



For Immediate Release

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Mullan BUILD Project Charging Ahead

Project elements prioritized; 2020 BUILD Grant application in-process

MISSOULA, Montana - [May 6, 2020] – The Mullan neighborhood has been experiencing growth and development pressures for many years. Constrained by mountains, rivers and recreation areas, Missoula has limited options for well-planned, affordable development. Building the Mullan neighborhood's foundation for today and tomorrow is one piece of the puzzle. Determining what that looks like with limited available funding is another. To begin tackling this challenge, Missoula County, the City of Missoula, and numerous partners secured a \$13 million [BUILD](#) [Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development] [Grant](#). Planning efforts have been underway for months and the project team now has the [framework](#) in place to recommend which elements will be delivered first, with current funding, and which must be delayed until future revenue becomes available.

"To fully build the Mullan area's entire infrastructure system would require hundreds of millions of dollars and we were awarded \$13 million," Missoula County Public Works Director, and project lead, Shane Stack said. "Just because we have a fraction of funding available to deliver this project doesn't mean that only a fraction of critical needs now exists. We have developed an innovative approach, establishing a design for the key transportation corridors, trails, and utilities that will serve the area. The elements prioritized to have the most immediate benefit to the public will be the first constructed using BUILD Grant dollars and local contributions."

The evaluation committee, comprised of government officials and industry experts, ranked ten project elements outlined as part of the original BUILD Grant application. Of these, [Mary Jane Boulevard South](#), [Mary Jane Boulevard North](#), [Tipperary Way Trail](#), [George Elmer South](#), and [England Boulevard](#) were scored as the five locations that would lead to the greatest benefit for the public.

"The evaluation committee looked at the ten identified project elements and independently scored each," Stack said. "The project scoring criteria was based on safety, traffic congestion relief, access to land for economic development, options for all modes of travel, and potential environmental and permitting challenges."

As a next step, Missoula County Commissioners and City Council will soon hear the committee's recommendations. If elected officials concur with the committee's prioritization, the project will continue advancing toward the next milestone; designing the entire project area to 30 percent completion. This allows the project team to more accurately determine costs and other factors that are weighed in making the final determination as to which project locations will be advanced to construction. Additionally, the team will work towards completion of all the Right-of-Way necessary for project elements that may not be constructed with the first round of funding. This decision is anticipated to be made in July.

"With federal funding comes federal requirements," Stack said. "The federal funding that is allocated for the project has strict timelines. While we will offer ample opportunity for public comment, the time frame will be limited. We plan to be under construction by the summer of 2021, compressing the schedule compared to what Missoulians might be accustomed to on other transportation-related projects."

Bringing a contractor on board early in the process is also critical in delivering this project. Utilizing a Construction Manager General Contractor (CM/GC) delivery method increases cost-certainties. Contractors interested in bidding on the Mullan BUILD project are encouraged to visit <https://www.missoulacounty.us/government/public-works/request-for-proposals-bid-solicitations/mullan-build-grant/mullan-build-grant-cm-gc>.

Missoula County's original grant request asked for \$23 million to create a network of complete streets to improve connectivity and provide access to 1,500 acres of developable land through the Mullan BUILD project.

"There aren't winners and losers in this project," Stack said. "All elements identified are still our focus, even if they're not prioritized for this round of funding. We need a strong process if we are to be competitive in asking for additional federal funding."

While projects are being prioritized, the Mullan BUILD team is also simultaneously in the process of preparing a 2020 BUILD Grant request, seeking the remaining \$10 million to address the remaining project needs. Once fully complete as envisioned through the original grant application, more than three miles of new roads will need to be built, along with nearly four miles of new trails. Half-a-mile of Grant Creek's stream must be restored in the flood plain.

Aside from City Council and Commissioner hearings, residents and businesses can share their feedback with the Mullan BUILD team's consideration by contacting public involvement lead, Katie Klietz either through the project webpage (www.mullanbuild.com) or via email at Katie@BigSkyPublicRelations.com. Residents will be asked for preferences regarding the look and feel of future infrastructure, including roadway styles, intersections, and landscaping.