

# TOSTON MISSOURI RIVER CROSSING CORRIDOR STUDY NEWSLETTER 1



Bridge over the Missouri River (looking northeast).

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Toston Missouri River Corridor Planning Study

## Project Description

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has initiated the process to develop the Toston Missouri River Crossing Corridor Planning Study. The corridor planning study will determine cost-effective ways to address transportation needs within the US 287 corridor near Toston, Montana. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has established the Corridor Planning Process in order to link the current transportation planning processes and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The Corridor Planning Process will provide information into the NEPA/MEPA process, help advance viable improvement options into NEPA/MEPA, and provide the opportunity for partner involvement at all stages.

NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act. Modeled after NEPA, MEPA is the Montana Environmental Policy Act, and it only applies to state agencies and state actions.

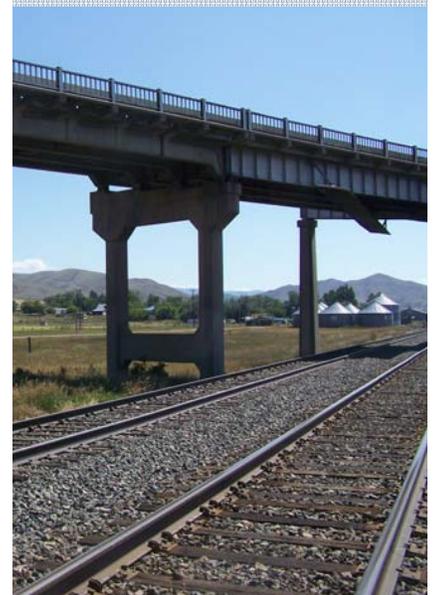
NEPA/MEPA is a federal law that outlines policies and goals to be complied with to protect our environment. The NEPA/MEPA process also makes sure that environmental information is available to the public before decisions are made and carried out.

The Toston Missouri River Corridor Planning Study is a pre-NEPA/MEPA study that allows for earlier planning-level coordination with the public, resource and other agencies, and will develop specific factors that can be used in the subsequent environmental review process as projects are moved forward from the study. The corridor study is designed to help facilitate a smooth and efficient transition from transportation planning to project development/environmental review.

It is important to note that the Corridor Planning Study is developed strictly as a planning project and not a design project. The results of the study will be used to determine the level of environmental documentation to be used prior to continuation of the NEPA/MEPA process and project implementation.

## A Corridor Study is...

- *NOT a NEPA Study or Environmental Study*
- *NOT a Preliminary or Final Design Project*
- *NOT a Construction or Maintenance Project*
- *NOT a Right of Way Acquisition Project*



Looking east at BNSF Railway and private land ownership.

## PROJECT CONTACTS:



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## Public Involvement Opportunities

Public involvement is an important component in any successful corridor planning study process. The purpose of public involvement is to ensure a proactive process that provides an opportunity for the public to be involved in all phases of the corridor study process. The general public is invited to participate in the process through public meetings and ongoing project information review and input.

A project web site has been developed to provide on-line opportunities to comment on the needs of the US 287 corridor and later on the draft plan recommendations. Dates, times, and locations for all public outreach will be announced prior to the events through the local media and the project mailing list.

The project team will collect and consider all public comments received to better understand the public view of potential issues. Those with a specific interest in the project are encouraged to join the **project mailing list**. They can do so by submitting their name and contact information to Jeff Key at [KeyJA@cdm.com](mailto:KeyJA@cdm.com).

Three public meetings will be held on the project over the course of the next twelve months. The first public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2010 from 6-8pm in the Townsend High School Community Room.

Check the Townsend Star, Independent Record, and the project website periodically for information relating to the time and location of future public meetings.

Check out the project website at:  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/toston](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/toston)

### Public Meeting #1

Tuesday, February 16, 2010  
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
Townsend High School –  
Community Room  
201 North Spruce Street,  
Townsend

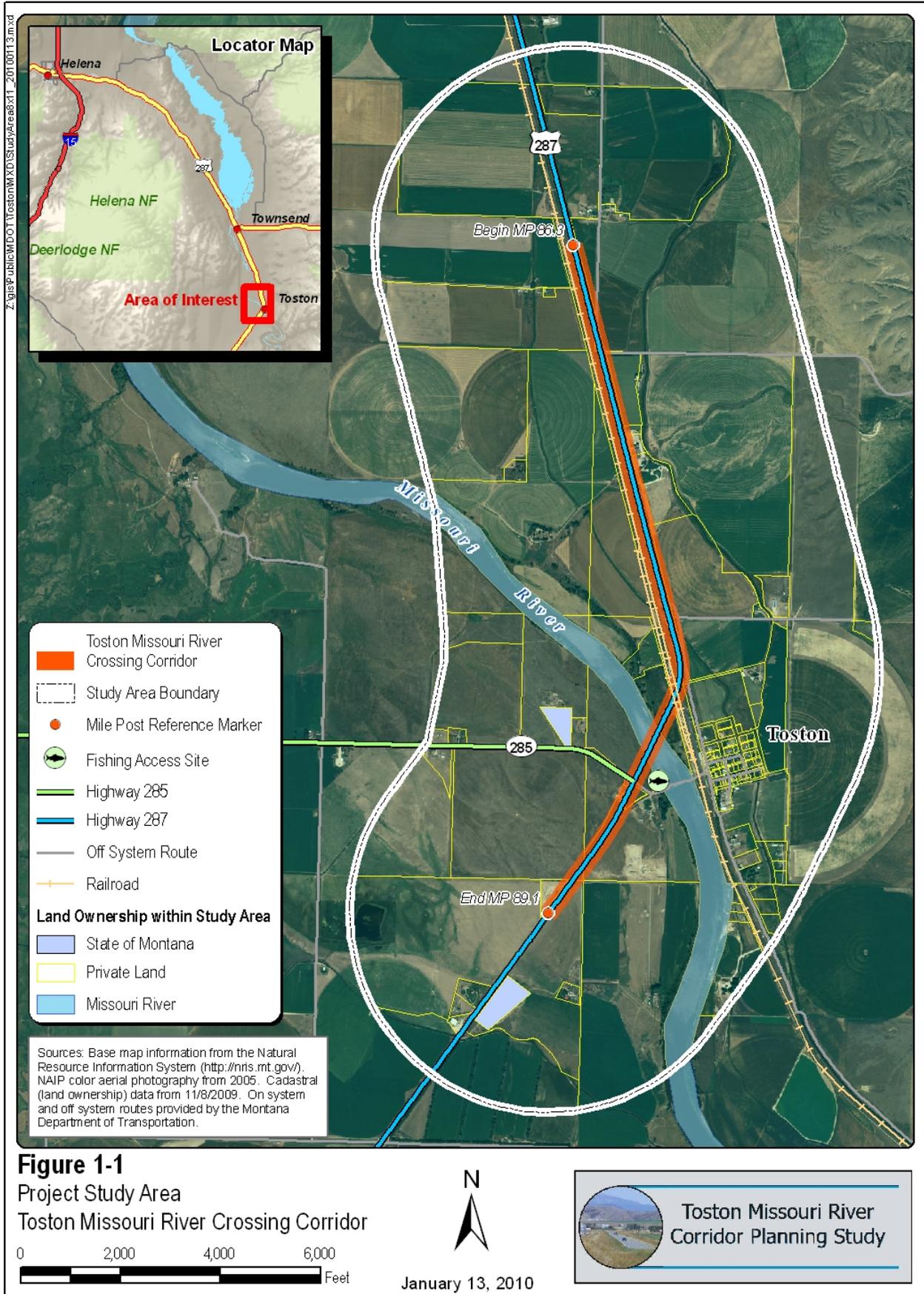
The public is  
encouraged and  
welcome to attend.

*We hope to see you  
there!*

*The MDT and CDM attempt to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity associated with this project. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information, call (406) 441-1400 or TTY (800) 335-7592 or by calling Montana Relay at 711. Accommodation requests must be made at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled activity and/or meeting.*



Snapshot of corridor study area south of Toston, Montana (looking north).



## Project Schedule

The project schedule is a twelve-month project that began on November 18, 2009. The project team strives for a final document and project completion near October 31, 2010.

### Toston Missouri River Crossing Corridor Planning Study



#### PROJECT SCHEDULE

PRESENT TIME

WORK TASKS AND DESCRIPTIONS	Dec '09	Jan '10	Feb '10	Mar '10	Apr '10	May '10	June '10	July '10	Aug '10	Sep '10	Oct '10
Task 1: Interactive Project Evaluation <i>(completed)</i>											
Task 2: Project Management and Accounting											
Task 3: Develop Corridor Study Work Plan											
Task 4: Develop Existing and Projected Conditions Report											
Task 5: Identify Needs, Issues, Goals, and Screening Criteria											
Task 6: Determine Improvement Options Advanced and Not Advanced											
Task 7: ArcGIS Spatial Analyst and Microstation/GeoPAK Technical Tool											
Task 8: Recommend Improvement Options											
Task 9: Prepare Draft Corridor Study Report											
Public Meetings											
Project Committee Meetings											
<b>MISCELLANEOUS DELIVERABLES</b>											
Corridor Setting Document											
Public Involvement Plan (PIP)											
Corridor Study Website											
Existing and Projected Conditions Report											
List/Description of Corridor Transportation Deficiencies											
Maps of Known Environmentally Sensitive Areas											
Summary of Comments/Concerns By Resource Agencies											
List of Initial Avoidance Areas, Potential Mitigation Needs & Opportunities											
Project Newsletters - 3 total (electronic only)											
Press Releases/Advertisements											
List and Description of Corridor Needs, Issues and Goals											
List of Screening Criteria											
List and Description of the Range of Improvement Options											
Documentation of Analysis (Methods and Findings) of Improvement Options											
Documentation of Improvement Options and/or Advanced & Not Advanced											
Memorandum of Proposed Weighted Options											
Package of Improvement Options and/or Option for Improving the Corridor											
List and Description of Potential Impacts and Mitigation Opportunities											
Corridor Study Report											
Statement of Purpose and Need											
Final List of Recommendations and Next Steps											
Meeting Agendas and Minutes											

#### Work Completed To Date:

- Public Involvement Plan
- Project Website
- Newsletter
- Press Release
- Public Meeting Announcement

#### What's Next?

The project team will be working on compiling information to develop existing and projected corridor conditions, a list of transportation deficiencies, and environmentally sensitive areas.