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# Memo

**To:** Missoula County Commissioners  
**From:** Shane Stack, PE (Missoula County Public Works)  
**Cc:** Jeremy Keene, PE (City of Missoula Public Works)  
**Date:** March 11, 2020  
**Re:** Prioritization of Projects Eligible for Funding Through Mullan BUILD Grant

The following MEMO outlines the recommended process for prioritizing and selecting project elements associated with the Mullan BUILD project that will be constructed with available BUILD funds.

## Background and History

In July of 2019, Missoula County and the City of Missoula (City/County) partnered to apply for a discretionary grant through the US Department of Transportation known as Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD). The project focused on developing roads and infrastructure to support residential and commercial development in the area to the west of Reserve Street between Mullan Road and West Broadway. The project, as originally proposed, consisted of eight distinct project elements (see page 4 of Mullan BUILD Application dated July 10, 2019) that were to be developed with grant funding and a local match from the City/County.

In November 2019, \$13M of the original \$23M requested was awarded to City/County for the proposed project. The City/County are committed to constructing all of the project elements included in the BUILD grant request but due to the approximate \$10M shortfall in funding, the City/County must prioritize which project elements will be delivered with the grant funding that is currently available and which elements will be delayed until future funding becomes available. This memo outlines the recommended process by which the City/County will rank and select projects. This process is designed to prioritize those project elements that provide the greatest public benefit, while providing equity and transparency for stakeholders.

## Project Elements to Be Considered

All eight of the project elements that were included in the original BUILD grant application will be considered. However, for evaluation purposes, two of the larger project elements (George Elmer Dr. and Mary Jane Blvd.) have been further divided into north/south segments to allow for more granular analysis of these large project elements. The project elements to be evaluated are as follows:

1a) **George Elmer Drive North** – Completes a new street connection beginning at the proposed intersection of England Blvd and George Elmer Drive and continuing North connecting to W. Broadway. This work will include a crossing structure over Grant Creek and an intersection improvement where it connects to W. Broadway. This work also includes necessary utility infrastructure.

1b) **George Elmer Drive South** – Upgrades George Elmer Drive to City of Missoula urban standards from Mullan Road to where it terminates today just north of the Flynn-Lowney Ditch. It completes a new collector continuing from its current termination at Pius Way North to the future intersection of England Blvd. This scope also includes completion of intersection improvements at Mullan Road and England Blvd. This work also includes necessary utility infrastructure.

2) **England Boulevard** – Extends England Blvd from Flynn Lane, where it currently terminates, to a future intersection with George Elmer Drive. This scope also includes intersection improvements or traffic calming at its intersection with Mary Jane Blvd as well as a roundabout at its intersection with George Elmer Drive. This work also includes necessary utility infrastructure.

3a) **Mary Jane Boulevard North** – Completes a new extension of Mary Jane Blvd beginning at its current termination at Camden St and continuing North to its proposed connection with W. Broadway. The scope will include an intersection upgrade at its connection with W Broadway. This work also includes necessary utility infrastructure.

3b) **Mary Jane Boulevard South** – Completes a new extension of the collector beginning at its current termination at Melrose Place and continuing south to its proposed connection at Mullan Road. The scope will include an intersection upgrade at its connection with Mullan Road. This work also includes necessary utility infrastructure.

4) **Grant Creek Restoration and Trail** – Completes the proposed re-alignment of 2,800 feet of stream channel and associated levee work to remove significant areas of developable land out of the floodplain. This scope also includes a new shared-use path trail alignment that will extend along the newly restored section of Grant Creek, and connect to the proposed North George Elmer Drive collector.

5) **Milwaukee Trail** – Extends a new shared-use path from Mullan Road northwest along the old Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad alignment to Grant Creek or its connection with the proposed Tipperary Way Trail.

6) **Tipperary Way Trail** – Completes a new shared-use path from Hellgate Elementary School west across George Elmer and eventually connecting to the proposed Milwaukee Trail.

7) **Flynn Lane Trail** – Extends the existing shared-used path at Hellgate Elementary School, north along Flynn Lane eventually connecting to the proposed Grant Creek Trail at the future North George Elmer Drive alignment.

8) **Mullan Trail** – Extends the existing Mullan Road shared-use path from its current termination at Flynn Lane east along Mullan Road to its proposed connection to Reserve Street. This work will include any needed safety improvements if a Mullan Road crossing is deemed necessary.

## Prerequisites

The City/County desires to leverage the awarded grant funds to the greatest extent possible for the maximum benefit of the public. Therefore, two prerequisites have been identified that, if not satisfied, would greatly diminish the value of the projects to the public. Project elements must meet the following prerequisites to be evaluated further:

1. **Independent Utility** – At the time of selection, project elements must be usable and functional, independent of other projects or improvements, in order to provide value to the public.

2. Right-of-Way Availability – At the time of selection, project elements must have adequate public right-of-way, or satisfactory evidence that the public right-of-way is in the process of being established. The acquisition of right-of-way can be time consuming and expensive. With limited funding, greater value will be delivered to the public by spending money on the design and construction of project elements that do not require the acquisition of right of way.

### **Additional Evaluation Criteria**

The Mullan BUILD project was awarded federal funds because it endeavored to address significant concerns related to safety and traffic congestion. In addition, it sought to promote economic development and offer multi-modal transportation solutions. As such, project elements that meet the prerequisites previously outlined, will be further evaluated based on the following evaluation criteria according to the total number of possible points indicated.

1. Safety (30 pts) – Addressing safety concerns through the construction of proposed project elements is the City/County’s top priority. Project elements that enhance existing safety concerns by addressing accident-prone intersections, reducing traffic near schools, and addressing dangerous conflicts between vehicles and non-motorized users, will be scored higher than those that do not.
2. Traffic Congestion (20 pts) – Traffic congestion is a growing concern in the Mullan Area due to a lack of connecting streets. The Mullan BUILD grant was awarded to reduce congestion through the construction of additional streets that connect to heavily used traffic corridors, and provide necessary upgrades at key intersections. Project elements that help increase Level of Service (LOS) on the main corridors and move non-school-related, through-traffic off Flynn Lane will be scored higher than those that do not.
3. Access to Land for Economic Development (20 pts) – One of the stated purposes of the BUILD Grant Program is to “leverage development.” The Mullan BUILD application promised to create jobs and build partnerships with private developers to provide workforce housing and increase Missoula’s tax base. Project elements that will directly serve areas currently under development (ie. lot layout and design of necessary infrastructure is advancing) will be scored higher than project elements that serve areas that are not under development.
4. Transportation Choice (20 points) – With travel demand in the area already high, certain project elements will provide additional modes of transportation thus providing multi-modal transportation options to area residents as they consider their travel needs. Project elements that provide more transportation choices to area residents will be scored higher than those that do not.
5. Environmental Review (10 points) - Because this project is federally funded, it is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA), which evaluates project-induced environmental impacts. Each project element will require a different level of environmental review which may have schedule and cost implications. Project elements that have fewer potential environmental impacts or require fewer permitting and regulatory approvals, will be scored higher than those with more.

### **Timing of Selection**

It is anticipated that the City/County will select project elements to be constructed with available BUILD grant funding on May 15.

### **Post Evaluation Considerations**

The purpose of the evaluation is to identify the relative value that different project elements offer to the public and prioritize them accordingly. It is the intent of the City/County to construct project elements in the order in which they are scored, with the highest scored element constructed first.

However, with limited funding available, the cost of each project element must be considered when determining the feasibility of constructing project elements in the order in which they were scored. The timing of construction may also be considered when delivering a highly prioritized project element. Some project elements may offer more value if they are timed with other work outside of the Mullan BUILD Project. The City/County will use cost, timing, and other considerations when obligating funds for the construction of project elements.