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**Public Involvement Opportunities**

Public involvement is important to any successful project development process. It is a proactive process that gives the public an opportunity to participate in all phases of the project. The public is invited to participate by attending Open House informational meetings, as well as reviewing and contributing input on ongoing project information.

The next planned Open House meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2015 from 4:00pm to 7:00 pm in the City Commission Room at City Hall, 121 North Rouse Avenue, Bozeman.

The website developed for the study provides online opportunities to comment on the *Bozeman to Bridger Mountains Trail Project*. Dates, times, and locations for all community outreach events will be announced in advance by using local media and the project mailing list. Notices will also be posted on the project website.

The project team will collect and consider all public comments received to better understand community views on potential issues. People with a specific interest in this project are encouraged to join the mailing list. They can do so by submitting their names and contact information to Kirk Loftsgaarden of FHWA at [MTrail@dot.gov](mailto:MTrail@dot.gov) or Carolyn Poissant of the City of Bozeman at [cpoissant@bozeman.net](mailto:cpoissant@bozeman.net).

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Issue  
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# Bozeman To Bridger Mountains Trail

## Montana Highway 86 (Bridger Canyon Road)



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**Project Description**

The City of Bozeman and Federal Highway Administration Western Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA), in partnership with the United States Forest Service-Gallatin National Forest (USFS), and the Montana Department of Transportation, is currently developing a project to construct a bicycle-pedestrian path along Montana Highway 86 (Bridger Canyon Road) from Story Mill Road in northeast Bozeman to the “M” parking lot. The project will include a new approximately 2 mile long path and a possible bicycle-pedestrian crossing under the highway to provide connectivity between the “M” parking lot and Drinking Horse Mountain trailheads.

Currently, bicyclists and pedestrians use MT 86 to access the trailheads and the “M” parking lot. As a result, pedestrians typically travel the short distance between Bozeman and the “M” parking lot by car. Overflow from the parking lot uses the shoulders of MT 86, further constricting the already congested area. The proposed trail would help alleviate some of the overflow and congestion by providing an alternative route for pedestrians and bicyclists to access the “M” and associated trails.



**OPEN HOUSE MEETING #2**

*Please Join Us!*

**Bozeman:**  
**Wednesday, April 29**  
4:00 PM—7:00 PM  
City Commission Room  
City Hall  
121 North Rouse Avenue

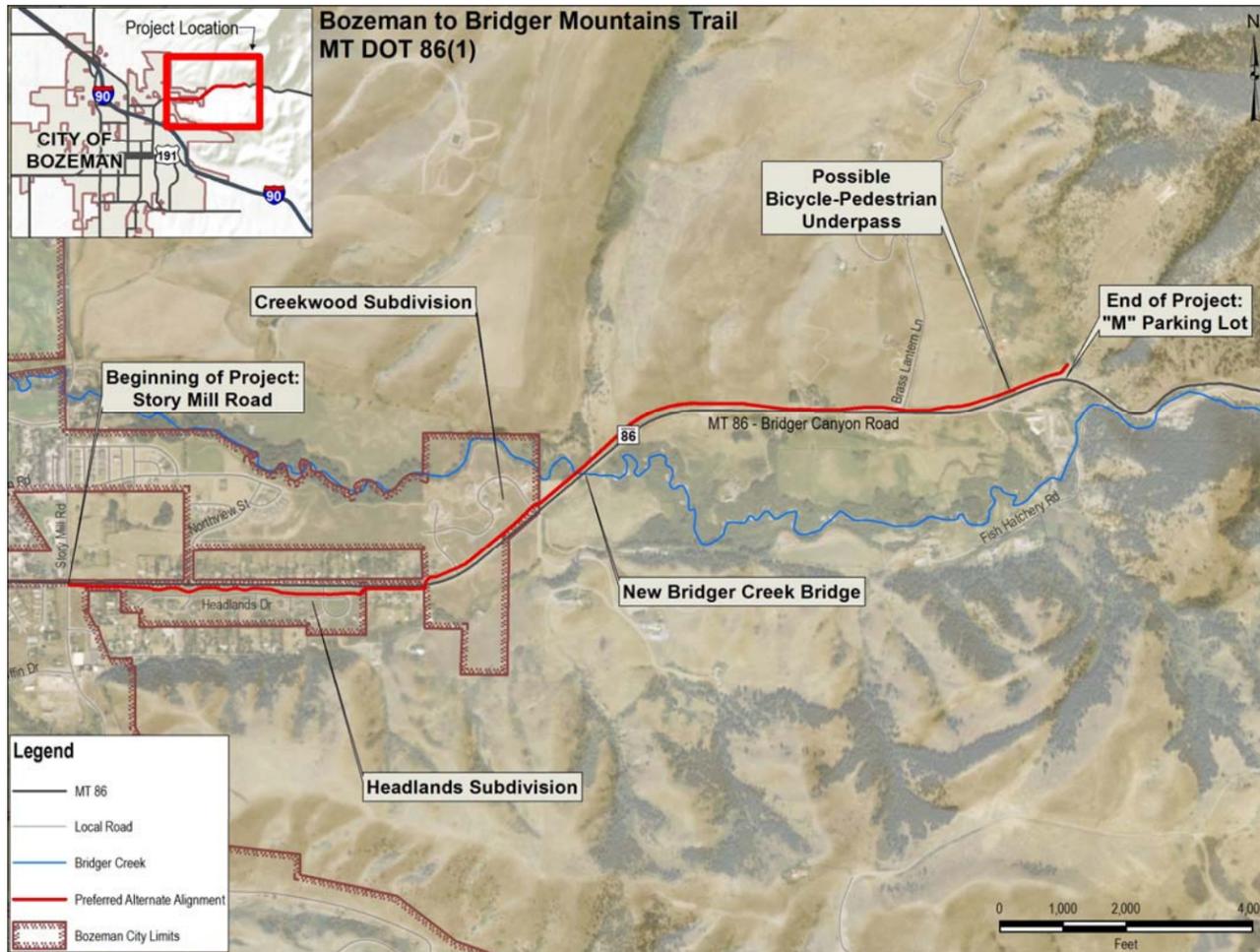
**Purpose:**

Open House Meeting #2 will allow the project team to describe progress made since the last Open House, future activities, and the schedule for the project. The informal meeting will also provide an opportunity for the public to comment on issues relevant to the development of the new trail. No formal presentation is planned.

**Project Background**

Bozeman’s “Main Street to the Mountains” trail system includes over 60 miles of greenway trails linking parks and neighborhoods throughout the community. This existing trail system crosses MT 86 at Story Mill Road, the proposed starting point of this project. The proposed project would provide a link between the existing trail system and the highest-use trailhead in the Gallatin National Forest at the “M” parking lot.

## Project Area



## Project Status

The Bozeman to Bridger Mountains Trail project began in the fall of 2014 with a feasibility phase to provide a high level look at conceptual design alternatives for the path. Five alternatives were analyzed:

- Alternative 1** is separated from MT 86, on an independent alignment that keeps all permanent path features within existing MDT right-of-way.
- Alternative 2** is separated from MT 86, on an independent alignment that reduces earthwork and the need for retaining walls, but would require additional path easement.
- Alternative 3** is adjacent to MT 86 on the north side of the highway, and within existing MDT right-of-way.
- Alternative 4** is adjacent to MT 86 on the south side of the highway, and would require additional path easement.
- Alternative 5** is separated from MT 86, and would follow the alignment of an historic county road easement south of Bridger Creek.

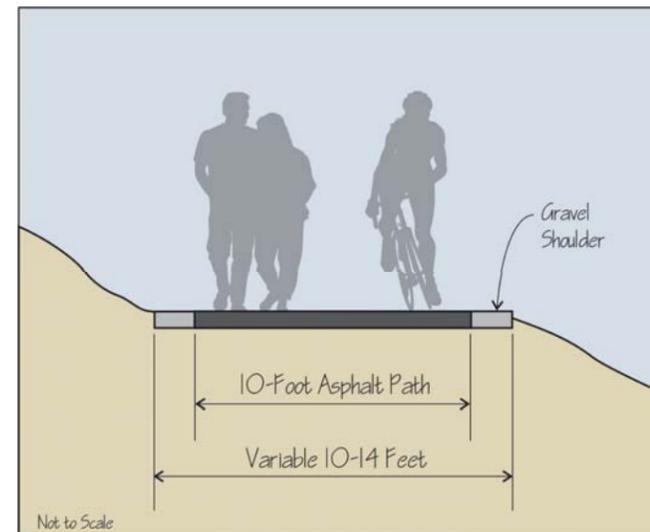
The feasibility phase included analyzing the conceptual design alternatives in order to evaluate the advantages/disadvantages, costs, right-of-way impacts, safety and potential environmental impacts of each alignment. The separated path requiring an additional path easement was chosen as the preferred alternative. The decision was based on several factors, including safety concerns, visual impacts, and traffic impacts, complexity of construction and maintenance, and cost.

In conjunction with the feasibility phase, environmental studies were completed for the project corridor. They included biological and botanical resource studies, wetland studies, hazardous waste studies, and cultural resource studies. The information gathered from the environmental studies are being used in the preparation of the project's environmental document as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

## Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative will generally follow the existing path on the south side of MT 86 through the Headlands Subdivision. East of the subdivision, the proposed path will cross Bridger Canyon Road and likely use portions of the existing path through the Creekwood Subdivision. The final crossing location will be determined as the design progresses.

East of the Creekwood Subdivision, the proposed path will remain on the north side of Bridger Canyon Drive, cross Bridger Creek via a new bridge, and continue to the "M" parking lot. Near the east end of the project, an underpass is proposed to provide a connection between the "M" parking lot and Drinking Horse Mountain Trailhead. The map on the previous page shows the general location of the preferred alternative. A schematic cross section of the proposed path is shown below.



## Future Activities

Information gathered during the feasibility phase and from the environmental studies, in conjunction with public input, will be used to advance the project development process.

Geotechnical field investigations will be performed to characterize the soils along the project corridor. The preferred alternative design will be further developed to better define the project's impacts and cost. The environmental document is nearly complete and will detail potential impacts of the preferred alternative.

Pathway easement activities will be undertaken with affected landowners. Similarly, utility coordination and relocation activities will be conducted with affected utility companies.

Upon completion of the design, environmental clearance, easement clearances, and utility relocation tasks, final plans and construction documents will be prepared. FHWA will then advertise the project, select a contractor to perform the work, and the project will proceed to construction.

The proposed project schedule is shown below.

## Preliminary Project Schedule

The preliminary project development phases of the *Bozeman to Bridger Mountains Trail Project* began in August 2014. Construction is tentatively planned for 2017, pending the completion of the design and NEPA processes and easement and utility coordination activities.

### Bozeman to Bridger Mountains Trail

PRELIMINARY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

MAJOR WORK TASKS	2014		2015				2016				2017			
	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Project Feasibility and Preliminary Design Phase	█		█											
Environmental (NEPA) and Permitting Phase	█		█											
Public Involvement Opportunities	█		█											
Final Design Phase			█				█							
Easement and Utility Phase			█				█							
Construction Phase											█			