



BIKE/WALK ALLIANCE for MISSOULA

P.O. Box 8881, Missoula, MT 59807

February 19, 2008

Steve King, Public Works Director
City of Missoula
435 Ryman Street
Missoula, MT 59802

RE: Russell/Third Street Project

Dear Steve:

It has come to our attention that the preferred alternative for the Russell/Third Street Project which was presented to the public in October 2006, is undergoing changes. We, as board members of Bike/Walk Alliance for Missoula representing well over 100 Missoulians, wish to register our deep concern over these changes which are being made in spite of the strong citizen feedback that the city, state and project consultants received nearly one-and-a-half years ago.

It appears some roundabouts are being eliminated and replaced by signals in the revised preferred alternative. Because roundabouts encourage reduced speeds, smooth traffic flows, fewer left-turns, increased driver awareness, and improved air quality, we oppose removing any roundabouts.

We also understand that a five-lane thoroughfare is now being considered over the entire length from Mount to Broadway. We believe this to a very bad idea, especially from Third to Mount. It would be detrimental to the neighborhood; it would encourage increased fast-moving traffic and would significantly increase risks to pedestrians, cyclists, and disabled persons. While we are willing to consider five lanes between Third and Broadway, we are united in our opposition to five lanes in the mainly residential section from Third to Mount. We believe three lanes and roundabouts will handle the traffic volume by keeping traffic moving smoothly and decreasing left turns. Three lanes (actually two lanes with islands and left-turn pockets) and roundabouts offer safe crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians alike.

Please, we must move beyond expensive solutions that only speed up traffic flow and increase traffic volumes. Rather, we must work together for more sensible, context-sensitive and fiscally responsible solutions that follow the principles of "Complete Streets" that keep our neighborhoods intact, that calm vehicle travel, and that promote transportation conditions safe for everyone – for both motorized and non-motorized travelers.

We hope there will be opportunities for additional public comment prior to the EIS and that roundabout options will be included in the preferred alternative for the EIS.

Sincerely,

/s/ BWAM Board of Directors :

Jim Sayer, President
Ryan Newhouse, Vice-President
Erin Kautz, Secretary
Bob Wachtel, Treasurer

Kevin Dohr
Kevin Hyde
Marta Meengs
Ethel MacDonald

