If anyone attending the Public Meetings needs special assistance, please provide advance notice by calling 258-4877. Missoula County will provide auxiliary aids and services.

1. CALL TO ORDER
   Commissioners Present: Commissioner (Chair) Michele Landquist, Commissioner Jean Curtiss, Commissioner Bill Carey
   Staff Present: Lewis YellowRobe, CAPS, Erik Dickson, Public Works

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS
   Commissioner Curtiss mentioned that April 27th is Forestry Day at Fort Missoula from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT
   None

5. ROUTINE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS
   Weekly Claims List ($2,390,010.56)

   Executive Session
   Commissioner Carey made motion that the Board of County Commissioners approve the weekly claims list in the amount of $2,390,010.56. Commissioner Curtiss second the motion. The motion carried a vote of 3-0

6. PROCLAMATION
   National Public Safety Telecommunications Week (April 14 - 20, 2013)
   Commissioner Carey read the Proclamation.

7. HEARING
Consider Options Presented in Robert Peccia & Associates Planning Study for Replacement of Maclay Bridge.

**Ground Rules for Today’s Hearing:**
~ Please make your comments based on the recommendation we have before us
~ When commenting, speak respectfully
~ Comment time ~ limited to 3 minutes per person
~ Be respectful by holding your applause/cheering

**Chair Landquist:** I’d like to discuss with everyone today, we’re predominately here to talk about a very hot topic that’s close to a lot of people. There’s people that feel differently about this. We’ve gone through quite a study process and a public process and this is the end product of that process. I think it’s the most respectful way to handle this while we begin this process and go through this whole process as people speak to not applaud, cheer or anything. Everybody has different comfort zones and I think out of respect for everybody regardless of what they have to say, I just hope they’ll say it politely and we can move forward as expeditiously as possible and hopefully get through this today to the point where the Commissioners can make a decision so everyone can move on with the rest of the summer and have their lives in tacked to do whatever it is you want to do with positive energies towards those ends. Without any further ado I’m going to turn this over to Erik Dickson and Lewis YellowRobe our two specialist that have been handling this to talk about the presentation that we’ve been through and where we are.

**Lewis YellowRobe:** I’m Lewis YellowRobe, I’m a planner with Missoula County assigned to work on this project with my colleague Erik Dickson and we have been working on the Maclay Bridge Planning Study for the past 12-14 months. This was a planning study that was done under not only the request but the direction of the Missoula Board of County Commission. This study was done in cooperation with the Department of Transportation and then with the technical assistance from the Robert Peccia & Associates, a Consultant to create the final Maclay Bridge Planning Study. That study was finalized towards the end of January, presented at a Public Meeting on January 31st. What I’m going to be doing is introducing the material and then I’ll be handing over the rest of the presentation to Erik Dickson to deliver for the Commissioners consideration. What this Planning Study did is it identified reasonable options to address safety, bridge concerns and environmental concerns, primarily to increase the safety and efficiency for the public. This existing bridge it’s obsolete and it’s deficient and the study then identified the South 1 alignment as the best option to meet the needs that were found within the Maclay Bridge Planning Study. This pre-NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) study what it isn’t ~ it is not a NEPA process. The purpose of this study was not again to create an environmental document, an environmental assessment and environmental impact statement. Again, what it sought to do was to look at the reasonable options and create the needs to increase the safety and efficiency of the transportation system within the planning study. One document that I do want to highlight as part of this portion of the presentation is the environmental scan this is a part of the final study. What this environmental scan did is it identified existing environmental resources and conditions in the planning area and so these environmental resources might be land, fish, wildlife, air, the visual resources so that just gave a very broad overview of what these resources are and what their conditions are. Within this environmental scan each section that has a statement similar to the statement that you see on the screen. If a project is advanced it
will be necessary to consider the potential impacts resulting from and whatever the proposed action is next, if that’s where the next step of the process is. Again, we just really wanted to highlight that this was not an environmental study but we just wanted to identify those reasonable options.

The planning team made a good faith effort to include and generate as much public participation as possible. The planning team hosted four information meetings; one is April, July September of 2012 and one as recent as January 31, 2013. Today’s public hearing held by the Board of County Commission is also part of this public involvement effort. The planning team also met with two interest groups from the area; the Maclay Bridge Alliance and the Maclay Bridge Common Sense Coalition on September 4, 2012. What the planning plan...the purpose of these meetings was is that these interest groups wanted to express some of their concerns that they had not only with the planning study but also express some of the concerns that they had with the bridge, the neighborhood and then other issues within the planning study. Quite a bit of the conversation on September 4th was generated around need #4 and Erik and I will get into a greater description of need #4, this really had to do with neighborhood character. There was quite a bit of debate from both sides on what this neighborhood was, what it meant and then also how the planning team then took that conversation into the planning study. There was also regular attendance by the public at eighteen planning team meetings throughout the process. And then throughout the process the planning team again received comments and questions throughout the study process and it wasn’t limited to the informational meetings, the hearings and two other meetings that were held throughout the planning process. The planning team also met with County, State and Federal Agencies at a resource meeting on April 24, 2012, you’ll see the list of agency invited, who were invited to attend the meeting and the list of who actually did attend the meeting. At this meeting the resource agencies were able to hear about the draft...learn a little bit more about the draft of the environmental scan that again is about the environmental resources in the area. The resource agencies were invited to comment on the plan before, during and after the meeting. The planning team took those resource agency comments not only into consideration but also begin to provide a little bit more comment into the environmental scan as well. So the Maclay Bridge Planning Study is comprised of five elements; the environmental scan, which again deals primarily with the air and water resources, fish, wildlife, some visual and then also the existing and projected conditions report that’s a summation of the environmental scan and then it starts to expand the conversation about the human element and not only the people that live there but also what are the activities that are going on in that area...not activities but the human resources that are at their homes and things like that. Needs and objections; the improvement options we’ll go over the 28 improvement options then which were screened to seven which got to the final recommendation that I introduced at the beginning of this presentation. With that I’d like to turn this over to Erik Dickson for him to deliver the remainder of the staff report.

**Erik Dickson, County Public Works Department:** As Lewis mentioned the first memo that was produced was environmental scan; I don’t want to go over too much of that right now it was a document that’s been in...this really isn’t any new information. Just mostly wanted to go through the steps of the study so that you could see and that anyone has not been a regular participant of the study can see where we developed our background information from. As Lewis mentioned, the environmental scan looked at those things you see on the screen like the geographic setting, what the land uses are, what the land ownership is, the land management, what physical resources are in the area such as the
geological and hydrologic and it just steps through all those environmental issues that are identified within the planning study. and as Lewis mentioned since this is not a NEPA process each one of those sections was identified to require more information with that statement that's if a project is advanced using these federal funds further evaluation or study examination will be required. There was no intent to say that the information that was provided was the final information or the end of the environmental process, this is just barely a start in when a project is moved forward. During the review of the environmental scan that's where the public really began to get involved and identified some of those key topics in that study. Primarily in the environmental scan was hydrology there was a lot of discussion and debate about the impact of the existing bridge on the existing channel what impacts a new structure might have on a different part of the channel considering riparian areas, wetlands, the flood plain and all those other impacts that it would have on such things as the air quality, the noise and the historic and cultural elements in the area.

After the environmental scan was completed the next step of the process was the existing projected conditions report and that’s exactly what that is, it just looks at the actual physical elements that are in the study area. Looks at the population, what planning efforts were in place to develop the neighborhood as it is now, what are the physical characteristics of the road, the bridge and a little more discussion for the environmental setting. Again this is not really a new topic it was well reviewed even though it was published in...I think finalized in September possibly, dates not clear. Anyway we were still taking comments on this clear through just about the end of the final study because each of these documents while the memo was finalized was still open for comment throughout the study process. A lot of those comments that were a theme that kept repeating itself through the environmental scan, through the existing projected conditions one of the big issues was the traffic predictions. We used the normal traffic demand model that the county and the state used to predict all projected traffic patterns in association with the Long Range Transportation Plan and for growth needs. There was a lot of debate about how accurate those models were that’s based on the previous twenty years traffic counts, they projected that forward through 2040 and in that model they can include adjacent land use, zoning issues, everything that is known for that area what can be impacting the predicted traffic. There was a lot of debate about that but that’s the best model we have, it’s an excepted method to give our best guess of what the actual conditions are going to be based on past history and adjacent land use. In conjunction with that there’s a lot of debate about the crashes in the study area. Early in this process MDT identified the west end of the bridge as being high accident location and there was a lot of discussion about the cause of the crashes and the contributing factors such as speed, alcohol impairment, weather conditions and again just a lot of debate about what the actual cause of those accidents were. Moving on from the crashes this I think really became the biggest discussion for any debate or any direction that the community felt the planning team was not addressing the needs or the goals or the desires of the community.

We’ll talk more about this later but this is the first time that this came up because with that traffic modeling and with the crashes there was a lot of discussion about the adjacent land use predicted traffic and how that fit in with the recently adopted Target Range Neighborhood Plan. I’ll get back to that later but some of the other issues that were identified in the E & P Report were questions about why we were encouraging access to what the community felt were substandard roads west of the Bitterroot River which would be Blue Mountain Road, Big Flat Road, they’re fairly narrow they are in hilly regions and they are an existing road network that we are connecting into so there’s different opinions about whether or not that was appropriate. Again, some other themes that carried forward from the environmental scan were again the discussion for the impacts on the
river channel, impacts to wetlands riparian areas and floodplains both in the existing location and the recommended location. From the existing and projected conditions report after the first meeting the consultant developed a set of needs and objectives that were intended to capture all of the community input and the local agencies consideration for what the ultimate goal of the study would be to recommend a viable option to improve this substandard bridge. You can see there that they narrowed it down to four for the very basic things of improving safety and operation, providing a long-term river crossing and connecting roads that would accommodate the plan growth in the area. That would minimize impacts from the selected options to the environmental cultural recreational characteristics of the study area and also as Lewis mentioned earlier, the forth need was really directed at addressing the impacts to the local residents in their neighborhood since they were so involved with the development of the recently adopted Target Range Neighborhood Plan they wanted to make sure that their plan was identified and was addressed in the needs objectives so we worked those four needs in. Each one of those needs had three or four objectives underneath that would help define the goals that were aimed at addressing that need. After the needs and objectives were identified the next step was to identify improvement options that would in theory satisfy those four needs. As many people know the 1993 study was used as background information, we did use I believe 16 of their identified routes and ultimately we added twelve more. Those broken down into general categories of improving the safety and operations on existing bridge which varied from adding some signs and lighting that MDT recommended and their safety analysis to removing the bridge and not providing a crossing in this area. The rehab option was a pretty hot topic for what level of work that was going to be done. It was really tough to define we worked a lot with MDT and their bridge engineers to see what level or work would be entailed with each level, whether it was a minor or a major. Really broke it down into just doing the basic work that could be done for keeping the bridge in service for roughly 20-25 years or a major rehab would be a significant investment to make it available for use for the next 50-75 years a very healthy investment. During the initial round of improvement options, we just started with the two but we later added the two more categories in the major/minor rather than just look at the bridge itself we decided to add approach work to the major and minor options so that there was four because in the end when it came to the screening criteria the major and minor rehabs didn’t even make the first screening cut. Again because knowing that the residents were really favoring a rehab option the design team made that exception to add those two options so that adding the approach would increase their chances of making through the first screening and at least being a viable option for the second level screening which we’ll look at here in a minute. Aside from the rehab options there was a new bridge to move to either an existing local on a slightly different alignment or one of those alternate routes up there, you see there’s fifteen total. They range from extending South 3rd Street from Clements to tying into River Pines Road or going straight across Sundown there on the south end or varying alignments in between that would theoretical address the needs by connecting with an existing road network and providing a feasible option. Of course the last option that was always carried forward and is required in this type of study is to do nothing, which would obviously mean we continue with maintenance as planned and continue to monitor the bridge and effectiveness in the future. So in the first level of screening we really broke it down in to two levels with twenty eight options the team decided that there was too many to try to screen out in one screening so we looked at it as the most basic need of those four original needs and objectives, which was to improve the safety performance and look at the conductivity as it relates to the existing road network and how that would serve the future growth. In order to move through the first
level screening each option would have to get a yes for both of those questions and that’s where again going back to the major and the minor rehab options. The first level screening completed without adding the approach improvements options to the major and minor rehab, they didn’t make it through, we adjusted that part of the available options mid-study to give a better chance for those options, again knowing that it was the request of the local residents, that they would really like to see the rehab options given a serious consideration. So in that first level screening we took the twenty eight options down to seven and that’s where you can see on this map that the purple line is the existing alignment of the bridge between North Avenue and River Pines Road so that includes the minor rehab with the approach work, the major rehab with the approach work. The #4 there was the North 1 option which would remove the bridge but put in a new structure, a new two-lane structure in the existing location. The other options that carried through into the second level screening were to add a one-lane bridge at an alternate location which was generally assumed to be the South Avenue alignment between River Pines Road and the end of South Avenue and keep each of those as a one-lane bridge with providing a looped route and obviously the Mount option, going from the end of Mount Avenue to River Pines Road and then both of the South Avenue options going from River Pines Road to Blue Mountain Road. Once those were set we looked at the second level screening criteria and that was a little more in depth, more so than the basic two question first level screening. The operational and safety screening criteria were further look at the safety and the conductivity of the option along with the conductivity and growth. What the constructability and cost concerns were, what the impact to the local environmental resources were and what the impacts to the neighborhood were. We broke those five categories down into sixteen questions and from those sixteen questions we came up with a final ranking of the seven options and in this case scoring the fewest points was the desirable goal. The consultant had a ranking system that was a combination of yes/no answers or a ranking of 1-7, depending on the questions asked and it’s a pretty involved analysis to put in one area, I think most people saw that during the final study report and actually that became one of the major concerns that we will discuss later. It’s tough to see in this slide but one of the two major discussions from the screening criteria were; what’s it going to cost and who’s going to pay for it? As one topic and then the other was as I think I mentioned before the desire of the Target Range neighborhood to have their neighborhood plan considered more in the screening criteria. As a general summary these seven options they range in cost from $6-8 million dollars for the two one-lane bridge loop route options to an estimate for the minor rehab with the approach work to just over a million dollars. So there’s a wide range of costs there but part of that concern is which of those options was going to be available for federal funding or would be required to be locally funded. In the screening process for the second level that was a major consideration for how feasible financially this each of those options would be. Lewis is going to take over again for a minute to discuss the off-system bridge funding program.

**Lewis YellowRobe**: There was quite a bit comment that was generated primarily at the fourth informational meeting about the funding, not only the funding program but the funding mechanism so we wanted to just take a little bit of time and talk about that. With this one funding mechanism for this and there are others but the one that was brought up is this off-system bridge program funding. One of the comments that was made at that public meeting was and their reference of some bridge funding, not only the program but the mechanism and that comment was using old information that was from the highway bridge replacement and rehabilitation program, that program no longer exists. What this does the new program for these types of bridges that are off of highways and major
secondary roads like highway 93 in Western Montana. What this off-system bridge program funding does is it…the current rules do not allow rehabilitation of a historic bridge due to and if it does not meet current standards and some of these current standards are alignment, clear zones, weight restrictions and the bridge width. It does encourage rehabilitation if the load capacity and the safety features can meet State standards but the department would not contribute funds if it does not address these safety and deficiency standards, including approaches. One of the other comments that came up during the planning study was about the reconstruction outside of the bridge itself. The bridge program does allow for some approach work, what they call tie-ins, so a certain amount of feet perhaps and I’m not talking two or three feet but a few hundred feet or so, to get the road tie-ins into the bridge to make it work. There’s a little bit of design work that’s involved that the decks fit and that the piers fit and so then all of that fits in with the road that leads into the bridge. The department said that any road work outside of these tie-in points are probably not likely for off-system bridge funding, so anything a few thousand feet or several hundred feet outside of that. So the planning team did not look at that and that gets back to this funding slide, its fairly difficult to read, Erik and I do apologize we’re trying to jam as much information into this presentation for everyone’s consideration. ‘B’ the cost estimates envision a new bridge and limited and limited approach work, this is based on this off-system bridge funding. These cost estimates again are limited to the new bridge and the limited approach work and then you’ll see towards the last sentence; outside of the tie-in points are likely not eligible for off-system bridge funding. One of the other rocks and hard places that we found ourselves in this planning team is that if we start planning and designing outside of not only what this program allows but from what the bridge focus is. Violating isn’t the right word either but we’re working outside of the confines of this existing off-system bridge program so we wanted to stay within the parameters of what we’re eligible to do with this off-system bridge program. We are aware of those costs that would extend outside of the existing bridge but again because of the confines of this program that we’re working under or could be working under we wanted to stay within that and not get out of not only the criteria but the intent itself. Again I just wanted to take a little bit of time and address that and what I’ll do is turn it back over to Erik. Erik this is the portion of the presentation, I know that we’re running short on time but we wanted to address some of the comments that were made, not only throughout the planning process but more towards the end of the process as well.

Erik Dickson: As Lewis mentioned this I think became the biggest portion for discussion throughout the process. The background documents, environmental scan existing and projecting conditions…the background information wasn’t, well it was receiving comment all through the process it wasn’t as much of a topic. People wanted to provide the background information that they felt was relevant and accurate but when it came down to the issuance of the final report this is the first time that the screening criteria was available for public comment. We received a lot of criticism that the screening criteria, particularly for the second level were biased towards engineering and transportation planners because that’s what the planning team are made of. We did receive some suggestions from members of the public that there should be other screening criteria that were directed more at the goals of the Target Range Neighborhood Plan but the consultant looked at those, compared those to the growth policy, long range transportation plans and some of the goals in the Target Range Neighborhood Plan conflicted with the growth policy. So rather than use those suggested criteria that would essentially cancel each other out we stuck with the original screening criteria that the consultant developed and once that was finalized then we were also criticized that the scoring of the screening
criteria that were used that it was scored incorrectly. A member of the public that was a
retired statistician with granted short notice was able to look at those the day or two before
the public meeting on January 31st and was critical at the public meeting that the result
were skewed towards a pre-determined outcome that we wanted to see. A lot of people
at the public meeting heard that and it became one of the main points of discussion
immediately after the fourth public meeting. What might not be clear is that upon further
examination of the screening criteria that were used by that retired statistician, he applied
what he thought was the correct scoring for those options and if you see on the bottom
there that 3E1 option still ranked as #1, which was the South 2 alignment. His results did
not change the ranking of the final seven options and for being such a hot topic we
thought that was important to see that without having screening criteria suggested by
members of the public even though they were criteria of how those screening criteria were
scored, even with what was determined to be an appropriate way to score those, it didn’t
change the outcome. I don’t know that many people saw that, this information was
submitted in a letter directly to the planning team and I don’t know how available that
information was to the public after that. You’ll see here that it is in fact the same ranking,
which ever scoring method is used.

Another discussion point of the screening criteria and actually was a fair discussion from
about half way through the study all the way on was that while the two original rehab
options were the minor and the major and there were members of the public that felt an
intermediate rehab option should have been considered and wasn’t given fair
consideration. They hired a local engineer to provide drawings and estimates for an
intermediate option. You saw earlier in the screening that those rehab options even with
the approach work consideration didn’t make it through the screening process to be a
viable option that addressed all four needs and objectives. This letter that was submitted
by the design engineer hired by the opponents of the planning study even on February
22nd which was about six weeks or so after the planning team had a discussion internally
through email, email chat, in our opinion the intermediate rehab option that was suggested
by the Maclay Bridge Alliance was essentially a major rehab option as agreed upon by
myself and two engineers from MDT. And you see in this letter several weeks after we
arrived at that conclusion which was the reasoning for not including intermediate rehab
option in the planning study is because…this highlighted sentence here that says; this
rehabilitation effort would generally fit the criteria shown in the study as a major rehab. It
just goes to show that the intermediate rehab option that was not considered in the
opinion of the public was essentially the option that was screened through the process
and didn’t meet all of the needs and objectives so it was not considered.

Another big discussion topic I think after the screening criteria came out was again that
thought that the planning team being mostly engineers and planners from Helena did not
consider many elements of the Target Range Neighborhood Plan that reflected the goals
and objectives of the community. I’m not going to read them all but in the Target Range
Neighborhood Plan that was adopted in 2010 I think there are several statements in there
that acknowledge that the growth predicted for the Target Range area is really not
impacted by the location of the bridge. One statement in the Target Range Neighborhood
Plan is that the Target Range area has seen continuous growth over the past 30 years so
they’ve acknowledge that for that long the area has been growing and even recognize that
many land owners realize the financial benefits of subdividing their holdings into 1-10 acre
lots for those people yearning to move away from the urban lifestyle. So the residents in
this neighborhood have already identified that they’re seeing financial gain by subdividing
and providing future development and continuous development and what the goal of the
study was to provide an option that addressed that growth. There’s several examples of
those repeated references to the fact that the areas growing. Another one was 40 years ago it was a very rural area, old timers point to many large developed areas and remembers the time when there were few if any houses here. Again, it's another point that identifies that with each generation or with each wave of people that moves in there's a different level of accepted growth and they're developing that to the predicted level of new development in the next 20 years with 655 additional dwelling units. The Target Range Neighborhood Plan doesn't associate any of that growth with the bridge; every reference is to future construction of homes and access to additional recreation lands. When they recognize that growth in their neighborhood plan they suggested several options to mitigate that growth and that included things such as reducing the speed limits on the major arterial streets which was accomplished in 2008. At their request we went through MDT, reduced all the speed limits to 35 mph, have such things as adding bike paths to provide separation from vehicle traffic. In all those options there's five of those, and those are all citizen initiated requests through the CTEP Program ~ Community Transportation Enhancement Program is now that Transportation Alternative Program so if they want those facilities there, that's a citizen initiated program to help provide that separation that level of safety. They include such things as establishing traffic circles at the intersections of 33rd & 40th, establish pedestrian crossings on side streets and I think one of the critical statements or sections in this is the bridge section which is #7 on page 38 of the Target Range Neighborhood Plan. The one statement is; at this time the proposed bridge faces significant financial hurdles, well that was true in 2010 but I don’t think it’s true anymore. Another comment said; this neighborhood plan has not identified a need for a new bridge. I think that's more of a want than a need, we spent the past year looking at this and have developed the needs and objectives the improvement options that would address some of these things that are brought up in the Target Range Neighborhood Plan. Even if you looked at the traffic demand model, although there was some debate or decent in whether or not that was an accurate prediction, the final study shows that regardless of where the bridge is the traffic east of the Bitterroot River increases while the traffic on Blue Mountain Road decreases. I think that's directly a result of the planned 655 dwelling units that have been identified in the Target Range neighborhood. Again this goes back to what the residents were objecting to as far as the screening goes and the fact that their opinion the planning study ignored the goals and desires of the neighborhood plan. We received several comments that were essentially saying that this bridge will bring more traffic and will be a negative impact on the neighborhood but for example one of these letters says; future construction will result in increased traffic congestion, more vehicle and vehicle/pedestrian accidents, increased noise and addition air pollution on roads and trails. That alone looks like a pretty good reason why there might be trouble with building a new bridge but if you go back to the neighborhood plan and look at the full statement, it says future construction of homes, additional recreation opportunities on city and county park land and city and county and federal lands, that will lead to the traffic congestion and the vehicle conflicts. It’s never been identified in the neighborhood plan that the bridge will bring the traffic, it’s always been identified that the plan development and recreational activities will bring that additional traffic and they’ve already suggested some feasible mitigation efforts that if and when the time comes can be examined for whether or not they can be implemented. I’m gonna pass this back to Lewis now and he’ll finalize our recommendation.

**Lewis YellowRobe:** With the final study that was completed towards the end of January and then released at the final public hearing. The results of the final study through the ranking from the second round of ranking identify South 1 as the option that addresses
the needs and objectives for safety and operation, future and current demands, minimizing the environmental impacts and also to the neighborhood characteristics. So that study again was made available to the public at that meeting and finalized at the end of March of this year. From the final study the staff does have a recommendation to the Missoula Board of County Commission and the staff recommends that the Missoula County Commissioners accept the Maclay Bridge Planning Study conclusion of replacing the Maclay Bridge using the off-system bridge program funding with the South 1 option and send a letter to the Montana Department of Transportation to request continued bridge project development. With that Chair Landquist and Commissioner Curtiss and Commissioner Carey, Erik and I would like to close out our portion of the staff report.

Chair Landquist: Commissioners do you have any questions for Erik or Lewis right now, at this point?

Commissioners: No.

Chair Landquist: Okay, what we’re going to do is open it up to the public to comment. I do want to make sure that everybody that showed up here today has signed in and if you haven’t, we can make sure that these clipboards get sent around or you sign in before you leave. And I’d also like to start with a show of hands…how many people are planning on saying something here today…a good number of people. And how many people have come to the meetings or even not come to the meetings and not spoken at all yet. Of those people that have raised your hands and have not spoken at all yet, I’d like to start with those people, who haven’t spoken yet and give you first dibs. If you want to line up, you’ll each be given three minutes; there will be clock up on the screen. Some of you have already handed us a copy of what you plan on talking about but you’ll each get three minutes and we’re gonna start with the people who have not spoken yet one way or another, regardless of what side of the river you stand on.

Public Comment

Steve Seninger: I’m a PHD Economist with more than 40 years of experience in economic cost and economic impact analysis. I live at 9601 Cedar Ridge Road in the O’Brien Creek area. I’d like to thank you for this opportunity to present some views, particularly in terms of what I find to be the very inadequate cost analysis of the final planning report. Basically in having studied as an economist and looking at what’s going on in there, I find the cost analysis particularly that pertaining to a two lane South Avenue replacement bridge extremely incomplete and lacking any realistic accounting and in conclusion of associated road, network infrastructure, maintenance law enforcement and public safety costs, basically about 3 or 4 points. Quickly point #1, the use of comprehensive costs in this critical table 15, where you look at the dollar numbers for the different options is not really comprehensive costs, there short run costs reflecting the construction phase of the operation and do not include any accounting for what might happen in terms increased traffic flows, particularly with the version of increased traffic flows from Reserve Street, which is already increasingly congested. Higher costs in the immediate post construction phase may be significant with this increased traffic diversions. We already see increased traffic flows along Big Flat and Blue Mountain Road over and above any kind of mechanical traffic studies that the planning team has looked at. Basically these higher vehicle trips which surely will be in excess of 650 vehicles per day,
as stated in the study are going to have a burden on South Avenue, on the Target Range School area, on pedestrian recreational path and basically on other roads in the Target Range area. So essentially when we look at the cost in table 15, it looks like it's a free deal because these are construction costs and in particular these seven million plus for the new south lane...South Avenue Bridge looks to be free money where as rehab costs look to be not free money and indeed it's not free money. It's an illusion that will be shattered in terms of increased costs as a result of more vehicle miles that vehicles trips are going to diverted off the increasingly congested Reserve Street area. Its public safety costs, maintenance costs, road network costs, etc. In closing I did hand you a copy of my comments. My wife Daphne and I have lived in O'Brien Creek area for 17 years, never encounter problems with Maclay Bridge. Many of our neighbors, especially those with kids at Target Range School and some who are small business operators in Missoula are in favor in retaining the existing bridge. Thank you.

**Michael Chandler:** My wife Nancy and I have lived at 4401 South Avenue for a few months shy of 40 years. In that time it appears that the traffic on South Avenue has multiplied about 10 times, it probably isn't quite that bad but it sure appears that way. We're living in a 30 mph zone and it's not uncommon at all to have 50-70 mph traffic by our house, most of which turns right or left two blocks away on the next street cutting over to the bridge. Quite often that is accompanied by squealing brakes and howling tires but an occasionally a crash. I do not see a...I'm primarily speaking to safety and costs and at this time we can't see where increased speed aimed right at the Target Range School, which will be the result of a straight shot coming down there. The way it is, the existing Maclay Bridge acts as a historical and expected slow-down. Recently, we have kept track of our last 10 crossings on the bridge; 7 times we didn't have to pause, 2 times we had to make a slow to a crawl and once a 10-15 second wait. I don't consider that to be an indicating obsolete or danger. It seems to be...and the three times we had slow up we were met by the opposing car with a friendly wave, seems like a nice neighborhood situation as opposed to something dangerous. We're strongly opposed to the new bridge on cost. I think everyone knows that big construction jobs that are several years down the road usually come in at close to double or more of the predicted cost. It's true that DOT would pay for the bridge abutment to abutment, maybe a little more than that but I think the cost of that will more than double in local infrastructure to try to slow down traffic that is coming straight down South Avenue aimed right at the Target Range School. For the reasons I know that the cost will be much higher than predicted and the safety factors involved, I think we're looking at a more dangerous situation rather than a safer one. Thank you.

**Sandra Acker:** I live on North Avenue just east of Humble. The traffic is there already, we see it increased year by year. Fixing Maclay Bridge is not going to fix the traffic problem or growth, on our side in our neighbor or west of the bridge. It's your job to plan for the future; the future is a new bridge. Target Range School has been there, nothing is going to change and the traffic goes by it now. I believe you Commissioners have a tough job and I was happy to hear the recommendation, I think we need a new bridge. Thank you.

**Christian Anderson:** I thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I speak to you from the perspective of a physician, a public health expert, a parent, a Missoula County resident and a Montanan who spent her life on rivers. I want to start by saying that I do understand
the emotional pull of a save the bridge campaign, beauty is in the eye of the beholder and those individuals certainly have the right to want to save an obsolete, unsafe bridge. I’m here today to encourage you to make the decision that has been recommended by two studies to save the Target Range neighborhood, save the river and most importantly save lives. Save the neighborhood, a few voices in one part of Target Range do not speak for all residents in the area. The new studies shows that moving the bridge would decrease traffic on most streets in Target Range, the current traffic design weaves traffic inefficiently through the residential streets and obvious an unwanted by-product of this design is useless gasoline consumption and decreased air quality. The more efficient traffic pattern created by moving the bridge location to the South Avenue site would actually preserve the rural character of the neighborhood. Save the river; anyone that has spent any time on this river knows that the channel is different at the bridge, the bridge was cobbled together and is not designed for that location and this has damaged the river. The South Avenue location is a much more shallow stretch of river and the bridge would be designed for the location to avoid river damage. At the current site, water hits the middle pier bounced off and creates a whirlpool and it’s this whirlpool that creates and irresistible attraction for unsafe behavior, which leads me to my third point. Please save lives; take a look at the pictures that I have supplied to you. Even if we didn’t have two studies that recommended moving the location of the bridge it’s hard for me to believe that anyone would think this is an acceptable risk. I took this picture driving on the bridge, I suppose one could make the argument that I could drive somewhere else and that an adult has the right to do anything that they want and if this were a natural rock wall that would be one thing but this is a county structure that is known to pose a risk. What future concerns me is the debate in the paper about how many drowning’s have occurred related to the bridge, is this the kind of community that we live in where debate and acceptable mortally ratio associated with the county structure occurs in the paper? I’ve watched a terrified child far younger than 18 standing on that bridge to jump being bullied by what appeared to be her family. In addition a new bridge would also save lives by lowering emergency vehicle response time and allowing full-sized fire equipment to reach everyone living west of the bridge. I hope we live in a community where we watch out for one another. Keeping this unsafe bridge doesn’t accomplish this. Please make the decision so that we can all move on to other things, tackle other issues that face our community; homelessness, joblessness, substance abuse, domestic violence just to name a few. We have so few opportunities to prevent bad outcomes; we live in a world where we can’t go to a marathon without fear of being killed. That isn’t the case here; we know the recommendation to move the bridge to a safer location improves the character of the neighborhood, allows the river to heal and prevents injury and death. Please consider these things, save the neighborhood, save the river, save lives.

Roger Hinther: I have lived with my wife Jan at 3840 Spurgin for the past 27 years. Approximately every six weeks I take our grandson to Target Range for a two week period when his parents change shifts at work. With a bridge off the end of South Avenue commuters will learn early what a bottle neck it is at Target Range School around 8:00 a.m., I myself avoid it by using North, Humble and Gunsight. Commuters will be looking for alternate routes, which will include Humble, North, Woodlawn Avenue, Clements, Spurgin, 7th and 3rd. The corner on 3rd is terribly unsafe, traffic in the Target Range and Orchard Homes will never be the same when we are a bypass.

Frances Owens: I live at the corner of Hampton Drive and South Avenue with my husband Roy, we have lived there 20 years and we have liked living there but when as
time comes when things have to change. We are both in our 80’s and can no longer take care of our place. Roy is in very poor health so we have put our place up for sale but who will want to buy our place with that bridge going in and it will also devaluate the price of our property. We want to go live near our daughter. We are very much against the new bridge.

**Sharon Sterbis:** I live at 4652 South Avenue West so this concerns me greatly since I’m going to be near the new bridge. My major concern about this whole study is that out of 100+ documents, only one page was devoted to vaguely discussing the roadway improvements. I don’t know whether the new bridge can be safe because right now where I live, the South Avenue I live on is a very unsafe road. It is narrow it doesn’t even have a double line going through it. I live on the crest of a steep hill so when I see the few people coming from west, I have to be very careful because you cannot see them until they are right there. This study did not...and I went to all four informational meetings and nobody ever said what’s going to happen to South Avenue where I live. I have a third grader and I would like him to be able to walk to school but there’s no discussion whether there’s going to be a bike trail continuing down. I run every day, I run across the bridge more than I drive across it. You should be looking at pedestrian concerns as well and nothings been discussed. I don’t see how you can just choose this option when you don’t know whether it’s going to be safe or not and at this point it’s not clear unless you detail what the roadway improvements are. It looks like it won’t be paid for by the funding program so who’s going to pay it? That’s my question.

**Barbara Hall:** I represent the Clark Fork Coalition. I just want to thank your efforts at the county, the staff for all the work that has gone into the study, as well as the work and involvement of the community. The Coalition, we’ve submitted comments on the draft report and our main concerns really are that once we do get to a decision on the bridge we really want to make sure as we understand will happen, that the environmental impacts to the river will be extremely considered. There will be a need for process. Right now it's hard to say because we don’t have the information on each alternative on what the environmental impacts are. Our initial recommendations are really that whatever the alternative chosen is that we do look at really having one bridge only in the river to minimize impacts. That we really try to avoid in the design having piers in the river and that every effort is taken to avoid every impact to the riparian area. Thank you.

**Vickie Mickelsons:** I live at 410 Brooks Street so I'm not in the Target Range neighborhood but I’m against a new bridge and would like to encourage you to go with rehabbing the existing bridge. I attended a transportation planning meeting that I wrote all of you about with my daughter, it was probably a year and half ago. In that planning meeting we were asked, there were probably 150-200 people, we were asked to sit in groups at tables of about 10 and talk about what we thought the transportation plans should be for the Missoula area spending Ninety Million Dollars and that was the estimated budget. I think that out of that meeting and with the consultants guidance it was determined that the people that were there primarily were interested in encouraging alternative methods of transportation and driving. Well we already have cars and already have congestion, that we need to do more in the way of upping the bus routes and the number of trips those buses take and allowing and encouraging bicycling etc. I know for some people that isn’t a viable alternative but I think Missoula is limited in growth regardless, in the way that it can grow and that we need to try to create and keep what we
have in terms of rural esthetics and I think also in terms of safety the Maclay Bridge does act as a calming device. I think that there definitely has to be rehab but I just encourage you to go that route. Thanks.

**Suzanne Sweitzer:** I live west of the bridge at 11905 Green Acres Road. I am speaking in favor of rehabilitating Maclay Bridge for the following reasons; having a one lane bridge that has been rehabilitated to 36 tons which is adequate for all emergency vehicles and buses is an option that compliments the rural character and social values of the area. A design has been submitted that has a separated bike/pedestrian path, if that is not a satisfactory plan I’m sure your engineers could come up with something that perhaps would meet the standards that they’re looking for. The second reason is there would be no addition environmental or river damage. Please look at the map on page 60 of the study plan, do you really want to impact that much of the environment to build a new bridge a few hundred feet away from the existing bridge? It preserves a historical landmark. We hear about having to meet standards but doesn’t AASHTO have a special consideration section that allows for situations involving historical, environmental and other special concerns? I think it would be a unique feature that Missoula County could be proud of and not just your standard concrete bridge, we got two of those and four miles away from this one. It is a built-in traffic calming again. We know that straight roads encourage speeding which in-turn leads to more and also more severe accidents. Why continue building straight roads in residential and recreational areas? I’m also concerned not just about South Avenue but the four way intersection at River Pines is already dangerous from the north and the south, the hill coming down Big Flat, the elevation increase from Blue Mountain. I also feel rehabilitating the bridge would cost a lot less than a new bridge. Finally, I think the Target Range, Big Flat, Blue Mountain area is one of the last best places new the city to live and recreate in. Commissioner Carey said it well when he voted against a proposed subdivision in the Swan Valley; “It’s just something I’m afraid that year after year, decade after decade we will gradually take the magic out of that part of the world, despite our best intentions.” I can only hope that the Commissioners will want to preserve and protect the “magic” that that is right in own backyard. Thank you.

**Cindy York:** Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I’m a Target Range resident, business owner and mother of three school children. A lot has been said and written about the condition of Maclay Bridge and I’m speaking in favor in rehabilitating Maclay Bridge. I’m here today as a concerned citizen regarding the lack of maintenance of Maclay Bridge. I think we all agree that maintenance slows the rate of deterioration, extending the life of a bridge. Rehabilitation efforts on Maclay Bridge have only been minimal over the last 19 years. I learned that the trust portion of Maclay Bridge spans between concrete supports on both sides of the main river channel. The bridge expands and contracts, to accommodate this movement the bridge ends on larger wall barring’s. In 1995 they were apparently in good shape. The portion of October 31, 2011 Maclay Bridge inspection report regarding these barring’s indicate that these barring’s were non-functional in 1998 and have remained that way to the present time. The bridge deck was replaced in 2004 which would have been a good time to repair or replace barring’s but that as apparently not done. Other neglect that has occurred with the paint and the rust is becoming a greater problem; the steel deck accurately has a hole rusted through it. Most things need to be regularly inspected and maintained in order to function properly, slows the rate of deterioration and avoids higher repair or replacement costs. I get my teeth cleaned twice a year, I have the oil changed in my car every 3,000 miles and have my furnace checked every fall, the bridge is inspected every two years but no action is taken to correct these
problems. As a tax payer, I would like to have the following questions answered; when the deck was replaced in 2004, why was this opportunity not used to repair or replace the barring’s? Why has there been no maintenance work done on the Maclay Bridge since summer 2005, eight years ago? Why has the ___ devices not been repaired since they were noted as non-functional in 1998, fifteen years ago? Thank you.

**Lynn Gogas:** I live in the 4600 block of South Avenue West, which would be very close to the new bridge location so of course I don’t want it for personal reasons but there are other reasons as well. I taught at Target Range School for 27 years, the school is located right up to the hill to ‘the Butte’ we call it accurately in Target Range and there’s no way for the children to get anywhere unless they cross South Avenue so we will need some kind of infrastructure to take care of that situation and to make sure that the children are safe. It’s very difficult now for the children to walk across the street, I can imagine what it will be after a new bridge is installed. Another question I have is you talk about the increase in development in that area and the increase in development as far as I can see will take place east of the bridge, I don’t see any land that’s particularly available for huge development west of the bridge because there are mountains, there is Blue Mountain recreation area, there are a few hay fields that are vacant that probably will developed but that’s all I can see. Of course everybody east of the bridge will be able to just take whatever street they want and go into town. I just don’t see that the bridge would be an improvement for our area. Thank you.

**Mark Partridge:** I thank you for the time to stand before you today. I’m a little slow so I would just like to ask a question of Mr. YellowRobe. You’ve obviously studied this and spent 18 months, correct? What is the cost, not counting the bridge, what is the cost from the bridge to Reserve Street to widen the road and to do all the infrastructure that we need, what is the cost for that?

**Lewis YellowRobe:** We did not calculate those costs. Again, falls out within the parameters of that off-system bridge program. I did have an explanation within the staff report.

**Mark Partridge:** So you don’t have a cost?

**Lewis YellowRobe:** No.

**Mark Partridge:** So my question is; my family is learning to live with less and as a Country I think we’re going to have to learn to live with less. How can you possibly approve a project that you don’t even know what it’s going to cost?

**Commissioner Curtiss:** That’s part of the next phase.

**Chair Landquist:** That’s a good question and its part of the next process. These things go in stages and I don’t want to take up your time, finish making whatever comment you need to make.

**Mark Partridge:** I guess all I want to say is my understanding is and I’ve heard a lot of different people, I hope we have some people that are going to speak today on this. Cost as high as 8-13 million dollars to widen the road from the bridge to Reserve Street, along
with the other infrastructure changes and things that we need and yet that is a cost that we will pay as a community. I don’t know if everyone here understands that but we’re mortgaging our kids. I’m far enough off it’s not going to affect me, I don’t really care if we have a bridge or not but what I am concerned about is how are we going fund all this stuff and how can we possibly consider a project when we don’t know how much it cost? The blank check that they are writing…

**Chair Landquist:** Are you speaking to us sir?

**Mark Partridge:** Well yes….

**Chair Landquist:** We’re over here.

**Mark Partridge:** I know I’m speaking to everyone though. I think that we need to understand that these costs are going to be paid. I look at my kids and they’re going to have to assume the costs of these things and I guess I just want to ask you very carefully to consider the cost of that. When we can spend a million to rehab a bridge versus 7 or 8 or 10 million to put a new bridge in and finally connect it to Reserve Street, I think we need to look at those costs. Thank you.

**Chair Landquist:** Before we get too carried away with going down one single path of thinking here, I will share with you when it comes to cost something that I was quizzing; one of the head honcho’s from MDOT yesterday after a transportation meeting about the off-system bridge and costs and things associated with it, that I was concerned with. My understanding and please experts here, my local staff, correct me if I screw this up…we take certain things in steps. We have this report from the consultants if the Commissioners decide to take the recommendations of staff to go with the preferred alternative and identify the need for a new bridge at the location that’s been identified; off-system bridge funding is used. We’ll still have to go through an EIS and a whole lot more planning and phases but everything that ends up being identified most of which the consequences of having to widen certain things, acquire certain properties, bench marks, all these different things get built into the plan and that’s all part of the funding mechanism that gets used and that comes from all of our federal tax dollars (gas tax dollars). I’ve been very concerned about unintended costs as well and have had the assurance of MDOT that that all gets…all those unintended costs aside from the bridge replacement, they get identified and they built into that fund that we’re entitled to pull money from. If that’s any consolation to you as far as the monies go, I know I’ve heard people say it sounds like it’s money waiting for a project, well it kind of sort of is, that’s what that money sits there in the federal coffers for. We all pay into it and the Maclay Bridge was identified many years ago; put on a waiting list and it finally trickled up so this is our turn, our shot at utilizing that pool, if we decide to go that way.

**Jim Roach:** My wife and I live in Target Range on Humble Road we’ve lived there for a while. My concerns are many and you’ll probably hear them repeated again and again. The money is definitely a concern, right now we have the big Federal deficit and we have sequestration and section 8 housing is being cut, all of those kinds of things. How can we justify seven million dollars for a bridge that’s not wanted, it’s apparently not needed right now, we’re doing okay with what we have and it could have a lot of negative consequences. That’s my first question. I’m not use to speaking in public. I think the
Target Range neighborhood, the whole area is really unique and it’s a really nice mix of agricultural and residential and it’s been that way ever since I first moved here in 1971. I think that the neighborhood is unique in part because there is no major travel corridor going through it and also just because the efforts of all the people that live there, they like it that way, they want to keep it that way. I think that this travel corridor that’s projected and I think it has a good potential for becoming a major shunt. I know if I lived up the Bitterroot and had to work in town I’d be using it a lot. I think that building that through there is going to tear a big hole in that riparian corridor that exists along the river and it’s also going to tear a big hole in the fabric of the neighborhood and people that live there really don’t want that…certainly has the potential to do that. I wonder what we really need it for. The engineering report specifies future growth and traffic needs and increasing traffic flow and better grid inter-connection and do we really have to sacrifice everything that we value and consider special for those things for all this growth and increased speed and traffic efficiency, that kind of stuff. I think it’s something that really needs to be looked at. In the report itself they talk about by putting in turn lanes at Humble and turn lanes at Clements, they can accommodate possibly up to 9,600 vehicles per day, we really don’t want to see that in our neighborhood and I don’t think it’s necessary to plan for that at this stage. I’m sure you’ll hear lots of points.

Hannah Smith: Me and my fiancé live at 1615 Clements. We are on one of the busier streets I’d say in the Target Range area because it is a thoroughfare that takes people from either South or 3rd down into any kind of westerly direction. I believe that creating a new bridge is an opportunity that we can’t miss. I’d hate to be in a position where for example, every time I cross Maclay Bridge I think I’d hate to be the person that this bridge collapses on today because there’s always a risk of that happening. I’m an avid river enthusiast and when I get into the river at Maclay Bridge I am always very cautious of where I get in because I know certain areas are incredibly dangerous. If there was an airplane that was in bad repair that hadn’t been fixed for several years and that multiple people had died at, that airplane would be taken out of commission and a new one built; it wouldn’t be up in the skies taking you to work every day. I think that a new bridge on South Avenue would allow people to get across town easier; I do believe considerations would be taken as far as speed, safety and the fact that there is a school zone there. I drive down 3rd Street everyday where there is a school zone and I agree that I have seen people drive way faster than 35 and in fact I’ve been passed going 40; I’ve been going 40 and people have passed me. But during the school zone times there is always people there monitoring speed, making sure that the children are safe at the crosswalks. I think that that’s something we shouldn’t just assume that that’s not going to be taken into consideration. I also believe that the money spent on putting a new bridge in or just the time and effort put into researching the benefits of a new bridge is worth our communities’ time. We talk about how the bridge is going to be more capacity than we need, well right now the bridge that we have is way less capacity than what we need. That bridge is used by several hundreds and hundreds of people, multiple times a day and again, when are we going to regret looking into other options? I support looking into the South Avenue option further; I think it that it is the right choice for our community in the future rather than holding onto our emotional ties to a bridge that is no longer functional.

Anne Rupkalvis: I live in the Target Range area and have for years. A couple things; first referencing the Target Range neighborhood plan, perhaps I miss understood when it was referenced but I want to make clear that with regard to bridges on page 38, it indicates and mind you this is 2010, it indicates that the Missoula County’s Transportation Plan proposes
a bridge crossing the Bitterroot River west at South Avenue. The next sentence is; at this
time the proposed bridge faces significant financial hurdles, I perhaps didn’t understand
what was being said but I didn’t understand it so I wanted to make sure that you
understand it. It’s the proposed bridge that we’re talking about here that at that time was
facing financial hurdles.

**Commissioner Curtiss:** And Anne to clarify, I think what Erik was saying was now that
it’s been identified as a priority for the off-system bridge that statement is no longer true. It
was at the time for sure.

**Anne Rupkalvis:** Also with regard to the Target Range neighborhood plan, at the time
that we were working on this plan which was what 18 months or so prior to its adoption,
there was not any discussion of this South Avenue bridge ongoing at that time. So had
there been, we probably would of addressed that much more focusedly and come up with
something more specific to that in the plan. A couple more points; one is I work at Target
Range School, have for many years, when you’re considering the health and safety of the
community, I would have you recall that there have been two children killed on South
Avenue already that actually were both in the same grade at Target Range School.
Whamming through a bunch more cars because it’s easier and faster will only increase the
opportunity for that to occur. Lastly a question, if there’s a new bridge put in at South
Avenue than what would be the fate of the Maclay Bridge? Would it just kind of continue
to get neglected and rust away and get sold away for scrape?

**Commissioner Curtiss:** That would be considered in the next process, whether it makes
sense to be a pedestrian bridge or whether it needs to be taken out or…

**Anne Rupkalvis:** I would hope that whatever consideration is given that is part of it.
**Laura Taylor:** I live in Target Range because it is rural by design. Michele I do have a
question for you, I’d like you to clarify for me; you stated there would be no Missoula
County money used for changing infrastructure from Reserve Street to a new bridge, am I
correct in hearing that?

**Chair Landquist:** No, I didn’t necessarily say that. I just said that I was assured that gas
tax money…the off-system bridge money comes from gas tax money and that whatever is
identified. If we make the decision to take this option that the consultants have come with
that everything that’s identified and building that bridge, if it’s written properly that money
goes towards those amenities or necessities for that bridge.

**Laura Taylor:** From gas tax money?

**Chair Landquist:** From gas tax money.

**Laura Taylor:** Not from Missoula County taxpayers?

**Chair Landquist:** That’s what I understand.

**Commissioner Curtiss:** It’s not gonna go clear back to Reserve Street you can bet.

**Laura Taylor:** Well it wouldn’t really need to.
Chair Landquist: All the safety concerns and abutments and what’s the word I’m looking for ~ for encroachments? ...Approaches.

Laura Taylor: Well everything that has been mentioned has been east of the bridge, let us not forget that there is major concerns west of the bridge as well. Especially the intersection River Pines and then when you get onto Blue Mountain Road itself, that is so constricted there’s no place to widen that, that has been done as much as it can possibly be done.

Chair Landquist: There’s an irrigation ditch there right?

Laura Taylor: Yes there is, yes there is. And if this becomes a bypass, we’re screwed. And Anne just started to bring this up and it is also a huge concern of myself and my family and my neighbors, what is going to happen to the existing Maclay Bridge if a new bridge is built? There has been mention right from the very beginning that there will be tax money used to make that a park area, I’m not hearing that anymore.

Chair Landquist: I hadn’t heard that and that’s part of the next process.

Laura Taylor: Okay then my last question is; if you as Commissioners approve this step right now is there a possibility down the road if things start going Ka-Ching, Ka-Ching, Ka-Ching and getting extremely expensive that you can halt it?

Chair Landquist: I would think that there would be a mechanism for us to pull the plug and say we can’t go here we have to do something else.

Laura Taylor: Thank you I truly hope that is the case.

Roy Owens: My wife spoke already here we both live on South Avenue and Hanson Drive and we could sell a rock any day for the last 20 years on neither one of them. I really don’t know which way to go on this bridge; I’m not trying to tell anybody what way to go. But I look at the thing a little bit different probably than lots of people and I still believe in ‘One Nation under God’. Before I left the house today we had been rustling with people trying to buy our property because we can’t take care of it anymore. We have too much garden and too much yard and all this bridge stuff has just conked in to where we are just sitting there doing nothing and wondering what it’s going to do. So I just want to put my arm around my wife today when I left and I said; Thank you Jesus for helping you and I said we’re going to leave it to them Commissioners up there, they’ll do the best they can for us I think. Under the circumstances if I was one of you I don’t know what I would do right now. Thanks for listening.

Chair Landquist: Okay, we’re still taking testimony from people who have not testified at any of these before.

George Hirschenberger: I live at 4475 Sundown Road in Missoula County. I’m here to offer my thoughts as a Missoula County taxpayer. I’ve attended three previous meetings that were held to take comments on the Maclay Bridge planning study and today I’ve heard many of the same comments offered during those meetings but the outcome of this
hearing will be different. I understand that the Commissioners will now decide whether or not to move into the next phase of planning, if you do decide to go forward with the proposal to build a new bridge you begin a new multier expensive divisive planning effort that under the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) will have to be examined closely. I worked extensively with NEPA as a Federal Land Manager and here’s what I see ahead; because the new bridge as envisioned will use federal funds and because there is both a high level of public controversy and significant effects to the natural environment, the need for an environmental impact statement is obvious. I understand that less rigorous environmental assessment of this proposal was done in 1994 and that this assessment was not taken to conclusion because it did not clearly state the purpose and need for the action and because the funding uncertainty for completely the project. Given that a lot of work lies ahead to comply with the law and I see some major hurdles for the new bridge proposal, here is why; NEPA requires that in addition to detailed subscription of the proposed action, a no action and all other reasonable alternatives be fully considered. The detailed professional engineers proposal to repair and augment the existing bridge that’s been presented by the Maclay Bridge alliance will certainly need to be given full consideration. NEPA does require that all connected actions also be considered as part of the proposed action. This brings into play over a half mile of redesign and reconstructed road at the end of South Avenue. Impacts to South Avenue land owners from widen right-of-ways and over a half mile of new right-of-way and new road to the west of the river. These impacts will have to be examined as part of the proposal in addition to all the impacts to land, water, human community, wildlife and so on that are associated with the new bridge itself. As I read the planning study that is before you, now most of these issues have not been adequately considered or not considered at all, my very quick back of the napkin comparison table tells me this; when all the costs and benefits and impacts of the South Avenue bridge are aligned up a very solid proposal to fix an existing bridge in place the decision to repair and not replace will be a foregone conclusion. Because this conclusion will follow a multiyear planning effort with cost running easily into six and probably seven figures at the tax payers’ expense, I urge you not to go down this path. I also want to briefly address the safety and maintenance issues that have been raised in the past meetings. I urge you to follow-up immediately on these concerns; Missoula County has an obligation to the public and to the tax payers to address hazardous conditions it’s aware of within its roads and bridges. These problems are now stated into the public record and it seems to me that it would be irresponsible to do anything less than to take corrective action as soon as possible.

Chuck Crowler: I live on Edwards. I have a little concern; the present bridge has been washed out twice so it's pretty impervious to flooding. Up the Bitterroot much of the forest land has been burned off, I think most people agree. Right here in this parking lot in 1996 the snow was four foot deep so we still are capable of having real winters here. So if we have real snow up there and we get the right kind of rain in June that bridge is gonna be down the road. Who's gonna pay for it then?

Chair Landquist: Good question. FEMA? I’m sorry.

Chuck Crowler: The other little thing about the bridge, you can’t park within a half a mile of the bridge June 1st to September 30th. There is a big law enforcement problem there. On the west side of the bridge there are no trails or anything to ride on, I rode my bicycle over there down to Blue Mountain and I decided on the way back I’d maybe plan Russian
roulette, it might be a little safer but you and two cars, they win. Thank you for your attention.

**Jean Thompson:** I've lived in Missoula since 1966, in Target Range since 1982. Over the last 47 years I witnessed a great deal of change in the valley and in town. The direction of the significant amount of that change was driven by decisions made regarding the construction new or replacement bridges, Madison Street, Reserve Street and Kona Road in particular. Based on my 47 years of personal observation I believe the construction of a new bridge off the end of South Avenue to replace the existing Maclay Bridge will have profound effects on travel entering Missoula from the Bitterroot Valley. There hasn't been a lot of discussion about traffic coming up from the valley; most of it has seemed to be discussing Big Flat primarily. Clearly a new main line bridge at the end of South Avenue will facility traffic coming and going from the Bitterroot Valley while Big Flat and O'Brien Creek are now being adequately served. At some point in the future growth on the Big Flat may drive the need for an improved bridge at or near the current Maclay Bridge location. However, replacing the bridge first will facilitate and drive that development and growth profoundly altering traffic use in the Blue Mountain, South Avenue and Target Range areas. A more nature progression would be to let the Big Flat grow at its own pace and let the growth determine when the bridge needs to be upgraded.

I have a question that just came up, just a...there was a question about would the Maclay Bridge remain, would it stay in place? The response was, well that's a decision to be made in the next phase it might be that it was used for...might be used for recreational purposes or something like that...a bike path. If one of the criteria for making this decision was regarding safety relative to the bridge and the way people recreeted on the bridge and this decision were to...say safety was a big part of this, we gotta get rid of the bridge or we have to build a new bridge because of safety. Wouldn't that negate the option of keeping the bridge going and have it be a recreational opportunity in the future?

**Commissioner Curtiss:** Probably.

**Chair Landquist:** Good question Jean.

**Joseph St. Peter:** I live at 1615 Clements with the pretty blonde lady that spoke earlier. I thought it was important to reemphasize that in their initial phase...your initial screening part that was a safety screening and that the rehabilitation that options didn't even meet the initial screening and that you continued them forward because people wanted you to continue them forward? I think it's important to emphasize that it doesn't even meet the safety requirements to rehab this bridge, this bridge isn't habitable. Let's not repair it; it's not good enough to repair. I've lived there my whole life, just on the other side and it is a mess, I saw it when I grew up it was a wooden until 2004 when they paved it over. The safety of that bridge is...well, like you said it doesn't even pass the first requirement. So I don't think it's very...it's pretty disingenuous to continue to put forward this rehabilitation options when in your own screenings it shouldn't of even passed the first round. I think the South options a great placement for it, the river there is a riffle it's not a turn so you don't get all that buildup of sand that you have at the current one. That big beach sits right there now is completely artificial, it's because of the way the bridge was built, I don't know in like the 50's they threw a bunch of stuff at it and threw a bunch of piers at it and created a big old mess which people love to hang on but it also creates very...it changes the channel
quite a bit where the new placement looks like it’s in a riffle that it wouldn’t create those same kinds of attractions. So I’m all for the new bridge.

**Chair Landquist:** Anybody else that wants to speak that has not spoken at any of these bridge meetings?

**Janet Lyon:** I’m a property owner in Target Range region; I’m also a parent of three children who attend the school there. I think especially in these times we have to be concerned above all with cost of the tax payer and we’re saying that federal funding is going to be used to pay for a replacement bridge, it sounded a little iffy. I have two major concerns about that and that is that in order for a new bridge to receive federal funding, it has to be included in the five year projections of the Missoula long range transportation plan to get that money.

**Commissioner Curtiss:** And it is.

**Janet Lyon:** Okay. And that was approved in 2012 and my understanding is that it would have to be amended somewhat to receive that federal funding and so that’s an additional….

**Commissioner Curtiss:** Different pots of money.

**Janet Lyon:** You keep saying different pots but they’re all our pots. So the other concern I have is that there’s thousands of Missoula County residents who know nothing about what’s going on out here and it will impact every single one of them via tax payer dollars. I think it’s important that we convey that to them, make sure they know about it and I think that’s part of what our process is doing here. The last think I wanted to say is our tendency or our movement in this Country is to reduce, reuse, recycle and I’d like to add rehabilitate. Everyone knows that this bridge is not sound and we’d like to rehabilitate it and I would ask you to consider that, strongly.

**Chair Landquist:** Okay so now we’re faced with the challenge of letting everyone talk that wants to talk that either is for replacing the bridge or against replacing the bridge for whatever your reasons are. I was told prior to this meeting by our HR guy I believe it was that the proper way to go about doing this would be to flip a coin, call heads or tails and give half an hour to people that are opposed and half an hour to people that are proposed, whatever….on one side or the other. Proponents or opponents but I know that there’s a lady here that wants to talk and has to go pick up a kid so why don’t I let you come up and say what you need to say and then we’ll flip the coin and go from there, giving you the respect and stuff that you need to get on with your evening.

Is that okay with everybody?

Response from audience is NO.

**Chair Landquist:** I’m attempting to balance people’s needs. I’m running the meeting; I meant that strictly as a nice courteous, we’re all going to give each other the respect that we reserve here today, regardless of how you feel about things.
**Linn Hoang:** I live at Green Bench on Green Bench Road which at the very end of South Avenue, we have two children that live there as well. I have an extensive background in reading and reviewing and writing documents in order to provide reason rational for decision makers. I can appeal to the emotional side of this and I think lots of people are but I want to appeal to your logic. I have reviewed every document as part of this planning process and I've reviewed the conclusion statements that have been made as part of these documents. I have provided comments as well that ask very specific pointed question about certain pages of the document and how you came to certain conclusions in the document. Those in the responses, in appendix 1 were not adequately in my view responded to; some of them said it was in the study, I couldn't find it. Some of them the responses weren't even there to a very direct question. I've given you examples in there, I won't go over each of the examples I think in some cases people have brought those forward already. But if this is the type of reasoning and the type of quality of documentation and public involvement that is going to move forward in an EIS process for the NEPA, I don't see this as being adequate. I think as decision makers I would look very carefully at the information and really understand if the information is needed there for you to be able to make that decision. For example, if you were going to buy a gallon of ice cream for a family, you need information about other things...is a gallon enough? Maybe, maybe not, if you had information that the family was maybe five people or if the family was twenty people, there's lots of holes in analysis that shows that you do not have the full context information to make a decision about spending more money, not just on the construction of the bridge but more money on the planning process. Doing an EIS is not cheap and whether it's federal dollars or whether it's county dollars, it's still taxpayer dollars. Thank you.

**Chair Landquist:** Okay, I'm not a good coin flipper but I'm gonna try. 30 minutes one group and 30 minutes the other.

**Commissioner Curtiss:** Like the Legislator in groups is what we're doing. I'm gonna call heads, so if it's heads its Pros first.

Coin toss: It is heads ~ Pros go first for 30 minutes.

**Chair Landquist:** Okay proponents of this recommendation meaning that you would favor a new bridge; this is your opportunity to get up and have three minutes apiece at the mic. If you're a proponent please come up and say your piece if that's what you'd like to do. Or if you just want to raise your hands and be counted, that would be fine too.

**PROponents:**

**Don St. Peter:** I live at the west end of Maclay Bridge. I want to start by thanking you and your staff for all the time and attention you have put into this issue. I know that in addition to reviewing the study report you have attended public meetings and have reviewed hundreds of comments regarding the study. I know that the job of County Commissioners can sometimes feel like a thankless position but I want you to know that your time and attention is appreciated. I want to direct my remarks to how I think you should make your decision and this situation means we need to talk about facts and we need to talk about emotion and speculation. There have been two studies done over a period of decades which both reach the same conclusion. A new bridge needs to be built over the Bitterroot River at the west end of South Avenue; those studies were based on fact, science and the
As County Commissioners you should be basing your decision in this matter on those facts not on emotion, which you’ve heard a lot of today and not on speculation, which you’ve heard a lot of today. As you’ve seen from attending public meetings for the current study, there is a lot of emotion regarding Maclay Bridge. That emotion does not change the facts nor does making a decision based on that emotion leads you to a good long term decision, the facts will always catch up to you. No amount of rehab money put into the existing bridge will change the fact that the approaches to the bridge are not safe and cause traffic accidents. The bridge and its approaches will still be functionally obsolete and will still violate State and Federal safety standards after spending County taxpayer money on the rehab. That is the fact. No amount of emotion for this old bridge will change the fact that the current bridge causes or significant contributed to drowning deaths at the bridge. That is the fact. No amount of emotion will change the fact that the rural character of Target Range will be enhanced by a new bridge at the west end of South Avenue. Currently many of the streets and neighborhoods in target Range area bare the traffic burden that should rightly be on the main arterial street in the area, South Avenue. That’s the fact. Target Range is bigger than the west end of South Avenue, do not fall into the trap of believing that Target Range will be damaged by a new bridge, that is not the fact and those facts are set forth in the study. The study demonstrates factually that Target Range will in fact be improved by the existence of a new bridge at South Avenue. The fact is that we do not hence our rural life style in Target Range by maintaining obsolete and unsafe infrastructure. The current bridge structure means that a resident on the west end of South Avenue receives a lessor level of emergency service than neighbors who just live a couple hundred away on the east side of the bridge. Facts are stubborn things. A decision today based on emotion will mean that this issue will be revisited again in five or ten years when the bridge washes out or something else happens. The facts are contained in the two studies and that’s what you should base your decision on not on emotionally pleas to maintain an obsolete and unsafe bridge. Thank you.

Evan Rosenberg: I live on Edward Avenue, I can see Maclay Bridge from my house and I watch 100’s of cars cross it every day, literally and watch people jump off that bridge. Lots of reasons to move the bridge to South Avenue, I heard Don state a lot of them, I’m gonna focus my comments on numbers I’m an economist and a numbers person. 100 ~ that’s the National Standard for the number of vehicles traveling safely across a one lane bridge, that’s from your study. 2,610 ~ is the current number of vehicles that cross that bridge today, every single day, I watch them from my house. I could understand if we were talking 150 cars go across that bridge and it was close to the standard but a little bit over but we’re talking 2,500 more cars than the safe standard, it’s not safe to have a one lane bridge in that spot. 5,650 is the number of cars estimated from your study to cross that bridge by 2040; any planner that looked at that data would say if we have an opportunity to put a new bridge somewhere else, where it’s safer and two lanes, we would do that, we have that opportunity today. 952,650 ~ that’s my estimate of the number of additional miles per year driven by people diverting from South Avenue weaving through our Target Range neighborhood to get to North across the bridge, then go back. If we put the bridge at South Avenue those 952,000 extra miles per year traveled would disappear. That wasted driving contributes to wasted gasoline and negatively impacts our neighborhood and environment. Eliminating that needless traffic in our neighborhood and keeping the cars on South, the main artery, would preserve the rural nature of Target Range. 47,000 is the number of wasted gallons of gasoline every year from driving out of the way. 12,481,000 is the estimated amount of Federal Gas Tax Dollars that we in Missoula...
County pay every year based on the number of adults who are driving age in our County. That's $12,000,000.00 well more than the estimated cost of our $7.3 Million dollar bridge at South Avenue, just one year of our own tax dollars would pay for it. We pay these gas taxes every year, it’s about time we see our Federal Tax Dollars come back to our community and this money would create a number of jobs in the hard-hit construction industry and help our neighbors get back to work, another huge value added. $1.5 - $3.9 Million dollars, that’s how much it would cost to do a major rehab of the current bridge. The Federal Gas Tax dollars won’t back for that, do we have those kinds of County Funds to even pay for it? No, probably not and if not then what are we left with...an unsafe bridge. Finally the #1, it’s the most important number. If we could prevent just one more death from drowning car accidents or the added emergency response time caused by that current bridge in its location, moving it to South Avenue would be worth it. Thank you.

Olleke Daniels: I was a public servant with the Forest Service for 34 years so I’ve made a lot of decisions about people and public lands. I’ve lived adjacent to the Maclay Bridge for 31 years and I use it many times, every single day. I’m gonna limit my comments even though my testimony that I provided to you is a little bit longer, I’m gonna limit my comment to two major points. One of them has to do with the Target Range neighborhood plan and the rural character that we hear so much about and one of them is our trust in our public servants and elected officials to do what’s in the public interest. So relative to the neighborhood plan I want to say right up front that the implication that the plan represents the majority of home owners in the Target Range area and that the neighborhood plan itself precludes bridge replacement is patently untrue. Nor the neighborhood plan represent all the people who use the bridge every day to go to work, school, appointments, shop or otherwise access Missoula. Secondly, the discussion the plan about the bridge is completely silent on issues such as standards, reliabilities, its history, river degradation and public safety, completely, completely silent. The other problem with the plan and its use is that it’s being taunted as a decision document, never in any of the public meetings with the Office of Planning and Grants and the County Commissioners was there a comment or commit made that the plan would be then an expression of sentiment from some of the members of the Target Range area. So to characterize it as something more is misrepresentation. So how do I know this? I was one of the authors, so I have personal experience. Now I want to talk a little bit about public trust because in the final analysis it will be up to the three of you to decide what you’ve learned, what you’ve heard, what you feel, what you know and what you ultimately think is right. In Montana we still trust our public officials to represent us and to act on our behalf and on our best interest. We believe you will do the best that you can for us. We trust that when we put our child on the school bus every morning you have done everything you can to make sure that that child safely gets across the river and back home. We trust that we will have a bridge that is not obsolete, can handle 2,600 vehicles a day and 5,600 vehicles by the year 2040 and will not fail in the next large flood. We trust that you will take the fiscally responsible approach of utilizing gas tax dollars for this project, rather than allowing the County taxpayers to pay again. We trust the environmental degradation that is clearly occurring to the Bitterroot River due to the angle and design of the current bridge will be stopped. We trust you will listen to the professional expertise in recommendations from two studies that recommend a new bridge at the end of South Avenue and to the recommendation of your own staff and finally we trust you will make your decision in the interest of the general public that you represent rather than a local few opponents. Thank you.
Orville Daniels: I have spoken before this group many times on the bridge as other things. You have a copy of my comments but I'm gonna paraphrase those; they're more complete than the three minutes would allow. There's one thing that's been raised a number of times that I want to make sure we have clarity on and that is what do we do with the old bridge? We take it out! In fact we should take it out even if we don't replace it; it is causing damage that we can't stand in the river. I have photographs I'll give you that you can look at them at your leisure. They are photographs of 1935 and current as to how the river has changed because of the bridge pilings, because of the piers. The piers are the problem, it's not the surface of the bridge, that's a major safety item so is (in auditable) but you look at it the river is half as wide now as it was in 1935 and that change is because of the piers under the bridge. It's causing sand and gravel to deposit upstream and downstream, it's causing flood levels to be higher under the bridge, makes it more vulnerable. It causes the swirl the whirlpool that is so dangerous to swimmers. All of the alternatives call for the removal of the bridge and it's piers as I understand it and I would tell you that's probably the key most important fact of the bridge. The old bridge was not designed under standards to allow water to pass under it freely, that's a major, major problem. For me we need a safe, reliable bridge. I've been there when the sirens go off and when the helicopters come over, I've lived for 34 years I watch it every day its part of my life. I love that old bridge, emotionally it's in my advantage to keep it but as a public citizen, it is not. This bridge has out used it's livelihood, it is unsafe, it's causing damage to the river and it's causing human suffering. I was in favor of a new bridge in 1994; I'm in favor of it now. The Maclay's favored putting the bridge at the end South Avenue in 1922 when I moved in there 34 years ago my realtor told me the bridge will go at the end of South Avenue but now we're still arguing over it. I know you'll do the right thing.

Nancy Suba: I just came from another meeting working on Elections and one of the people I spoke to there was with the Search and Rescue and he spoke of an incident, more than one incident on the Maclay Bridge. Cops came from both directions to the bridge and he said it was an absolute mess! He actually had to get in the water to do some…whatever it was but he said it was extremely dangerous. Not only is it dangerous for the swimmers but when people get in trouble and people come to help, it's dangerous for the people that are coming to help. I know that change is not easy and I feel for the people that live on the bridge. I live in the Orchard Homes area, 3rd Street is a busy area my kids walk to Hawthorne, it was not always easy but they made it and we protected them. Having children in the Target Range area is not a reason to prevent the bridge on South Avenue. I know the bridge is dangerous, it needs to go and I don't envy you the decision that you're going to have to make because you can't make everybody happy, that's obvious. To me it is the common sense thing to put the bridge at the end of South Avenue. Why make people wonder all over looking for the bridge to begin with through the Target Range neighborhood? The people that live on those side streets I feel for them as well. So my thing is; make a decision and then make it right. There are going to have to be some things that are gonna have to be adjusted before the project is finished but I have faith that you'll be able to do that. So my thing is do the safe thing, protect people's lives because there has been a lot of lives lost so please consider putting the bridge at the end of South Avenue.

Mike Burnside: I lived in Target Range for about 31 years. I've been involved in both studies the 1992/1993/1994 studies, as well as this one. I'm a professional geologist I've worked in the field for over 40 years and I can tell you that the geology at Maclay Bridge is
not good for a bridge. There’s historic evidence this bridge has washed out at this site up to five times over the past 100 years. The last total failure documented in your own historic journals was in 1948 when the entire bridge washed out. It was rebuilt in 1952 from spare parts, literally. The journals also reveal that the county didn’t want to spend money for a new bridge that sounds familiar, so instead of designing a proper bridge that would fit the site they used parts of another old bridge of unknown history rumored to be from the Blackfoot area to build the current one. The spare bridge span was too short so a short pony truss had to be manufactured and inserted with two piers placed in what was then the center of the river to support the trusses so you had a three truss system. Then in the 1960’s the east span of that bridge failed and that east span was replaced with two pre-stressed concrete spans, that meant a third pier had to be added to support the concrete spans. The three piers in the east channel of the Bitterroot River have acted like a damn slowing the river flow on the east side. This causes sand and gravel to be deposited and an island has grown around the pier which over time has blocked and partly closed that east channel of the river. The damming of the east channel has forced most of the river to flow to the west, to the west channel thus the old bridge has significantly changed the Bitterroot River at the current site and it’s continuing to change it. The high volumes of flow in the west channel are squeezed between the center piers and the west abutment. This constriction of the flow is well known to bridge engineers and especially during high water it creates a vortex or a whirlpool as the water pours through that narrow gap. The whirlpool scourers a hole in the channel beneath the bridge and on the west side during spring runoff and floods scour action can be major, that’s when most of the scouring happens and undercutting piers and causing major loss of river bank. Scour action is a special concern with Maclay Bridge as the Maclay Bridge Planning Study Final Report that you have here states on page 22 in regard to the old bridge. Channel scour was not part of the original design requirements in the 1940’s. The existing bridge piers are located in the river channel on unknown materials. Regarding floods; the Federal Emergency Management Agency has done studies of the Bitterroot River and their study shows that a 100 year flood on the Bitterroot River would come within one foot of the Maclay Bridge deck. The one foot proximity of the 100 year flood means that the bridge violates current county floodplain regulations which require a minimum of two feet between the low point of the bridge and the projected water level. Then finally I just wanted to commend the engineers and scientist that worked on this study, including your two. Lewis and Erik were professional and gentlemen throughout this in spite of some very trying meetings. Thank you.

**Linda St. Peter:** The reason you hear from us so often is we’re on the west side and if it was a fairytale, we are troll under the bridge, we are that close, with the exception perhaps Orville. So 30 years ago when we moved there I heard until they cracked it lately the thumping sound of the cars going over the bridge. Which I didn’t think was too bad at least I knew somebody was coming, I could look out the kitchen window and see if they were coming down our drive or over to the other side. It wasn’t funny when we met our neighbors through all the car accidents and all the drowning’s. What I taught my children is you do not recreate at that bridge. When I see the kids at the very highest point at that bridge going to dive off I want to stop by car and tell them to get down. I’m also an Attorney and the liability is ridiculous and this county knows it. I didn’t prepare anything because I’m never quite sure what I’m going to say but I don’t have the science and I don’t have the math but I do have some common sense and I have what I’ve experienced and seen. I don’t have courtesy going across that bridge. One car doesn’t go across that bridge at a time as soon as it’s ready to go four cars are going to go, we’re going to get
across as fast as we can while the other one is waiting. I’ve had the standoff; who’s going
to back off first and that’s not fun when you’re a young mom and you’re trying to get your
kid to the emergency room. This is not practical if we have a means to pay for something
better, than by-golly we should do it and we owe it to everybody in this county to do so.
Thank you.

**Chair Landquist:** We’ll turn it over to the opponents now for 30 minutes. For those of
you that are walking out I just really want to thank everybody who showed up today,
regardless whether you spoke or not. I really do value everybody’s time getting involved in
this process.

**OPPONENTS:**

**Larry Martin:** I’m a retired physician, I live on South Avenue. Despite all the controversy
around the planning report and the bridge options there are some things most of us could
agree on. One would be that public safety should be paramount. Another would be that
it’s essential to know what a building project will cost before committing to it. Regarding
safety the notion the new bridge on South would improve public safety ignores the
planning reports own documentation that traffic accidents on Maclay Bridge are caused
primarily by speeding in almost every case, alcohol in nearly half the incidents and other
forms of unsafe driving. Along new bridge on South Avenue would only exacerbate these
hazards by enabling wreck less or impaired drivers to reach even higher speeds on the
long straight-away and get into much worse accidents when they lose control. It would
consequently be more serious, even fatal traffic accidents such as head-on on or near the
new bridge when there have been none on Maclay. Next regarding cost of a major new
bridge on South; we have yet to see the full price of the entire project nor do we know how
much in additional taxes would be necessary to pay for what isn’t paid by our gas taxes.
This is the first time today when someone has suggested that we have an open checkbook
and gas taxes will pay for anything I don’t think that’s correct; I don’t think most of us
believe that. The current planning report cost estimate for the South Bridge is $9.2 million
but this does not nearly include all costs. For example, an environmental impact statement
which would clearly be required here would bring the estimate to around $10 million. Add
to that the long list of safety measures necessary on both sides of the bridge, which time
doesn’t permit me to detail and we are looking at well over $10 million dollars. Then we
shouldn’t overlook the frequent cost overrun seen with these projects. If the
Commissioners approve the proposal for the South Bridge before we have a creditable
price for the entire project plus how much in new local taxes would be required and how
the new threats to public safety created by the South Bridge would be mitigated the
decision would seem quite premature. Please bare in mind that we do have on hand a
detailed viable engineering plan to rehab Maclay Bridge for less a tenth the cost of the
South bridge project. Maclay rehab has had the support of a clear majority at every public
meeting in 2012 and 2013, including this one but has been dismissed by the planners
because of what we think are incomplete screening criteria plus ambiguities about funding
which ought to be clarified before a decision is made by the County Commissioners.
Accordingly we ask the Commissioners to postpone action on the South Bridge proposal
until we have more specifics about the full costs, the need for new taxes and all safety
measures necessary for the new bridge. There is no valid reason to rush into a decision of
such importance to so many people before we have sufficient information to justify and
legitimize that decision. Thank you.
Bob Carter: I just want to quickly say that I am for the rehabilitation of Maclay Bridge and there are a lot of other people that can say other things a lot better than I will. As a side note as another contributing author to the Target Range Neighborhood Plan, I would like to say that I believe the neighborhood plan has an overwhelming support from a large majority of the people in the Target Range neighborhood.

Don Loftsgaarden: I’m a professional statistician, University Professor for 40 years and I’ve conducted statistical consulting all over the Country. The statistical procedure used for the final screening of the bridge options is the most important part of the entire study. The procedure used is very simple but serious errors were made using it. I submitted written comments for corrections to Jeff Key and the study team, my corrections were not used in the final report. The study team made comments in the appendix (red on your sheet) briefly the study team says the ranking procedure with errors used in the Maclay Bridge study was found in other similar studies so it was okay to use it again. Doing something wrong several times does not make it right. As a professional statistician I know exactly what they did and it was wrong. They clearly did not understand the statistical analysis they used for the most important step in the entire study. The other part of the screening process that was important is the screening criteria that were chosen. I submitted written comments to the study team about the criteria used concentrating on the nine qualifying criteria since they were used incorrectly in the statistical analysis. The nine criteria as a whole were heavily leaned against the rehabilitation option for good reason, which I’ll get to in a moment. There are no criteria that take into account the Target Range Neighborhood Plan, none at all. Attempts to submit suggestions for these criteria to the study team were rejected until the screening was entirely done, no test to do anything with it. The wrong way in which this qualitative criteria were used, they were used wrong but they were used they biased it even worse, the way that procedure was done. Because of the errors and problems mentioned above the choice of the final bridge option was for all practical purposes divided by the qualitative criteria which were the weakest criteria in all of them. $250,000.00 study was not needed to write out those nine questions which you can look at there, you can do that before the study was ever done. The study teams response to mine contain one interesting thing, right below outlined in red, I’ll read one sentence out of there; the planning team elected to not develop criteria associated with the Target Range Neighborhood Plan. The only place for the Target Range Neighborhood Plan could play a role in the choice of a final bridge option goes through the criteria to the screening. In this written statement the study team we see firm confirmation that the TNRP was ignored making the final choice of the bridge option, that’s the only place it could have been used and there’s no criteria there. Their argument for not using the TNRP is nonsense. In view of a recent Supreme Court ruling on ignoring neighborhood plans in a case involving the City of Missoula this is a very serious problem, I’m sure you’re all aware of it on the County Commission. Conclusion; with the improper use of ranking and refusal to use criteria reflecting community impacts, the recommended bridge option in this study was determined from the beginning, before everything ever started. There is no valid bases for recommendation and no defensible way for you to select it.

Commissioner Curtiss: I have one question. In your very first number here it says your corrections were ignored even though they didn’t change the result.

Don Loftsgaarden: You can put garage in the report it’s alright as long as it doesn’t change the result.
Commissioner Curtiss: Erik put the results up there of the way that you showed it should be scored and it came out the same, right?

Don Loftsgaarden: Right but they didn’t take it into account all these other things, the missing criteria about the Target Range Neighborhood Plan. But they did not put it in the report so they published a report that has garage in it. That’s unacceptable.

Commissioner Curtiss: And Erik stated earlier why we didn’t use the Target Range Plan in the scoring.

Don Loftsgaarden: That’s required if you look at that Supreme Court ruling, that the Target Range Plans cannot be ignored or any neighborhood plan. That was clear by Montana Supreme Court ruling in Missoula.

Commissioner Curtiss: It has a different basis.

Carter Beck: I’m speaking in favor of rehabbing the existing bridge. This whole discussion reminds me of something that occurred 10 years ago in Alaska it was the Gravina Island Bridge at that point the State of Alaska and now late Senator Ted Stephens decided that it was absolutely imperative that a $300 million dollar bridge be built to an island that had 50 residents. They commissioned studies and the studies showed that it was absolutely essential. $300 million dollars was appropriated from the American taxpayer to build a bridge to nowhere. Why did they do that? Why on Earth does something like that happen? Well it’s about the money, it’s always about the money, it’s about somebody else’s money and that’s what this reminds me of. I listen to the staff describe the neighbors criticisms of the study that was done and what I heard was a rejection of each and every item that we submitted. You did not find that we had an idea that was valid because you had a predetermined idea and that was spend the money. In building a new bridge a new bridge that costs millions of dollars more than a viable alternative we’re going to cross an important boundary, it’s a moral boundary. You’re going to steal the hopes and dreams of people who choose to live in a quiet place. Why are we going to do that? I think it’s about money. We’re gonna steal from people when there’s a viable alternative. I find it reprehensible.

Monica Weisal: I live off of South Avenue in Target Range. You have a copy of my comments and they’re specific to the final report and are factual. I’d like point out in the first section of chapter 3 of the final report the planning team listed 12 planning documents that were reviewed to provide a context for the Maclay Bridge Planning Study. The planning team said “numerous documents exist that guide or supplement Missoula County’s Growth Policy and the documents listed were reviewed to provide a context for the Maclay Bridge Planning Study.” However, if you’ll look in the appendix of the final report in the response to public comment submitted the planning team stated at the top of page 5 and again on page 29 that, “criteria related to the Target Range Neighborhood Plan was initially considered along with criteria represented of County and Regional Planning documents. Unfortunately these documents conflict with each other and the planning team elected to not develop criteria associated with the Target Range Neighborhood Plan, the Neighborhood Transportation Plan, the Growth Policy, active Transportation Plan, etc. due to the inherit conflicts found in each document.” So my
questions to you; why are you led to believe that all twelve planning documents listed in section 1 were utilized in this study? What other reports are included under etc. and not considered? And why was there no reference anywhere in the final report that several documents were not being considered? It makes you believe that the criteria were developed by engineers and engineers like to build bridges. The planning team also stated “The Missoula County Growth Policy establishes the legal and philosophical foundation upon which future plans and regulations will be passed and that long range transportation planning is recognized as one of many important implementation tools for helping to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the Growth Policy.” My question; why was this official public document that serves as an official statement of public policy not considered by the planning team? What specifically in the Growth Policy was considered conflicting information to discount its use? And finally, what could that conflicting information found in your Growth Policy possibly pertain to results of a survey conducted by the University of Montana which in part showed 82% community support to protect and enhance neighborhood character and 80% encourage preservation and use of historic structures. And finally in Appendix 3 of the planning study both the Maclay Bridge and the Maclay ditch are eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and have been given a Smithsonian site number. My final question; why was this specific information not carried forward in the final report? The only mention of these two cultural resources is in Appendix 3 of the Planning Study and unless you read every page of that 184 page Appendix you wouldn’t know that that significant information was there. Thank you.

Dave Loomis: You have a copy of my comments but I’m going to try to summarize the best I can. I’m a resident of the County of Missoula and a resident specifically west of the Bitterroot River. I travel over the Maclay Bridge every day, by my estimate over 22,000 trips witnessing no traffic accidents or problems with crossing the bridge. It’s true I could shave 5 or 10 seconds off getting my granddaughter to school with a nice fast, slick bridge but that’s not needed. Others will and have been detailing the numerous negative impacts of building a new bridge that’s not needed and those negative impacts are numerous and major. I want to highlight some of those impacts for the Commissioners. As stated by others this is a pot of money looking for a project. Tax payers have not been given the full cost of elevating the approach over the extensive floodplain on the east side, all the way over to the existing South Avenue. You can’t just fill it in; it’s real expensive to build some kind of cause way over the floodplain. And then of course the cost of improving South Avenue has not been stated and we’ll go back and forth on that. The Target Range Neighborhood Plan is ignored, I don’t understand why I was not part of it either as a stamp person or as a participant and I certainly appreciate the interpretation of the plan by Mr. Dickson but the Commissioners should consult to the framers of that document and most of them are right here tonight. So if there’s any question of what that documents says talk to them not the engineers. There’s no creditable analysis of future growth west of the river where I live because frankly very limited opportunities as you all know. Most of the land is either in Federal ownership or is not dividable, there’s very little private land available for development west of the river. The thousands of auto trips are attributed in the future, there’s no proof of where they got that number but I’d like to know. Unfortunately this process has been shown to be fatally flawed. A wealth of information and data has been presented to the consultants and either ignored or dismissed. The process was primarily one way, consultants and engineers preaching down to the public. Little actual discussion occurred; I was at all those meetings. The study is an engineer snapshot of a future bridge project with the alternative fixing the existing bridge not seriously considered as you
already heard that and the new bridge will result in new and negative impacts on a new part of the river and the recreational use of the river and the use of the wildlife corridor that goes along both east and west side of the river. I’ve been involved in over 40 years of the planning and regulating development in two states at all levels of Government, thank you, so this study is incomplete, ignores the will of the citizens directly affected, does not follow approved neighborhood plans as directed by MCA 761-605 & 601 and should be rejected now and save the tax payers. Thank you.

Ben Deeble: My wife and I live at 2475 Humble Road and I’d like to state in our opinion the current Maclay Bridge with summary you have an updating is adequate to serve the rural character of this neighborhood and provides actually more long term safety to drivers and River users then the likely alternative at South Avenue. In my opinion the report recommending tearing down the single lane Maclay Bridge to build a longer, faster bridge at South Avenue ignores some key factors in the discussion around public safety. For over 50 years the waters below the Maclay Bridge have been a favorite swimming and fishing hole for Missoula families. On blistering summer days it’s a favorite place for people to float to from the recreation area a few miles upstream or just to frolic in the cool shallows, the gentle eddy and the sand there. There’s been a lot of anecdotal testimony about the dangers posed to people who swim or recreate near the old bridge. Yes tragic drownings have occurred, most recently a teenage who admittedly didn’t know how to swim and went into the current fully clothed. We’ve gone into the archives of the Missoulian and scoured them for the last decade and we can find only this single drowning reported at the Maclay Bridge over the last 10 years and nothing specific to the bridge that caused this drowning. Unfortunately last year alone we lost people in the Blackfoot, the Clark Fork, the Clearwater, the Flathead River and Flathead Lake. In other years we can add other parts of the Bitterroot, Rock Creek, Alberton Gorge and even the Beavertail Hill Pond to the list of waters where lives have been lost. My sympathy goes out to the families who have lost loved ones in these accidents because I’ve lost one of my own family members in a similar accident. Please consider that there are new viable concerns about the I-90 Bridge at Bonner and the truly dangerous midstream piers exposed there by the removal of the Bonner Dam; piers which may take millions of dollars to make safer for floaters. Water safety experts released a test dummy into the current above these bridge piers last year and the dummy rapidly disappeared into the strong current at these piers and has never been recovered to this day. If you want to look for a real danger presented to the public by a bridge in Missoula County in my opinion the Bonner Bridge is the one you should get resolved before committing resources to tearing down the old Maclay Bridge where no unusual risks occur. My wife and I love that we can put in with family or friends at the Maclay Bridge and float to the Maclay Bridge for a couple hours on a hot summer day in tubes, get out there and walk home or that we can canoe the same stretch all the way to the Kona take out in a little more time. One of the unique things that makes the Maclay Bridge particularly safe for us is there’s no support pier in the main channel that boats or float tubes can get trapped against by current or we where we might get bumped off of our canoe or raft. However, any new bridge at South Avenue will likely have one or more of these support piers in the main channel.

Chair Landquist: You’re out of time.

Ben Deeble: Can I please have 30 more seconds?
Chair Landquist: 30 seconds and then I’m going to be really firm after you, everybody gets 3 minute no more. The last 30 second extension I’m giving.

Ben Deeble: These piers will also likely collect logs and snags in high water as is frequently seen at the Kona Bridge. One of the greatest hazards for boaters on any river is getting tangled in mid-channel structures or trapped against it by current. Even a good life jacket won’t save you in these situations. Where’s the wisdom in replacing the Maclay Bridge that is clearly safe to float under when one at South Avenue that won’t be as safe. I would ask if you haven’t already to please consult with Emergency Rescue and Law Enforcement personnel and really understand what the hazards are or aren’t at the Maclay Bridge and understand what will be the new hazards opposed by a South Avenue Bridge before you let concerns about public safety propel your endorsement of the Bridge Planning Study Report.

Commissioner Curtiss: I just want to be on the record to say Bonner is not an off-system bridge, it’s not under our purview and for several years we’ve advocated for that to be replaced.

Chair Landquist: We need to stick with what the recommendation is here that we’re looking at and not try to compare apples to oranges.

Commissioner Curtiss: Everything that came to us in written or by email is on the record so you don’t have to read every word in it to be on the record.

Gary Botchek: I live in Target Range. I have a couple factual questions. My first question is on May of 2012 you guys produced a frequently asked question document which stated no local S1D funds will be used for this project. The planning study set estimates for the new South Avenue Bridge at $7.3 Million noting the bridge estimate includes only the bridge and the approaches. Additional costs of an estimated $3.9 Million include from the east approach to Blue Mountain/Big Flat intersect, the intersect from the existing River Pines Road with a new alignment, the west approach from Hanson Drive west of Clements and South Avenue from Clements to Reserve Street; how will these additional costs be funded? Question two; safety and physical conditions of the existing Maclay Bridge, over the course of the planning study a picture of the bridge was painted as being unsafe, using terms like fractural critical, functionally obsolete, designed efficiencies, scour holes, sufficiency ratings leading in a direction that suggests the rehabilitation is not possible, realistic because of excessive costs which was further complicated since rehabilitation is some eyes cannot be accomplished without moving the bridge to another site to be worked on. This bridge over the years has received complete engineering site reports by qualified licensed professional engineering firms all with positive outcomes with consistent recommendations for short and long term maintenance. History will show that many of these recommendations were not completed. Other than deficiencies in maintenance this bridge is in good structural condition. This includes an in-house report by Fred Crisp the County Bridge Engineer at the time whose 33 page calculations concluded that the Maclay Bridge can be upgraded to H20 Highway standards. This is an approved funded project but never complete with no reasons given. This information was confirmed during a 1996 interview with Mr. Crisp. In order to answer many of the conflicting statements and questions about the condition of Maclay Bridge the Maclay Bridge allegiance hired Mr. Frank Moth, a Licensed Professional Engineer and recognized
expert on bridge design, construction rehabilitation. To evaluate the bridge and provide a bid appropriate construction estimate his findings confirmed that the bridge could be rehabilitated in place and that all fracture critical components could be upgraded to meet the required standards. These upgrades include increasing the bridge load necessary to permit all fire equipment safety vehicles to access the bridge without restriction. Further his evaluation includes the design that accompanied pedestrian bicycle walkway which would help eliminate any conflicts between pedestrian, bicycles and vehicles. The total cost of the bridge rehab and the walkway is $972,000,800.00. You have now available for you the actual cost to rehab the existing Maclay Bridge complete with pedestrian, bicycle walkway for less than a tenth of the cost of the new bridge. With your approval and support to accept a revision to county bridge standards to keep the one lane bridge the Maclay Bridge could be eligible for Federal funding for rehabilitation and at the same time meet one of the concerns and objectives in maintaining the existing and rural character Target Range provided for in the Target Range Neighborhood Plan. The existing bridge at 28 feet does not have a walkway…another $2 Million.

Peggy Morrison: I live at 4415 South Avenue West. Safety is a word that has often been heard throughout the last year. Who is responsible for my safety, whether on the road or near water? Obvious answer ~ me. If I choose to drive inappropriately for the characteristics of the road and/or under the influence, I am responsible for any result or consequences. The approaches to Maclay Bridge and Maclay Bridge itself being single lane encourage me to drive slowly and courteously. At the west end of the bridge the addition of the street light and arrow indicating a sharp curve, which were approved in 2011 and have yet to be installed, would be helpful to drivers less familiar with the roadway. A new two lane bridge is not needed. Robert Nolan check the website; saferroads.com states that when wider roads are built in rural areas traffic moves faster. Faster is not safer. Faster means that the crash force of accidents causes more severe injuries and more fatalities. Funneling traffic moving from Reserve Street to the river onto one road does not slow or clam traffic down, as it is driving through our neighborhood encourages drivers to take time to enjoy life, to leave the busy mess of the city behind them. The current flow of traffic calms traffic without adding traffic circles or stop lights. Likewise if I choose to recreate in the Bitterroot River my misadventures are a result of my decisions, not caused by the bridge or the river. Where folks have access to water drowning’s unfortunately occur, one drowning has occurred near the Maclay Bridge in the last ten years. Compare this; if you will, to the one or two drowning’s that occur at the Alberton Gorge annually, you can check this out on Google. Neither the Bitterroot River nor the Maclay Bridge should be held accountable for the young person’s choices. Should a South Avenue Bridge be built the same issues that currently surround Maclay Bridge will inevitable appear around this new bridge involving yet another Target Range Neighborhood. Law enforcement personnel will have two areas to patrol increasing pressure on a group that’s already spread pretty thin. A new bridge at the end of South Avenue will not make our neighborhood safer; in fact, it will make it less safe. Two public access areas to the Bitterroot River increases the potential for drowning’s. A wider bridge and straight road provides drivers an opportunity to put the pedal to the medal dramatically increasing the potential for fatal accidents involving pedestrians, bicyclist, wildlife and others. Thank you.

Willis Curdy: My wife and I live at 11280 Kona Ranch Road which is the third house west of the Kona Bridge. My wife and I have lived there for almost 31 years. I came here tonight with a prepared message but I’ve listened to a number of these things going on
here tonight and I just have to ask some questions and I have to refute some things. First of all, I was one of the principle writers of the Target Range Neighborhood Plan Transportation portion, there were about three of us who spent the time working on it. Again, nobody has come to us or come to me and asked questions about the intent or what was driving the things behind what was put in the Target Range Neighborhood Plan except for the commentary we received from Target Range residents who said this is what we want in the plan, nothing else. Erik and Lewis they talked about 600 new homes in the Target Range are UFDA says what 400 over the next 200 years? I don’t know where this 600 number came from. That’s one thing where I look at the planning study and think, hmm I wonder what else is missing here or incorrect? And the assumption is that all 400 or they 600 people are gonna drive across the Maclay Bridge every day...they aren’t. Most of their work and time spent will be going the other way east to Reserve Street. Also I have some really serious questions about the assumptions made on terms of ignoring what was said in the Neighborhood Plan or just flat errors and so again I want to make sure those are addressed. Finally, I want assurance from Missoula County Commissioners that there’s no western bypass in place along Blue Mountain, Big Flat, Kona Ranch because if the bridge is built it eventually will become one whether or not it’s approved or not, in fact it will become a western bypass. Thank you.

Chair Landquist: Okay it’s 7:00, we’ve given 30 minutes each way, I’d like to have a show in hands how many people either way whether you’re an opponent or proponent still would like a 3 minute time period? Okay, six people. I was thinking we’ve been here since 4:00, I know I need a break and I don’t want to walk out and be rude so I don’t know how many other people could use a break too…I’m getting thumbs up! Let’s take a 15 minute break and come back at 7:15 and try to wrap this up.

Dana Headopohl: I live at the end of South Avenue; I’m also a civil engineer and I’m looking at these pictures there was no development in the initial picture what has happen is the whole valley is shifting so that the river is naturally shifting to the west and now there is rip raff and protection for this roadway that protects the homes on that side of the river so it automatically will funnel the channel in that way. That is not necessarily a function of the bridge; in fact it is not a function of the bridge. I do thank you for taking your time, I know that this is difficult; I know that everybody has different views. I don’t exactly understand the process but I’m grateful to be able to participate in it, this is one of the wonderful things about democracy. One of the questions I had is I heard you Jean talking about this planning study was to address specific issues, was it also to address specific issues and balance those issues against the problems that the solutions might solve or was it simply to address the issues?

Commissioner Curtiss: I guess I don’t understand your question.

Dana Headopohl: Oh I don’t want to use up all my time, we’ll come back to that, I’ll ask it again. First thing I’m going to talk about is the Target Range Neighborhood Plan I know you signed off on it and other people have mention this before as well but I think it is very important to consider the legal ramifications of discounting the plan in the discussion tonight and on an ongoing basis. The basis for the Supreme Court decision is not as clear cut as you might think. Safety I think the planning study just does not adequately address the additional safety issues that will come from South Avenue Bridge dangerous approach going up and down that hill; I go up that hill every day and it is scary. It is very dangerous.
either going down the hill or up the hill right where the irrigation ditch goes across. This is a natural corridor for herds of wildlife, deer cross that area every morning, every evening. I’m concerned that with higher rates of speed this is going to be a major problem. My mother lives at Village and she until quite recently drove her car which was scary as heck with the traffic that already is on South Avenue. I can’t even imagine what it would be like for people coming out of Community Medical Center or the recreational areas, Target Range Schools, Big Sky School. Thank you.

Brian Riggers: I live just basically across from Dana on South Avenue West. One of the things I wanted to talk about is we...everybody here and I do want to thank everyone for the process but I’m concerned that the sort of the culmination doesn’t give you adequate idea of the effects because a lot of folks commented and I was one of those. I looked at my comment...the responses to my comments just today and I wanted to bring a couple things up in terms of how those were addressed. One of the comments I had was that through the process if we follow through and go forward with this, there will need to be involvement of agency folks; Fish & Wildlife Service, Fish Wildlife & Parks those sorts of people I wondered what involvement they’ve had so the response was they’ve been involved. I looked back to see what the involvement was and yes they were sent a letter, there was an agency meeting a couple of people from those agencies did show up. What happens in that process is representatives from the agency show up and they become involved or informed of what’s going on. When I looked back to the follow-up on that, Fish Wildlife & Parks response to that was we’re interested in the project, there will need to be follow-up with our field biologist. The follow-up with a field biologist is the part that takes the time that changes the project that increases the cost that brings things in that are not accounted for when we say this is a fairly straight forward thing. Fish & Wildlife Service had comments one of them was we’re concerned about this and we would like to see the bridge span be 1-1/2 times the 100 year floodplain. The design right now is 1, to span the 100 year floodplain. Fish & Wildlife Services is a big player in this in that it’s critical to have a tap for bull trout so they’ll have a big say in this, if they say it’s going to be 1-1/2 times and if it in fact is that that will increase the cost of this project immensely. That’s a big thing to consider bigger than just saying they were involved. Another thing they had said was we expected abutments in the bridge to be removed if we build a new bridge; that’s a huge cost again. Another comment; the aquatics...the impacts on aquatic resources were addressed by basically what’s the span of the floodplain and so the wider the river is the different impacts. Right now the impacts at the existing bridge are there, there not going to be taken away if we build a new bridge. The road that’s there with the rip raff that’s protecting the homes will stay there, that floodplain will be impacted and it will continue to be that way. We’re basically adding additional impact and that’s not the way it’s displayed to you folks in the document and so I’m concerned that without an accurate representation of that it’s really hard to make a good decision. So I wanted to make sure that...and I know it’s hard to dig into the details but I want to make sure that you understand that there may be more to this than just the summary stuff. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Ed Taylor: I live on 3920 Sun Rose Drive. I had currently lived in the Orchard Homes are for 21 years and I have some questions about the traffic bottling that’s been presented at all these meetings. If it’s any indication of the modeling that had been used that they use for Reserve Street that they’re looking for and this, I’m afraid it’s going to be total disaster because within about a year the traffic projections were outdated so I’m a little concerned about those numbers there. I’m also, I don’t know for sure if South Avenue and Reserve
Street is still listed in the State as one of the top three accident intersections in the State but if it is and dump all this more traffic coming up South Avenue there, I'm really concerned about all that. I have an opinion about things; I really urge that the Board make their choices tonight. If they have to tonight I'd rather not see this because I don't think that all the facts are really known all the ramifications have been dealt with at all. I've been trying to think about something positive to say tonight but about the only thing I can come with that I've thought about for the past couple days is; I'm really thankful that this is probably going to bring the Target Range Neighborhood together like it's never had before. We're solidifying as we speak so look out.

Fred Stewart: I'm a resident in the Target Range community. As a resident there for 29 years I've been involved with both studies that related to the Maclay Bridge. In this brief time that I have available I'd like to tell why so many of us have become disappointed with the study. When the feasibility/quarter study was announced it appeared that public input would be an important part of the process as shown on the web page for MDT, it linked to this particular document. This document says that there will be extensive community outreach and coordination with others partnering agencies but in reality the public input has meant that public comments have been entered into the planning record and ignored. The universal reply to comments was; “thank you for your comments they've been included in our study record.” That's true but unless you as Commissioners have the ability, the time, the interest to dig into that record you're not really going to know all of the details associated with this study and why we're so disappointed. I found out that the evaluation criteria to address community values were not going to be included I presented information to the planning team and I said here's an example of criteria that could be used and it would be useful for the Board of County Commissioners in their discussions. It turns out that just like the other comments it was just blown off and said thank you for your comments. The part about the Target Range Neighborhood Plan not being considered is really fundamentally wrong because the community impacts are what matter to the people and those community impacts are not evaluated in this study. The key finding from the neighborhood plan was the survey said; how important is it for you? The rural character of the community was very important to 88% of the people, somewhat important to 11% so that's 99% of the population came up with that and it's a statistically valid survey that does represent the feelings of the community. I'm gonna run out of time…it's unfortunate that as Don Loftsgarden stated in his testimony, the selection of the evaluation criteria is the most important factor in producing a fair and accurate planning study that was not done despite the efforts of the public to be involved in the study process so you don't have the information you need. Thank you.

Bob Schweitzer: I live out on Big Flat. I sent you copies of my remarks by the internet so you should have them in your file, never the less I would like to go through this. You are faced with an important decision that has the potential to forever change the character of nearby neighborhoods in ways that are contrary to the very plan that you have approved. Even the fact that you are now faced with this action leave many of us wondering; is there a valid purpose to neighborhood planning in Missoula County? If you choose to go forward with the recommend in the Maclay Bridge Planning Study the next step will be an environmental impact statement. The outcome of such a study could be to keep the bridge we have rather than build another bridge across the Bitterroot floodplain. The cost for that step has not been revealed by the study but as good administrators I'm sure you've thought about it, could you please tell us? Though this cost is not a direct county expense
it is something we as tax payers have to pay for. Rehabilitation could add to the character of the neighborhood as well as to the uniqueness of Missoula. It would underwrite the investment people have made in their homes and their neighborhoods as wise decisions. As responsible administrators are you now going to tell us that we need this bridge so badly that you are willing to gamble the value of neighborhood homes? Do you recognize that the cost for an EIS could rehabilitate Maclay Bridge and upgrade it to 36 ton capacity and build a separate pedestrian, bicycle crossing? Please deny the recommendation in the Maclay Bridge Study Report. Thank you.

Frank Muth: I’m a Consulting Bridge Engineer and I’d like to point out a few observations here. The traffic that presently uses Maclay’s Bridge, it’s unique in that it’s not a bridge that’s used to move commodity it’s a bridge that’s used to move people from a bedroom community. Consequently this bridge doesn’t see the pounding and the deterioration that a bridge on a farm-to-market road would receive. Through trusses like this in the eastern part of the state are a deterrent for moving cumbines and moving the big farm machinery, we don’t see that being moved here. It would be interesting to see of the 2,600 cars a day what the population; how many trucks, how many…I suspect that the traffic that goes on that bridge is a garbage truck, a school bus and lots of cars. In the Planning Study it talked about functionally obsolete and deficient, now AASHTO does recognize that there are situations where and I’ve rated a lot of bridges as functionally obsolete and deficient and that has to do with the passing of truck traffic and calmers. If you go to the northeast part of this Country there are a lot of covered bridges AASHTO has funded a good number of the rehabilitation of the covered bridges so it’s going to be a hard ticket to sell when you say that there is absolutely no Federal money available for the rehabilitation of the Maclay Bridge. The Maclay Bridge I’ve been on it I’d like to point out that there was testimony earlier about the accretion of sand and gravel in the easterly most span, I wouldn’t challenge those people to go down to Kona Bridge and look at the northern most span on the Kona Bridge. There’s river dynamics things upstream cause the rivers to move that bridge sight probably hasn’t been maintained or nothing has been done to alter or to correct any deficient flows in 60 years so I better quit now. The only other thing; by putting a Kona style bridge on South Avenue I know we don’t log anymore but some day we’re going to log again. They’re going to have a timber sale coming off of Blue Mountain or O’Brien Creek and the temptation might be very easily to go across this bridge to Seeley Lake to Pyramid one of the remaining saw mills.

Chair Landquist: The public comment portion is now closed. We’ll let staff address issues.

Erik Dickson: I think there are a couple things that I would like to address. The first thing is the accidents. When this process first started and MDT identified the crash cluster at the west end of the bridge there where residents also bringing our attention to the reported accident histories on some of the surrounding roads and there’s always the comparison to the Kona Ranch Road and that style bridge brings higher speeds, higher accident rates more serious accidents. After we got that information from MDT I went through looked at the information that’s available to the county from MDT safety girl. What I found that of the roads in the area, River Pines Road had over the 13 year accident period that was available for all of these roads River Pines Road had the highest accident rate at 5.8 accidents per million vehicle miles. Big Flat Road had a combined accident rate of 1.8 accidents per million vehicle miles and Blue Mountain Road had 1.5 accidents per million
vehicle miles. Kona Ranch Road was the lowest at .97 accidents per million vehicle miles. That’s based on the information available to us based on the traffic counts that we have that I’ve taken over the years and I think it goes to show that there’s a perception that wider and means higher speeds and more accidents. And yes I agree that the speeds are higher out there but this is a road that is 32 feet wide, has 12 foot travel lanes and 8 foot shoulders and based on an accident rate compared to…not the overall traffic but on rate per million vehicle miles, this is the lowest accident rate in this area. So I think it’s important to note a lot of claims have been made that there’s going to be more accidents, more intense accidents but from the information we have available it appears that wider and straighter is working in this instance.

Another thing I’d like to address ~ Mr. Curdy asked a question about where the 655 additional dwelling units was identified on page 33 of the neighborhood plan, it says; if all the remaining undeveloped residential land in Target Range was developed with the current zoning there’s a potential for 655 new dwelling units. I’d just like to point out the fact that it is identified in the Target Range Plan which was again then incorporated into the traffic demand model which predicted the traffic volumes showing the increase on the east side of the Bitterroot River.

I guess another thing I’d like to address is the proposed design of what’s been classified as the intermediate rehab option that was proposed by Frank Muth. While yes it does solve part of the problem, we could increase the load capacity to handle all the emergency response vehicles in the rural fire department fleet but that only solves part of the problem. Right now part of the Target Range Neighborhood Plan a very brief statement says; in order to improve air quality they want to reduce the number of vehicle miles driven. One way this is 4/10 of a mile out of the direct travel to get to the same intersection at River Pines and Blue Mountain Road so you have 3,000 cars a day assuming it’s about a mile going out of travel. That contributes to more increased vehicle miles travelled which is directly against what the Target Range Neighborhood Plan wants and is recommending but also it provides a facility that encourages the possibility of public transit if Mountain Line ever found it necessary to expand their service to areas west of the river. It also encourages bicycle and pedestrian traffic by not having a conflict on the bridge and in going back to the design where a single lane rehab was proposed with a pedestrian bridge adjacent and upstream now you’ve introduced the sight hazard at the west end of the bridge because that pedestrian rail is going to be dense enough that it can’t go past that 4” opening so kids and other obvious can’t be pushed through the bridge. Now you’re creating a sight hazard so people are gonna have to creep even farther around the corner before they can see oncoming traffic. Right now with the whole bridge open you can see from one end to the other and judge whether or not you should make your approach, that introduces another sight hazard where we already have an accident cluster identified.

Another part of the rehab option that I’m concerned with is in the cost estimate; there’s a line item detail for all the materials for the tied arch addition to the bridge but there’s no cost listed for the installation of all the material, just the materials only. Whereas with the pedestrian bridge the materials are listed separately from the installation cost if we were to consider the rehab option as a viable option I think there’s elements left out. My opinion you would need to paint the existing bridge, it’s rusting and there are some other issues that I don’t think are identified that truly address the issues of the main span itself. Yes we can put another layer of steel over the top and have parts of the bridge from 1935, 1954, 1964 and now 2014, it’s just more pieces, more pieces that are going to lead to increased maintenance cost and even right now there are problems with the deck that was installed in 2003. We’ve always had problems with the expansion joints we’ve replaced each end and still have problems with them, now there are significant portions of the deck on the
main trust that are I think just coming lose from the corrugated steel. The asphalt surfacing is cracked and there’s no good way to get down into that to fix it without spending a lot of time, a lot of money and having the bridge closed for several days at a time again. So I think some of those costs are not reflected in the rehab option for what needs to be done in order to bring everything up to a current standard that would allow the bridge to be in place for the next 50-75 years as a new structure would allow.

**Commissioner Curtiss:** Erik, I have one question related to the things that you are…if it’s alright madam Chair?

**Chair Landquist:** Go ahead.

**Commissioner Curtiss:** It seems to me what I’m hearing you say and the public say is that the planning team didn’t ignored this plan, we used in lots of ways but because the transportation section of this plan was not a real detailed it hadn’t as Ms. Rupkalvis said earlier, there was really no community decision at the time so therefore there was no analysis or research regarding the bridge. So the transportation part of this is weak and therefore there wasn’t really anything in here that you could use for the scoring criteria, is the way I picked up. Because you’re scoring criteria was to address the things that we had identified in the scope of work that identify reasonable options to address safety geometry and environmental concerns and increase safety and efficiency for the traveling public. A lot of what this is doing is focusing on transportation related things so it’s not that the plan was ignored you’ve referred to it several times tonight but the transportation portion of the Target Range Plan isn’t very strong.

**Chair Landquist:** It was silent on safety; I think is the term she used.

**Erik Dickson:** I think if you look at the needs and objectives that were developed ~ we had four; obviously the first was address safety issues, second one was provide a long term river crossing and the fourth was minimizing impacts to the neighborhood. In my opinion that’s three out of four that do attempt to address what is some-what identified in the neighborhood plan. Item #7 on page 39 of the Target Range Plan says this bridge is critical for Target Range and Missoula Valley residents to access recreational opportunities in the Blue Mountain, O’Brien Creek and Big Flat areas. What this plan does and I think it is somewhat also covered by the growth policy that more residents of the growth policy that responded to their survey listed the importance of preserving a natural environmental or repairing it ensuring access to recreational areas. The Target Range neighborhood has repeatedly included areas west of the river as being part of their neighborhood. If parts of that neighborhood are going to Target Range School and the Target Range School has become the default community center then I think that helps encourage continue access for a long time in the future for those residents to get from the Big Flat area to the school that their kids attend without going out of direction traveled, it’s more efficient, it’s as the accident rates show it’s likely a safer route to have a straighter alignment that doesn’t have inherent problems with approaches onto a bridge. And bridges shouldn’t be designed as calming devices, they are there to get people across obstacles in a safe manner, I don’t think you can go anywhere in the Country and say; we’re going to put a bridge over here to slow people down. The Target Range Neighborhood Plan identifying the traffic growth related to residential construction and increased recreation opportunities has identified a page and half of mitigation measures that include traffic circles and lower speed limits and
trip separated trails and all these things that they're willing to implement to address the residential growth but not growth from anything else. They've already identified the growth.

Chair Landquist: I think it's really important to note that #7 on page 38 in the Target Range Plan under bridges it does say, underneath what you read; Bridges, continue Missoula County Public Works maintenance and Maclay Bridge we have continued maintenance the bridge is critical for Target Range and Missoula Valley residents to access recreational opportunities in the Blue Mountain, O'Brien and Big Flat areas and then when Missoula County transportation proposes a bridge crossing at the Bitterroot River at the west end of South Avenue West. It's not like this was not in there, yes there is more and at this time the neighborhood the last sentence of that #7 ~ this neighborhood plan has not identified a need for a new bridge, not at the time that this was written but when was this written and the fact that we were waiting, this was already three years ago when this got finalized but it was clearly known during this process to the residents that were out there because I know Lewis was one of the planners working on it. He was making you all aware of the fact that this bridge was still nominated years ago on the Long Range Transportation Plan and the fact that it finally trickled up is what made the monies available to do this study so I don't think that this plan was ignored during this process. Even on page 7 under Transportation and infrastructure; every effort should be taken to mitigate growth and motorized traffic while enhancing the traditionalized styles and safety of citizen living within the Target Range area. That transportation alternatives must be undertaken to offset potential negative impacts associated with future development including efforts to reduce the number of motorized vehicles miles traveled to improve air quality. I think that that's also been looked at as part of this study. I'm just not going to buy into the fact that this plan wasn't used just because it didn't meet some of the scoring criteria's and was somewhat conflicting with the growth policy. If it conflicts with Missoula County Growth Policy, that's our fault for adopting something that conflicted as far as I'm concerned.

Commissioner Carey: For staff; page 38 of the final report of the planning study makes a statement that the cost of a major rehabilitation can be similar to the cost of the new bridge. I guess I have two questions ~ do you think that's true? And my sense is we don't have federal money to do a major rehab or a minor rehab from what I read here, has that changed somehow?

Erik Dickson: I think I understand your question. I don’t believe that federal money would be eligible for a rehab as Lewis pointed out during the report that the off-system bridge program can be used for historic bridges and encouraged for rehab but this is not historic, it’s historic to the neighborhood but it’s not listed that we’re aware of in a National Register of Historic places. It may be eligible but it’s not registered, it’s old and important to the community but it is not eligible for federal funding for a rehab. For one it’s not listed as a historic structure as I think the table says that it doesn’t address the substandard approaches and the substandard width. Those are not our standards those are federal standards that have been being developed since 1970’s that are recognized nationwide so that if anyone from any part of the Country comes here they can identify the same issues, the same problems and hold it to the same standard. It’s not a matter of…it’s local standards that are blocking the ability to use federal money for rehab it’s nationwide standard that we can’t vary from if we want to use that money.
Commissioner Carey: The cost of a major rehab do you think...do you agree with the planning study report that it could be similar to the cost of a new bridge.

Lewis YellowRobe: I’d like to address that. The cost that's listed in this study is...I don’t exactly remember what it is because I’m running out of steam here but that one time cost of about One Million Dollars or so, that’s a one-time cost now and do the age of this bridge then that one-time cost in another few years I don’t know when that next few years is; followed by that next few years, followed by that next few years so compounded over time what is the true actual cost of a rehabilitation because what’s being looked at here is that one time rehabilitation effort that would have to be done again over and over and over again due to the age of the bridge. Bridges are inspected every two years. There might be something that and I don’t want to get into the bridge inspection process but the next one might identify something or a high water event or there’s all of those unknowns. That’s one of other costs again compounded over time that’s not necessarily included in this study but it is a consideration point.

Chair Landquist: Is there anything else that you felt the need to address from what the public questioned or made comments on Lewis?

Lewis Yellow Robe: I don’t believe so Madam Chair, I think the staff had the opportunity to address the major issues that came up within terms of the planning study. Not only the county staff but the planning team as well, we really made every effort that we could to include as much comment as we possibly could. None of the comment was ignored or outright dismissed we really took the time to not only read this and analysis it but have a discussion with the planning team of staff from Department of Transportation and also with the county staff as well to give full consideration of all of the comments that came in through this. We took the public comment very seriously during this planning process.

Chair Landquist: Commissioners any other questions or comments?

Commissioner Curtiss: I’d just like to thank the planning team and the public for all the time that you put into it. The plan acknowledges that this pre-NEPA process is really above and beyond what often happens in regard to looking at whether or not an off-system bridge should be considered. I think we even went beyond that, there were two more meetings in this process then there are in most. We also ask the folks in Target Range to put forward a couple folks to go to Helena and choose the consultant, I think that was more than was needed. The County has 150 bridges, somewhere around that, that we maintain and have to replace and the most recent one that we used off-system bridge funds for was a bridge in Seeley Lake the one that's up Airport Road going past to the High School. In that case it was a bridge that needed repaired, the money was there, we didn’t do a big public process because it needed a new bridge and the community was glad we replaced it. And we were able to add a pedestrian portion to that bridge that wasn’t there before. We used bridge fund money, we used the Treasure State endowment program and other funds to replace bridges throughout the county and this was just a source that this one qualifies for that does use gas tax money. The gas tax money is collected whether there’s a bridge waiting for it or not. Missoula County Commissioners are pretty conservative in asking for federal money to fund things in our community but gas tax money that’s set aside for bridge to me is a good nexus and I don’t feel a bit guilty
about using that money if it's needed. This bridge was nominated in 2002, as you know and the pre-NEPA study is above and beyond as I said. Ms. Headapohl asked about our scope, well the scope and planning of this study was to identify reasonable options to address safety, the geometrics and the environmental concerns based on needs but also to increase safety and efficiency of the transportation system. One of the things that…I've been Commissioner a little over 12 years now and we've talked a lot about the need for an infrastructure transportation plan for the Target Range, Orchard Homes areas because there are very few streets that serve as arterials that go through the neighborhood, there has to be a lot of jiggling and jogging to happen. Because of that there's also not a clear safe route for kids and families to walk or ride bikes, we've done things like added the trail along Clements and the trail along South Avenue and that's good but it is rather meandering neighborhood. I think that the screening process was correlated very well with the needs and objectives of this study and the balance of the transportation needs of the community, the consultant, the planning team are all professionals and I think they were fair in options. I know that we have been accused of having money and looking for a project, that's not true we probably have some other bridges that could be replaced but this one has been on the radar for 20 years. The consultants and our planning team did have tremendous amount of discussion about comments that came forward and I don't think they brushed any of them off, even though in the report it might say thank you for your comments they were discussed in detail because staff would brief periodically about things that would come in and the discussions that they had had. Many of you attended those 18 planning meetings and heard their discussion. Part of the study was to evaluate the river crossing but also the surrounding transportation system; the system needs objectives, constraints, opportunities and the funding availability. I think it's pretty clear that a rehab of that bridge isn't going to be able to use this particular pot of money. There are floodplain issues, any time we put things in the floodplain there's an issue new bridges can be designed to keep those piers out of the river. I think that the interesting thing in this past year and a half has been the fact that...we've joked all along that we must be doing something right because we have two very generally concerned groups that think we had a prepositioned already established so therefore we must be somewhere in the middle with that balance. The Target Range Plan really does have just that one paragraph about Maclay Bridge and I think it's because it wasn't on the radar at the time the plan was written because even though it's notes that it was in the Transportation Plan there wasn't a lot of discussion or analysis done through that plan. Target Range Plan also talks about growth and access to the recreational areas, the increase in traffic and a bridge can't be blamed for the traffic that's going to be generated because there are new houses in the area and your own plan recognizes that. We know that you've asked to be down zoned in a couple areas and once the commission gets through lots of things like the updating of our Subdivision Regs and our Zoning Regs then maybe we'll have time to get to that. A lot of the concerns that have been identified will be addressed in that whole next process if we go forward here, the increased traffic and the design would be to address speed and safety and traffic calming within the area. As Erik said, the bridge shouldn't be used to be the traffic calmer but that doesn't mean there can't be some things like that addressed. It was talked about the Target Range and Orchard Homes neighborhood being unique and that is true, all of our neighborhoods in this County are unique. All you have to do is ask the people that live in them that's why they like to live in different neighborhoods. This study models future needs and that's our job is to look at the future needs and I often say, so if in 10 years or in 2 months a big cottonwood tree comes down and wipes out that bridge somebody's going to say, why the heck didn't the Commissioners plan for what to do here? So growth is going to happen whether there's a bridge or not and that's our job
to plan for that. If we were building a bridge today we would not build it there. If you look at that river, that is not the prime location to build a bridge and in my mind the rehabilitation of the bridge, the amount of work that bridge needs to make it safe, add pedestrian stuff to it, make it last for any amount of time Erik talked about that is the equivalent of building a new bridge. I just don’t think it’s prudent for us to invest money, whether it be from gas tax or taxes, in to rehabbing an old bridge that we also now-a-days, I would hope wouldn’t move a bridge that only reached half way across the river from one part of the county to the next and add on to it and hope that it served its purpose. It’s true that accidents happen because people aren’t paying attention or driving too fast or all of those things but as Erik said we try to look at accident clusters are quantified based on maximums per million miles driven so I think that give it that apples to apples instead of apples to oranges comparison. Rehabilitation does not address problems except maybe pedestrian crossing and the weight limit. I think the other thing to keep in mind is the Commissioners represent more than just those who attend and those who comment. Someone here today said that there are a lot of people in this county that don’t even know that this is going on and they don’t because it’s not in their neighborhood and they didn’t pay attention. Access to those public lands is one of the most important we hear throughout the county; access to trails, access to recreational areas and so we don’t want to be bridgeless. You do say in your plan that the people that live in the Westside of the river are part of neighborhood.

Commissioner Carey: Commissioner Curtiss covered it very well as she always does. I’ll just say that for a long time I’ve gone back and forth on this. One day I’ll think about it and I’ll think they have a good point on that side and I think that’s maybe where I’ll land. The next day it’s different with new information that comes in but what’s occurred to me recently is that if I’m gonna make an error in judgment it’s going to be on the side of public safety, that’s just the way it’s gonna have to be for me. I think the staff; the planning study makes a cogent case for a new bridge. Why leave something that’s potentially hazardous to public health and safety, why leave that in a place where it can do real harm to real human beings, not to mention the river and the wildlife and so on. Why leave that in place when there’s an opportunity to create a better, safer structure? I’m prepared to call the question.

Chair Landquist: No, I need to talk. I’m so glad I’m not the only one that has been going back and forth on this. I’ve been wrestling this; I’ve been dreaming this because I’ve been going back and forth the whole time that this study has been going on. That’s one of the reasons I have...I’m one of those sort of causewayed Bitterrooter’s that does drive that once in a while and I’ve been driving it more than I need to because I needed to continue to get the feel for what’s going on out there so as I come in from Lolo and I have the time, I would take that sometimes on the way going home, sometime on the way coming in, all different seasons so I can continue to kind of be one with the bridge and one with the area and see and experience for myself. It’s not like I’d never taken it before, I had but I felt like I being the Commissioners that commutes from out of town I had the opportunity probably to take it more than anybody else and experience things. I also have a certain amount of experience in the ways of the water world, not only from being an owner of some creek side property out in Lolo but from the non-profit work I did before being a Commissioner as well. So I know the ways of rivers and migrations and things like that and I’m still not overjoyed with this study and the things that it has identified that I’m still waftling on. Ideally I’d really still kind of like a new bridge in the same location, a more modern bridge in the same location because I do think some stream restoration could probably change things and it would be less disturbing to the area off of South Avenue where the new
location has been identified for the wetlands and all the other reasons and the traffic calming and the accident clusters. It’s not like the bridge really caused the accidents and maybe there’s some other things that we can do. I’m finding that the resolve in knowing that to move forward with the option we have, the opportunity we have for this funding, it’s taken how many years to rise up to the top 20 years now?

**Commissioner Curtiss:** It was 2002 that it was put on the list last time.

**Chair Landquist:** There was something in 93 when it was first nominated too. That’s a long time for something to finally trickle up and give Missoula County the federal dollars we need to move forward. We do have a responsibility when it comes to promoting safety and safe operation of things and the EIS that we’ll have to go through may turn around and say just that – oh no this is way too wide for you to put here and there are some other options for you to keep it in the same location. Who knows what FWP and some of the other agencies are going to come up with. We as County Commissioners with the limited resources we have would be remiss to turn down the opportunity to utilize the federal dollars that this has been on the waiting list for all these years. We do have to look at the future long-term, the 50-75 years which in Erik’s words; health investment. That’s the kind of sound investment I would want to do for my own home so therefore I can translate that into making that as a sound decision for the county too. The things I don’t like about this, I said once before to the newspaper; the unintended consequences. Anytime we’re dealing with a river access crossing the river people are going to do some really clever things that we didn’t intend for them to do, just like they do now off of some of our rivers when they go to recreate and the parking zones and no parking zones that it creates. Those are some of the things we can try to plan for I think they did some of that when they did the Kona Ranch Bridge by having a little access there for people to access the river and park. Maybe this is an opportunity to do the same with a new bridge but then I have very big concerns about two dead ends where the Maclay Bridge is now. If the Maclay Bridge does have to come out then what kind of hazard are we creating by having two dead ends with a river through it for rescue and safety? I think some of the other things that haven’t come out and by the time we get through the EIS some of the other safety concerns may come out. I know Missoula Rural Fire has gone through a long range plan for their service area. One of the sticky wickets now is where their main station is located and their other stations are located for when they’re called out to service. As the City continues to annex and grow that Station 1, which is their main station on South Avenue, may need to be moved somewhere else or they may have to have another area on the other side of the bridge, which sort of negates some of the safety concerns that we’re looking at for that bridge being where it’s at now. I think time will tell some of these other things to get flushed out but in order to flush out those things we need to be able to move forward because that’s the only thing that’s going to give us the federal dollars and MDOT dollars to move forward with. While I’m not thrilled with this report it’s a step forward and I think we have to take that forward step. With the Mr. Carey called for the question does somebody want to make a motion?

**Commissioner Carey:** Once again thanking the staff for your incredibly good work, we appreciate it very much. Thank you for coming to this meeting you good citizens of Missoula County. We do listen, we do care and sometimes we can’t agree.
Executive Session
Commissioner Carey made motion that the Board of County Commissioners accept the Maclay Bridge Planning Study’s recommendation to replace the Maclay Bridge with the South One Option and send a letter to Montana Department of Transportation to request continued bridge project developments. Commissioner Curtiss second the motion. The motion carried a vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Curtiss: I’m confident the public will continue to be involved as we go forward to address the safety.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. RECESS
Being no further business to come before the Board the Commissioners are in recess at 8:17 p.m.