | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Common Name | Spatial buffer (miles) | Seasonal buffer |
| Golden Eagle | 0.50 | January 15 - July 31 |
| Ferruginous Hawk | 1.00 | March 15 - July 31 |
| Swainson's Hawk | 0.25 | April 1 - August 31 |
| Bald Eagle | see Bald Eagle information web page | |
| Prairie Falcon | 0.50 | March 1 - August 15 |
| Peregrine Falcon | 0.50 | March 1 - August 15 |
| Short-eared Owl | 0.25 | March 15 - August 1 |
| Burrowing Owl | 0.25 | April 1 - September 15 |
| Northern Goshawk | 0.50 | April 1 - August 15 |
| Additional Wyoming Raptors | | |
| Common Name | Spatial buffer (miles) | Seasonal buffer |
| Osprey | 0.25 | April 1 - August 31 |
| Cooper's Hawk | 0.25 | March 15 - August 31 |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | 0.25 | March 15 - August 31 |
| Red-tailed Hawk | 0.25 | February 1 - August 15 |
| Rough-legged Hawk (winter resident only) | ---- | ---- |
| Northern Harrier | 0.25 | April 1 - August 15 |
| Merlin | 0.50 | April 1 - August 15 |
| American Kestrel | 0.125 | April 1 - August 15 |
| Common Barn Owl | 0.125 | February 1 - September 15 |
| Northern Saw-whet Owl | 0.25 | March 1 - August 31 |
| Boreal Owl | 0.25 | February 1 - July 31 |
| Long-eared Owl | 0.25 | February 1 - August 15 |
| Great Horned Owl | 0.125 | December 1 - September 30 |
| Northern Pygmy-Owl | 0.25 | April 1 - August 1 |
| Eastern Screech-owl | 0.125 | March 1 - August 15 |
| Western Screech-owl | 0.125 | March 1 - August 15 |
| Great Gray Owl | 0.25 | March 15 - August 31 |

¹ http://www.fws.gov/wyominges/Pages/Species/Species_Concern/BaldEagle.html

Raptors of Conservation Concern

The Service's Birds of Conservation Concern (2008) report identifies "species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing" under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C 1531 et seq.). This report is intended to stimulate coordinated and proactive conservation actions among Federal, State, and private partners. The Wyoming Partners in Flight Wyoming Bird Conservation Plan identifies priority bird species and habitats, and establishes objectives for bird populations and habitats in Wyoming. This plan also recommends conservation actions to accomplish the population and habitat objectives.

We encourage project planners to develop and implement protective measures for the Birds of Conservation Concern as well as other high-priority species identified in the Wyoming Bird Conservation Plan. For

additional information on the Birds of Conservation Concern that occur in Wyoming, please see our [Birds of Conservation Concern web page](#).

Additional Planning Resources

[Avian Power Line Interaction Committee \(APLIC\). 2006. Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006. Edison Electric Institute, APLIC, and the California Energy Commission. Washington, D.C. and Sacramento, CA.](#)

[Edison Electric Institute and the Raptor Research Foundation. 1996. Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines - The State of the Art in 1996. Washington, D.C.](#)

[Edison Electric Institute's Avian Power Line Interaction Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2005. Avian Protection Plan Guidelines.](#)

[Edison Electric Institute and the Raptor Research Foundation. 1994. Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines - The State of the Art in 1994. Washington, D.C.](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2000. Siting, Construction, Operation and Decommissioning of Communications Towers and Tower Site Evaluation Form \(Directors Memorandum September 14, 2000\), Arlington, Virginia.](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2007. National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines. United States Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington, Virginia. 23 pp.](#)

[Wyoming Game and Fish Department Internet Link to Raptor Information](#)

References

[50 CFR 10.12 – Code of Federal Regulations. Title 50--Wildlife and Fisheries, Chapter I--United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Part 10--General Provisions.](#)

[50 CFR 10.13– Code of Federal Regulations. Title 50--Wildlife and Fisheries, Chapter I--United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Part 10--General Provisions.](#)

[50 CFR 22.3 – Code of Federal Regulations. Title 50--Wildlife and Fisheries, Chapter I--United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Part 22—Eagle Permits.](#)

[50 CFR 22.25– Code of Federal Regulations. Title 50--Wildlife and Fisheries, Chapter I--United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Part 22—Eagle Permits.](#)

[66 FR 3853 - Presidential Documents. Executive Order 13186 of January 10, 2001, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies To Protect Migratory Birds. Federal Register, January 17, 2001.](#)

[72 FR 31132 - Protection of Eagles: Definition of “Disturb”. Final Rule. Federal Register, June 5, 2007.](#)

[74 FR 46836 - Eagle Permits; Take Necessary To Protect Interests in Particular Localities. Final Rule. Federal Register, September 11, 2009.](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. Migratory Bird Permit Memorandum, MBMP-2, Nest Destruction \(Directors Memorandum April 15, 2003\), Washington, D.C.](#)

Enclosure

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2008. Birds of Conservation Concern 2008. United States Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Arlington, Virginia. 85 pp.

COMMENT FORMS

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Donna Edwards

Address: (Optional) 2022 US Hwy 14, Banner WY

Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: I think leaving the exit where it is, is for the best for the businesses in that area now.

No more land would need to be torn up. The only thing would be to maybe straighten things out a little.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Engineer
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
Fax: 307-777-4193
Email: dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov



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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Brian Kuehl

Address: (Optional) 122 Upper Road Sheridan WY

Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: _____

This is a bad outcome for Sheridan. I fear it will hurt our North Main and Downtown businesses. I fear it will promote sprawl and excessive driving in what should be a pedestrian friendly community.

I also believe that WYDOT should have analyzed an alternative that assumed the railroad had been moved - a reasonably foreseeable outcome. That may have allowed a rebuild of the interchange in the current location

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Wyoming Department of Transportation
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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) John Heppner

Address: (Optional) 4100 Big Horn Ave Sher.

Representing: (Optional) Self

Comments: I would like to see the data that classifies current interchange dangerous. I was not in town when process began, so haven't seen the justification & statistics. It seems like Boyman exit & off ramp is same design - they have same problems? What has been done to make current design safer? Roundabouts, signage, traffic slowing mechanisms etc.

Designated open space/parks will be a great thing at city entrance.

Building at great expense is easier to justify after trying other options & improve safety.

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Charlie Linhart

Address: (Optional) PO Box 212 Dayton WY

Representing: (Optional) Linhart LLC

Comments: Looks like a great improvement to North main

Multiple horizontal lines for additional comments.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Engineer
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Jim Adams

Address: (Optional) 131 Decker Rd, Sheridan, WY 82801

Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: _____

Preference is to leave interchange where it is currently located.

Recommendation to add a culvert under the interstate for walkers & bikers on Decker Rd to connect with the newly added bike path.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Duncan Irvine

Address: (Optional) 2571 N Main St

Representing: (Optional) Kmart

Comments: Assuming the Option 4 plan goes through our concerns would include

- cutting off traffic flow. Current interchange practically in our
- cutting off access to customers at KOA and residents' parking lot North of the interstate
- How the land between the new interchange and Kmart would be Platted. This opens up possibility of new competitors picking up customer off the interstate before they get to our business, and how that would affect job stability for 70 employees.
- BNSF is looking at moving their line which seems to open the possibility of changing the current location's (interchange's) structure. Safety could be improved w/o negatively impacting established businesses. I don't think that is even being taken into consideration.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Environmental Services Engineer
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North Sheridan Interchange
Environmental Assessment

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Barnaby Duncan
 Address: (Optional) 25 Wild Hollow Rd.
 Representing: (Optional) WRWA

Comments: I find the data in crash rate table on 3-23 to be consistent with data not fitting the measurement, what is the statistical deviation for this?
Use or preservation issues immediately north of T-90 X need to be addressed.
I find the EA significantly lacking in discussion of development pressure the proposed X places on historic Ranch & residential properties.
The noise level data presented in table on page 3-54 seems to only account for straight-line distance, with new location would not increased noise levels due to Acceleration & De-acceleration in Direct Line-of-sight

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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 Wyoming Department of Transportation
 Environmental Services Engineer
 5300 Bishop Blvd.
 Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
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to mitigate with trees?

to residences be a consideration calculation?



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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Barry Duncan

Address: (Optional) 25 Wild Hollow Rd, 82801

Representing: (Optional) WRHA

Comments: What percent of respondents to Sep 2009
meetings were present in comments
received in June 2010? if this is
less than 75% then how can the June
2010 comments be considered as resolving
concerns raised in 2009? Especially
since "proposal 4A" was not even
included in 2009?

I am confused by EA page 3-21 specifically
the excuse used to justify not place I-90 X
for west is that it would preclude an
I-90 X for west corridor, isn't I-90 that
backwards? wouldn't you try to serve
both purposes with a single X?

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Dave Sharpki

Address: (Optional) 63 Decker Rd

Representing: (Optional) Sheridan KOA campground

Comments:

① Cul-de-sac, can the cul-de-sac be designed for a large RV to be able to turn around at the end if they pass the campground, ex. 43' motorhome towing a 30' vehicle.

② Future Public use land - Make it a no camping area.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Dave Sharpski Sheridankoa@hotmail.com
Address: (Optional) 63 Decker Rd 82801
Representing: (Optional) Sheridan KOA -owner

Comments:

- ① What are the impacts on business for the KOA campground - during construction & after.
- ② All of the billboards & signage will be incorrect once construction is done. How will this be addressed.
- ③ Why was the KOA not surveyed or contacted about the final draft.
- ④ What about upgrading the current infrastructure for the area on Decker Rd, water, sewer, cable fiber optics.
- ⑤ What about traffic flow during summer months coming & going from the KOA.
- ⑥ Environmental - water wells are drying up, how will construction impact existing wells.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Rob GREEN

Address: (Optional) _____

Representing: (Optional) Trails End, Firewater, Stages Top, Buddys!

Comments: This change would be devastating to all of our businesses, we have invested in N. Main, Sheridan has invested considerable in N. Main, we have other new business opening on N. Main, to move the change you are creating a dangerous traveling condition on the old Decker Rd. N. Main residents use that exit extensively. They don't want drive through town, wait at 5th for a ~~train~~ train! Kmart will close!! We need Kmart. Inconvenient traveling to Billings. We are investing considerable in a outdoor Amphitheatre. We need the tourism traffic that the exit brings, we will lose that commerce. There has to be a alternative plan. or redo that

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to: Exit if needed

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Engineer
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Nelbe

Address: (Optional) 4 Lower Piney Bonner

Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: To get an exit and entrance to the
interstate at the real north end of Sheridan
tying into North Main via Yellowtail drive
is significant progress for the future
of Sheridan. Yellowtail drive will in time
become part of the West Beltway
connecting Northern towns like Bonchesteer
and Dayton to the hospital

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) _____

Address: (Optional) _____

Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: _____

I like the proposed modified alternative.

This preferred alternative is just what the

north end of town needs.

Great Job!

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Wyoming Department of Transportation
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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) _____

Address: (Optional) _____

Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: _____

I couldn't understand why the existing

120' right of way is not used and forest

service land needs to be taken?

Couldn't the crossing be slightly skewed?

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Debbie Belus

Address: (Optional) _____

Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: *After reviewing the EA and discussing the Alternatives with several people present, I have to say I still am partial to alternative 2. The interchange should just be rebuilt at the existing sight. There would be less impact all the way around and the existing businesses near the interchange would have a chance to survive. Thank you for the chance to comment on this project.*

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

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Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Dave Ferrico

Address: (Optional) 44 W. Brundage St, Sheridan

Representing: (Optional) First Federal Savings Bank

Comments: Modified Alternative 4 provides a safe and improved entry into north Sheridan. It is well-designed and provides safe traffic flow through a visually positive area. Heavy truck traffic from the Decker Road is managed efficiently and more safely with this design. Modified Alternative 4 is cost-effective and fulfills the needs of the Sheridan community.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
 Wyoming Department of Transportation
 Environmental Services Engineer
 6300 Bishop Blvd.
 Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
 Fax: 307-777-4193
 Email: dot-hsl-ea@wyo.gov



*copy
of
foundation
of project*

Your input is an important part of the public involvement process. Your comments and suggestions can help us adequately identify the public's concerns, and issues regarding the **North Sheridan Interchange Environmental Assessment**. Please indicate your thoughts regarding the purpose and need, alternatives process, environmental analysis and the Preferred Alternative. Space is provided below to write down any comments you wish the study team to consider. You may hand in your comments at the end of the meeting or, if you prefer mail or fax this form to the address printed below. You may also email comments at the address provided below.

Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) CHARLES W. POPOVICH
1311 LA CLEDE STREET
SHERIDAN, WY 82801

Address: (Optional) _____

Representing: (Optional) as Sheraton since 1950s

Comments: _____

*There is one vitally important thing
that must be done no matter
what is done*

** (D) Get rid of the signal
light at the north end
of main as there is
absolutely no reason
for it since the weigh
station has been moved*

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Engineer
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
Fax: 307-777-4193
Email: dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov



Your input is an important part of the public involvement process. Your comments and suggestions can help us adequately identify the public's concerns, and issues regarding the **North Sheridan Interchange Environmental Assessment**. Please indicate your thoughts regarding the purpose and need, alternatives process, environmental analysis and the Preferred Alternative. Space is provided below to write down any comments you wish the study team to consider. You may hand in your comments at the end of the meeting or, if you prefer mail or fax this form to the address printed below. You may also email comments at the address provided below.

Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Lynn Reeves
Address: (Optional) PO Box 61 Big Horn WY 82833
Representing: (Optional) self

Comments:
Looks like a good proposal. I see favorable aspects for all of North Main. Great forward looking plan to tie into rest of long range planning.
Thank you for good, thorough information.

Written comments on the EA can be submitted to:

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Engineer
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
Fax: 307-777-4193
Email: dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov

WRITTEN COMMENTS

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FORWARD SHERIDAN

Board of Directors
Anthony Spiegelberg, Chairman
Dixie See, Vice-Chair
Dick Kindt, Secretary
David Ferries, Treasurer
Kim Cannon, Counsel
Dayton Alsaker
Bruce Garber
Mark Kinner
Brian Kinnison
Mark Law
Councilor Alex Lee
Commissioner Steve Maier
Ron Patterson
Aaron Sopko
Dick Weber
Dr. Paul Young

Mayor Dave Kinskey, Ex-Officio

Jay Stender, Executive Director
Zoila Perry, Office Manager

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 1, 2012
TO: Mark Gillett – WYDOT District Engineer
FROM: Jay Stender
Transmitted: Alternative 4
SUBJECT: Support

Mr. Gillett:

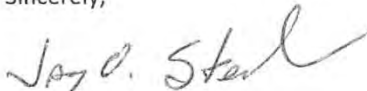
Forward Sheridan's Board of Directors supports the decision implemented for the North Sheridan Interstate. As reported via the media (Sheridan Press – April 25, 2012) the selection was for alternative 4, or the NW option.

Our belief is that this option represents the best opportunity for continued development of the Wrench Ranch. This enables legitimate options for the utility infrastructure for VAMC and for the connections to 5th and Highland; most importantly as another piece in the framework for recruitment and development of new light manufacturing and technology businesses.

Forward Sheridan has been involved in the support of the many options at the Wrench Ranch and Hi-Tech Park. This decision provides a stronger development option.

Let us know if we can be of assistance in the planning and implementation of this alternative.

Sincerely,



Jay Stender
Executive Director

**1981 Double Eagle Drive, Suite A
Sheridan, WY 82801**

**Ph: (307) 673-8004
Fax: (307) 673-8006**

RECEIVED MAY 9 2012

Office of the Governor

Record # 14364

State Capitol Building, Room 124
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002-0010 Phone (307) 777-5387 Fax: (307) 632-3888

File Code: 03-045-10

Date assigned: 5/8/2012

To: Department of Transportation

John Cox
5300 Bishop Blvd
Cheyenne WY 82009-3340 (307) 777-4484

Constituent:

Noel Young
P O Box 6822
Sheridan WY 82801-

Please return to the Governor's Office on or before: 5/22/2012

RE: WYDOT wants to build a new I90 interchange at the north end of Sheridan. No reason have been given as to why this is necessary. Thinks money could be put to better use. WYDOT is dragging feet on pedestrian crossing light on 5th street at the hospital.dr

Instruction: Respond directly to Constituent; cc: Governor's Office

Please return the tracking sheet with your response. You may keep the copy of correspondence for your file.

If you have questions, please call Dede Reed at 777-5387

Analyst/Agency Comments:

Agency Initials: _____

Date: _____

Governor's Office Use Only: Initials: _____ Date: _____

T 14364
A 3790
P 03-045-10
File # WYDOT
Copy:
Responsible Person:

4 May 2012

NOEL YOUNG
P O BOX 6822
SHERIDAN WY
82801

Dear Gov. Mead,
WYDOT wants to build
a new I 90 interchange
at the north end of Sheridan.
No reasons, however weak,
have been given as to
why this is necessary.
These funds could be much
better used patching and
upgrading highways.

What Sheridan does
need is a pedestrian
crossing light on 5th St.
at the hospital, but WYDOT
seems to drag their feet
on that.

RECEIVED
MAY 07 2012
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
Noel Young

MAY 9, 2012

ATTN.

TIMOTHY L STARK, P.E. WYDOT

AS YOU REQUESTED A COMMENT, ME AND OTHERS I'VE TALKED TO, DO NOT FEEL YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE BEST ALTERNATIVE.

YOU ARE TAKING GOOD LAND OUT OF OTHER PRODUCTIVE USES, BY NOT USING MOSTLY WHAT LAND YOU ALREADY HAVE.

ALSO RUNNING A STATE HIGHWAY PLUS ALL THE OFF/ON RAMPs OF THE INTERSTATE 90 PAST THE ENTRY OF A BALL PARK DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE.

REBUILDING THE UNDERPASS AT DECKER RD WOULD TAKE UP A LOT LESS NEW LAND AND LESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND NOT BE AS FAR OUT OF TOWN. ALTERNATIVE TWO WOULD ALSO FIT THE ABOVE ASSESSMENT.

YOU WILL BE ROUTING SOUTH BOUND TRAFFIC THRU MAIN ST TO 5TH STREET INTERCHANGE AS MOST PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO DRIVE TWO PLUS MILES OUT OF THEIR WAY TO GO IN THAT DIRECTION.

THANK YOU.

BEST REGARDS

Ernie Selig

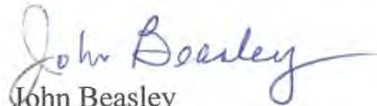
27 Decker Rd

Sheridan, Wyo 82801

North Sheridan Interchange, EA Open House
May 15, 2012

I am in favor of the Modified Alternate #4 for the North Sheridan Interchange. The purpose of considering changes to the existing interchange probably revolves more around safety than anything else. But we have an opportunity to greatly improve not only the interchange functionality, but also incorporate future plans that will enhance Sheridan's prospects for economic development for many years to come. In addition it will provide a very pleasing first impression to the traveling public. The icing on the cake is having a much-needed project that provides for safety, economic development and is the low cost alternate.

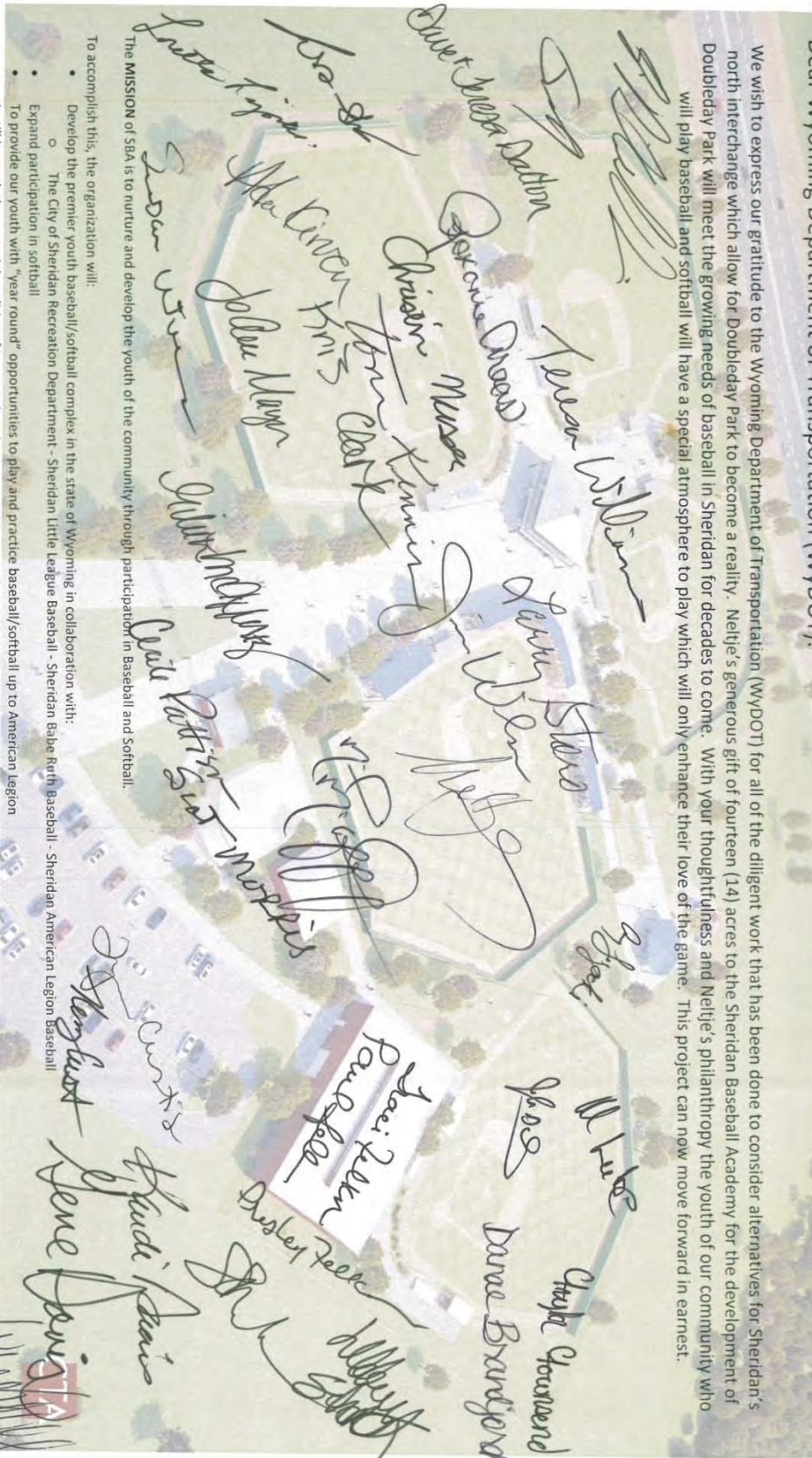
The only change or encouragement I would offer is to try to fast track the EIS, design and ROW acquisition so we have a true shovel-ready project should the opportunity arise.


John Beasley
434 Shadow Ridge Blvd.
Sheridan, WY 82801

Sheridan Baseball Academy

Dear Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT):

We wish to express our gratitude to the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) for all of the diligent work that has been done to consider alternatives for Sheridan's north interchange which allow for Doubleday Park to become a reality. Neljé's generous gift of fourteen (14) acres to the Sheridan Baseball Academy for the development of Doubleday Park will meet the growing needs of baseball in Sheridan for decades to come. With your thoughtfulness and Neljé's philanthropy the youth of our community who will play baseball and softball will have a special atmosphere to play which will only enhance their love of the game. This project can now move forward in earnest.



To accomplish this, the organization will:

- Develop the premier youth baseball/softball complex in the state of Wyoming in collaboration with:
 - The City of Sheridan Recreation Department - Sheridan Little League Baseball - Sheridan Babe Ruth Baseball - Sheridan American Legion Baseball
- Expand participation in softball
- To provide our youth with "year round" opportunities to play and practice baseball/softball up to American Legion
- Instill in youth the essential qualities of teamwork and sportsmanship, as well as pride in themselves and their community

The MISSION of SBA is to nurture and develop the youth of the community through participation in Baseball and Softball.

The VISION of SBA is to grow baseball into the preeminent sport for the youth of Sheridan – we want it to once again be the game they love to play.

The Sheridan Baseball Academy (SBA) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit
 Board of Directors
 Matt Lube - Tom Mayer - Dan Godwin - Jim Wilson - Aaron Ligocki - Alden Donston - Mike McCafferty

Handwritten signature: Matt Lube

Handwritten signature: Tom Mayer

EMAIL COMMENTS

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from: Jeff Fuller jeffb-fuller@live.com
to: dot-nsi-ea@wyo.gov
date: Thu, May 24, 2012 at 1:53 PM
subject: North Sheridan Interchange Environmental Assessment
mailed-by: live.com

I preface these comments with this background.....

I have been out of the country for several months, hence the tardiness of these comments
I have an extensive background in transportation planning in the Rocky Mountain Region
I attended the last portion of the meeting of May 15, 2012; hence did not hear the "speech" by Sen. John Schiffer.
I have not reviewed the EA in detail.
I do have some background knowledge of the north interchange situation.

1. FHWA has encouraged, and many state DOT's have adopted an open house form to receive input on anticipated projects. The intent of this open house is to receive any and all comment and not provide a forum to grandstand a particular point of view. (By example, a leading individual in the community stands up and states..."this idea is so wrong, and anyone that thiinks this is a good idea must be stupid." Hence discouraging anyuone else to stand up and speak.)

It appars the "speech" by John Schiffer was just that, politically motivated to present a specific point of view, to those in attendance, to generate additional input from them in the same vein, to the project team. This goes against the "open house" format and should not be allowed to happen.

2. It appears this solution addresses immediate access to several adjacent (in the planning stages) developments. Rather, a new interchange on the interstate network, and the significant taxpayer expense (\$25M) should rather address long term regional transportation network needs.

3. Although I haven't researched thoroughly, I am aware that the current North Main Interchange does not meet some current FHWA safety geometric standards. For SAFETY reasons, the New Deitz Interchange and the accompanying Port of Entry significantly reduced truck traffic to the exisiting North Main Interchange; hence greatly reducing the safety concerns. I am curious as to the number of accidents occurring at the North Main Interchange, since the completion of the Deitz Interchange, if this is indeed the case, and are the current safety concerns that demonstrable.

4. By way of example, I was significantly involved with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), with the planning and envrionmental assesment of a new interchange in Pocatello, Idaho. In the ealrly 1990's, Idaho received Federal funds (\$12M) to address congestion relief in Bannock County, Idaho. The then President of the State Senate Transportation Committee, was involved with a significant development in the vicinity of a potential new interchange, and obviously thought this new interchange would benefit the development. The solution that provided the most effective augmentation to the regional transportation network, was not to add another interchange; however to add a third lane, in each direction, on the interstate, between two existing interchanges. Throughout this process, I was impressed with the professional integrity of all of the significantly impacted "players"; as the solution was based on the science and engineering of transportation planning; not several specific political or financial development agendas.

I believe long term regional transportation network enhancements would be better served, and should consider a new arterial roadway extending west of Sheridan, from the Big Horn comunity to the new Deitz Interchange. This concept has been given several names, and I believe the same consultant providing EA services for this project, has previously provided concept plans for this arterial. As a taxpayer, I believe this area would receive significant increased value for the financial investment. AND for the \$25M estimated for this new interchange, I believe the measure is not to bring

the most money to Sheridan County, rather the "wisest, and most beneficial" use of the money; which may be in another area of the state.

5. I believe, most Sheridan County residents are aware of and don't agree with the specific political and development agendas associated with this project; and as has been said "you can't fight city hall", have opted to not "get involved".

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. If there is anything further, of benefit, you think I could provide, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jeff Fuller
3099 Big Horn Avenue
Sheridan, WY 82801
jeffb-fuller@live.com
307-752-9768



Denver
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Suite 700
Denver, CO 80203-1256
p. 303.764.1520
f. 303.860.7139