



# CITY OF POLSON – LOCAL BYPASS STUDY AND 7TH AVENUE & HILLCREST DRIVE ASSESSMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **What is this project?**

This project is being led by the City of Polson and includes the study, future design and potential construction of a local bypass within Polson, MT. The bypass would utilize the existing facilities of Ridgewater Drive, include a connection between the existing terminus of Ridgewater Drive and Hillcrest Drive that would be constructed by Cougar Ridge Subdivision, and include the city improving Hillcrest Drive/7th Avenue East from the new connection to approximately Main Street/7th Avenue intersection.

## **Where is the project located?**

This project is located in Polson and starts at the intersection of Main Street and 7th Avenue and from there proceeds with reconstruction of 7th Avenue/Hillcrest Drive for 1.3 miles to near the intersection of Hillcrest Drive and Daniah Lane; from here the route would proceed south, requiring construction of a new connection mostly through Cougar Ridge Subdivision property to connect to the current Ridgewater Drive; the final segment utilizes the existing Ridgewater Drive facilities up to the intersection of Ridgewater Drive and US Hwy 93.



## **Why are you doing this project?**

The downtown area of Polson experiences severe congestion and delays at times on US Hwy 93 due to a combination of summer tourist traffic and local/regional day-to-day traffic. To address this issue, the City would like to consider reconstructing 7th Avenue/Hillcrest Drive to accommodate additional traffic generated from a connection of Ridgewater Drive to Hillcrest Drive. The developer of the Cougar Ridge Development is committed to constructing the connection to meet one of the City's original conditions of approval to construct a secondary access.

## **Were other options considered?**

Yes, other bypass options were considered. The options included different connections between Hwy 93 and downtown Polson using a variety of existing routes and new street segments; for example, a bypass route was evaluated that would connect 15th Avenue East to Long Lake Drive to Ridgewater Drive. The options were dismissed for a variety of reasons, including steep grades, limited right-of-way, impacts to existing residential areas, excessive distance and associated travel times, and challenging winter maintenance requirements.

### **How will this project affect emergency response?**

Once completed, this project is expected to improve access and response times for emergency services. Emergency access would be retained through construction.

### **How much will this project cost and how is it being funded?**

The estimated total project cost to the city is \$8.2 million for design and construction. The high-level study was funded with local city funds. The proposed traffic study will be funded with local city funds. While no funding has been identified for the design and construction costs, the city is reviewing different discretionary grant funding opportunities to cover these costs and the city will begin applying for grants as they are advertised.

### **What work has been completed so far?**

A high-level study that evaluated the feasibility and potential effects of a local bypass within Polson.

### **When will construction start?**

At this time, a construction start date has not been set. The construction start date is dependent upon the availability of funding, completion of design and acquisition of any right-of-way (if necessary).



### **Will this project need to purchase additional right-of-way to construct the improvements?**

No new permanent right-of-way acquisition is anticipated for the proposed improvements. The improvements are expected to be contained within the existing 55-ft wide city right-of-way limits. Depending on the final design, temporary construction permits may be needed to support contractor operations.

### **I live along the proposed bypass route, what is going to happen to my property?**

Currently, no impacts are expected for the adjacent property owners, aside from minor impacts associated with tying in private features such as sidewalks and approaches to the street improvements. The public street improvements are expected to fall entirely within the available right-of-way.

### **What is planned for the intersection of US Hwy 93 and Ridgewater Drive?**

At this time, there are no plans to change this intersection, however it will be further evaluated as the project develops.

### **How can I stay updated about this project?**

The city will provide updates as information becomes available and will post updates to the website at <https://www.cityofpolson.com>.

Please contact the City of Polson at 406-883-8200 with questions or comments.