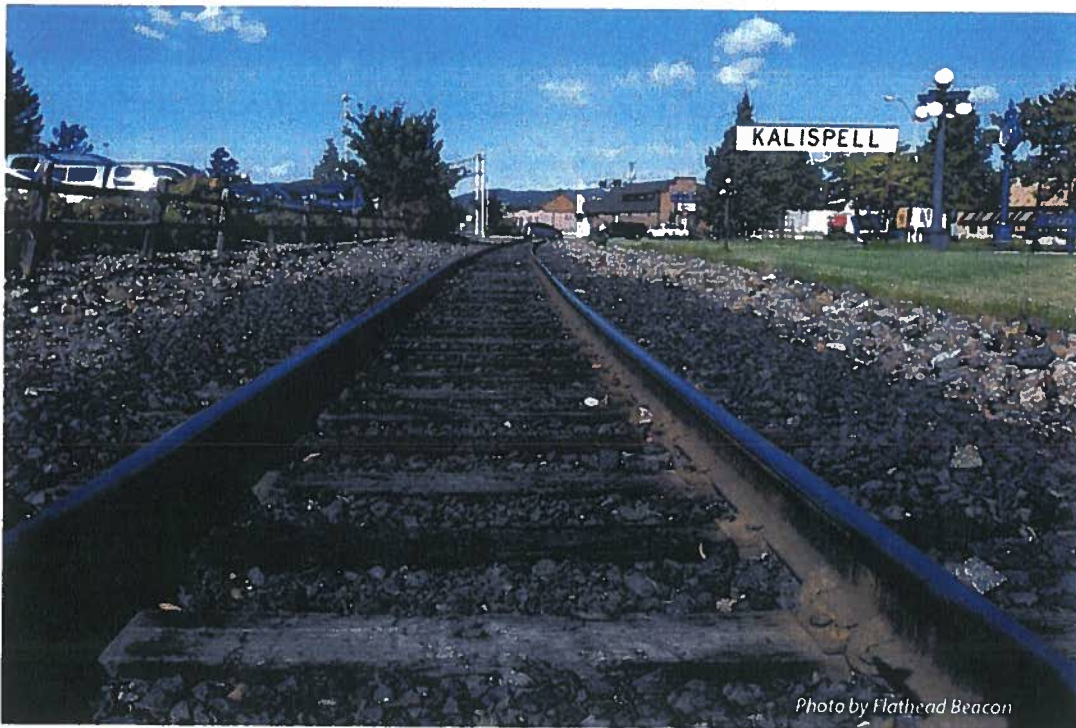


ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR THE
GLACIER RAIL PARK/ KALISPELL CORE AREA DEVELOPMENT AND TRAIL PROJECT
KALISPELL, FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA
Prepared Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (42 USC § 4332), 49 USC § 303, and
64 FR 28545
May 2017



Approved by:

 5/18/17
Federal Railroad Administration

 5-18-17
City of Kalispell



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed Glacier Rail Park/Kalispell Core Area Development and Trail Project (Project) is located in northwest Montana and is envisioned to create economic and transportation opportunities and spark community revitalization. The proposed Project would incentivize private investment to create jobs, prepare the City of Kalispell (Kalispell or City) for growth, and provide increased community cohesion and safety by transforming the underutilized heart and historic downtown area of Kalispell into a thriving city center for residents and visitors. Federal grant funding under a Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant awarded to the City and administered by the US Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and non-federal financial contributions from local, and private sources would make possible the construction of new rail, roadways, and safety infrastructure for a rail-served industrial park (Glacier Rail Park or Rail Park) to serve existing and new prospective businesses. Provision of rail services at the proposed new Rail Park for two existing rail users from the Kalispell Core Area (Core Area) would allow for the abandonment and removal of the existing railroad tracks and redevelopment in the center of Kalispell and construction of the Kalispell Trail in the abandoned railroad right-of-way (ROW).

The establishment of the new Rail Park would allow the relocation of existing rail service from its current location within the Core Area to an area that would provide current and future rail-served businesses an appropriately zoned, sized, designed, and located facility to grow and expand and would be buffered from residences and other non-rail land uses. Once the existing freight rail service is relocated to the new Rail Park, the track that currently bisects the City would be removed to allow for construction of up to three complete street connections; conversion of an existing rail bridge for pedestrian and bicycle use; and construction of 1.6 miles of a paved, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant public-use recreational trail (Kalispell Trail) in a non-contiguous linear park stretching across the community. The proposed Kalispell Trail would provide community connectivity and benefit all residents, including those that are economically disadvantaged and elderly, by providing improved and safer access to business districts, grocery stores, schools, child and elder care, healthcare, workforce training, and employment assistance, and would provide a safe option for non-motorized transportation.

Currently, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway bisects the downtown area of Kalispell east to west. There are six at-grade railroad crossings over the two-mile length of the City that restrict traffic moving north to south, pose safety issues for pedestrians and vehicle traffic, and have created conditions that are not conducive to economic or community growth. Potential users and businesses have avoided locating to available lots adjacent to the existing rail line because of restricted access for traffic and pedestrians, and the general unappealing visual setting of the Core Area, which currently consists of 44 acres of blighted or vacant properties.

The purpose of the proposed Project is to improve the layout, safety, and economic vitality of the Core Area through:

- ◆ Improved roadway traffic, safety, and efficiency;
- ◆ The provision of safe, alternative (non-motorized) modes of transportation for residents and visitors;



- ◆ The revitalization of Kalispell’s historic downtown area to attract additional businesses, retail, and residential uses; and
- ◆ The provision of local and regional business access to rail.

The proposed Project would address existing deficiencies and accomplish the goals and objectives identified by City officials, local businesses, and residents in the Core Area Plan (Core Area Steering Committee 2012).

The first phase of the proposed Project, also referred to as the Build Alternative, involves the construction of the new Rail Park and associated infrastructure necessary to support rail-served businesses in the park. The Rail Park would provide for future economic development and allow connectivity to reach regional, national, and international markets. Approximately 2,300 linear feet of gravity sewer main pipe and 2,400 linear feet of force main sewer pipe would be installed and connected to the City’s existing system. A lift station would be installed to facilitate the conveyance of wastewater to the City’s system. Nearly 8,000 linear feet of new water main pipe would be added to the City’s system to provide domestic water and fire flows to the new Rail Park. All stormwater runoff from the new park would be collected and sent to one of two new stormwater detention ponds, to be constructed as part of the Project, for treatment and disposal.

Also during the first phase of the proposed Project, approximately 6,600 linear feet of roadway would be widened. Whitefish Stage, East Oregon Lane, and a private, interior road within the Rail Park would be reconstructed to meet the City’s collector street standards. This includes a 34-foot-wide, paved surface; curb and gutter; boulevard; and sidewalk. Flathead Drive from Montclair to US Highway 2 would be widened to 32 feet. The intersection of Flathead Drive, US Highway 2, and Woodland Park Drive would be improved with the installation of a traffic signal so that vehicles could turn in all directions. The new signal would provide a safe and controlled access point for trucks to enter US Highway 2 from the Rail Park. The existing railroad crossing at Flathead Drive and East Oregon Lane would also be widened and flashing lights would be added to warn vehicles, thereby increasing safety. Approximately two miles of new track would be installed within and adjacent to the new Rail Park. The new track would include a siding parallel to the existing mainline, a new spur to the Rail Park, up to four storage tracks, and three transload tracks.

The Phase II of the Build Alternative involves the abandonment of rail service by BNSF in coordination with the Surface Transportation Board (STB), railbanking through a process between the City, BNSF and STB, removal of the tracks by the City, construction of the Kalispell Trail, and connecting up to three city streets to provide north to south community connectivity. The BNSF mainline would terminate approximately 90 feet north of the existing railroad bridge over US Highway 2 (Milepost 1225.19). Rail service would be abandoned and tracks removed by BNSF from that point through town, to across Meridian Street (Milepost 1226.79). Rights to the BNSF ROW would be transferred to the City through a railbanking process. A small section of track would be left in place as part of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to mitigate adverse effects to four properties eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). While the abandonment of rail service is necessary in order for the proposed Project to be successfully implemented, USDOT/FRA does not have an approval role over the abandonment, and the abandonment itself is not part of the TIGER-funded Project. BNSF filed a petition for abandonment with STB on April 26, 2017.



The proposed Kalispell Trail would begin at the rail termination point, 90 feet north of the existing railroad bridge spanning US Highway 2, and travel west through the Core Area until it crosses Meridian Street. The existing railroad bridge would be converted for recreational use, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to safely cross US Highway 2. Additional landscaping and infrastructure (e.g., benches, interpretive signage, and potentially public art and water features) would be added along trail. Safety measure would be installed at road crossings, such as marked at-grade crossings, walk signs and/or signals, and pedestrian warning signals for traffic (e.g., hawk lights) would be installed to limit pedestrian/bicycle – vehicle conflicts.

In addition, up to three streets between Meridian Road and Woodland Park Drive that are currently dead-ended by the existing railroad tracks would be connected (complete streets) to increase the efficiency of north-south automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. Currently, six north-south at-grade railroad crossings for traffic are present throughout the two-mile width of Kalispell. All streets considered for connection (i.e., 8th and 6th Avenues North-West and Woodland Park Drive to 7th Avenue East-North) are owned and maintained by the City (i.e., the City has a 60-foot-wide ROW on each roadway). Roadway improvements (e.g., sidewalk and curb and gutter installation, utility extensions) where roadway already exists would be contained within existing City ROW. For all complete street connections considered, the City would acquire ROW from BNSF within the existing rail corridor, as well as acquire property from private landowners outside of the rail corridor and along the existing streets in order to construct the new portions of roadway to create new north-to-south roadway connections.

The potential impacts to the human environment resulting from the Build Alternative (i.e., construction of the Rail Park, removal of the rail line, and construction of the Kalispell Trail and up to three complete streets) are analyzed in this Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA analyzes the No-Action Alternative to provide a baseline from which to determine the impacts of the Build Alternative. Because federal funding is involved (i.e., the FY15 TIGER grant), preparation of an EA is required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FRA's NEPA implementing procedures.

The majority of effects from the Build Alternative would be short-term and related to temporary construction activities. Clearing and grading activities would potentially result in soil erosion, generation of dust, and increases in surface water runoff. Use of construction equipment could potentially result in spills of fuel and oil, increases in noise disturbances, temporary changes in the view shed due to presence of construction equipment and personnel, and increases in construction vehicle traffic. There would also be temporary, minor delays at the existing at-grade roadway crossings while construction activities are occurring. This EA also identifies appropriate mitigation and minimization measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) where necessary. Based on the analysis in this EA, these anticipated environmental effects from the proposed Project would be minimal and not significant.

Permanent impacts caused by buy-outs and/or relocations necessary for the construction of the complete streets would occur to up to 10 local landowners/businesses. In cases where business, residential, and/or commercial displacements, or relocations would occur, the City would comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), Montana state law, and the City's adopted policies and procedures to protect the interests of current landowners or landowners' leases.



In coordination with the NEPA process, FRA has ensured the proposed Project complies with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106). In summary, FRA determined that adverse effects to four historic properties would result from conversion of the existing railroad line to the Kalispell Trail. These adverse effects would be resolved through execution of a MOA among FRA, the City, and the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (MTSHPO) pursuant to Section 106.

The four aforementioned historic properties as well as Depot Park are protected under Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (Section 4(f)). Only one of the historic properties, the Great Northern Railroad, would incur a use under Section 4(f). With respect to Depot Park, while current construction plans would limit work to within the existing BNSF ROW, FRA has identified the potential for a temporary occupancy of a small portion of Depot Park during removal of the rail line and/or construction of the Kalispell Trail. Based on this potential temporary occupancy, FRA has made the preliminary determination that such occupancy, if required, would result in a *de minimis* impact to the Section 4(f) resource. Approval of the Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact to Depot Park would require written concurrence from Kalispell Parks and Recreation. The circulation of this EA for a 30-day public review and comment period is intended to satisfy the public involvement requirements of NEPA, Section 106, and Section 4(f) prior to FRA making a final determination under any of these Federal environmental planning requirements.

Several resources analyzed in this EA would not be impacted by the proposed Project, neither temporarily nor permanently. These resources include: floodplains, prime and unique farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, coastal zones, coastal barriers, Section 6(f) resources, and land use.



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Appendix C – Traffic Study

Appendix D – Cost Benefit Analysis

Appendix E – Market Analysis and Feasibility Study

Appendix F – Section 106 Coordination

Appendix G – Draft Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement

Appendix H – Public Outreach

APPENDED BY REFERENCE

Kalispell Core Area Plan, December 2012, City of Kalispell, Montana

Glacier Rail Park and Kalispell Trail Core Area Development and Trail; A Transformative Transportation Solution; 2015; Kalispell, Montana; USDOT TIGER 2015 Discretionary Grand Proposal Capital Applications

Cultural Report, March 2016; *Class III Cultural Resource Investigations of the Glacier Rail Park in Kalispell, Montana*; Historical Discoveries

Cultural Report, December 2016, *Section 106 Cultural Resources Inventory Glacier Rail Park/Kalispell Core Area Development and Kalispell Trail Project City of Kalispell, Flathead County, Montana*; Rabbitbrush Archaeological Services LLC.

Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments; Knife River Property (Former McElroy and Wilken Site) Kalispell Montana; AMEC Geomatrix; 2011

Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Update; Knife River Property (Former McElroy and Wilken Site) Kalispell Montana; Applied Water Consulting LLC; January 2012



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	FTA	Federal Transit Administration
ADT	average daily traffic	GHG	greenhouse gas
APE	Area of Potential Effect	GIS	Geographic Information System
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	GNCC	Great Northern Corridor Coalition
BNSF	Burlington Northern Santa Fe	GNRHS	Great Northern Railway Historical Society
BSA	Big Sky Acoustics, LLC.	H ₂ S	hydrogen sulfide
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	Historical Society	Northwest Montana Historical Society
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act	IPaC	Information for Planning and Conservation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	KBIC	Kalispell Business Improvement District
CO	carbon monoxide	LLC	Limited Liability Company
CWA	Clean Water Act	LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
dBa	decibels	LUST	leaking underground storage tank
EA	Environmental Assessment	MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
ESA	Endangered Species Act	MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
FCEDA	Flathead County Economic Development Authority	MPDES	Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	MPO	Municipal Planning Organization
FR	Federal Register		
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration		



MTDEQ	Montana Department of Environmental Quality	SDWA	Safe Drinking Water Act
MTDNRC	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation	SIP	State Implementation Plan
MTFWP	Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks	SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
MTSHPO	Montana State Historic Preservation Office	SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices	STB	Surface Transportation Board
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards	STIP	State Transportation Improvement Plan
NAIP	National Aerial Imagery Program	SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
NASS	National Agricultural Statistics Service	TIGER	Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act	USC	United States Code
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide	US	United States
NO _x	nitrogen oxides	USDA	US Department of Agriculture
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service	USDOT	US Department of Transportation
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places	USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
NWI	National Wetland Inventory	USGS	US Geological Survey
O ₃	ozone	UST	underground storage tank
Pb	lead	VOCs	volatile organic compounds
PM _[x]	particulate matter	WATCO	Mission Mountain Railroad
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act		
ROW	right-of-way		



CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE PROJECT

1.1 Introduction

The City of Kalispell, Montana (Kalispell or City) was selected to receive a Fiscal Year 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the proposed Glacier Rail Park/Kalispell Core Area Development and Trail Project (Project). The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), an operating administration of USDOT, is administering the TIGER grant. This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, (64 Fed. Reg. 28545, May 26, 1999 as updated in 78 FR 2713, January 14, 2013), which are FRA's procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508). This EA was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed Project on the human and natural environment. To implement the Project, the City is the lead local agency and is working in coordination with FRA, Flathead County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA), Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and Mission Mountain Railroad (WATCO) Companies. In addition to the \$10 million TIGER grant, \$11.2 million would be provided by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), the City of Kalispell, FCEDA, and other non-federal funding sources.

1.2 Description of the Proposed Project

1.2.1 Existing Conditions

The Project Area for the Build Alternative is defined as the construction footprint of the proposed Project that would be directly impacted by the construction of the proposed Glacier Rail Park (Rail Park), Kalispell Trail, and associated improvements (e.g., construction of complete street connections, installation of a new traffic signal and utilities, and roadway improvements). The WATCO short line railroad is currently under contract with BNSF to provide rail service on the tracks serving the rail-served businesses in downtown Kalispell. WATCO currently provides service to CHS, Inc. (CHS), a farmer cooperative and agribusiness, and Northwest Drywall, and stores railcars at the end of the track and on siding track. These freight railroad lines through the Project Area are owned by BNSF and leased by WATCO. WATCO operates the railroad line that begins in Columbia Falls, Montana, and extends southwest to Kalispell. WATCO serves 12 customers at 15 locations, primarily moving forest products and grain (WATCO Companies 2016).

The proposed Project is part of the Great Northern Corridor Coalition (GNCC) umbrella of identified regional projects. The GNCC works to promote regional cooperation, planning, and shared project implementation to improve moving freight from Chicago through Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, and Idaho to ports in Washington and Oregon. The GNCC system of highways, railroads, and ports is vital to move American products to global markets and deliver necessary commodities to communities. The GNCC is working to strengthen this corridor in order to promote economic growth for neighboring communities and accommodate the demand for safe, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation services (GNCC undated). Currently, because of a lack of a central rail hub in the



region, grain farmers south of Polson, Montana, truck their grain to Lewiston, Idaho (M. Lalum, CHS; Operations Manager, personal communication, June 2016). A 2013 Market Analysis and Feasibility Study for the proposed Rail Park indicated the Rail Park would connect businesses within a 100-mile radius of Kalispell to the GNCC, as well as Canadian ports (KLJ 2013a). Please refer to **Appendix E, Market Analysis and Feasibility Study**.

The proposed Project is partially located in downtown Kalispell, which is also known as the Core Area, and is identified in the City's Core Area Plan (2012). The Core Area and Core Area Plan are described in detail in **Sections 1.2** and **1.3**.

There is no existing rail park or loading/unloading facilities within the Core Area; trains deliver directly to two businesses, CHS and Northwest Drywall, within downtown Kalispell. There is a mainline with spurs serving the CHS fertilizer plant and grain elevator as well as short storage tracks. A private spur leads to Northwest Drywall.¹ Train operations for the existing CHS facility within the Kalispell Core Area consist of one locomotive to move 24 train cars during the busiest times of the year, which are in August and December. During these busy months, one to three full trains per month are moved onto the BNSF mainline from CHS. It takes approximately 8 hours to load 24 cars using the locomotive. The locomotive then travels south into Kalispell, taking approximately 1.5 hours to couple the railcars and move the train north out of town on the mainline. At non-peak times of year, CHS operations typically move single cars by trains two to four times per month (Mark Lalum, personal communication, June 2016). On average, 12 trains per month provide deliveries to the rail-served businesses in the Core Area. Anytime a 28-car train is loaded with grain at the CHS grain elevators in the Core Area, the train blocks three of the six north-south at-grade crossings in the City of Kalispell. If a 48-car train is brought to the Core Area, it blocks all six north-south crossings (M. Lalum, personal communication, June 2016). There are more frequent trains when CHS receives fertilizer for spring planting and in fall during grain harvest. The CHS grain elevator is located in downtown Kalispell in the Core Area. During a 4-week period, CHS receives 20 to 80 grain trucks per day. Grain trucks regularly park along 5th Avenue West North from West Center Street to US Highway 2 (Idaho Street) where they wait to unload at the elevator (M. Lalum, personal communication, June 2016).

The existing BNSF rail line bisects the City for 1.6 miles. Trains travel over US Highway 2 via a concrete bridge south of the location of the proposed Rail Park within the Project Area. The tracks continue through the downtown Kalispell Core Area where they split on the west side of Kalispell (west of South Meridian Street) before the line terminates. There are six existing at-grade railroad crossings through the Core Area: five cross two-lane city streets (Meridian Road, 5th Avenue West, 1st Avenue East, 3rd Avenue East, and 4th Avenue East) and one crosses the four-lane US Highway 93 (Main Street). There are several roads that are currently dead-ended by the BNSF railroad tracks: 7th, 6th, 5th, and 2nd Avenues East-North and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 8th Avenues West-North. There are no designated bike lanes currently within the downtown area. The existing Great Northern Historical Trail (a rails-to-trail initiative) begins on the west side of Meridian Street. This recreational-use trail splits and runs south to Somers, west to Kila, and north along the Kalispell Bypass.

¹ It is the City's understanding that the owner of the private spur would remove the track, following abandonment of the BNSF rail line, so that the property where the private spur is currently located could be redeveloped for another purpose in the future.



The proposed Rail Park would be constructed on a 40-acre reclaimed gravel pit, which is currently vacant with no businesses currently operating on the site. A private gravel road connects Whitefish Stage Road and Flathead Drive on the north boundary of the proposed Rail Park. East Oregon is a two-lane, asphalt-paved road that borders the proposed Rail Park site to the south and east. The paved road is approximately 24-foot-wide with gravel shoulders. Flathead Drive, on the east side of the proposed Rail Park, is also a two-lane, asphalt-paved road, approximately 24 feet wide with gravel shoulders. These existing roadways surrounding the proposed Rail Park site are owned and maintained by the City of Kalispell. Flathead Drive turns south after crossing the tracks traveling east. This section of Flathead Drive is approximately 22-foot-wide with gravel shoulders and is owned and maintained by Flathead County.

Flathead Drive intersects with US Highway 2 and Woodland Park Drive, where the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) owns the right-of-way (ROW). Existing stop signs on Flathead Drive and Woodland Park Drive control traffic entering onto US Highway 2. Traffic on US Highway 2 does not stop, but can turn onto both Flathead Drive and Woodland Park Drive. Vehicles on Flathead Drive can turn onto US Highway 2 in either direction; however, a concrete island on Woodland Park Drive only allows vehicles to turn right onto US Highway 2.

The proposed Rail Park, including the existing interior gravel road, East Oregon Lane, and Flathead Drive, are within the boundary of the City of Kalispell. Currently, City of Kalispell water and sewer service is not available at the proposed Rail Park site (Susie Turner, Kalispell Public Works Department; Director, personal communication, February 2014). Flathead Electric Cooperative provides power to the surrounding residents and businesses (Stan Pluid, Flathead Electric Cooperative; Manager, personal communication, October 2014). Natural gas is also available in the area (Eric Smith, Northwest Energy; Manager, personal communication, June 2015). Several telecommunication companies have overhead lines surrounding the proposed Rail Park site (Wes Just, CenturyLink; Manager, personal communication, October 2016). No stormwater collection system currently exists in the Project Area.

1.2.2 Proposed Project

The proposed Project is located in Kalispell, Flathead County, Montana, and consists of:

- ◆ Constructing a rail-served industrial park (Rail Park);
- ◆ Removal of 1.6 miles of existing rail track²;
- ◆ Conversion of 1.6 miles of rail bed and the existing railroad bridge over US Highway 2 to a public-use trail (Kalispell Trail);
- ◆ Construction of up to three north-south street connections (complete streets);

² BNSF, in coordination with the Surface Transportation Board (STB), is pursuing the abandonment of rail service along the full length of track totaling 1.6 miles from milepost (MP) 1225.19 to MP 1226.79. USDOT/FRA does not have an approval role regarding the abandonment of rail service but, once the rail line is abandoned and the railbanking process is completed by the City in coordination with STB, TIGER funding would be used to remove 1.6 miles ((MP)1225.19 to Meridian Road) of track and subsequently construct the proposed Kalispell Trail in the abandoned railroad ROW.



- ◆ Installation of a new traffic signal at Flathead Drive/Woodland Avenue and US Highway 2 to control ingress/egress to the Rail Park; and
- ◆ Installation and/or extension of utilities to serve the Rail Park.

The proposed Rail Park would be located on the eastern side of Kalispell, while the Kalispell Trail would be located on a portion of what is currently a BNSF railroad line through Kalispell's Core Area. The Core Area is defined as the traditional industrial hub and downtown located along the rail corridor within City limits. The Core Area is bounded to the east and west by City limits, Washington Street to the north, and First Street to the south (Core Area Steering Committee 2012). Please refer to **Figure 1, Kalispell Core Area** and **Figure 2, Project Location Map**. Please refer to **Chapter 2, Alternatives**, for specifics regarding the alternatives considered for the proposed Project.

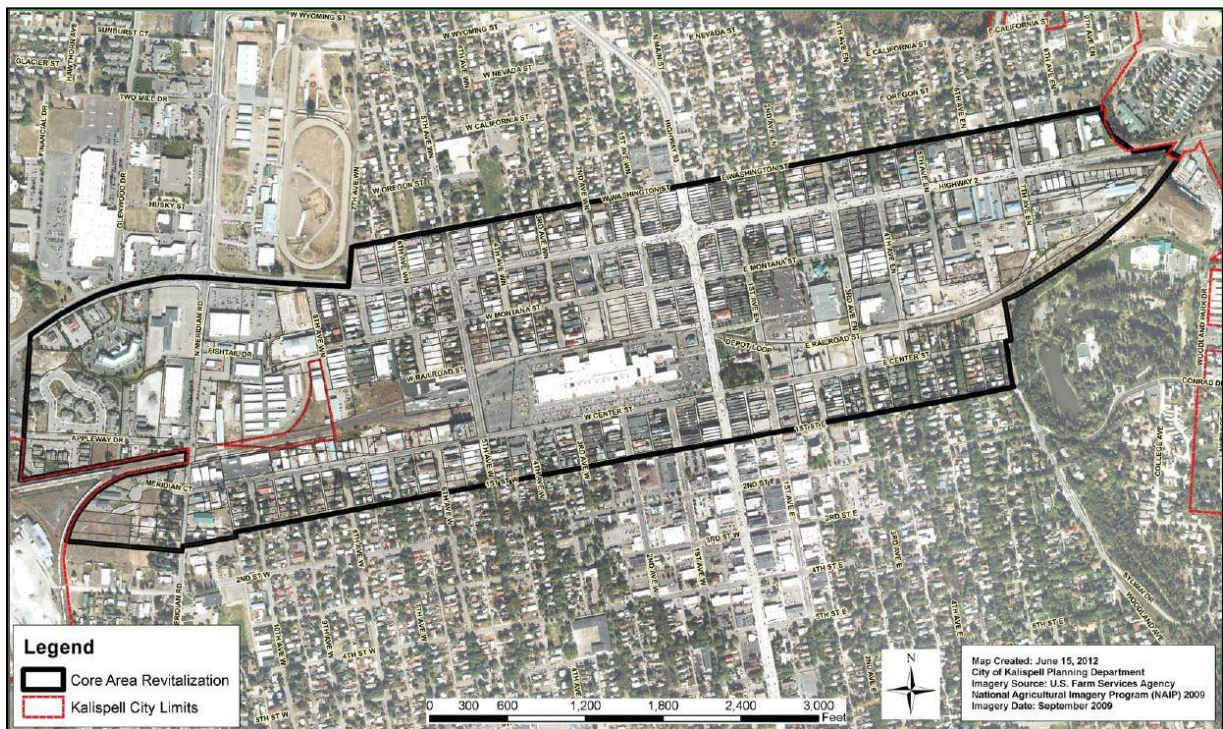


Figure 1, Kalispell Core Area

The proposed Rail Park would enable existing freight rail service to be relocated from its current location within the Core Area to an area that would provide current and future rail-served businesses an appropriately zoned, sized, designed, and located facility to grow and expand and would be buffered from residences and other non-rail land uses.

Construction of the proposed Project would occur in two phases, with the proposed Rail Park being constructed first (Phase I) and the Kalispell Trail (Phase II) being constructed after Phase I is completed. Phase I and Phase II are described in more detail in **Chapter 2, Alternatives**.



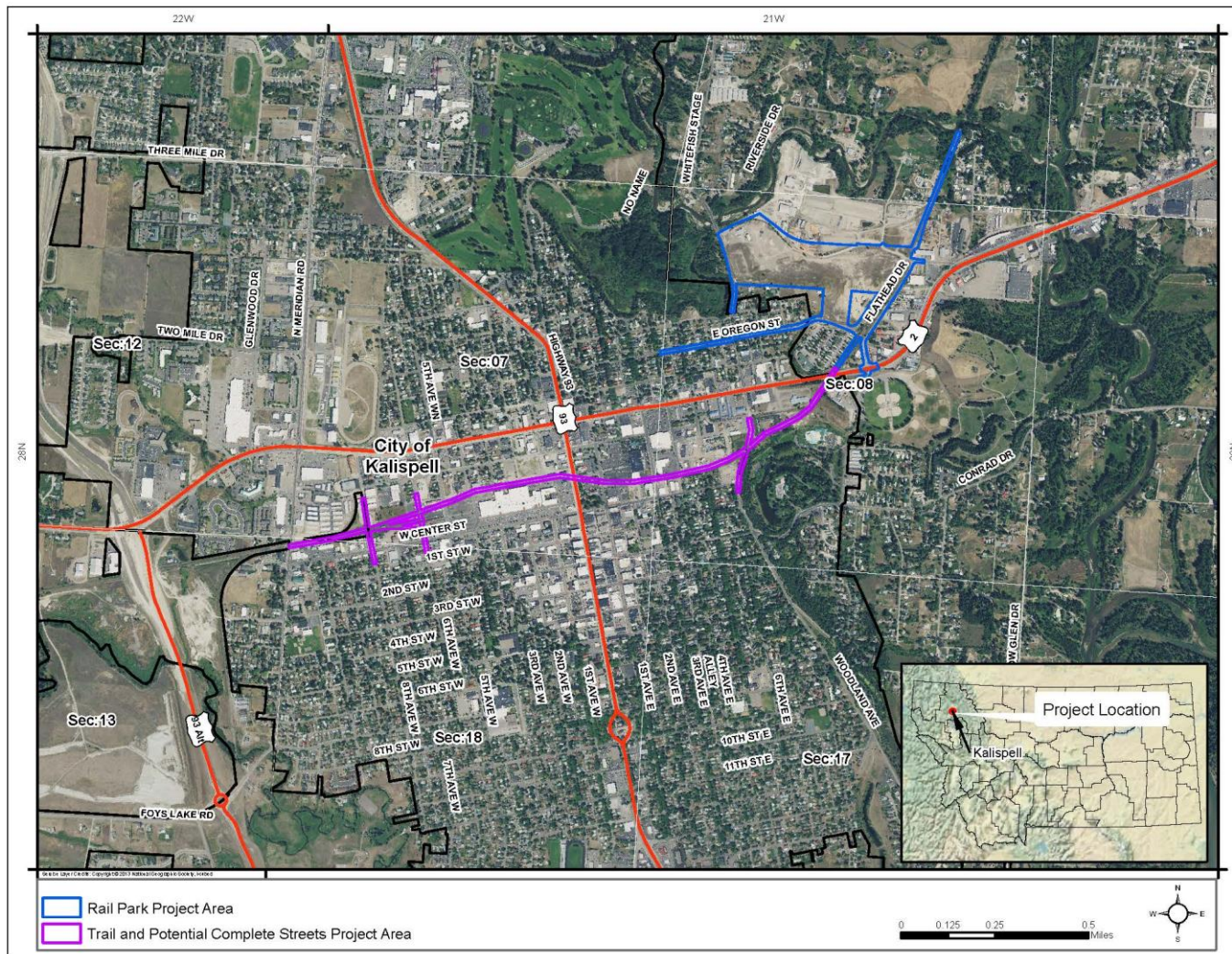


Figure 2, Project Location Map



1.3 Need for the Project

Kalispell is Flathead Valley's largest city and the retail and business hub of the region, serving approximately 140,000 people in northwest Montana (US Census Bureau 2015). The community hosts over two million visitors annually because of its proximity to popular outdoor recreational locations such as Whitefish Mountain Resort, Flathead Lake, and Glacier National Park (Great Falls Tribune 2014). Between 2000 and 2015, the population of Kalispell increased 40 percent to 21,142 (US Census Bureau 2015). Kalispell's fast growth has compounded issues associated with the existing railroad line that runs directly through the Kalispell Core Area, splitting and isolating the City into north and south segments. Adjacent to the railroad track are small city lots, incompatible uses, 44 acres of vacant or underdeveloped property, and dead-end streets (Tom Jentz, Kalispell Planning Department; Director, personal communication, October 2015).

In 2012, the City established a Core Area Steering Committee to identify major community needs in the Core Area and to develop the Core Area Plan (Core Area Steering Committee 2012³) to resolve the identified deficiencies in the community. There are several issues associated with the current layout of the Core Area of downtown Kalispell including the following:

- ◆ Roadway traffic movement is limited by existing railroad tracks that run the entire two-mile span of town and there are only six at-grade crossings.
- ◆ Green space is lacking in the Core Area, the creation of which would improve community cohesion, recreational options, and visual appeal.
- ◆ There are no adequate sidewalks or pathways for alternative non-motorized transportation modes, such as walking, bicycling, or rollerblading.

"The vision of Kalispell's revitalized Core Area is to transform from an industrially-oriented center into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood, focusing upon retail, residential, entertainment, and cultural amenities designed to proudly and consistently complement the existing historic Kalispell downtown area."

- ◆ Incompatible, vacant, and abandoned industrial buildings are the primary land use adjacent to the railroad tracks.

- ◆ There are no pedestrian-friendly retail, residential, entertainment, or commercial entities to enhance the community and existing historic downtown area.

These issues are the basis for the need for the proposed Project. For the

community of Kalispell, the proposed Project would address several needs, including correcting inefficient traffic operations and related safety issues, providing safe pedestrian and other non-motorized travel options, providing a central location for business and economic diversity and growth for industrial rail users, and creating an attractive trail amenity for residents and visitors enabling community revitalization and infill at the heart of the City.

³ http://www.kalispell.com/community_economic_development/documents/LowResolutionVersion.pdf



1.3.1 Traffic and Safety

Kalispell requires traffic modifications to streets running north to south to efficiently handle traffic from its 20,000 residents and the influx of over 2 million visitors annually due to the proximity to Glacier National Park (Great Falls Tribune 2014). Deficiencies related to the existing railroad tracks in downtown Kalispell include restricted north-south traffic due to only six at-grade railroad crossings across the entire two-mile width of the City. This diverts an inordinate amount of traffic to US Highway 93, causing high traffic congestion and delays. Second, large numbers of grain trucks (maximum of 80 trucks during harvest season) serving the CHS facility clog roadways and produce additional travel efficiency and safety issues (M. Lalum, personal communication, April 12, 2017). Grain trucks crowd narrow, congested streets at the height of summer, the area's busiest tourist season. The current location of the railroad tracks causes school and public transportation buses to come to a complete stop and then cross the tracks, which occurs up to 50,000 times per year (Jim Boyd, Eagle Transit; Transportation Manager, personal communication, March 25, 2015; Mike Flatau, Kalispell School District 5; Superintendent, personal communication, April 2014). The railroad tracks, when utilized, also create long idle times for stopped vehicles waiting for trains to cross.

AN AT-GRADE CROSSING IS AN INTERSECTION WHERE A RAILROAD CROSSES A ROADWAY AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THE ROADWAY, AS OPPOSED TO UTILIZING A BRIDGE OR TUNNEL TO SEPARATE THE TWO.

The existing at-grade railroad crossings create unsafe conditions for motor vehicle and pedestrian travel, increasing the risk for train-vehicle or train-pedestrian collisions. This is compounded by the lack of sidewalks and/or designated pedestrian facilities within the Project Area. In addition, there are unsafe conditions at the intersection of US Highway 2, Flathead Drive, and Woodland Park Drive. The current traffic volume at the intersection warrants modification based on eight-hour, four-hour, and peak-hour vehicular volumes with the northbound right turns from Woodland Park Drive. From January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012, there were 11 collisions at this intersection; four of those with injuries involved (KLJ 2013b). The 265 westbound left turns during the peak hour conflict with the 1,026 eastbound through and right turn movements at the intersection, creating significant backup (KLJ 2015). Please refer to **Appendix C, Traffic Study**. Existing truck traffic also poses potential safety concerns for travelers on US Highway 2.

Pedestrian safety is a primary concern within the Core Area of Kalispell. Since 1995, four pedestrians have been killed in motor vehicle-pedestrian accidents. Fifty percent of these fatalities happened within a block of each other in the Core Area, within 200 feet of the proposed Kalispell Trail as elderly citizens were attempting to walk where there are no sidewalks and no pedestrian safety features such as crosswalks or signals (Roger Nasset, Kalispell Police; Chief of Police, personal communication, June 22, 2016). In particular, children, elderly and physically or mentally disabled people are at risk for collisions and need safe transportation options. Flathead Industries, which serves disabled clientele, is located within the Project Area. Of its clients, 98 percent are not licensed to drive, and would greatly benefit from pedestrian transportation options to allow them to access services and employment independently (Vickie Poynter, Flathead Industries; Manager, personal communication, May 2015).



1.3.2 Non-Motorized Transportation and Community Cohesion

Kalispell needs to create a safer, more walkable community, which is identified as a priority in the Kalispell Core Area Plan (Core Area Steering Committee 2012). Currently, there are six roadway-railroad at-grade crossings through the two-mile width of town. Many city streets were developed without sidewalks, which makes alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, difficult and dangerous for travelers. While extensive trail systems, including the Great Northern Historical Trail, reach south, west, and north of the City, none of these trail systems connect to the Core Area and traditional downtown. This leaves pedestrians and bicyclists to negotiate streets with no designated pedestrian crossings or bike lanes. In the case of Main Street (US Highway 93), pedestrians are forced to cross seven vehicle lanes without proper signalization or signage, causing safety concerns.

1.3.3 Economic and Business Opportunities

Flathead County and northwest Montana are geographically situated to be able to capitalize on the proximity to the Great Northern Corridor along the BNSF railway; however, rail access is lacking in northwest Montana for freight movement. There is currently only one facility in Montana capable of shipping goods via rail to Canada. This facility is located in Shelby, which is 115 miles from Kalispell. This has limited the ability to diversify and strengthen a rail -supported economy. A central location that would improve safety, access, and economic growth opportunities for businesses located within Kalispell, or considering locating to Kalispell in the future, is currently lacking.

Potential users and businesses avoid locating to lots adjacent to the existing railroad line in the Core Area because of restricted access and general appeal of the area. This has resulted in 44 acres in the Core Area are blighted or vacant (T. Jentz, personal communication, October 2015).

1.4 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the Project is to improve the layout, safety, and economic vitality of the Core Area through improved roadway traffic and safety and efficiency; provide safe, alternative modes of non-motorized transportation by repurposing existing railroad infrastructure. The proposed Rail Park would provide for future economic development; allow connectivity to reach regional, national, and international markets; improve the efficiency of existing freight rail operations in the City; facilitate the revitalization of Kalispell's historic downtown area to attract additional businesses, retail, and residential uses; and provide local and regional businesses with improved access to rail.

The proposed Rail Park would provide for future economic development and allow connectivity to reach regional, national, and international markets, as well as improve the efficiency of existing freight rail operations in the City. The proposed Kalispell Trail would provide citizens of Kalispell a safe and efficient method of pedestrian travel, improve traffic conditions by eliminating at-grade railroad crossings, and provide the Core Area with opportunity to redevelop abandoned and vacant lots, spurring community development.



CHAPTER 2 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

This EA analyzes a No-Build Alternative and one Build Alternative. Two additional locations for the proposed Rail Park and four additional complete street crossings were considered but eliminated from further consideration and analysis in this EA, as discussed in the following subsections. The proposed construction of the Rail Park and the Kalispell Trail would be split into two phases. The proposed Rail Park would need to be constructed and operational, with rail-served customers using the new facility before the portion of BNSF rail line could stop service and be converted into a pedestrian and bicycle trail (Kalispell Trail). For the purposes of this EA, the Rail Park and Kalispell Trail are assessed as a single Project.

2.2 No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, the City would not construct the Project. Existing conditions (**Section 1.2.1**) associated with the current location and operation of the railroad in Kalispell would continue, including traffic delays, lack of facilities to allow pedestrians to safely traverse the City, and lack of a central location for rail-served businesses. The No-Build would not include the same incentives for further economic development, job creation, or revitalization of the Kalispell Core Area. The railroad would continue to hinder economic and community development by dividing the City and its residents and would not address the goals and objectives identified by the Core Area Steering Committee.

The No-Build Alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the Project. It has been evaluated in this EA to provide a baseline against which to evaluate the potential impacts of the Build Alternative.

2.3 Build Alternative - Glacier Rail Park and Kalispell Trail

The Project involves two dependent phases that form a single Project. The first phase is the construction of the proposed Rail Park and associated infrastructure serving the Rail Park. Associated infrastructure would include:

- ◆ Construction of a team track and transload facility (described below);
- ◆ Installation of a traffic signal at Flathead Drive/Woodland Avenue and US Highway 2;
- ◆ Road work to expand the width of Flathead Drive, East Oregon Lane, and a private interior Rail Park road; and
- ◆ Extension of City utilities (e.g., sewer, water, electric) to the Rail Park.

The operation of the proposed Rail Park is not anticipated to increase train traffic to the area. To compensate for increase in rail service demand, additional cars would be added to existing train sets. Trains travel to Kalispell an average of 12 days per month and include shipment of fertilizer to the existing location of rail services and shipment of grain out to ports on the West Coast (Portland/Seattle area).



Once the proposed Rail Park is completed and operational, the proposed Kalispell Trail portion would be constructed. This second phase of the Project would include;

- ◆ BNSF abandonment of rail service on the existing railroad tracks;
- ◆ BNSF removal of 1.6 miles of existing rail line from north of the railroad bridge spanning US Highway 2, to Meridian Road;
- ◆ City's construction of the 10-foot-wide public-use trail along the abandoned railroad tracks; and
- ◆ Up to three complete north-south street connections.

The two phases of the Project are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

The Project Area for the Build Alternative is defined as the construction footprint of the Project that would be directly impacted by the construction of the Rail Park, Kalispell Trail, and associated improvements (e.g., complete street connections, traffic signal, roadway improvements, utilities).

2.3.1 Glacier Rail Park (Phase I)

There is not a rail park or loading facilities currently in operation within Kalispell. Construction of the proposed 40-acre industrial Rail Park would represent an investment in rail, road, and utility infrastructure for existing and future businesses to access the existing BNSF rail line. The Rail Park would provide for future economic development and allow connectivity to reach regional, national, and international markets. An anticipated investment of a portion of the TIGER funds would leverage local, public, and private funds to develop the Rail Park.

Under the Build Alternative, the proposed Rail Park would be constructed and operated on a former Brownfields site, which previously operated as a gravel, open-pit mine. The mine has since been reclaimed and the property on which the proposed Rail Park would be constructed is currently owned by FCEDA. FCEDA would also purchase an additional 3.38 acres of BNSF right-of-way (ROW) adjacent to their existing property (location of the Rail Park) to construct the Rail Park. FCEDA has agreed to allow the City to construct the Rail Park on FCEDA property. A new rail line would be extended into the Rail Park from the mainline north of the Rail Park and enter on the east side. The spur would traverse west from the existing BNSF line 1,000 feet. Four parallel tracks within the Rail Park, totaling approximately 7,400 feet in total length, would provide car storage, run around track, loading and unloading (i.e., team/transload track), and access to industrial business lots within the Rail Park.

Outside of the proposed Rail Park, approximately 3,500 feet of new rail is proposed parallel to the east side of the existing BNSF mainline, to total approximately 10,900 linear feet of new track. The additional 3,500-foot side track would allow engines to go around stationary rail cars on the mainline. All new track, inside and outside of the Rail Park would be entirely located within FCEDA property. Within the Rail Park, a section of track, approximately 100 feet long, would provide a team track for rail users not located in the Rail Park. This team track would be available to businesses to load or unload their own materials on and off railcars. A business would provide their own labor, equipment, and insurance. Please refer to **Figure 3, Rail Park Overview** and **Figure 4, Rail Line Index**.



The BNSF lines to the east of proposed Rail Park and through the Core Area would remain operational while the Rail Park is under construction and the parallel lines are laid. Rail service would continue to be provided to the rail-served businesses in the Core Area throughout construction of the Rail Park.



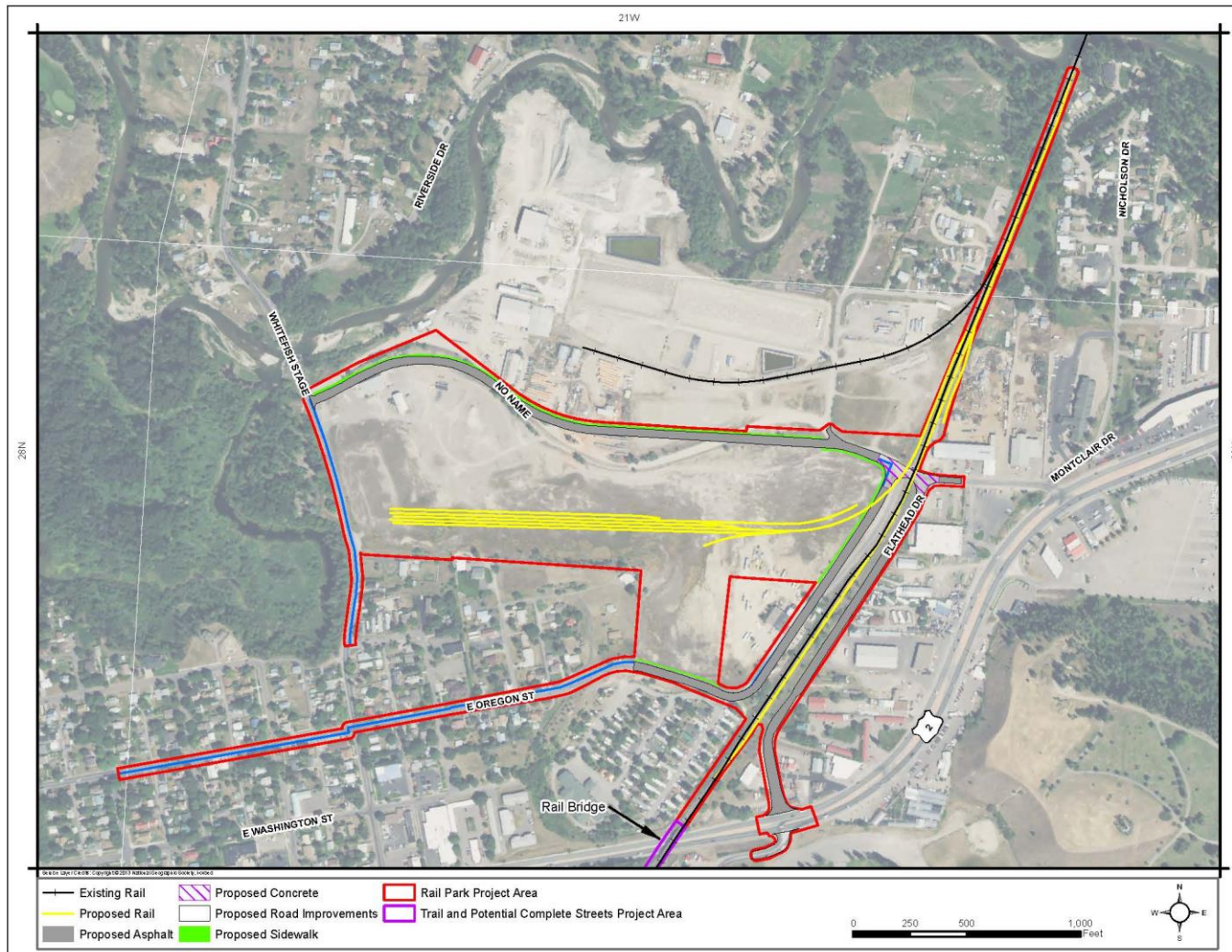


Figure 3, Rail Park Overview



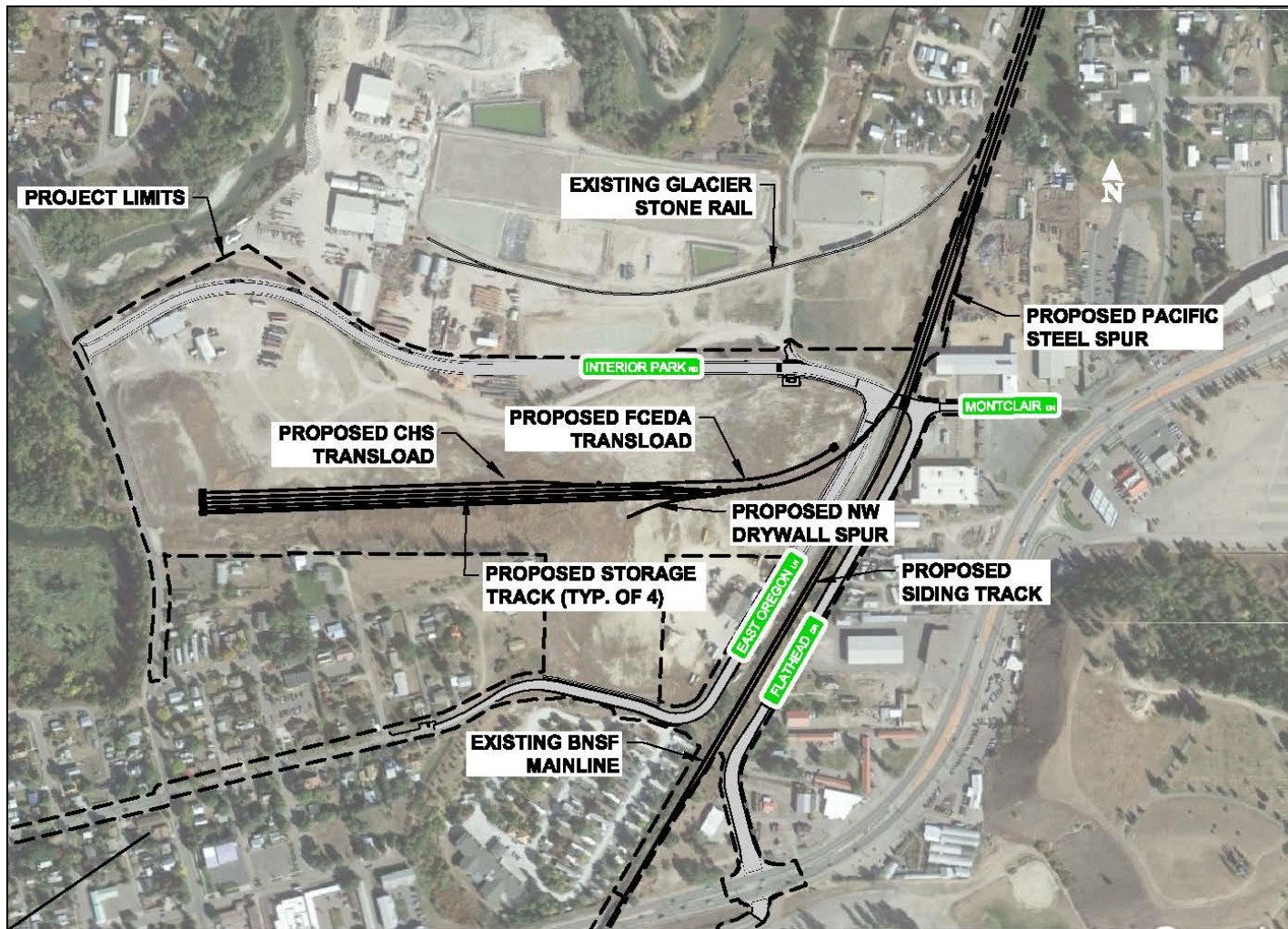


Figure 4, Rail Line Index



2.3.1.1 Roadway Improvements

The proposed Rail Park site is currently accessed from Whitefish Stage Road to the west, East Oregon Lane to the east/south, Flathead Drive for eastbound or westbound vehicles from US Highway 2, and Montclair Drive to the east. Currently, traffic access to the proposed Rail Park site on Flathead Drive and Woodland Drive is controlled by one stop sign. The existing Flathead Drive/Woodland Park Drive and US Highway 2 intersection currently restricts the Woodland Park Drive, or south leg (northbound direction) to a right-turn-only via a raised concrete channelization island. For northbound travelers on Woodland Park to access the proposed Rail Park, they must travel east on US Highway 2 to the Montclair intersection 0.4 miles away. Please refer to **Figure 5, Existing Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 Intersection Configuration**.



Figure 5, Existing Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 Intersection Configuration

To accommodate vehicles traveling north on Woodland Avenue and truck traffic from the proposed Rail Park, the Flathead Drive/Woodland Park Drive and US Highway 2 intersection would be improved to include a four-way traffic signal. Installing signal control and removing the median would allow left and through travel from Woodland Park Drive, and would provide a safer, more attractive Rail Park access option for travelers and truck traffic. The intersection would also be widened at Flathead Drive

to accommodate the turning radius and weight of trucks accessing the proposed Rail Park from westbound US Highway 2. Please refer to **Figure 6, Proposed Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 Intersection Configuration**. The signal at Flathead Drive/Woodland Park Drive and US Highway 2 intersection is anticipated to accommodate existing trips that currently use the Montclair Drive and US Highway 2 intersection; 30 percent of the current outbound and inbound left turns are anticipated to shift from Montclair Drive to the Flathead Drive/Woodland Park Drive and US Highway 2 intersection. With the addition of a four-way traffic signal, primary Rail Park access would be located at the Flathead Drive/Woodland Avenue and US Highway 2 intersection. Secondary access into the proposed Rail Park from the existing access points of Montclair Drive/US Highway 2, Whitefish Stage Road, and East Oregon Lane would continue.

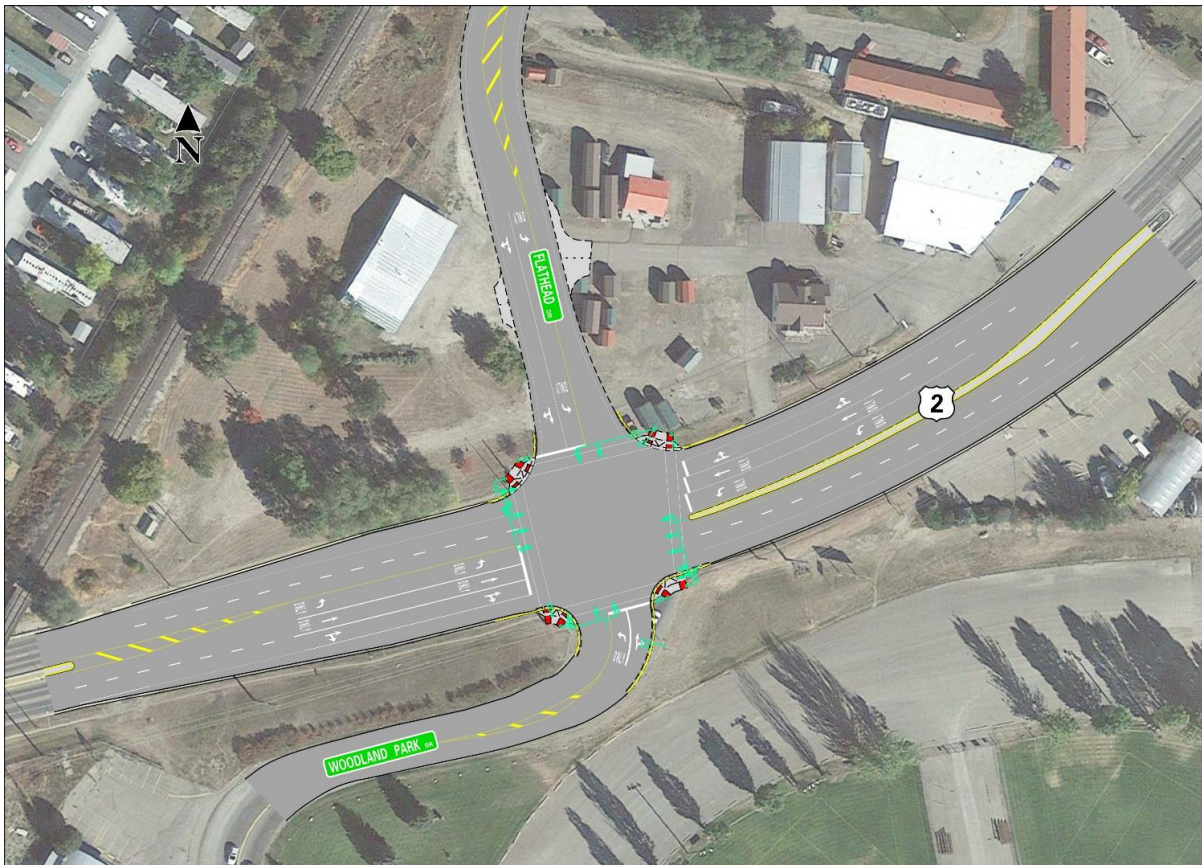


Figure 6, Proposed Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 Intersection Configuration

A new, private road would be constructed within the proposed Rail Park boundaries (Interior Road). Interior Road would be constructed to collector street standards⁴ per Kalispell Design and Construction Standards (2009), but would be owned and maintained privately by FCEDA. Improvements to meet Kalispell collector street standards (City of Kalispell Design and Construction Standards 2009) would also be made to East Oregon Lane from the intersection with Montclair Drive, south/west to

⁴ Kalispell collector street standards consist of two 17-foot-wide lanes, a 6-foot-wide boulevard, a 5-foot-wide sidewalk, and curb and gutter.

approximately 300 feet east of 10th Avenue East-North. A total of 2,100 feet of Flathead Drive (US Highway 2 north to Montclair Drive) would be widened to two, 16-foot-wide lanes with gravel shoulders. The railroad crossing at Flathead Drive and East Oregon Lane would also be widened and flashing lights would be added to warn vehicles, thereby increasing safety. Roadway improvements to Woodland Park Drive would include removing the concrete channelization island, installing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps at each corner of the intersection, and narrowing and resurfacing the roadway. Improvements to East Oregon Lane and Woodland Park Drive would stay within the boundary of City ROW (60 feet along existing roadways). No improvements are proposed to Montclair Drive; where Montclair Drive ties into Flathead Drive the curb and gutter would be blended to the roadway. Please refer to **Figure 7, Flathead Drive, Montclair Drive, and Interior Road Intersection** and **Figure 8, Interior Park Road Typical**.

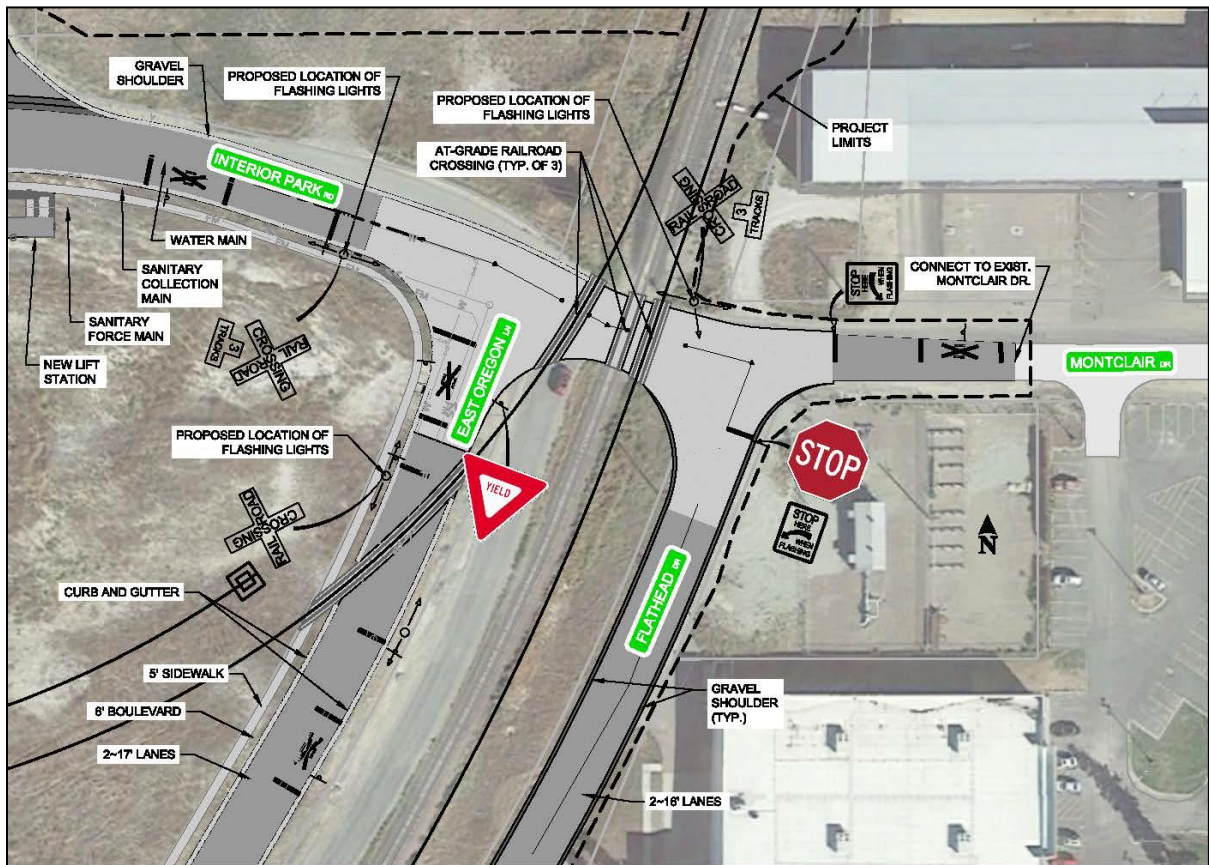


Figure 7, Flathead Drive, Montclair Drive, and Interior Road Intersection



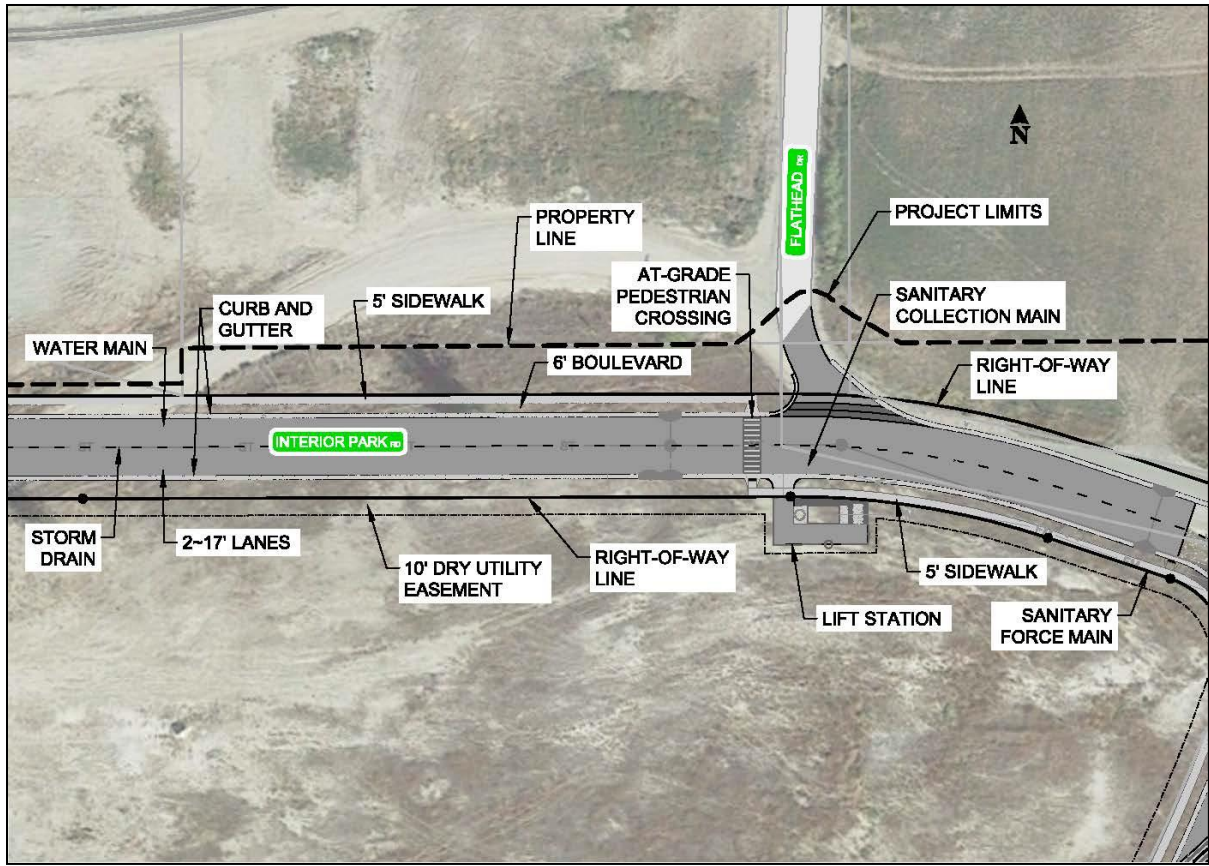


Figure 8, Interior Park Road Typical

The proposed traffic signal installation and completion of associated roadwork would take place largely within MDT ROW along Flathead Drive (MDT manages the ROW for major highways through Kalispell, while collector and local street ROW is managed by the City). ROW totaling 0.11 acres would be purchased from 1005 East Idaho Street by FCEDA to widen Flathead Drive and construct a suitable turning radius for westbound trucks accessing the Rail Park from US Highway 2. ROW purchased by FCEDA for completion of the Flathead Drive improvements would be immediately transferred to MDT. The City would obtain an Encroachment Permit, also known as a MDT Environmental Checklist, that would allow for construction on MDT ROW and satisfy Montana Environmental Policy Act requirements.

2.3.1.2 Utilities

The City's water and sewer utilities would be extended to the proposed Rail Park to provide domestic water, fire flows, and sewage disposal. City water would be extended around the proposed Rail Park, starting east of 4th Street under East Oregon Lane. The water main extension would continue under East Oregon Lane to Flathead Drive, to the interior private road, and finally to Whitefish Stage Road where the new water main would tie back into the existing water main. Approximately 8,600 feet of water main would be installed along with 17 fire hydrants that would provide at least 3,000 gallons per minute for fire protection. City sewer service would also be extended to the proposed Rail Park. Gravity sewer mains would be installed under the interior private road and East Oregon Lane and would flow



to a new lift station. The new lift station would be constructed at the intersection of East Oregon Lane and Montclair Drive outside existing City ROW on FCEDA property. FCEDA has agreed to allow the City to construct the proposed lift station on FCEDA property. The lift station would pump wastewater along East Oregon Lane to its connection with the City's existing sewer main. Approximately 4,600 feet of sewer and force main pipe would be installed. Natural gas, power, telephone, and fiber optic lines would also be extended to the proposed Rail Park.

All stormwater runoff from within the proposed Rail Park would be collected and retained in a new stormwater pond to be constructed onsite that would consist of two cells: sedimentation cell and retention pond. Furthermore, stormwater from the interior road, Flathead Drive within the boundary of the Rail Park, and the northern section of East Oregon Lane would also be collected and diverted into the new onsite stormwater pond.

A second new stormwater pond along East Oregon Lane would collect water from the remaining reconstructed section of East Oregon Lane. The new retention pond built in the proposed Rail Park would receive treated water from the first cell, allow the fine sediments to settle to the bottom of the pond, and capture runoff from the roads. Please refer to **Figure 9, Proposed Stormwater Ponds**.



Figure 9, Proposed Stormwater Ponds and East Oregon Typical

2.3.2 Kalispell Trail and Complete Streets (Phase II)

The second phase of the proposed Project is the construction of 1.6 miles of public-use trail along BNSF ROW extending south from the proposed Rail Park to Meridian Road. Before construction of the proposed Kalispell Trail can begin, the Rail Park must be constructed and operational, the

RAILBANKING IS A VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT BETWEEN A RAILROAD COMPANY AND AN AGENCY TO USE AN OUT-OF-SERVICE RAIL CORRIDOR AS A TRAIL UNTIL RAIL-SERVICE MIGHT BE NEEDED AGAIN. BECAUSE A RAILBANKED CORRIDOR IS NOT CONSIDERED ABANDONED, IT CAN BE SOLD, LEASED, OR DONATED TO THE INVOLVED PARTY(S). (RAILS TO TRAILS CONSERVANCY 2016)

BNSF rail service abandonment must be complete, and rail-served businesses must be relocated to the new Rail Park. BNSF has started the rail service abandonment process with the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The City has begun the railbanking process for the proposed Kalispell Trail in the Core Area.⁵ STB must approve the request from BNSF to abandon rail service downtown and to remove the existing railroad tracks. On April 26, 2017, BNSF submitted a petition for abandonment to STB, pursuant to 49 USC § 10502. BNSF and the City anticipate that BNSF would transfer rights through railbanking to the City to construct the trail and the City would acquire the BNSF ROW to complete street connections (Rails to Trails Conservancy 2016). Before the City can begin construction, the City's contractor would need to obtain a Contractor's Right-of-Entry from BNSF in order to access BNSF ROW. The City anticipates that all construction staging areas would be located within the Project Area. However, if any staging areas would need to be located outside of the Project Area, the City would notify FRA of the proposed locations and obtain FRA approval prior to obtaining any temporary easements, acquiring property, and/or carrying out any construction staging activities. FRA, in coordination with the City, would conduct any additional environmental analyses as necessary.

The proposed Kalispell Trail could be utilized by pedestrians (i.e., for bicycling, rollerblading, running, and walking), but would not allow motorized vehicles. For pedestrian and bicyclist safety, warning or stop signs would be installed at the road crossings (Meridian Road, 5th Avenue Northwest, Main Street, and 1st, 3rd, and 4th Avenues Northeast) and curb bump outs are proposed to restrict the distance that they must cross roads. A Traffic and Pedestrian Control Plan would be submitted and approved by the Public Works Department for all work within the public ROW. The latest edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) would be followed to create the Plan (City of Kalispell Standards for Design and Construction 2009).

In addition, up to three streets between Meridian Road and Woodland Park Drive that are currently dead-ended by the existing railroad tracks would be connected to increase efficiency of north-south traffic and pedestrian circulation. Currently, only six north-south at-grade railroad crossings for traffic are present throughout the two-mile width of Kalispell. All streets considered for connection (8th and 6th Avenues North-West and Woodland Park Drive to 7th Avenue East-North) are owned and maintained by the City (i.e., the City has a 60-foot-wide ROW on each roadway). Roadway improvements (e.g., sidewalk and curb and gutter installation, utility extensions) where roadway already exists would be contained within existing City ROW. For all connections considered, additional ROW would be acquired

⁵ For a definition of railbanking, see the National Trails System Act (16 USC § 1247 [d]).



from BNSF and property would be acquired from private landowners to construct the new portions of roadway to create the new north-south connections.

Completed street connections would meet Kalispell local street standards, providing two, 14-foot-wide driving lanes, a minimum 9-foot-wide boulevard separating the roadway from a 5-foot-wide sidewalk, tree plantings, and sewer and water extensions as needed (City of Kalispell Standards for Design and Construction 2009). Please refer to **Figure 10, Local Street Cross Section**.

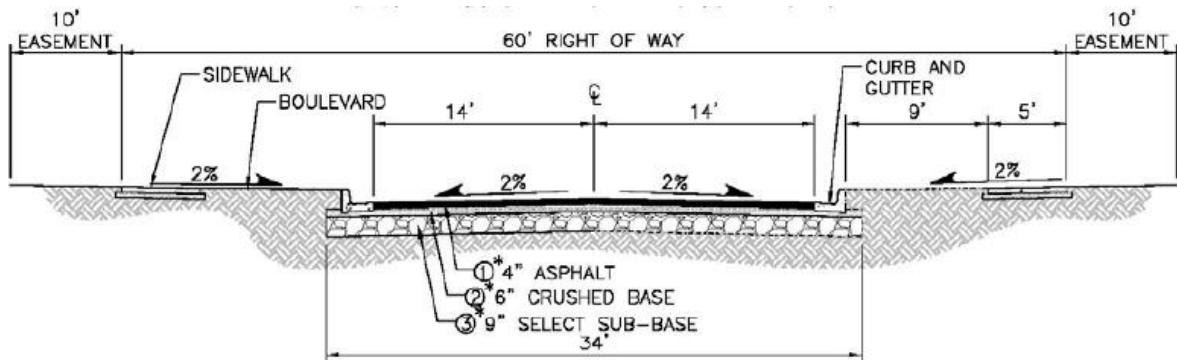


Figure 10, Local Street Cross Section

2.3.2.1 Kalispell Trail

BNSF has begun the rail abandonment and the City would file a Notice of Interim Trail Use with STB for the eventual removal of the existing railroad tracks that extend through the Core Area (Lake 2017). For completion of the proposed Kalispell Trail, 1.6 miles of existing track would be removed from 90 feet north of the railroad bridge spanning US Highway 2, southwest/west to Meridian Road. After removal of the existing rail by BNSF, a 10-foot-wide, paved, public-use trail would be constructed by the City with an additional 7.5 feet of land (or more in areas where ROW is greater than 25 feet wide) available for landscaping on either side. The Kalispell Trail would be designed and constructed in compliance with the ADA. Please refer to **Figure 11, Kalispell Trail Overview**.

Kalispell Trail construction would begin approximately 90 feet north of the railroad bridge spanning US Highway 2, travel west, and terminate at Meridian Road. The existing railroad bridge, located 0.1 miles south of the proposed Rail Park would be converted to function as a non-motorized, pedestrian-only bridge (e.g., walking, bicycling, rollerblading). The existing railroad bridge, which would be included in the railbanking process to transfer rights to the City, would be improved to meet all MDT, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Load and Resistance Factor Design Bridge Design Specifications (2016) for pedestrians, and City of Kalispell Standards for Design and Construction (2009). No structural work is proposed for the bridge, and all substructures, piers, and deck would remain in place. Please refer to **Figure 12, Existing Railroad Bridge (top left) Concept Pedestrian Bridge (center)**.

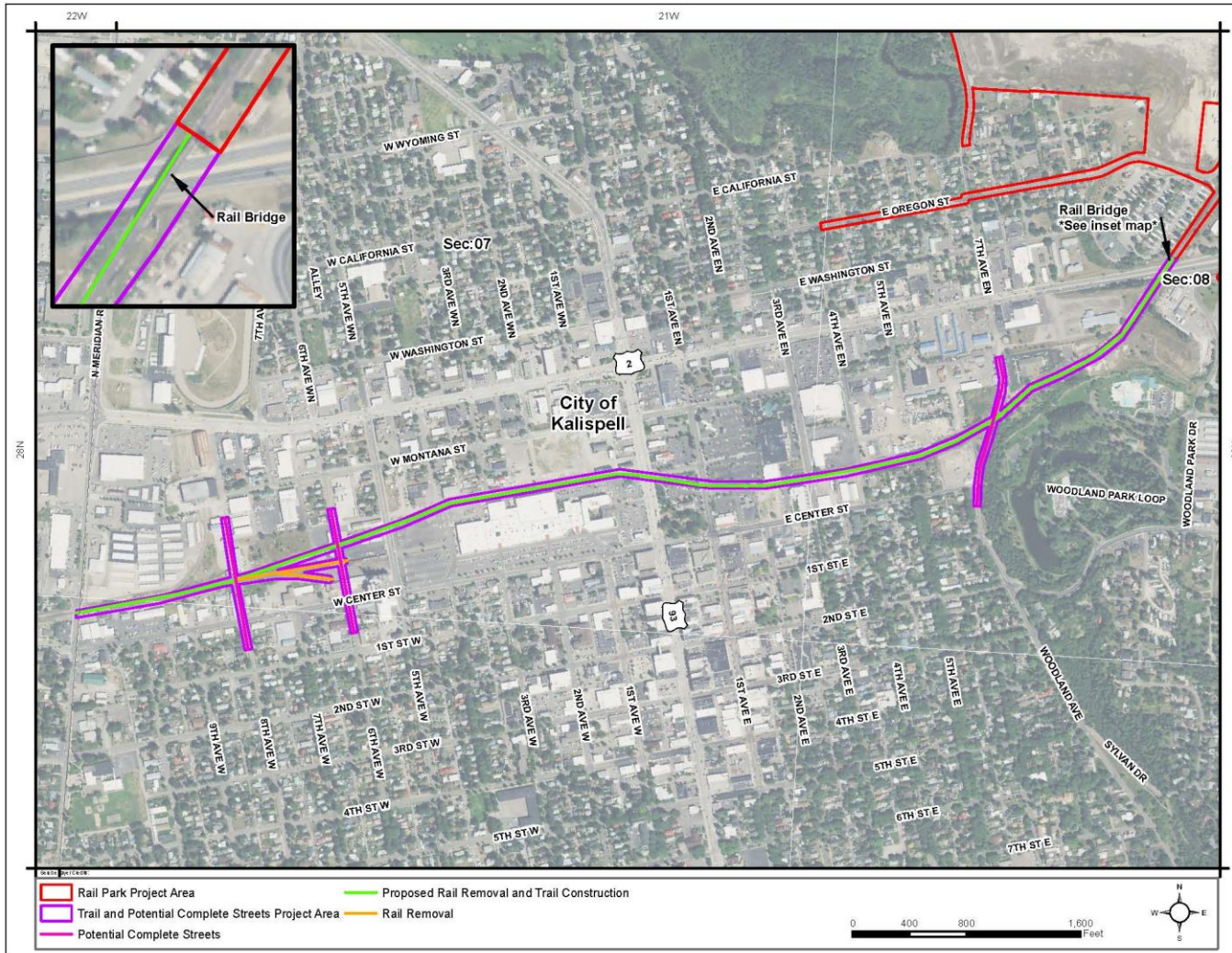


Figure 11, Kalispell Trail Overview





Figure 12, Existing Railroad Bridge (top left) Concept Pedestrian Bridge (center)

2.3.2.2 Complete Street Options

Extensions of up to three streets between Meridian Road (west boundary) and Woodland Park Drive (east boundary) would allow efficient north to south flow of traffic and pedestrians across the public-use trail and connect the north and south portions of downtown Kalispell. The complete street connections (8th Avenue West, 6th Avenue West, and Woodland Avenue) would include sidewalks, bicycle facilities, urban tree plantings, and sewer and water extensions. For pedestrian and bicyclist safety, warning or stop signs would be installed at the road crossings, and curb bump outs are proposed to restrict the distance that they must cross roads.

A desktop study of traffic for the complete street options was completed by KLJ in February 2016. The most current year of traffic data available in the MDT interactive Traffic Map is from 2015. Please refer to **Table 1, 2015 MDT Average Daily Traffic**. These volumes will change over time and it is assumed the increase in the Core Area would generally reflect the historic background growth of traffic in Downtown Kalispell. Traffic has historically increased through the downtown of Kalispell at a rate of 1.8 percent per year. However, since 2011, with the advent of construction of the southern half of the US Highway 93 Bypass around the west side of Kalispell, traffic growth slowed to a 1.3-percent year growth rate through 2016. In addition, the projected traffic increases in the Core Area are predicted to decline even further due to the influence of the north half of the US Highway 93 Bypass completed in

the fall of 2016. The goal of the new US Highway 93 Bypass highway system was to provide an alternate route around Core Area, thus reducing traffic congestion (Robert Peccia & Associates 2016⁶).

Table 1, 2015 MDT Average Daily Traffic shows the current traffic volumes of the existing crossings. Per the most recent traffic volume analysis (MDT 2015) 6,500 is the maximum capacity count of the adjacent crossings of the railroad excluding Main Street (US Highway 93) and West Center Street. This is a strong indicator than any future connections, as proposed, would not exceed local street capacity.

Table 1, 2015 MDT Average Daily Traffic

TRAFFIC COUNT LOCATION	AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC 2015	AVERAGE DAILY COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC 2015	# OF LANES	MAX CAPACITY(A)
Meridian Road				
North of West Center Street	10,860	67	3	18,000
South of West Center Street	4,290	67	2	12,000
West Center Street				
East of 10 th Avenue West	6,030	175	3	18,000
East of 3 rd Avenue West	7,170	175	5	36,000
East of 1 st Avenue West	5,630	175	5	36,000
5th Avenue West (North of West Center Street)				
	5,860	45	3	18,000
US Highway 93/Main Street (North of West Center Street)				
	23,260	671	5	36,000
1st Avenue East (North of West Center Street)				
	4,240	53	3	18,000
4th Avenue East (North of West Center Street)				
	6,480	22	3	18,000
Woodland Avenue (South of West Center Street)				
	3,850	107	2	12,000
<i>(a) Kalispell Transportation Plan 2006</i>				

Complete street options selected for analysis in this EA were based on the following two criteria:

- ◆ If completion of the road would meet the purpose of, and need for the project; and
- ◆ If construction of the road is technically feasible from an engineering, social, and traffic perspective, considering Kalispell local street standards (City of Kalispell Standards of Design and Construction 2009).

If these criteria were not met, the complete street option was eliminated for further detailed analysis.

⁶ <https://rpa-hln.sharefile.com/d-sb9d5b00babc44b2b>



8th Avenue West-North to West Center Street

The existing 8th Avenue West-North, north of the proposed Kalispell Trail (currently BNSF railroad tracks) consists of an approximate 35-foot-wide, asphalt-paved roadway that lacks sidewalks, curb, and gutter within 60 feet of ROW.

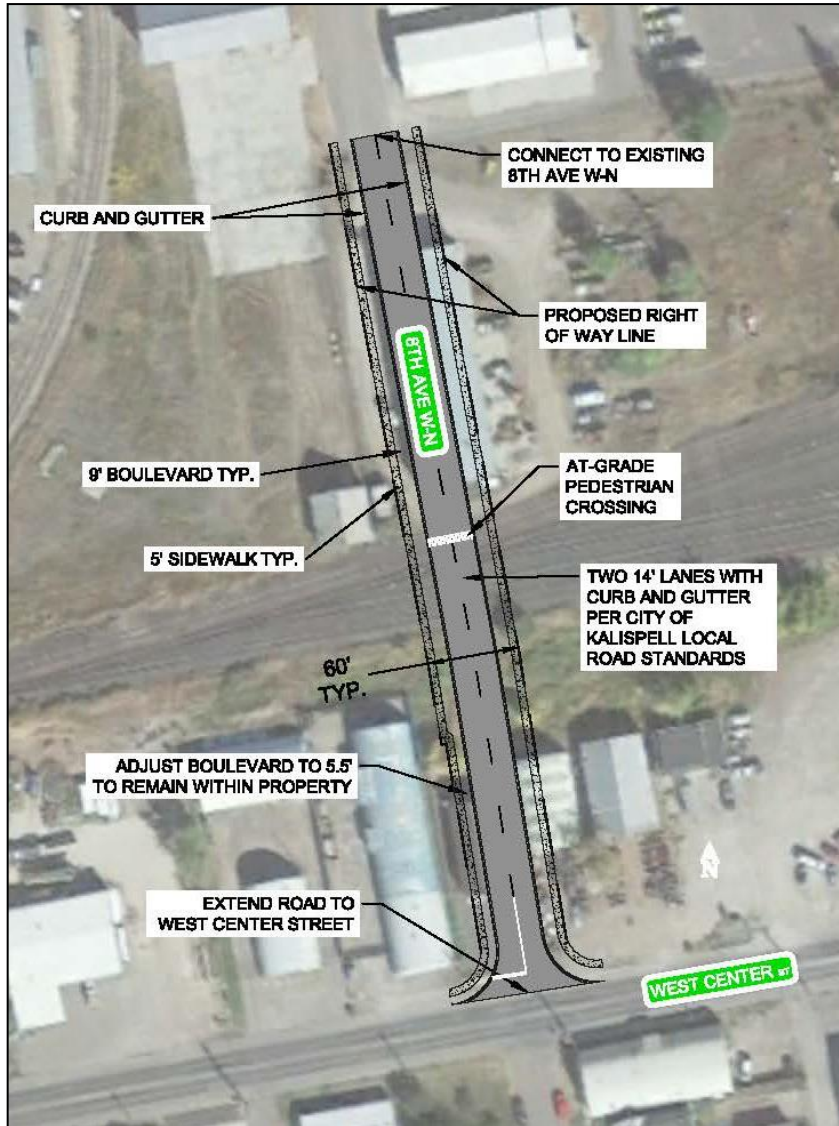


Figure 13, Proposed 8th Avenue West-North Connection

Due to the location between 5th Avenue West and Meridian Road, it is anticipated that this connection would improve connectivity for the local north-south street system and reduce traffic at both the 5th Avenue and Meridian Road crossings. (KLJ 2016)

A new left turn lane would be needed on West Center Street, which would be installed by restriping the pavement. Traffic control would include north-south stop control at the West Center Street intersection and east-west stop control for all other roads intersecting 8th Avenue West-North. There would be the potential for future signalization, if or when warranted.

Completing the extension of 8th Avenue West-North to West Center Street would consist of constructing a 28-foot-wide roadway surface with two, 14-foot-wide driving lanes containing concrete curb and gutter; a landscaped boulevard (minimum 9 feet between curb and sidewalk); 5-foot-wide sidewalks on at least one side; and possibly a bike lane on one side of the road. Final determination regarding sidewalk and bicycle lane

configuration would occur during final design of the Project.

Where portions of 8th Avenue West-North roadway already exist, all construction and utility work would be confined to the existing 60-foot-wide City ROW. Potential relocations and/or property acquisitions would be required to construct the new portion of roadway across the proposed Kalispell Trail and complete the street connection. Several privately-owned, commercial business lots are located within the proposed street connection ROW including 701-799 Railroad Street Southwest to

the north of the proposed Kalispell Trail and 749 and 747 West Center to the south. The City would purchase ROW and/or buildings from the private landowners and three non-historic buildings, including a closed shop and two warehouses, which would ultimately be demolished. The City would also acquire existing BNSF ROW for completion of the street connection. The total ROW for the new roadway (acquired from BNSF and landowners) after construction of the extension would be 60 feet, and would be owned and maintained by the City. Please refer to **Figure 13, Proposed 8th Avenue West-North Connection**.

6th Avenue West-North to West Center Street

The existing 6th Avenue West-North, north of the proposed Kalispell Trail consists of an approximate 40-foot-wide asphalt roadway within 60 feet of ROW. North of the proposed Kalispell Trail, 6th Avenue

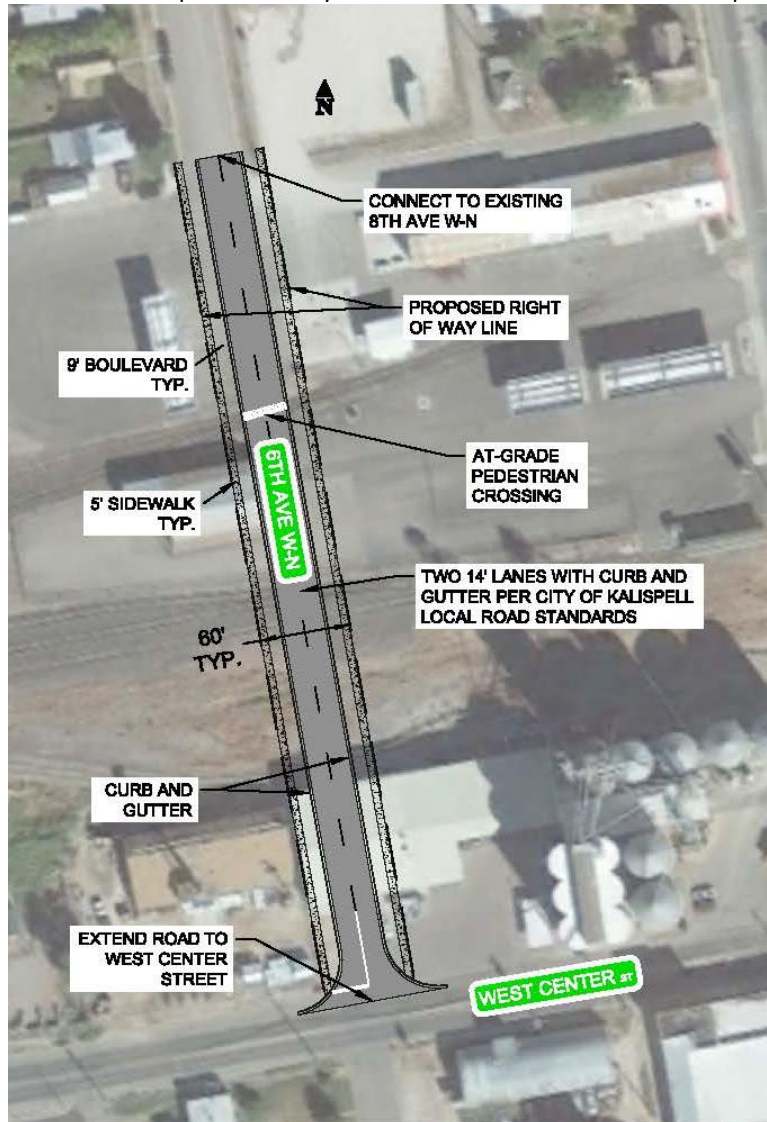


Figure 14, Proposed 6th Avenue West-North Street Connection

West-North contains a sidewalk and landscaped boulevard on the west side of the roadway and has curb and gutter. The south portion of the 6th Avenue West is approximately 33 feet wide and lacks a sidewalk, curb, and gutter within 60 feet of ROW.

Due to the location between 5th Avenue West and Meridian Road, it is anticipated that this connection would improve connectivity for the local north-south street system, and reduce traffic at both the 5th Avenue and Meridian Road crossings (KLJ 2016).

A new left-turn lane would be needed on West Center Street, which would be installed by restriping the pavement. Traffic control would include north-south stop control at the West Center Street intersection and east-west stop control for all other roads intersecting 6th Avenue

West. There would be potential for future signalization, if or when warranted.

Completing the extension of 8th Avenue West-North to West Center Street would consist of constructing a 28- to 32-foot-wide roadway surface containing concrete curb and gutter, a landscaped boulevard (minimum 6 feet between curb and sidewalk), sidewalks on at least one side, and possibly a bike lane on one side of the road. Final determination regarding sidewalk and bicycle lane configurations would occur during final design of the Project.

Where portions of 6th Avenue West-North roadway already exist, all construction and utility work would be confined to the existing 60-foot-wide City ROW. Potential relocations and/or property acquisitions would be required to construct the new portion of roadway across the proposed Kalispell Trail and complete the street connection. A commercial fuel station (600-698 Railroad Street West) is located north of the proposed Kalispell Trail and has several buildings within and outside the proposed street ROW. The City would purchase the ROW and/or buildings needed and demolish a non-historic warehouse located in the proposed road extension ROW. Property would also be acquired from BNSF for the new roadway.

Additionally, the current operations and commercial buildings of CHS are located to the south of the Kalispell Trail within the proposed ROW for this street connection. FCEDA would acquire the CHS land and buildings, and the City would be allowed to construct the new roadway. After FCEDA acquires the CHS-owned lands and buildings, two non-historic warehouses may be demolished. The historic grain bins to the east of the proposed new roadway extension would remain in place. The total ROW for the new roadway (acquired from BNSF, CHS, and landowners) after construction of the extension would be 60 feet, and would be owned and maintained by the City. Please refer to **Figure 14, Proposed 6th Avenue West-North Street Connection**.

Whitefish Stage Road (7th Avenue East-North) to Woodland Avenue

The existing Woodland Avenue consists of a two-lane roadway approximately 24-feet wide that runs north to south adjacent to Woodland Park within a 60-foot ROW. A public-use path runs along the east of Woodland Avenue and is separated from the roadway by a grass boulevard at varying distances. Outside of the Project Area to the southeast, the shared-use path eventually connects to the path system within Woodland Park. Several at-grade pedestrian crossings cross over Woodland Avenue; however, they are also located south, outside of the Project Area. Whitefish Stage Road (7th Avenue East-North) is dead-ended by the existing railroad tracks and contains no pedestrian facilities, boulevard, curbs, or gutters. The pavement ends at the entrance for Head Start Center, east of 7th Avenue East-North.



Due to its proximity to 4th Avenue East, it is anticipated that this connection would primarily reduce traffic on the existing 4th Avenue East crossing. The intersection of Woodland Avenue and East Center Street would become a T-Intersection.

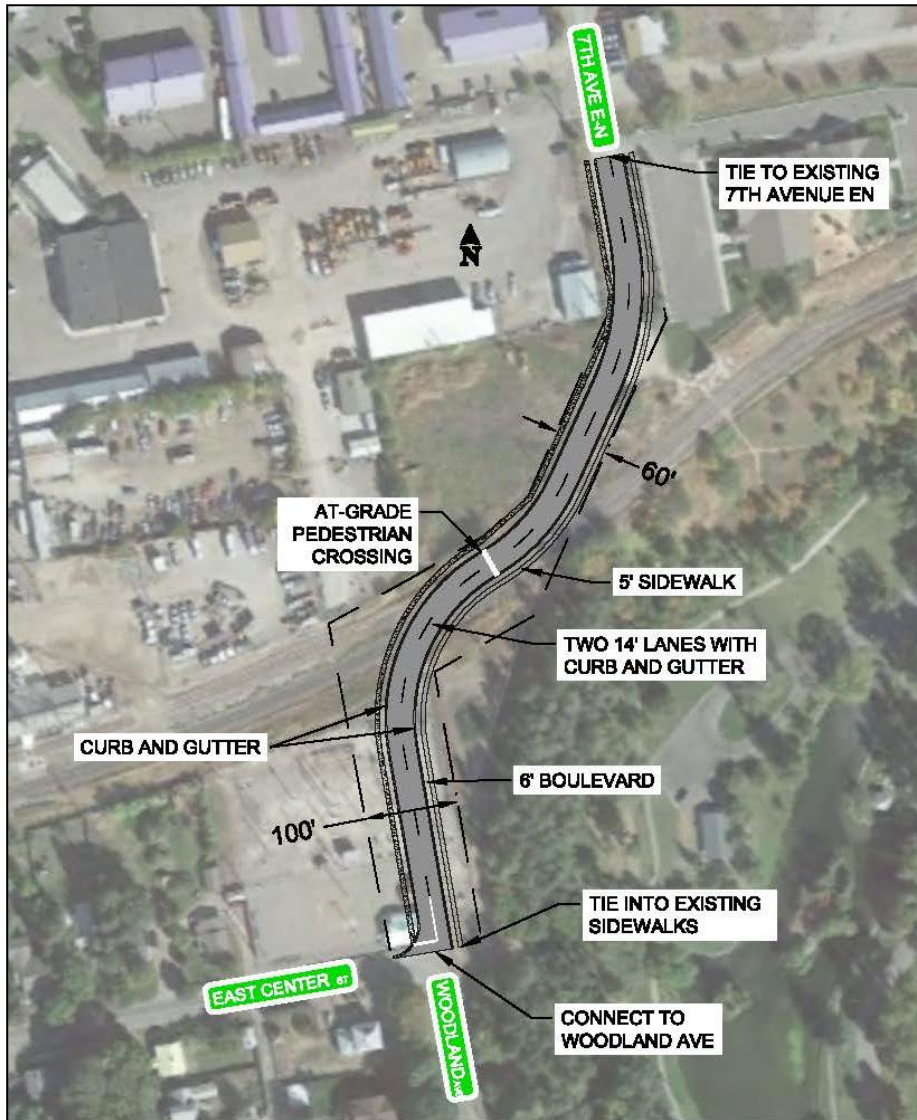


Figure 15, Proposed Whitefish Stage Road (7th Avenue East-North) to Woodland Park Drive Connection

Completing the street connection would consist of constructing a 28- to 32-foot-wide roadway surface containing concrete curb and gutter, a landscaped boulevard (minimum 6 feet between curb and sidewalk), sidewalks on at least one side, and possibly a bicycle lane on one side of the road. Final determination regarding sidewalk and bicycle lane configurations would occur during final design of the Project.

Where portions of Woodland Avenue and Whitefish Stage Road already exist, all construction and utility work would be confined to the existing 60-foot-wide City ROW. Potential relocations and/or property

acquisitions would be required to complete this street connection. An electric facility used for training purposes (535 East Center Street) is located within the proposed street ROW. ROW would also have to be acquired from BNSF and two private landowners to complete this street connection (80 7th Avenue East-North and 79 7th Avenue East-North). A non-historical shed and electrical infrastructure, including aboveground electrical lines, would have to be moved or demolished to construct the new portions of roadway. The total ROW for the new roadway (acquired from BNSF and landowners) after construction of the extension would be 60 feet, and would be owned and maintained by the City. Please refer to **Figure 15, Proposed Whitefish Stage Road (7th Avenue East-North) to Woodland Park Drive Connection.**

2.4 Alternatives Considered but Dismissed from Further Analysis

Two additional locations for the proposed Rail Park were considered but dismissed from further analysis. Both locations are located approximately 13.7 miles northeast of the Project in the City of Columbia Falls. These locations were originally considered by the City because of their close proximity to existing railroad tracks, the ease of access for construction, and both sites were large enough to accommodate large industrial uses (e.g., business tenants). The considered options could have provided northwest Montana the connectivity to reach regional, national, and international markets; however, they were ultimately discarded due to reasons discussed in the following subsections.

There were no additional alternatives considered for the proposed Kalispell Trail (see also discussion of avoidance alternatives in Section 3.16.2 below). The purpose of the Kalispell Trail is to benefit the downtown, Core Area of Kalispell and its residents and could not be located anywhere else besides the current proposed location. Four additional street connections were considered for complete streets improvements but dismissed from further analysis, because of design issues, and the need to create more efficient north-south community cohesion and traffic flow would not have been met.

2.4.1 Glacier Rail Park

2.4.1.1 Columbia Falls Industrial Park

The existing Columbia Falls Industrial Park is a total of 109 acres with three current tenants occupying less than 10 acres of the park. The park is served by a gas main and two water mains and has adequate fire suppression measures and water flow from a well on the property. FCEDA participated in discussions with the owner of this industrial park from 2007 to 2009. Ultimately, this parcel was determined not a feasible alternative due to fiscal and legal issues surrounding the property. Please refer to **Figure 16, Rail Park Locations Eliminated**.

2.4.1.2 Columbia Falls Aluminum Company

The Columbia Falls Aluminum Company is an existing 80-acre parcel within a 3,000-acre property. The 80-acre parcel is located at the entrance to the property between Aluminum Drive and the BNSF Main Line/Flathead River. Although FCEDA negotiated the potential purchase of the site with the property owner, the property owner was later unwilling to sell the 80-acre parcel to FCEDA. Please refer to **Figure 16, Rail Park Locations Eliminated**.



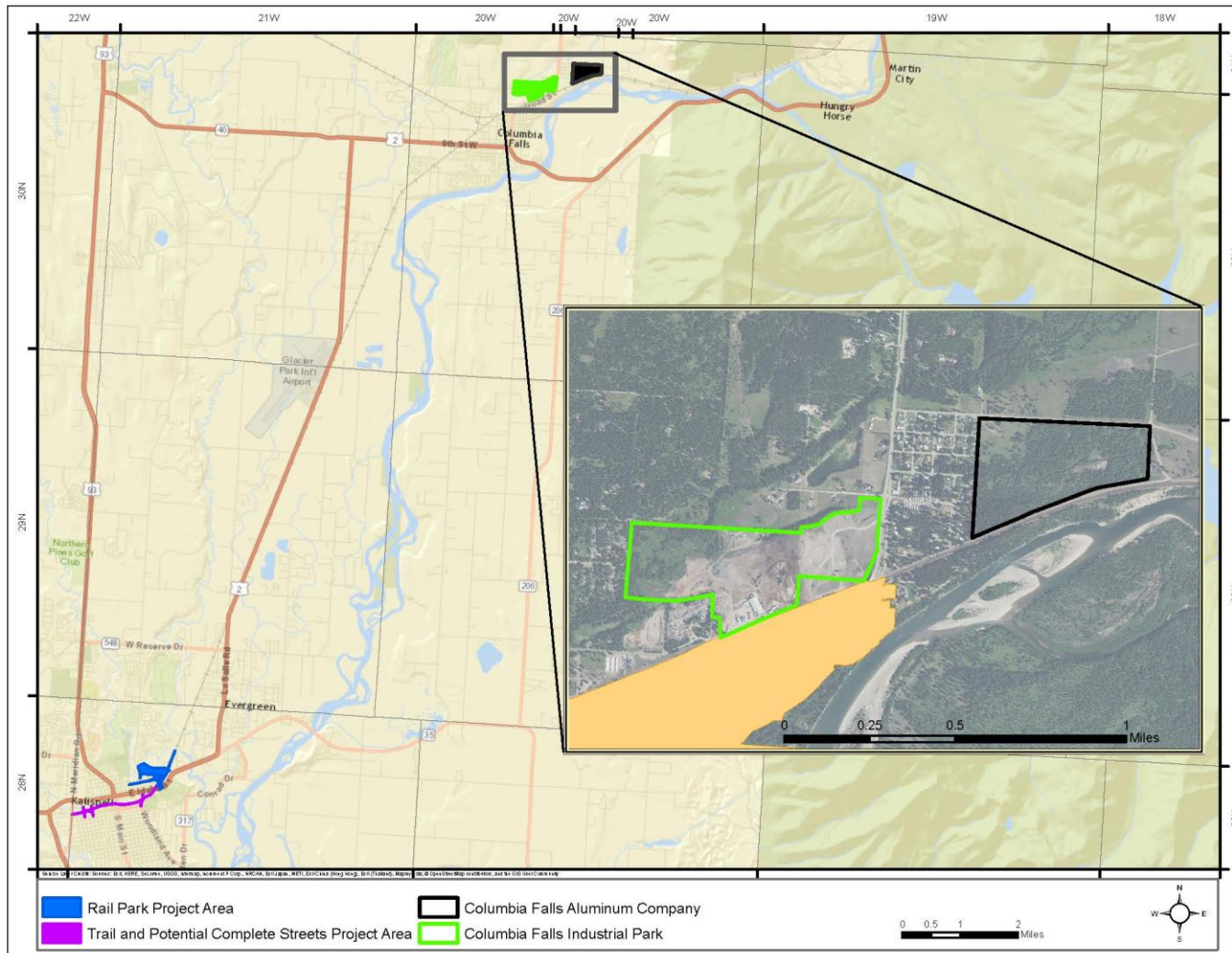


Figure 16, Rail Park Locations Eliminated



2.4.2 Complete Streets

2.4.2.1 4th, 3rd, 2nd, and 1st Avenues West-North

These above listed connections would not have met the purpose and need of the proposed Project. Each would have provided connectivity to the Kalispell Center Mall (Mall) for southbound traffic on 4th, 3rd, 2nd, and 1st Avenues and northbound patrons exiting the Mall, but would not have provided a direct connection to the south of Kalispell. Please refer to **Figure 17, Street Connections Eliminated**.

In addition, 1st Avenue West-North would connect to the Mall parking lot where only a right turn would be allowed, or would require the mall to reconfigure their parking lot. Businesses along 1st Avenue West-North could have been adversely impacted due to higher traffic levels in front of their properties (KLJ 2016).

The 2nd and 3rd Avenue West-North options also presented turning radius concerns due to the connection's proximity (approximately 26 feet) to the Mall building. The proximity between the Mall access drive and the proposed Kalispell Trail would have made it difficult to control these intersections by stopping the vehicular traffic, because even one stopped vehicle would block the Kalispell Trail. Additionally, sight distances at the intersection of 3rd Avenue West-North and the proposed Kalispell Trail would be obstructed by existing buildings. Residents along 3rd Avenue West-North could be negatively impacted by increased traffic exiting and accessing the Mall (KLJ 2016).

To connect 4th Avenue West-North, additional street improvements, such as paving and traffic control, would be needed along Railroad Street West. The Mall parking lot would need to be modified to address the offset between 4th Avenue West-North and a major aisle in the parking lot, which would pose multiple engineering issues. Also, residents along 4th Avenue West-North could be negatively impacted by increased traffic exiting and accessing the Mall.

The City determined that completing these connections would not meet the purpose and need of the proposed Project and would create additional traffic and access concerns, and therefore, were eliminated from further analysis.



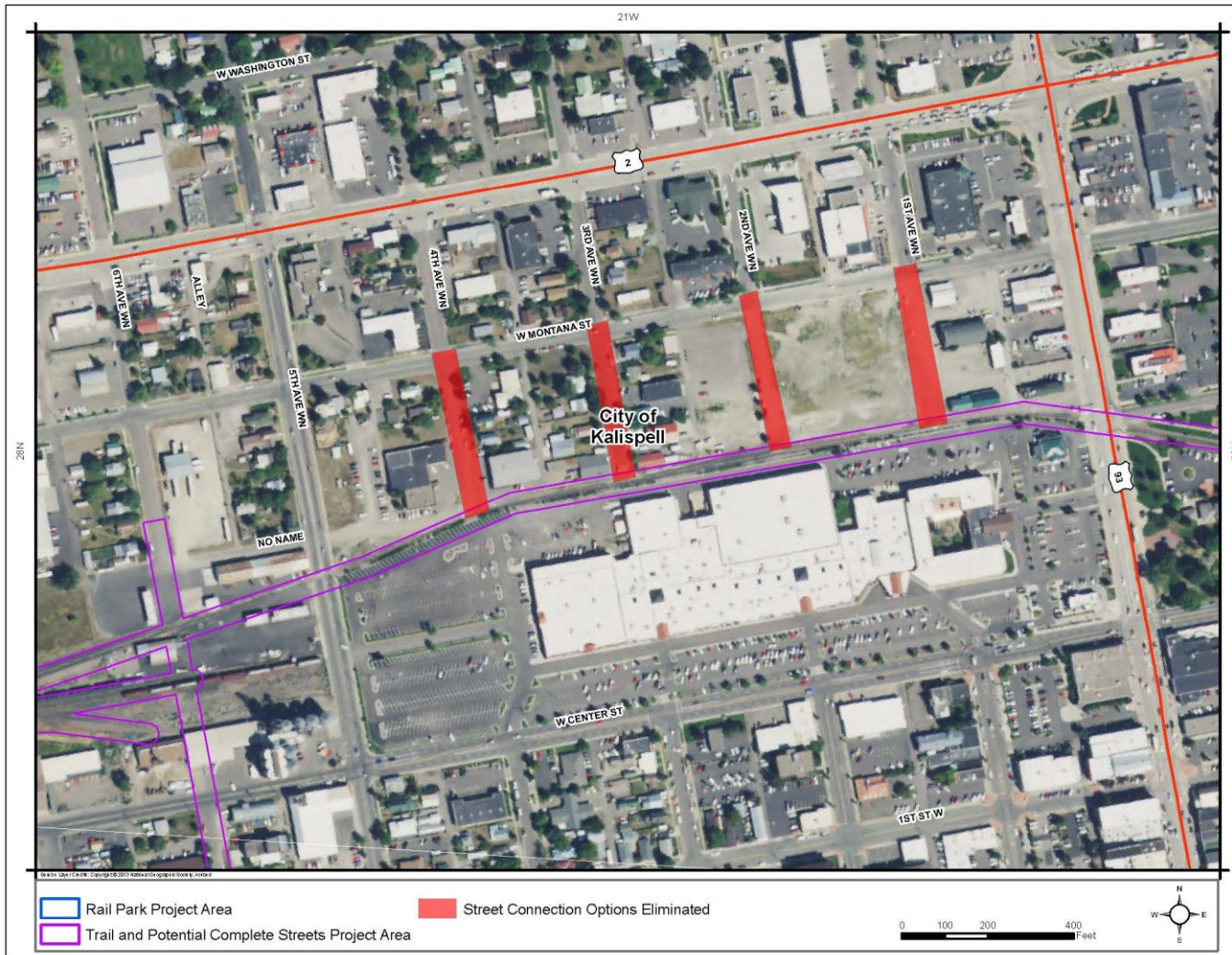


Figure 17, Street Connections Eliminated



CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The potential impacts to the human environment resulting from the Build Alternative (i.e., construction of the Rail Park, abandonment and removal of the rail, construction of the Kalispell Trail, and construction of up to three complete streets) are described in this chapter. This chapter also evaluates the potential impacts of the No-Build Alternative. Where impacts of the Build Alternative are anticipated, potential mitigation or minimization measures or best management practices (BMPs) are identified in the applicable sections.

The Study Areas for this EA consist of the construction footprint (Project Area) and the area affected directly or indirectly by the Project. Study Areas vary based on the resource being analyzed and are defined under each resource section. For certain resources (e.g., air quality, noise, socioeconomics), impacts could potentially extend beyond the Project Area. In such cases, impacts to locations or receptors outside of the Project Area were considered and are noted as such in the respective subsections. The potential impacts from construction and operation of the Rail Park and the Kalispell Trail are analyzed and discussed together in the following sections, unless otherwise stated.

3.1 Resource Areas Not Relevant to the Proposed Project

A detailed analysis of the following resources or impact areas was not performed as part of this EA because these resources are not present in the Project Area, nor would they be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed Project.

3.1.1 Floodplains

The Project Area is outside of a designated 100-year flood plain per Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Plain Panel # 30029C 1810J (effective date of November 4, 2015).

3.1.2 Prime and Unique Farmlands

The Project Area does not contain any soils classified by the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as prime or unique farmland or land of statewide or local importance.

3.1.3 Wild and Scenic Rivers

No wild or scenic rivers are located in the Project Area.

3.1.4 Coastal Zone

The Project is not located in a coastal zone area.

3.1.5 Coastal Barriers

The Project is not located in a coastal barrier area.



3.1.6 Section 6(f) Involvement

Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act requires that the conversion of lands or facilities acquired with Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) be coordinated with the Department of Interior. When such a conversion occurs, replacement in-kind is typically required. A search of the MTFWP Recreation Grants LWCF Website identified two Section 6(f) resources (Woodland Park and Conrad Complex) within 0.25 miles of the Project Area (Montana State Parks 2008); however, the proposed Project does not require conversions of these properties; therefore, a Section 6(f) evaluation is not necessary.

3.2 Resources Analyzed

Potential impacts of the proposed Project to the following resources areas are analyzed in this chapter: air quality; water quality and water resources, including wetlands; noise and vibration; land use; ecological systems (e.g., threatened and endangered species and wildlife, fish, and vegetation); energy use; visual resources; traffic and transportation; socioeconomics and environmental justice; relocations and displacements; public health and safety; hazardous waste; cultural resources and historic properties; and Section 4(f) properties. Cumulative impacts to these resources are also assessed in this chapter.

3.2.1 Summary

The No-Build Alternative and Build Alternative, inclusive of the proposed Rail Park, Kalispell Trail, and up to three complete street connections, were evaluated in this EA. The potential impacts of the Build Alternative and No Build Alternative are summarized in **Table 2, Summary of Environmental Impacts**.



Table 2, Summary of Environmental Impacts

	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
Air Quality	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Temporary dust (particulate matter [PM]₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and emissions during construction activities.</p> <p><u>Operations:</u></p> <p>Operation of the Rail Park is not expected to increase the frequency or severity of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) emissions or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS and, would be consistent with conformity regulations. The purpose of the Rail Park is to relocate and improve the efficiency of existing freight rail operations in Kalispell.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/Best Management Practices (BMPs):</p> <p>BMPs to control dust, such as water spraying, would be implemented as needed; using vehicular emission-control equipment (e.g., catalytic converters) and limiting idling of equipment would be followed as feasible to minimize impacts.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Temporary dust (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and emissions during construction activities.</p> <p><u>Operations:</u></p> <p>The Kalispell Trail is not expected to contribute to PM₁₀ emissions after construction has been completed. Operation of the Kalispell Trail, which would be a recreational resource intended for non-motorized use, would not increase the frequency or severity of NAAQS emissions or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS, and would be consistent with conformity regulations. Furthermore, the Kalispell Trail could potentially benefit air quality by providing non-motorized transportation options to Kalispell residents and visitors.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>BMPs to control dust, such as water spraying, would be implemented as needed; using vehicular emission-control equipment (e.g., catalytic converters) and limiting idling of equipment would be followed as feasible to minimize impacts.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact; continued use of existing rail facilities in the populated Core Area of Kalispell resulting in truck and train traffic emitting small amounts of pollutants within City limits.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
Water Quality and Water Resources, including Wetlands	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>No wetlands are present.</p> <p>May temporarily degrade surface and groundwater quality because of sedimentation and soil erosion, or surface runoff carrying contaminants through the water table; such materials can infiltrate the soil and/or be carried by stormwater, ultimately having the potential to contaminate surface waters and groundwater reserves.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>No wetlands are present.</p> <p>May temporarily degrade surface and groundwater quality because of sedimentation and soil erosion, or surface runoff carrying contaminants through the water table; such materials can infiltrate the soil and/or be carried by stormwater, ultimately having the potential to contaminate surface waters and groundwater reserves.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
	<p>Operation of the Rail Park would include two onsite stormwater retention systems (to be constructed as part of the Project), which would minimize any stormwater-related water quality impacts; retention ponds allow for additional biological interactions that aid in improving water quality.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Standard stormwater management practices would be followed; erosion-control measures; and other BMPs, including completing spill prevention plans, identification of cleanup procedures, and reclamation measures for disturbed areas; contractor would be required to develop and maintain a Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit; the Rail Park would continue to use BMPs and erosion-control measures throughout operation.</p>	<p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Construction would occur within an urban setting and therefore prevention of stormwater runoff into streets and storm drain inlets would be the primary concern, and therefore standard stormwater management practices would be followed; erosion-control measures; and other BMPs, including completing spill prevention plans, identification of cleanup procedures, and reclamation measures for disturbed areas; contractor would be required to develop and maintain a Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit.</p>	
Noise and Vibration	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Construction of the Rail Park would result in temporary increases in noise above baseline levels.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Two moderate (per Federal Transit Administration [FTA]-defined impact range) noise impacts are predicted primarily at the East Oregon Lane/Flathead Drive intersection of the Rail Park. No severe impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Should there be complaints regarding noise at the subject intersection, the City would monitor the noise levels and, if needed, install wayside horns at the impacted intersection.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Construction of the Kalispell Trail would result in temporary increases in noise above baseline levels.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Cessation of freight rail operations and truck transportation through the Kalispell Core Area would result in a reduction in noise levels.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact; trains and commercial truck traffic would continue to travel through the Core Area of Kalispell and would not be relocated to the less populated Rail Park, buffered from residences.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
Land Use	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
	<p>No change in land use. The Rail Park would be constructed on the site of a former abandoned gravel pit in an area that is already zoned for industrial use.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>No change in land use. The Rail Park would be constructed on the site of a former abandoned gravel pit in an area that is already zoned for industrial use.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>A change in land use would occur from the conversion of 1.6 miles of industrial rail track to a recreational trail and green space.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Threatened and Endangered Species, Eagles, and Wildlife, Fish and Vegetation</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>There would be no effect to the Canada lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>), bull trout (<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>), or yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>) because no suitable habitat for these Endangered Species Act (ESA)listed species is present in the Study Area; no active eagle nests are present in the Study Area; Montana Natural Heritage Program did not identify and State Species of Concern in the Study Area⁷; activities associated with the construction and operation of the Rail Park may result in the disturbance or displacement of terrestrial wildlife species; however, animals present in the Study Area are likely adapted to urban habitat and human disturbance; in the context of the urban setting of development, vehicular traffic, and pedestrian activity, the effects on wildlife would be minimal.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Operational activities could result in wildlife injury or death from operating equipment or vehicles; however, the potential for such</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>There would be no effect to the Canada lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>), bull trout (<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>), or yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>),because no suitable habitat for these ESA-listed species is present in the Study Area; no active eagle nests are present in the Study Area; Montana Natural Heritage Program did not identify and State Species of Concern in the Study Area; activities associated with the construction and operation of the Rail Park may result in the disturbance or displacement of terrestrial wildlife species; however, animals present in the Study Area are likely adapted to urban habitat and human disturbance; in the context of the urban setting of development, vehicular traffic, and pedestrian activity, the effects on wildlife would be minimal.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>The Kalispell Trail may provide urban habitat for wildlife through the addition of landscaping and urban plantings that are not currently present along the railroad ROW.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>

⁷ The Study Areas for this EA consist of the construction footprint (Project Area) and the area affected directly or indirectly by the Project. Study Areas vary based on the resource being analyzed and are defined under each resource section.



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
	<p>impacts currently exists with the existing operation of the railroad and vehicular traffic in an urbanized area.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Measures to minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species and wildlife would include the appropriate BMPs, such as silt fencing and reseeding disturbed areas, to control soil erosion and minimize the potential for runoff to affect adjacent water bodies; any storage bins containing liquids would be sealed to prevent wildlife from accessing them, and proper speed limits and restrictions would be followed on roadways to prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions; to minimize the effects of overhead utility lines on birds in flight, any overhead lines impacted or installed would be marked with bird diverters, and new placements or extensions of utilities would be placed underground.</p> <p>Should eagle nests be discovered during construction of the Rail Park, to avoid disturbing nesting bald eagles, USFWS recommends (1) keeping a distance between the activity and the nest (i.e. 330 to 660 feet distance buffers depending on visuals from the nest); (2) maintaining forested or natural areas between the activity and around nest trees; and (3) avoiding certain activities, such as tree removal, during the breeding season (USFWS 2007a).</p> <p>Per Flathead County Weed Control District Revegetation Policy, disturbed areas would be reseeded and reclaimed as soon as possible after construction with a Flathead County Weed Control District-approved seed mix and would occur after completion of construction of the Rail Park, either between April 15 and June 15 or October 1 and November 15.</p>	<p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Measures to minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species and wildlife would include the appropriate BMPs, such as silt fencing and reseeding disturbed areas, to control soil erosion and minimize the potential for runoff to affect adjacent water bodies during Project construction; any storage bins containing liquids would be sealed to prevent wildlife from accessing them, and proper speed limits and restrictions would be followed on roadways which would not change the potential for wildlife-vehicle collisions compared to existing conditions; to minimize the effects of overhead utility lines on birds in flight, any overhead lines impacted or installed would be marked with bird diverters, and new placements or extensions of utilities would be placed underground.</p> <p>Should eagle nests be discovered during construction of the Kalispell Trail, to avoid disturbing nesting bald eagles, USFWS recommends (1) keeping a distance between the activity and the nest (i.e. 330 to 660 feet distance buffers depending on visuals from the nest); (2) maintaining forested or natural areas between the activity and around nest trees; and (3) avoiding certain activities, such as tree removal, during the breeding season (USFWS 2007a).</p> <p>Per Flathead County Weed Control District Revegetation Policy, disturbed areas would be reseeded and reclaimed as soon as possible after construction with a Flathead County Weed Control District-approved seed mix and would occur after completion of construction of the Kalispell Trail, either between April 15 and June 15 or October 1 and November 15.</p>	
Energy Use	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Construction of the Rail Park would temporarily increase energy consumption used by heavy construction machinery in the form of fuel and electricity or battery power of smaller tools.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Construction of the Kalispell Trail would temporarily increase energy consumption used by heavy construction machinery in the form of fuel and electricity or battery power of smaller tools.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>No impact.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
	<p>Operation:</p> <p>Operation of the Rail Park would not increase energy use from current levels, as the number of trains servicing/serviced by the new Rail Park would not increase from levels currently operating in Kalispell; due to the shorter distance trains would travel for deliveries and pick-ups and the reduction in use of trucks and other rail shipment routes for freight in northwest Montana, energy use may decrease from current levels; potential fuel savings of up to \$7 million and a \$1.4-million reduction in emissions over 20 years is anticipated due to operation of the Rail Park.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Limit equipment idling; locate staging areas as near to work sites as possible throughout construction; strategically deliver construction materials to the Rail Park to limit traffic congestion and detours.</p>	<p>Operation:</p> <p>Operation of the Kalispell Trail would limit consumption of fuel by providing non-motorized transportation options which do not currently exist, thereby eliminating idling traffic waiting for trains to pass, and increasing traffic efficiency by completing up to three street connections across the Kalispell Trail; overall emissions and energy use in the Study Area could decrease.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Limit equipment idling; locate staging areas as near to work sites as possible throughout construction; strategically deliver construction materials to the Kalispell Trail to limit traffic congestion and detours.</p>	<p>Operation:</p> <p>Less efficient transportation of agricultural goods would continue and vehicles would continue to idling at railroad crossings.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
Visual Resources	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>Construction:</p> <p>Construction would impact visual quality in the Study Area temporarily due to the presence of construction equipment, staging areas, and equipment operation.</p> <p>Operation:</p> <p>Rail tracks placed within the Rail Park may provide new views of train cars for viewers looking in from the east along Flathead Drive or west from Whitefish Stage Road; infrastructure associated with business operations such as buildings, warehouses, or grain bins would be developed within the Rail Park to accommodate businesses that would utilize the Rail Park; however, due to the existing industrial and urban features of the Rail Park location, which was formerly operating as a gravel pit, the addition of buildings or infrastructure would have no impact on, and would not change the overall feel and setting of, the surrounding viewshed.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>Construction:</p> <p>Construction would impact visual quality in the Study Area temporarily due to the presence of construction equipment, staging areas, and equipment operation.</p> <p>Operation:</p> <p>Removal and conversion of the existing tracks into a public-use trail would remove train cars from traveling through the Core Area of Kalispell; unvegetated rail beds would be converted to a landscaped, green space and provide a more visually appealing setting to users within and outside of the Study Area.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact; pedestrians and residents of Kalispell would continue to be subject to trains passing through the Core Area and obstructing views of the downtown area.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
	<p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>		
Traffic and Transportation	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Temporary traffic delays and detours during construction.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Operation of the Rail Park would eliminate grain trucks from having to travel through the Core Area, which would relieve traffic congestion; eliminating trains from traveling through the Core Area would eliminate traffic delays and queues at at-grade crossings and along street corridors; increased ability to access rail for long-haul shipments of grain instead of truck shipments would reduce impacts on highway transportation systems and reduce the need for maintenance of roadways.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Mitigation:</p> <p>Temporary delays and detours would not occur at every intersection or roadway simultaneously; construction would be staggered across intersections and street connections; Access to all businesses and residences would be maintained throughout construction; Detours would be signed and marked clearly for travelers and a Work Zone Safety and Mobility Transportation Management Plan and Maintenance of Traffic Plan following MDT guidelines (MDT 2015) would be developed and adhered to by the City's contractor; the public would be notified in advance of closures or detours; to mitigate unsafe conditions and long queue times for vehicles at the US Highway 2 and Flathead Drive/Woodland Park Drive intersection an actuated traffic signal would be installed and the roadway widened to accommodate large trucks turning into the Rail Park.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Temporary traffic delays and detours during construction.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Operation of the Kalispell Trail would relieve traffic congestion by providing up to three new complete through-street connections within the Study Area; construction and operation of the Kalispell Trail would have a beneficial impact on bicyclists and pedestrians within the Study Area and Kalispell community by providing a safe option for non-motorized travel.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Temporary delays and detours would not occur at every intersection or roadway simultaneously; construction would be staggered across intersections and street connections; access to all businesses and residences would be maintained throughout construction; detours would be signed and marked clearly for travelers and a Work Zone Safety and Mobility Transportation Management Plan following MDT guidelines would be adhered to; for pedestrian and bicyclist safety, warning or stop signs would be installed at the road crossings, and curb bump-outs are proposed to restrict the distance that pedestrians must cross roads.</p> <p>To determine if signalization would be warranted at the completed street connections, traffic signal warrant studies on the completed street connections would be completed after construction of the complete streets; if the traffic signal warrant studies indicate the need for signalization at the three subject intersections, traffic signals would be installed in the future by the City, as a separate action(s) from the Project.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact; traffic congestion would continue in the Core Area; rail would continue to transport materials and commodities through the Core Area; pedestrian facilities would remain limited; a central location to access to rail shipments would continue to be non-existent; long-haul truck shipments would continue.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>There may be temporary, localized impacts to surrounding residential or commercial communities during construction of the Project; impacts would be localized in the form of noise above ambient levels, visual disturbance from construction equipment, and air emissions from equipment; pedestrians and vehicle traffic may experience temporary delays during construction.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>No elderly or disabled populations would be impacted by operation of the Rail Park; there are no environmental justice populations within the Study Area; operation of the Rail Park would benefit community cohesion and access to goods and services by removal of tracks and trains passing through the Study Area, and, therefore, reducing traffic congestion; businesses may experience temporary adverse impacts due to relocation of the rail services, such as added staff hours, to move equipment.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>To minimize temporary delays due to construction activities, signed detours and alternative access routes to businesses would be provided and a Maintenance of Traffic Plan enacted and followed by the Contractor as well as appropriate public notification of detours/delays; BMPs, such as watering methods and limiting vehicle idle, in regards to dust and emissions would be implemented during construction.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>There may be temporary, localized impacts to surrounding residential or commercial areas during construction of the Project; impacts would be localized in the form of noise above ambient levels, views of construction equipment, or air emissions from equipment; pedestrians and vehicle traffic may experience temporary delays during construction; businesses may experience impacts due to construction of up to three complete street connections, which may require property acquisitions and/or relocations.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Improved economic and visual appeal and access along the Kalispell Trail could increase and incentivize the establishment of new businesses; community cohesion and elderly and disabled populations would benefit from operation of the Kalispell Trail by increasing transportation options and access to goods and services, due to removal of railroad tracks, elimination of trains passing through the Study Area, and reduction of traffic congestion through Core Area; there are no environmental justice populations within the Study Area.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>To minimize temporary delays due to construction activities, signed detours and alternative access routes to businesses would be provided and a Maintenance of Traffic Plan enacted and followed by the Contractor as well as appropriate public notification of detours/delays; BMPs, such as watering methods in regards to dust and emissions, and limiting vehicle idle would be used during construction; for pedestrian and bicyclist safety, warning or stop signs would be installed at the road crossings, and curb bump outs would restrict the distance that they must cross roads.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact; community of Kalispell and northwest Montana would not receive economic and trade benefits associated with construction of the Rail Park; community cohesion would continue to be bisected by the existing tracks.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
Relocations and Displacements	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>One parcel of land from a business would be purchased for expansion of Flathead Drive and installation of the traffic signal at Flathead Drive, Woodland Park Drive, and US Highway 2; temporary impacts would</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>Construction of up to three complete street connections would require buyouts of several businesses, lease modifications, and/or ROW acquisitions; temporary impacts would occur to landowners and staff</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impacts.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
	<p>occur from inventory requiring rearrangement and consolidation to a slightly smaller lot; traffic access from US Highway 2 would be restricted; however, access as normal would remain to the business from Flathead Drive.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>No impacts.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>The City would comply with the Uniform Act, state law, and its own adopted policies and procedures to protect the interests of current landowners or landowners' leases; compensation and assistance in relocations would be provided consistently and equitably with applicable state and federal laws and procedures; properties to be acquired would be independently appraised for fair market value; eligible individuals, families, businesses, or organizations may receive moving costs, housing replacement, rental assistance, or business relocation benefits to minimize hardship and provide the assistance necessary to accomplish this consistently.</p>	<p>during the moving process in the form of extra hours of work, overtime, and/or consolidation of inventory.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>The City would comply with the Uniform Act, state law, and its own adopted policies and procedures to protect the interests of current landowners or landowners' leases; compensation and assistance in relocations would be provided consistently and equitably with applicable state and federal laws and procedures; properties to be acquired would be independently appraised for fair market value; eligible individuals, families, businesses, or organizations may receive moving costs, housing replacement, rental assistance, or business relocation benefits to minimize hardship and provide the assistance necessary to accomplish this consistently.</p>	<p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
Public Health and Safety	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Construction of the Rail Park would require the use of heavy equipment and construction vehicles within the Project Area, which could present a potential safety risk to construction workers or the public if they were to enter the site on foot or by vehicle; temporary degradation of air quality due to the generation of fugitive dust and emissions from construction equipment and vehicles.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Would result in increased safety for the public by removing the risk of pedestrian/vehicle-train collisions from the Study Area; relocation of the rail operations to an area away from the population center of the</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Construction of the Kalispell Trail would require the use of heavy equipment and construction vehicles within the Project Area, which could present a potential safety risk to construction workers or the public if they were to enter the site on foot or by vehicle; temporary degradation of air quality due to the generation of fugitive dust and emissions from construction equipment and vehicles.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>Would result in increased safety and access for non-motorized and motorized travelers by removing the at-grade railroad crossings.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>Pedestrians and motorized travelers within the Core Area would remain subject to pedestrian/vehicle-train collisions along the tracks and roadways that currently lack appropriate markings and signage for pedestrian at-grade crossings; localized emissions from trains and grain trucks would remain in the Core Area and would not be relocated to an industrial area buffered from residences.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
	<p>City (Core Area) would also benefit public health by reducing localized emissions.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Restrictions on unauthorized persons accessing construction sites would be achieved through the use of fencing, warning signage, and/or similar measures.</p> <p>All pre-construction and construction work adjacent to and within an active railroad corridor must adhere to federal, state, local and host railroad worker safety rules and regulations.</p>	<p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Restrictions on unauthorized persons accessing construction sites would be achieved through the use of fencing, warning signage, and/or similar measures.</p>	
Hazardous Waste	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Ground clearing activities have the potential to expose concealed contaminated areas; small quantities of hazardous materials used/hazardous wastes generated during construction. The site of the former gravel pit has been remediated in accordance with Montana Department of Environmental Quality requirements.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>If contaminated soils are encountered, they would be mitigated and properly disposed of; appropriate BMPs for storing and handling toxic or hazardous materials and wastes would be implemented; contractor would obtain a Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) permit and implement and follow Stormwater General Permit and SPCC plan; Proper notifications would occur if an unknown hazardous material or site is discovered during construction or operation of the Rail Park and Kalispell Trail; Known contaminated areas would be identified on construction drawings.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>Ground clearing activities have the potential to expose concealed contaminated areas; small quantities of hazardous materials used/hazardous wastes generated during construction; 6th Avenue West-North would impact a fueling station and possibly underground tanks.</p> <p><u>Operation:</u></p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>If contaminated soils are encountered, they would be mitigated and properly disposed of; appropriate BMPs for storing and handling toxic or hazardous materials and wastes would be implemented; contractor would obtain a MPDES permit and implement and follow Stormwater General Permit and SPCC plan; ESA Phase I and/or II studies would be completed as needed within the portion of the Project Area for the Kalispell Trail; proper notifications would occur if an unknown hazardous material or site is discovered during construction or operation of the Rail Park and Kalispell Trail; known contaminated areas would be identified on construction drawings; should removal or decommissioning of USTs be needed, they would be inspected by</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
		qualified, trained and licensed professionals in accordance with MDEQ guidelines and all Federal, state and local regulations regarding the removal of USTs would be adhered to; should USTs be left in place, they would be properly managed and monitored by the City of Kalispell for releases in accordance with MDEQ guidelines.	
Cultural Resources and Historic Properties	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact. There are no NRHP-listed or eligible properties in the direct or indirect APE for the Rail Park portion of the Project.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>Removal of the tracks would have a direct adverse effect on the NRHP-eligible Great Northern Railroad and an indirect adverse effect on three NRHP-listed architectural properties adjacent to the railroad ROW that were historically served by the railroad.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>A Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would be executed among FRA, the City, the Montana SHPO, and other consulting parties. The draft MOA specifies mitigation measures, including leaving a small portion of rail track in place near the Great Northern Railway Depot in Depot Park; providing interpretive signage along the Kalispell Trail that highlights the historic importance of the railroad in the development of Kalispell and surrounding region; and planting of cherry trees along the Kalispell Trail, with emphasis in the former location of the Flathead Lake Cherry Growers Association Warehouse at 20 North Main Street, to commemorate the area's history of agriculture, particularly cherry orchards along Flathead Lake to the south, and the impact of this agricultural product on the local and regional economy and the importance of the railroad in shipping this agricultural product.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
4(f) Properties	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impacts.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>No impacts.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p><u>Construction and Operation:</u></p> <p>Removal of the tracks would result in a use of one Section 4(f)-protected historic property, the Great Northern Railroad.</p> <p><u>Construction:</u></p> <p>A <i>de minimis</i> impact to Depot Park may occur due to temporary occupancy (i.e., temporary easement, access, and/or construction staging).</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
		<p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>See the Section 106 discussion above regarding historic properties and the mitigation included in the draft MOA. Written concurrence with FRA's proposed <i>de minimis</i> impact determination would be required from the Parks Director, Kalispell Parks and Recreation, which is the official with jurisdiction over Depot Park. As necessary, FRA, the City, and the Parks Director would identify mitigation measures to address the potential temporary construction-period impacts to Depot Park.</p>	
Indirect Effects	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>Indirectly, the Project may increase community growth and development, due to the planned infrastructure associated with the Rail Park and Kalispell Trail. The Kalispell Trail would provide an attractive community area to establish businesses that would be more efficiently and safely accessed by vehicular and non-motorized transportation compared to current conditions; this could increase jobs and economic opportunities within the community. The Rail Park may also incentivize new industrial businesses to establish within Kalispell, which could improve the local economy and attract people to move to the City or immediate area for employment. This intensification of future development could result in ambient effects, such as additional lighting, energy use, grading/soils disturbance, and increased impervious surfaces. Indirect impacts to air quality could result based on tenants that move to the Rail Park during future operations, especially if the number of rail-served businesses increases from the current number.</p> <p>Noise and vibration impacts throughout the Core Area would indirectly decrease from the removal of the existing rail tracks and elimination of associated train traffic.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>Impacts:</p> <p>Anticipated growth impacts resulting from the Project would be minimal and consistent with the new Core Area B-3 zoning designation. Future businesses relocating to or leasing within the Rail Park would be required to obtain individual MTDEQ- and EPA-required air quality permits, as needed.</p>		<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No Impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
Cumulative Effects	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No significant adverse impacts to any resources of concern are anticipated to result from implementation of the Project; therefore, no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No significant adverse impacts to any resources of concern are anticipated to result from implementation of the Project; therefore, no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>No impact.</p> <p>Mitigation/Minimization/BMPs:</p> <p>None.</p>
Floodplains			



	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - GLACIER RAIL PARK	BUILD ALTERNATIVE - KALISPELL TRAIL AND STREET CONNECTIONS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
Prime and Unique Farmlands	These are resource areas not relevant to the Project/not present in the Study Area, and, therefore, they were not analyzed in this EA.		
Wild and Scenic River			
Coastal Barriers			
Coastal Zones			



3.3 Air Quality

Under the Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 USC § 7401 et seq. (1970)), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed numerical concentration-based standards, or National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), that represent the maximum allowable concentrations for the following six criteria pollutants: ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), respirable particulate matter (PM) (including particulate matter equal to or less than 10 microns in diameter [PM₁₀] and particulate matter equal to or less than 2.5 microns in diameter [PM_{2.5}]), and lead (Pb) (40 CFR § 50). As precursors to O₃, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) are criteria pollutants

IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL CAA REQUIREMENTS, THE AIR QUALITY IN A GIVEN REGION OR AREA IS MEASURED BY THE CONCENTRATION OF CRITERIA POLLUTANTS IN THE ATMOSPHERE. THE AIR QUALITY IN A REGION IS A RESULT OF NOT ONLY THE TYPES AND QUANTITIES OF ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTANTS AND POLLUTANT SOURCES IN AN AREA, BUT ALSO SURFACE TOPOGRAPHY, THE SIZE OF THE TOPOLOGICAL 'AIR BASIN', AND THE PREVAILING METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

regulated under the NAAQS program; however, no ambient air quality standards have been set for them. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MTDEQ) has established State Ambient Air Quality Standards that must be as stringent as (but may be more stringent than) NAAQS. In addition, Montana has set air quality standards for hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), fluoride in forage, and settleable PM, as well as visibility standards.

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) (e.g., carbon dioxide [CO₂], methane [CH₄]) are

primarily produced by the burning of fossil fuels, and through industrial and biological processes. GHG emissions caused by human activity have increased since the preindustrial era, driven largely by economic and population growth, and are now higher than they have ever been. Globally, economic and population growth continue to be the most important drivers of increases in CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion. As a result of increased GHG in the atmosphere, many regions are experiencing climate change impacts that threaten ecosystems, human health, and infrastructure (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2014).

MTDEQ has developed local air quality programs to regulate residential wood burning and road dust (the primary sources of particulate air pollution in Montana), as well as other minor sources of air pollution. MTDEQ has also developed the Montana Smoke Management Plan and Open Burning Program to control the amount of harmful PM that is released with smoke from prescribed burnings (MTDEQ undated). In addition, MTDEQ has implemented a permitting program for smaller sources of pollution, and in some cases, certain emission controls to ensure that such sources of air pollution are equipped with the best emission-control technology available (MTDEQ 2015).

Class I areas, including national parks greater than 6,000 acres in size, national monuments, national seashores, and federally-designated wilderness areas larger than 5,000 acres designated prior to 1977, are afforded special protection under CAA. There are no federal Class I areas within the Study Area (EPA 2016b). The nearest Class I area is Glacier National Park, approximately 21 miles northeast of the Project Area.



3.3.1 Affected Environment

The EPA classifies the air quality based on ambient concentrations of criteria pollutants in areas designated as attainment, nonattainment, maintenance, or unclassifiable for each of the six criteria pollutants. Attainment means that the air quality within an area meets the NAAQS; nonattainment indicates that one or more criteria pollutant ambient concentrations are greater than NAAQS; maintenance indicates that an area was previously designated nonattainment, but is now in attainment; and an unclassifiable air quality designation by the USEPA means that there is not enough information to appropriately classify an area, so the area is considered as being in attainment.

As of February 13, 2017, the EPA has determined Kalispell is in nonattainment for PM₁₀. The Study Area for air quality is defined as the designated PM₁₀ Nonattainment Area boundary. Please refer to **Figure 18, Air Quality Study Area**. The Study Area is in attainment for all other NAAQS (EPA 2017b). The EPA originally designated Kalispell as a nonattainment area for PM₁₀ in 1987. Five sources were identified as contributing to the PM₁₀ pollution levels in Kalispell, including vehicle exhaust, road dust, prescribed burning, residential wood burning, and industry. Measures were developed to address each source in the EPA-approved State Implementation Plan (SIP) (EPA 1996). Since then, Kalispell has shown a continued reduction in annual tons of PM₁₀, as well as a decline in measured 24-hour ambient air concentrations of PM₁₀ (EPA 2016d).

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would not result in changes to current air quality within the Study Area or City of Kalispell; however, the Core Area would not see the benefits of the relocation of industrial, rail-served businesses to the less populated and industrial-zoned Rail Park. The level of traffic congestion at railroad street crossings would remain the same, and automobiles would continue to idle at railroad street crossing locations while waiting for trains to pass, further contributing emissions.

Temporary impacts to air quality from construction would not occur with the No-Build Alternative. It is unlikely that the No-Build Alternative would cause or contribute to any new violations of the NAAQS, increase the frequency or severity of NAAQS violations, or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS.



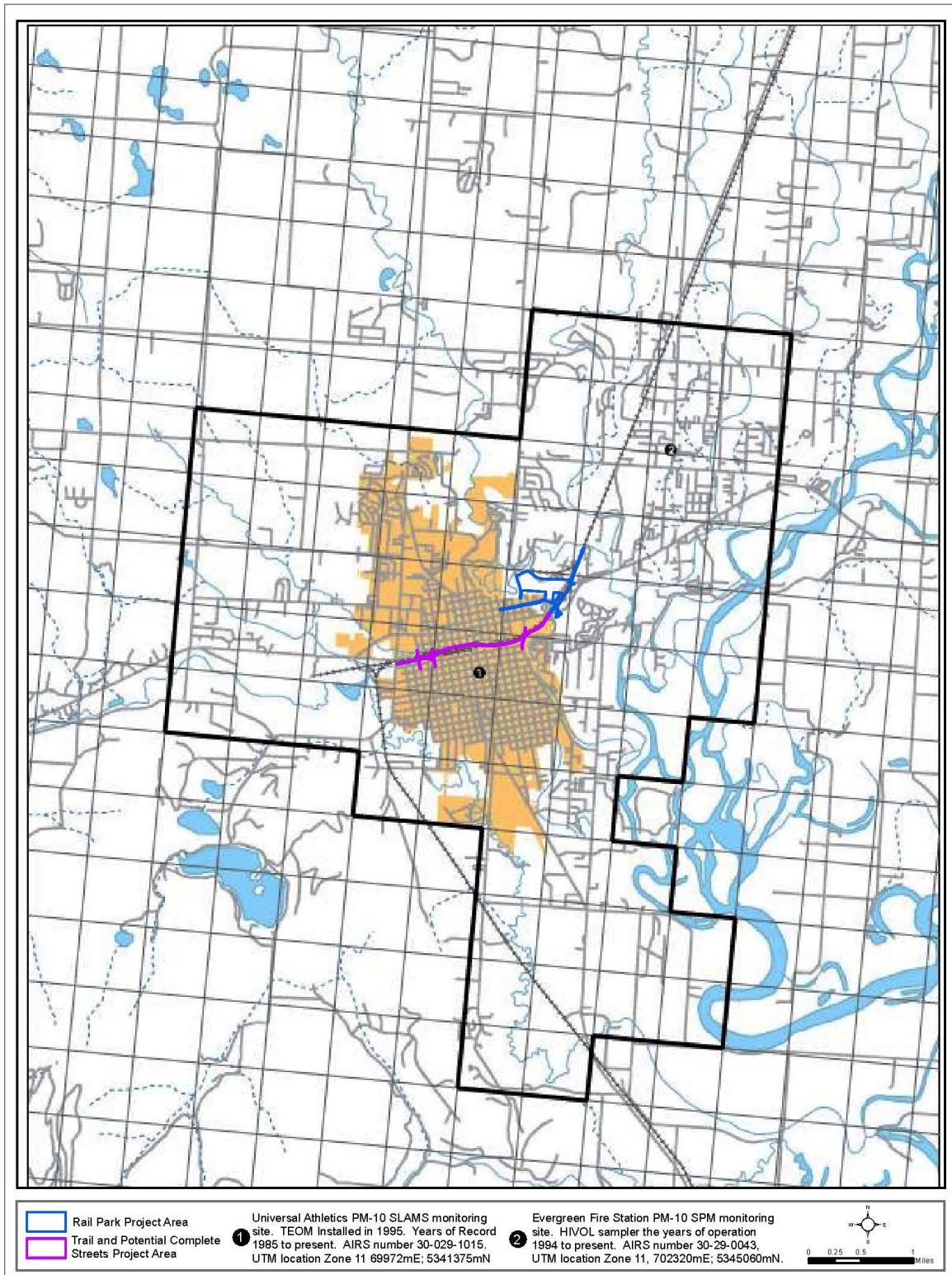


Figure 18, Air Quality Study Area

Build Alternative – The Build Alternative would not cause or contribute to any new violations of the NAAQS, increase the frequency or severity of NAAQS violations, or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS, or expose sensitive receptors to substantially increased PM concentrations. Potential temporary impacts to air quality due to construction and operation of the Rail Park are discussed below.

Construction Impacts

Construction activities would generate PM emissions as fugitive dust from ground-disturbing activities. Fugitive dust emissions from construction activities would be greatest during initial site-preparation activities (e.g., grading and excavation) and would vary from day to day, depending on the construction phase, level of activity, and prevailing wind and weather conditions. All emissions from construction activities would be temporary in nature.

Trucks and heavy construction equipment would temporarily generate minor amounts of gaseous emissions of PM, SO₂, NO₂, CO, and VOCs. However, due to the amount and nature of construction activities and the duration of construction, the PM₁₀ emissions are unlikely to exceed the *de minimis* thresholds set by the EPA general conformity regulations. As a result, the Project emissions are not anticipated to increase the frequency or severity of NAAQS violations or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS. The majority of construction for the Rail Park and Kalispell Trail would occur in areas zoned industrial or commercial.

GENERAL CONFORMITY (I.E., CONFORMITY REGULATIONS) ENSURES THAT ACTIONS TAKEN BY FEDERAL AGENCIES DO NOT INTERFERE WITH A STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO ATTAIN AND MAINTAIN NAAQS (EPA 2016C)

Operational Impacts

The Build Alternative is not anticipated to increase train traffic in the Study Area; rather, additional cars would be added to existing train sets to compensate for the increase in rail services demand. Therefore, operations at

the new Rail Park or Kalispell Trail would not result in any new or increased emissions, and the Build Alternative would be consistent with conformity regulations. Businesses relocating or leasing within the proposed Rail Park would be required to obtain individual MTDEQ- and EPA-required air quality permits, as needed.

The proposed Rail Park and Kalispell Trail would have a beneficial impact on air quality in the Core Area by relocating train and truck traffic to a less populated, industrial-zoned area on the outskirts of the City, away from residences and other land uses. The relocation of the freight rail operations to an area away from the population center of the City would also benefit public health by reducing localized air pollutant emissions. Large grain trucks and trains would no longer have to travel directly through the Core Area for deliveries and pick-ups. Traffic congestion and vehicle idling due to lack of street connections across the railroad tracks and wait times for trains would decrease, further reducing emissions. In addition, replacing the existing railroad tracks with a new public-use trail would increase the efficiency and public appeal for alternative modes of non-motorized transportation within the City, such as walking, bicycling, and rollerblading, which could further reduce emissions. It is anticipated that air quality conditions within the Core Area would improve under the Build Alternative. Train and truck traffic would be more efficient at the Rail Park. Trains would travel decreases distances to service customers since the Rail Park is closer to the BNSF mainline and all customer are now in one location.



Trucks now would have a more direct route to each relocated business and use a signaled intersection built to handle truck traffic. Grain and fertilizer truck drivers would also benefit from upgraded facilities in the Rail Park.

Per the Diesel Emission Reduction Act of 2005 (42 USC § 15801; Reauthorized in 2010), the EPA enacted new regulations that require new and remanufactured non-road diesel equipment (e.g., construction equipment and locomotives) to steadily reduce diesel emissions in the future (EPA 2017). Additionally, in June 2008, the EPA finalized a three-part program that dramatically reduces emissions from diesel locomotives (e.g., line-haul, switch, and passenger rail). The program cuts PM and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) emissions by 80 percent or more (40 CFR 1033). The standards are based on the placement of clean technology on engines built in 2015 (or later) or when an older engine is remanufactured (EPA 2008). Diesel emissions generated by construction activities and rail operations are expected to decrease over time because of these regulations.

Ultimately, the purpose of the proposed Project is to relocate existing freight rail operations in Kalispell and thereby improve the efficiency of operations as compared to existing conditions. There would be no long-term, significant adverse impacts to air quality and only minor increase in GHG emissions would result from construction or operation of the proposed Project.

3.3.3 Mitigation

BMPs to control fugitive dust such as water spraying, would be implemented as needed. BMPs such as using vehicular emission control equipment (e.g. catalytic converters) and limiting construction equipment idle time would be followed as feasible to minimize impacts. All construction equipment must satisfy EPA emission standards for non-road engines⁸.

3.4 Water Quality and Water Resources

The Study Area for water quality and water resources, including wetlands, corresponds to the Project Area. The methodology used to determine the presence of such resources included desktop reviews, site visits, and correspondence with appropriate resource agencies.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-500), as amended by the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977, provides the authority to establish water quality standards, control discharges into surface and subsurface waters, develop waste treatment management plans and practices, and issue permits for discharges (Section 402) and for dredged or fill material (Section 404). Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (33 USC § 403) protects the navigability of navigable waters of the US.

The EPA has the authority to protect the quality of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) of 1974 (Public Law 93- 523, 42 USC § 300 et. seq). As amended in 1986 and 1996, the SDWA requires measures for protecting drinking water and its sources: rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and

⁸ To see emissions standards for nonroad engines and vehicles such as large spark-ignition engines, compression-ignition engines, and locomotives, please refer to the EPA Emission Standards for Nonroad Vehicles at <https://www.epa.gov/emission-standards-reference-guide/epa-emission-standards-nonroad-engines-and-vehicles>



ground water wells⁹. Sole-source aquifers are groundwater supplies that provide the only source of drinking water for a particular area. These aquifers are protected under the SDWA of 1974. There are no sole-source aquifers (i.e., singular water source for an area) designated in Kalispell.

Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands (42 FR 2696, 1 May 24, 1977) requires Federal agencies to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.

Surface water resources generally include lakes, rivers, streams, floodplains, and wetlands. Water resources were desktop-evaluated using US Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Aerial Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial imagery, USFWS National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, FEMA Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps, US Geological Survey (USGS) National Hydrography Dataset, and various mapping tools and through coordination with agencies such as Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MTDNRC). Additionally, multiple on-site field visits have not identified the need for field-based delineation methods.

3.4.1 Affected Environment

3.4.1.1 Surface Water

Minimal surface water resources exist in the Study Area. The site lies within the Flathead Lake and Stillwater Watersheds (Hydrologic Unit Codes 17010208 and 17010210) (USGS 2014). Several perennial streams and rivers, including the Stillwater, Whitefish, and Flathead Rivers, flow through the valley eventually making their way to the Columbia River. The rivers and streams that comprise the watershed are utilized for crop irrigation, drinking water, recreation, and fish habitat. Total water withdrawals within the Northern Rocky Mountain Resource Region average 355 million gallons per day, comprised of 5 percent from ground water and 95 percent from surface water (NRCS 2006).

There are no identified wetlands within the Project Area per personal communication, e-mail correspondence, and site inspection with Mr. Tim Bodurtha, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Mr. Mark Deleray, Biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MTFWP), and Ms. Patti Mason, Flathead Conservation District (May 2015).

The Stillwater River is approximately 130 feet northwest of the proposed Rail Park. Historically, the site of the proposed Rail Park was developed as a gravel extraction and processing area, and such uses were setback from the river bank of the Stillwater River. In addition, there are existing roadways and a vegetative buffer located between the Stillwater River and the Project Area. Please refer to **Figure 19, Surface Water Resources**.

⁹ The SDWA does not regulate private wells that serve fewer than 25 individuals.



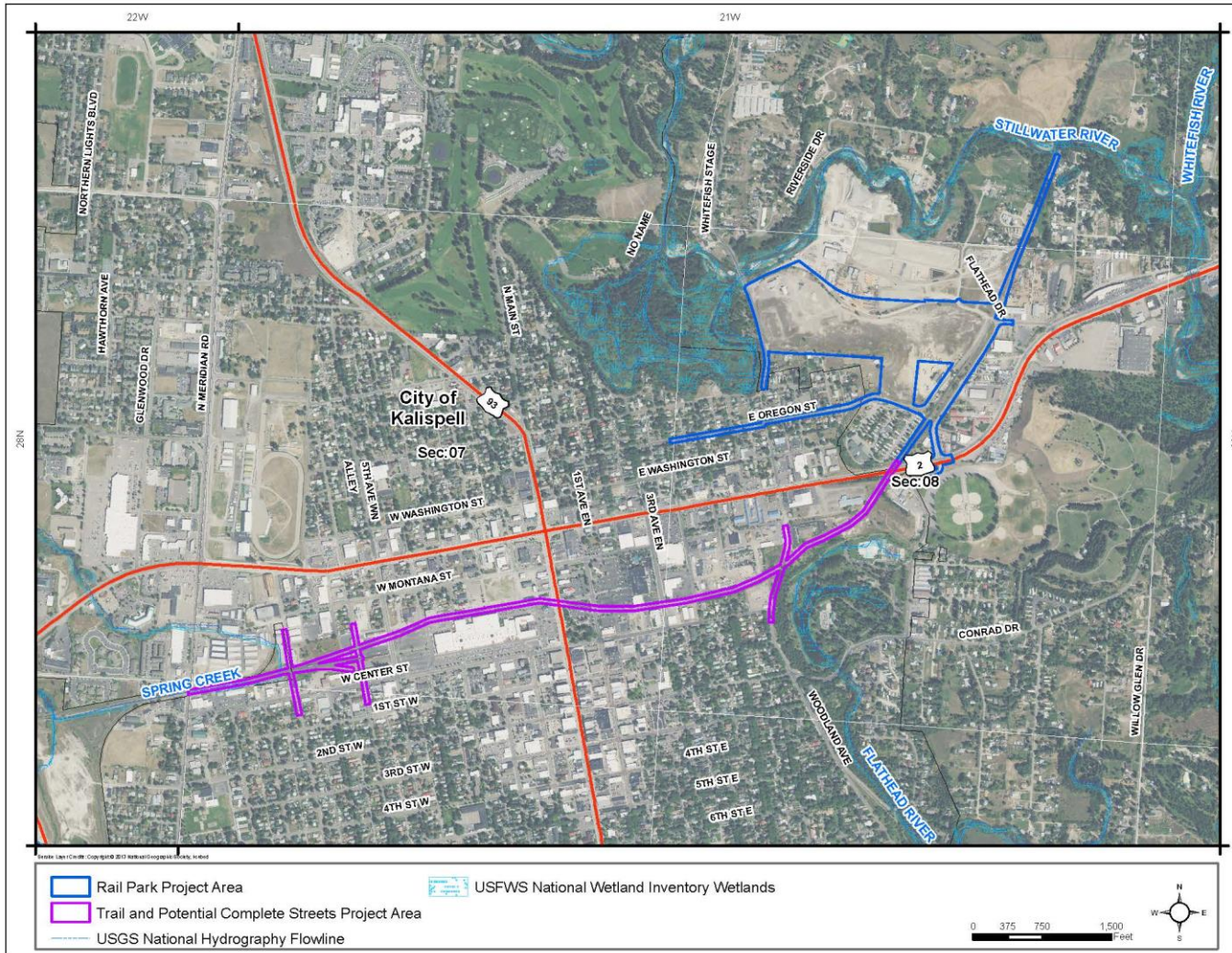


Figure 19, Surface Water Resources



3.4.1.2 Groundwater

Groundwater is defined as the water from precipitation that soaks into the soil and is stored or moved through the porous locations between rocks and soil particles. Groundwater can flow through the spaces between rocks and soil via gravity and capillary action and help fill rivers, streams or lakes, or can be pumped to the surface through water wells located in aquifers. Aquifers are underground porous rocks, sandstones or gravel that yield a sufficient and consistent supply of groundwater to be useful as a water source for streams, rivers or human uses (NDSWC 2014). Ground water is an essential resource in Montana. About 445,000 Montana residents (about one-half the state's total population) depend on ground water for their primary water supply. Ground water provides 94 percent of Montana's rural, domestic water supply. Every day approximately 126 million gallons of ground water are used for irrigation, water supply for livestock, and industry (MTDEQ undated). Montana has authority to designate controlled groundwater areas to prevent new uses or to limit certain types of uses due to water availability or to protect groundwater quality (MTDNRC 2010).

The Northern Rocky Mountains Intermontane Basins Aquifer Systems underlies the entire Study Area. A search of Montana's Ground Water Information System indicated there are multiple municipal and domestic groundwater wells and boreholes within and adjacent to the Study Area (MBMG 2016). Please refer to **Figure 20, Groundwater Resources**.

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would not result in changes or impacts to existing surface or ground water resources. Currently, no stormwater collection or treatment systems are in place within the vacant proposed Rail Park site, and no curbs or gutters are present on streets near the proposed Kalispell Trail. Under the No-Build Alternative, stormwater would continue to run-off of the site, without collection or treatment, and potentially impact the nearby Stillwater River or underlying Northern Rocky Mountains Intermontane Basins Aquifer System.

Build Alternative – The following paragraphs discuss potential impacts to water resources resulting from the Build Alternative. No significant adverse impacts to water resources or water quality are anticipated because of the distance between the proposed locations of the Project and surface water, and because appropriate BMPs would be implemented during construction and operation of the Project.

Construction Impacts

Groundwater or aquifers can be contaminated by water from the surface moving through the water table, carrying any contaminants present through the porous areas between rocks and soil particles and entering the groundwater supply. Contaminants may reach groundwater from human activities on the surface such as spills, improperly stored hazardous or industrial materials, or leaking underground septic systems or petroleum storage tanks, and stormwater runoff (EPA 2015).



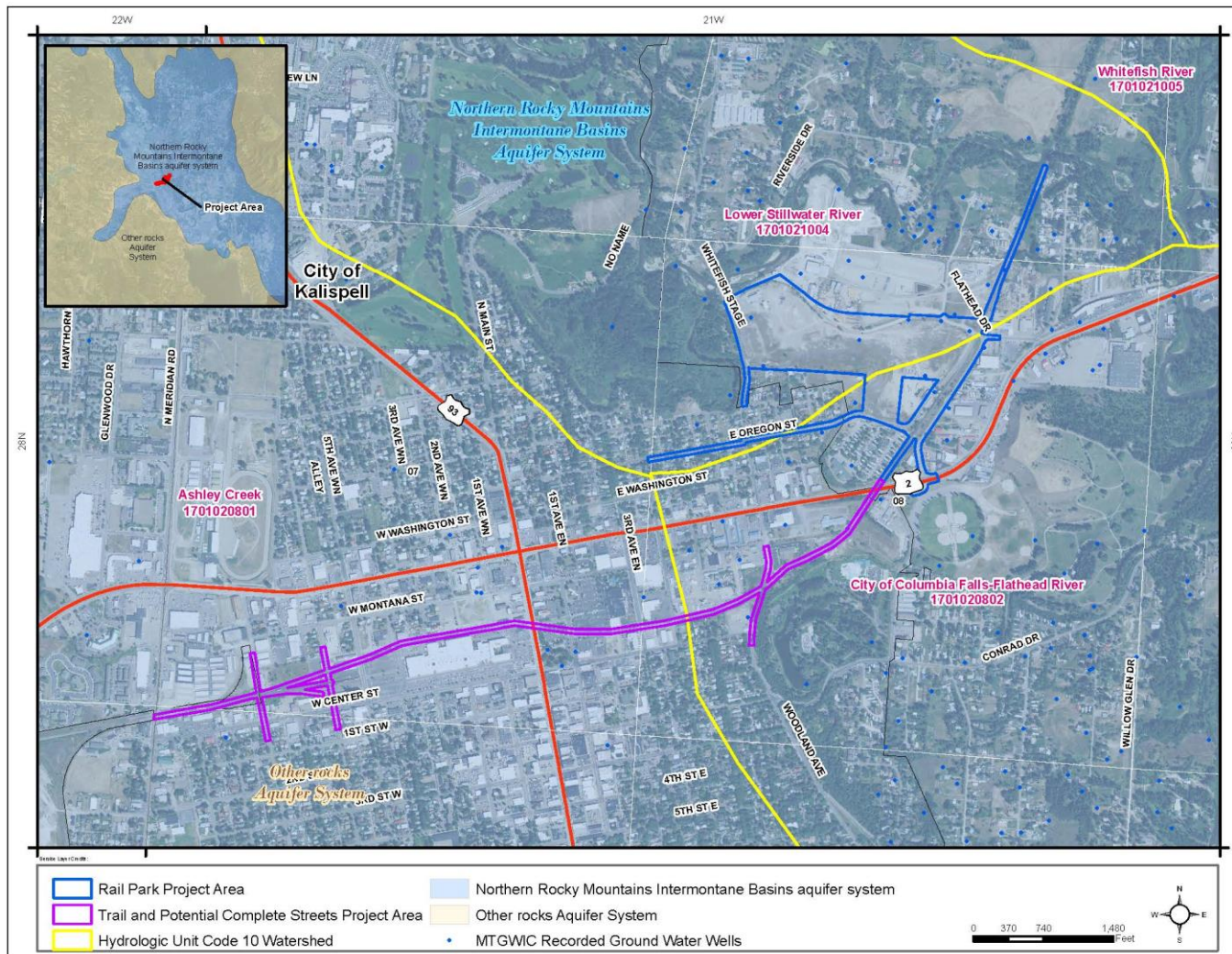


Figure 20, Groundwater Resources



Construction activities that disturb the ground surface and expose the underlying soils can temporarily degrade surface and groundwater quality as a result of sedimentation and soil erosion or surface runoff carrying contaminants through the water table. Construction activities can also introduce petroleum or other construction related chemicals through inadvertent spills or improper chemical application procedures (e.g. fertilizer). Such materials can infiltrate the soil and/or be carried by stormwater, ultimately having the potential to contaminate surface waters and groundwater reserves. The nearby Stillwater River could be susceptible to water quality impacts based on its proximity to the Project Area; however, there are land and vegetation buffers between the Stillwater River and Project Area.

Operational Impacts

There would be a low potential for inadvertent spills (e.g., fuels, chemicals) during operation of the Rail Park. The Build Alternative would increase the acreage of impervious surface area within the Study Area in the form of the paved Kalispell Trail, up to three completed street connections, and the paving of the Rail Park interior road. Increased impervious surfaces limit the ability of water to penetrate and restore groundwater sources and may produce more surface runoff, which could contaminate surface or groundwater resources; however, proposed onsite stormwater retention systems would minimize any stormwater related water quality impacts from runoff.

The proposed Project would maintain the setback to the Stillwater River and no new development is planned as part of the proposed Project within the Stillwater River banks. The proposed Rail Park would be developed in such a fashion that storm water runoff would be diverted away from the Stillwater River and managed entirely by new stormwater ponds to be constructed onsite. (T. Jentz, personal communication, April 2017; Keith Haskins, Kalispell Public Works Department; Senior Engineer, personal communication, April 2017; and per Rail Park preliminary civil site construction drawings on file with the City of Kalispell Public Works Department, Kalispell City Hall).

Wastewater from toilet flushing, dishwashing, and equipment washing would be generated by Rail Park operations; however, the Project would include the extension of wastewater facilities to the Rail Park site. The Kalispell Public Works Department has confirmed that its systems are adequately sized to handle the demand of the new Rail Park. Please refer to **Appendix A, Solicitation of Views Package and Responses**. Consequently, there would be no wastewater impacts because no direct wastewater releases to local surface or groundwater bodies would occur. Water supply requirements would continue to be met by the Kalispell's water supply system through the extension of the existing water main into the Rail Park.

The Rail Park would not require surface water or groundwater extraction, and no wells are planned to be drilled onsite. The existing MTDEQ test wells located on site have been abandoned and reclaimed (i.e., sealed) (MGMB 2016). Although the Kalispell Trail would be paved, both sides of the Kalispell Trail would be landscaped allowing stormwater infiltration resulting in no significant change from existing conditions.

No impacts to surface or groundwater resources would result from operation of the Kalispell Trail.

3.4.3 Mitigation

Mitigation measures to limit impacts to water resources during construction of the proposed Project would include the installation of standard stormwater management practices, erosion-control

measures, and other BMPs. These measures include completing SPCC plans, identification of cleanup procedures, and reclamation measures for disturbed areas. The Project would continue to use BMPs and erosion-control measures throughout operation.

The City's construction contractor would be required to develop and maintain a Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) General Permit from the MTDEQ for the Project. An MDPES General Permit requires the development and maintenance of a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP), including public involvement and participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction sites runoff-control, and post-construction stormwater management and pollution prevention measures (City of Kalispell Stormwater Management Program 2017).

Stormwater practices and systems would also prevent any runoff from reaching the Stillwater River. To limit the potential for pollution resulting from stormwater runoff within the Study Area associated with the Kalispell Trail and complete streets, Kalispell Pollution Prevention BMPs, such regular street sweeping, leaf collection, and storm drainage system inspection and cleaning would be implemented (City of Kalispell 2011). All stormwater within the boundary of the Rail Park would be captured and directed to an onsite retention pond. The retention pond would have a sedimentation cell and a primary infiltration cell. A second retention pond along East Oregon Lane would collect and treat stormwater from East Oregon Lane. The ponds are designed to treat a 100-year storm event on frozen ground. Due to the capacity of the ponds and the lack of connection to Stillwater River, no stormwater is anticipated to reach Stillwater River. While both types of ponds provide a water quality benefit, retention ponds allow for additional biological interactions that aid in improving water quality. Detention ponds usually temporarily hold stormwater long enough to settle sands and larger silt particles. Retention ponds are designed to store all stormwater.

3.5 Noise and Vibration

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound, and can be intermittent or continuous, steady or impulsive, stationary or transient. Noise levels discernable by humans and animals are dependent on several variables, including distance and ground cover between the source and receiver and atmospheric conditions. Perception of noise is affected by intensity, frequency, pitch and duration. Noise levels are quantified using units of decibels (dBA). Humans typically have reduced hearing sensitivity at low frequencies compared with their response at high frequencies.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has outlined noise-sensitive land uses including Category 1 (e.g., parks and recreation areas); Category 2, residences and buildings where people normally sleep (e.g., single family, multi-family, and mobile homes); and Category 3, including institutional land uses (e.g. churches, schools, hotels, hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, museums) (FTA 2006). Please refer to **Table 3, Land Use Category Description**.



Table 3, Land Use Category Description

LAND USE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF LAND USE CATEGORY
1	Tracts of land where quiet is an essential element in their intended purpose. This category includes lands set aside for serenity and quiet, such land uses as outdoor amphitheaters and concert pavilions, as well as National Historic Landmarks with significant outdoor use. Also included are recording studios and concert halls.
2	Residences and buildings where people normally sleep. This category includes homes, hospitals, and hotels where a nighttime sensitivity to noise is assumed to be of utmost importance.
3	Institutional land uses with primarily daytime and evening use. This category includes schools, libraries, theaters and churches where it is important to avoid interference with such activities as speech, meditation and concentration on reading material places for meditation or study associated with cemeteries, monuments, museums, campgrounds, and recreational facilities can also be considered to be in this category. Certain historical sites and parks are also included.

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The proposed Rail Park would be in an area containing mixed-commercial, residential, and industrial land uses. Glacier Stone Supply, Klingler Lumber, a BNSF siding, and the Kalispell Pole and Timber, Reliance Refining Company and Yale Oil Corporation facilities (known as the KRY Superfund site), border the site to the north. Residential (single-family and mobile homes), commercial (hotels and retail businesses), and light industrial (Pacific Steel and Northwest Truck Repair) uses are located northeast and east of the proposed Rail Park, between East Oregon Lane, Flathead Drive, the BNSF mainline, and US Highway 2. The Greenwood Village Mobile Homes and a residential neighborhood with two churches border the site to the south. Whitefish Stage Road and the Stillwater River form the west and northwest boundaries.

Big Sky Acoustics, Limited Liability Company (LLC) (BSA) completed a Detailed Noise Analysis and General Vibration Assessment (2017) for the Project considering noise receivers of interest within 1,000 feet of the Project Area. Additionally, ground vibrations at receivers located within 300 feet of the proposed Rail Park and mainline tracks and the additional siding track between US Highway 2 and the Stillwater River were assessed. The study was completed per the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*¹⁰ guidelines (FTA 2006). Please refer to **Appendix B, Noise and Vibration Study**. The proposed Project would not include train operations south and west of US Highway 2, and the existing tracks through the Core Area would be removed and converted to the Kalispell Trail. Therefore, since the noise sources are being removed, the area south and west of US Highway 2 and the Core Area are not located in the noise and vibration Study Area, and were not evaluated by BSA for the Detailed Noise Analysis or General Vibration Assessment.

10 https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Noise_and_Vibration_Manual.pdf



Twelve noise-sensitive receivers were identified within the noise study area. Of these, ten (10) are Category 2 land uses and two (2) are Category 3 land uses. The noise Study Area does not include any Category 1 receivers. Predicted noise impacts are summarized in **Table 4, Change in Noise Levels and Impact at Land Use Category 2 Receivers** and **Table 5, Change in Noise Levels and Impact Land Use Category 3**.

Table 4, Change in Noise Levels and Impact at Land Use Category 2 Receivers

RECEIVER LOCATION	RECEIVER IDENTIFIER	CALCULATED BASELINE NOISE (DBA)	CALCULATED PROJECTED NOISE (DBA)	CHANGE IN NOISE (DBA)	FTA IMPACT	NUMBER OF IMPACTED RECEIVERS
1	Southern Neighborhood (Northeast corner)	56	57	+1	None	0
2	Town and Country Trailer Court	60	63	+3	Moderate	4
3	Northwest Neighborhood	52	53	+1	None	0
4	Northeast Neighborhoods 1 & 2	58	60	+2	Moderate	13
5	Greenwood Village Mobile Home Park	59	60	+1	None	0
6	Southern Neighborhood (Northwest corner)	50	53	+3	None	0
7	Flathead Drive Residence – North	59	60	+1	None	0
8	Flathead Drive Residence – South	59	59	0	None	0
9	Alpine Inn	59	60	+1	None	0
10	La Quinta Inn	53	54	+1	None	0
Total Number of Impacted Receivers:						17

Table 5, Change in Noise Levels and Impact Land Use Category 3 Receiver

Receiver Identifier	Calculated Baseline Noise (dBA)	Calculated Projected Noise (dBA)	FTA Impact
Shining Mountain Science and Seventh-Day Adventist Community¹¹	46	50	None

11 One receiver was used to represent both Category 3 locations which consists of churches.



3.5.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would not result in changes or impacts to current noise levels within the noise and vibration study area, and the Core Area would continue to experience noise from trains and train horns.

Build Alternative – The following paragraphs discuss noise and vibration impacts due to the construction and operation of the proposed Project. There would be temporary increases in noise levels above current conditions during construction of the Project. There would be no severe, long-term impacts resulting from noise or vibration requiring mitigation. The Core Area would receive a benefit of removing noise exposure resulting from trains and associated train horns as they travel through the downtown area of Kalispell, through removal of existing train tracks.

Construction Impacts

Construction of the proposed Project would result in temporary increases in noise above baseline levels; however, the proposed Rail Park would be located in an existing industrial area with noise levels typical of this land use. Current businesses surrounding the Rail Park site include a granite rock processing facility, post and pole manufacturing company, and a recycling center that recycles scrap iron. Temporary increases in noise levels above baseline conditions would be due to heavy construction equipment operation during construction of the Project, such as bulldozers, front end loaders, excavators, dump trucks, scrapers, and compactors. Construction of the entire Project would likely last approximately 18 months. BSA (2017) did not predict any severe impacts requiring mitigation to sensitive noise receptors adjacent to the Rail Park.

Long-term noise sources (i.e., train horns, locomotives, train cars) throughout the Core Area south and west of US Highway 2 would be removed due to construction of the Kalispell Trail. During construction, the following impacts would likely occur: temporary lane closures, temporary loss of utility services, and temporary noise from construction equipment.

Although noise level would temporarily be above baseline throughout construction of the proposed Project during the daytime hours, no significant impacts are anticipated due to construction of the Rail Park or Kalispell Trail.

Operational Impacts

Sensitive noise receptors (Category 2 and 3 land uses) are located within 1,000 feet of the proposed Rail Park (Study Area). Please refer to **Table 5**, **Table 6**, and **Appendix B, Noise and Vibration Study**. Noise levels during operation of the Rail Park were predicted using a BSA-developed noise model based on the Cadna-A Version 4.6 noise prediction software. The noise predictions are based on the conservative assumption that all equipment associated with business operations of CHS and Northwest Drywall (i.e., train locomotives, vehicles, trucks, engines, industrial fans, etc.) during everyday operations of the Project would be operating simultaneously. It is also assumed that train operations for the existing CHS facility (which would move to the Rail Park) include one locomotive to move 24 train cars during the busiest times of year, which are August and December. In the busy months, one to three full trains per month are moved on the BNSF mainline from CHS. It takes approximately 8 hours to load 24 cars using the CHS locomotive. Then the locomotive travels south into Kalispell, takes



approximately 1.5 hours to couple the railcars, and then moves the train north out of town on the mainline. These southbound and northbound trips occur during separate daytime hours (approximately 7 AM to 10 PM hours). At other times of year, the CHS operations typically move single cars onto locomotives two to four times per month. On average, 12 trains per month provide service to CHS, Pacific Steel, and others (M. Lalum, personal correspondence, June 22, 2016).

The Moderate (per FTA (2006) defined impact range) noise impacts at Locations 2 and 4 are primarily due to the train horns used at the Flathead Drive/East Oregon Lane crossing. For the Rail Park operations, CHS does not anticipate the need for additional trains or locomotives, but when the new facility is at full capacity, an additional five to six railcars could be added to the current trainsets, which would be approximately 30 railcars per train. At the Rail Park, the locomotive could pass through the Flathead Drive/East Oregon Lane crossing up to three times an hour as it moves railcars into position, for two daytime hours.

Although the Rail Park portion of the proposed Project would result in two Moderate noise impacts, those impacts are not in FTA's Severe Impact range. Based on the receiver locations' baseline noise conditions, Moderate noise impacts could be anywhere between a 2- to 4-dBA increase (FTA 2006). At Location 2, the predicted increase in Project noise levels from 60 to 63 dBA is 1 dBA above the FTA defined No Impact range. At Location 4, the predicted increase from 58 to 60 dBA is on the midway point between the FTA defined No Impact and Moderate Impact ranges. Trains are already active on the exiting BNSF mainline; therefore, the noise from locomotives, coupling of railcars, train horns, and other tracks-related noise sources already contribute to the existing noise environment of the impacted receivers. Public reaction to the operational noise is expected to be less than if the proposed Project introduced a new noise source to the area. In addition, the topography in the area and large buildings have a significant effect on how the sound travels near the Rail Park (BSA 2017). The approximate 40- to 60-foot-high ridge between the proposed Rail Park and the Southern Neighborhood acts as a natural barrier to reduce noise.

Moderate noise impacts from the Rail Park portion of the proposed Project are predicted near the No Impact Range, primarily from the train horns along the Flathead Drive/East Oregon Lane crossing. Noise impacts are predicted on days the trains operate to move product out of the Rail Park; on these days, train operations are expected to be infrequent. On days when train operations occur, the noise sources were assumed to be active during the daytime hours and not at night when people tend to be more sensitive to noise. Please refer to **Appendix B, Noise and Vibration Report**. No impacts due to noise or vibration are associated with the proposed Kalispell Trail; however, the Core Area and its users/residents would benefit from the removal of noise and vibration sources due to removal of the existing tracks.

BSA also completed a General Vibration Assessment; no vibration impacts were predicted for the proposed Project. Please refer to **Appendix B, Noise and Vibration Report**.

There would be no, long-term significant adverse noise or vibration impacts associated with construction or operation of the Project. The Kalispell Trail would result in the removal of noise and vibration sources (i.e., locomotives, train horns, train cars) from the Core Area, benefiting users, neighborhoods, and businesses adjacent to the existing tracks.



3.5.3 Mitigation

Construction would not take place in evening hours (10 PM to 7 AM), when sensitivity to noise is more pronounced due to lower levels of background noise. According to FTA (2006), the need for mitigation is strongest when Moderate impacts approach the Severe range, and the need for mitigation is less when the predicted Moderate noise impacts are near the No Impact range (BSA 2017). Because the noise impacts from Project operation would not result in severe noise impacts, no mitigation is required.¹²

3.6 Land Use

The Study Area is defined as the Project Area, as impacts and land use changes would occur within that boundary. Land use and zoning were evaluated by reviewing land use information for the Study Area including USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle maps, NAIP aerial photographs, USDA CropScape and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) data, Flathead County and Kalispell zoning maps, correspondence with the City, site visits, and other relevant information within and surrounding the Study Area.

3.6.1 Affected Environment

The proposed Project is located in the Flathead Valley of Montana, in the heart of the Northern Rocky Mountains Resource Region, just west of the Continental Divide. The valley contains glacial lakes and is flanked by forested, rugged, high elevation mountains with considerable climatic diversity. The land use Study Area is located in the urban setting of downtown Kalispell (NRCS 2006).

The proposed Rail Park site is currently zoned as I-2 Heavy Industrial. Rail Road Yards are considered a permitted use in the I-2 Heavy Industrial zone by the Kalispell City Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-17. An I-2 Heavy Industrial District is intended to provide areas to accommodate heavy manufacturing, processing, fabrication, and assembly of products or materials. The future construction of non-industrial uses such as hotels, residential buildings, or professional office use within the I-2 Heavy Industrial zone would be prohibited by the I-2 Heavy Industrial Zoning (Chapter 27-17 Kalispell zoning Ordinance) (City of Kalispell 2016).

Whitefish Stage Road, a minor arterial, marks the western boundary of the proposed Rail Park. A small stretch of 500 feet of the Stillwater River flows near the northwestern boundary, located 130 feet from the Project Area and buffered by roads and vegetation. Significant industrial uses (e.g., Glacier Stone and Klingler Lumber) form the northern boundary outside of the proposed Rail Park. Outside the Study Area and south of the Rail Park there is a residential trailer court. The BNSF Railroad and East Oregon Lane form the eastern boundary of the Rail Park site. The extension of the water main for the Rail Park extends into areas zoned residential, vacant, and roads. Please refer to **Figure 21, Urban Land Use**.

¹² Wayside horns at the Flathead Drive/East Oregon Lane crossing would minimize noise impacts but are not required. Wayside horns are mounted on poles and are not as loud as locomotive-mounted horns. Wayside horns are focused on the roads at the crossing and not mounted on trains approaching the crossing, making horn noise less in the surrounding areas. Wayside horns could be used to reduce or eliminate Project-related noise impacts. If the City receives complaints about project noise during operation, the City would conduct further monitoring to determine whether it is appropriate to install wayside horns at this location.



The proposed Kalispell Trail and complete streets would pass through areas zoned as residential, industrial, commercial, vacant, and roads (Kalispell Zoning Regulations 2010). Please refer to **Figure 21, Urban Land Use**. There are no recreational options or trails currently located in the Study Area; however, the Great Northern Historical Trail, a previously completed Rails to Trails project, is located 75 feet west of the termination of the proposed Kalispell Trail. The Great Northern Historical Trail would not directly tie into the Kalispell Trail; however, users would only need to walk along 40-foot sidewalk, then across Meridian Road to access either trail from the other. The Great Northern Historical Trail connects Kalispell to surrounding communities and Flathead Lake (TrailLink 2016). Woodland Park, a public, multi-use recreation park managed by the Kalispell Parks and Recreation Department, is located to the south outside of the Study Area.

The natural land use surrounding the Study Area is dominated by developed lands, with croplands and agricultural areas to the north, west, and northeast. Agricultural land consists primarily of grasslands, utilized as sheep, horse, and/or cow pastures throughout the past 60 years. The riparian areas of the Flathead and Stillwater rivers exist to the north and east of the Study Area (USDA 2015). Please refer to **Figure 22, USDA NASS Natural Land Use**.

3.6.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – There would be no land use changes or impacts associated with the No-Build Alternative and all current uses would remain as they exist today.

Build Alternative – The proposed Rail Park would serve an industrial function in an area appropriately zoned for such activities. The Build Alternative would continue the industrial use of a former gravel pit that is classified by the EPA as a Brownfield Site, which has since been remediated, and owned by FCEDA, in the form of an operational industrial rail park. The Build Alternative would convert 1.6 miles of railroad tracks, which travels through the Core Area, from industrial and commercial uses, to a recreational public-use trail. Completing up to three north-south street connections would convert areas currently zoned as commercial, industrial, or vacant to a developed transportation use (City of Kalispell 2016). Kalispell has started the process of re-zoning properties to B-3 (Name: Core Area Business) within the Core Area to implement the goals and policies in the Core Area Plan.

Construction Impacts

No impacts to land use from construction of the proposed Rail Park would occur because the zoned industrial use of the site would continue.

The existing tracks from 90 feet north of the railroad bridge spanning US Highway 2, west to Meridian Road would be abandoned and removed in order for the City to construct the Kalispell Trail, effectively changing the land use from industrial/commercial to public-use and/or greenspace.



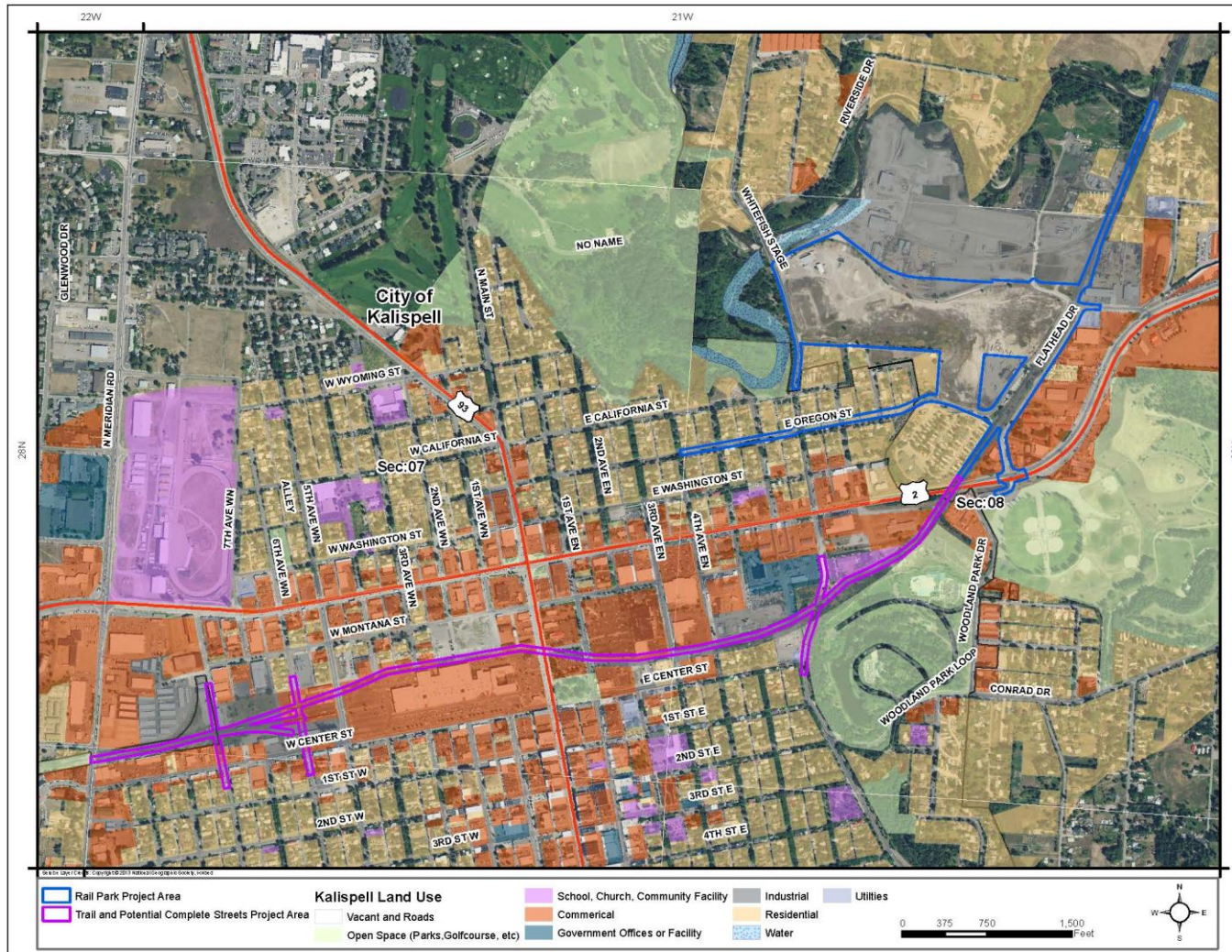


Figure 21, Urban Land Use



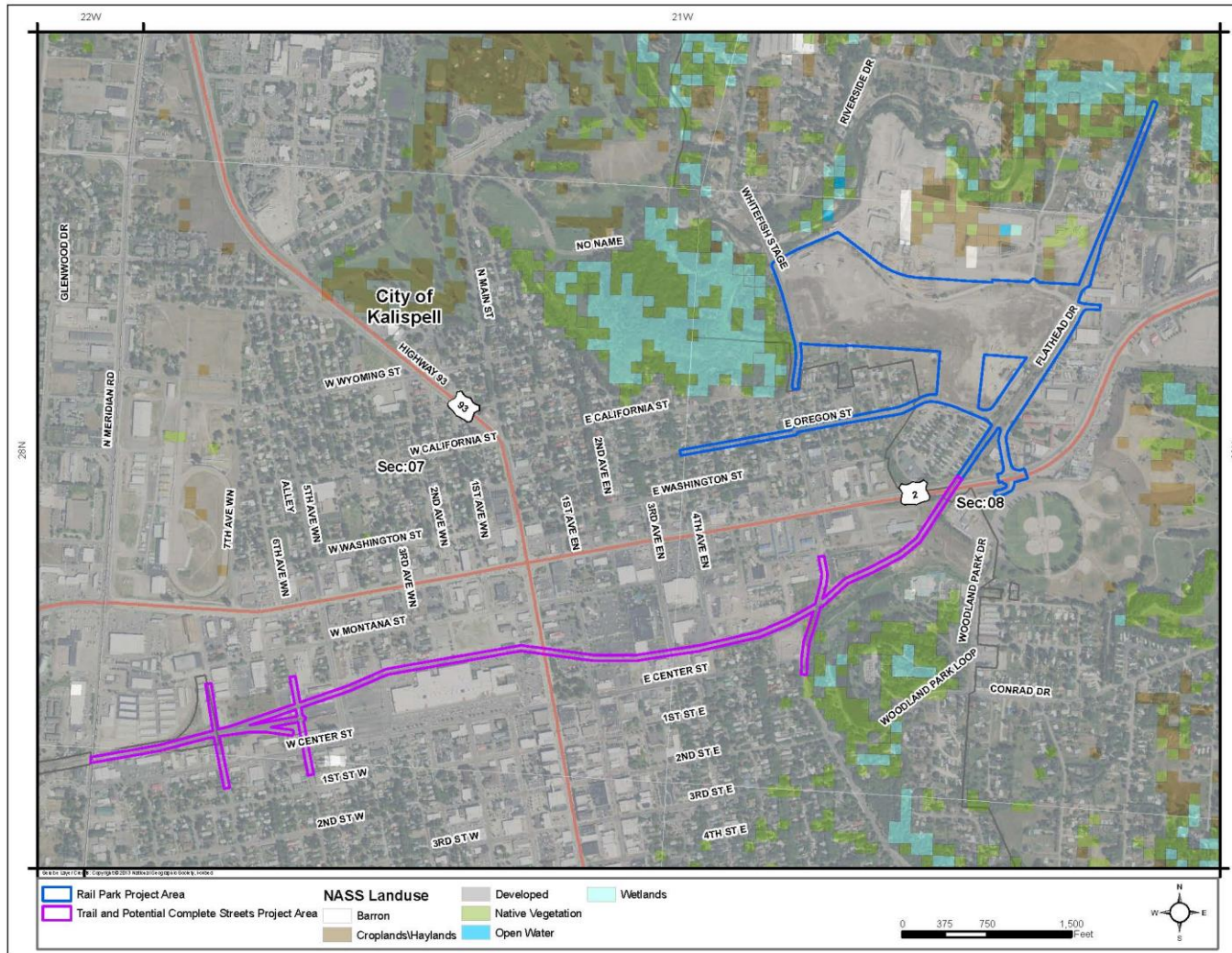


Figure 22, USDA NASS Natural Land Use



Operational Impacts

Most properties, including the proposed Rail Park itself and existing properties adjacent to the Rail Park site, are either current or former industrial facilities. It is anticipated that the industrial properties within and adjacent to the proposed Rail Park that are zoned for industrial use would continue to be used for industrial purposes. No impacts to land use from operation of the proposed Rail Park are anticipated, as the current industrial uses would continue.

The proposed Kalispell Trail would convert a segment of railroad (currently zoned as an industrial and commercial use) to a public-use, recreational, and greenspace area. Before construction of the Kalispell Trail can begin, the Rail Park must be constructed and operational, the rail service abandonment must be complete, and rail-served businesses must be relocated to the new Rail Park; therefore, no impact to existing rail service or operations would result from the land use conversion. Construction of up to three complete north-south street connections would provide access to vacant or undeveloped areas by providing improved access for potential future businesses. The Kalispell Trail would allow safe and efficient connectivity for pedestrians to access recreational facilities, such as Woodland Park to the east and the Great Northern Historical Trail system to the west of the proposed Kalispell Trail, by providing nearby access to, and a direct link between, these resources, which is currently lacking for pedestrians. The Kalispell Trail would not connect directly with the Great Northern Historical Trail or Woodland Park; however, pedestrians could access these recreational facilities by utilizing existing sidewalks located outside of the Study Area.

3.6.3 Mitigation

No significant adverse impacts to land use are anticipated due to the construction or operation of the proposed Project, and therefore no mitigation is proposed.

3.7 Ecological Systems

3.7.1 Threatened and Endangered Species

In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, federal agencies are required to ensure their actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any federally listed animal or plant species. Federal agencies are also required to ensure that destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species that is determined to be critical by the Secretary of the US Department of Interior Secretary does not occur.

An endangered species is one that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A threatened species is one that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. Critical habitat for listed species consists of areas designated for protection that contain the necessary habitat features essential to conservation of a listed species. Formal consultation with the USFWS is required when an action may affect threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat. Proposed species or critical habitat are those that are officially proposed for listing under the ESA as threatened or endangered. Candidate species are those that are under consideration for official listing and for which there is sufficient information to support listing. While candidate species are not legally protected under the ESA, it is within the spirit of the ESA to consider said species as having significant value and worth protecting. Candidate species were identified and considered in this analysis.



ESA-listed species in the Study Area were identified by reviewing existing documentation, such as the USFWS Endangered, Threatened, Proposed, and Candidate Species Montana Counties List (USFWS 2016a) and a USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) inquiry (USFWS 2016b). Aerial photographs, USGS quadrangle maps, USFWS NWI Maps, and other relevant information were also examined to determine the presence of potential habitats for ESA-listed species in the Study Area. Based on the urban location of the proposed Project and lack of potential suitable habitat for ESA-listed species, the Study Area analyzed corresponds to the Project Area.

3.7.1.1 *Affected Environment*

The USFWS Environmental Conservation Online Service IPaC system was used to identify protected species in the Study Area. The results of the IPaC inquiry identified the threatened Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), and yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), as well as critical habitat for the Canada lynx and bull trout as having potential to occur within Flathead County (USFWS 2016b).

- ◆ *Canada Lynx and Critical Habitat*- The Canada lynx is a forest-dwelling cat that inhabits interior Canada and several the northern most states within the United States. Canada lynx are highly adapted to hunting in deep snow and most commonly found in boreal spruce-fir forests with dense understory. Canada lynx range and dispersal patterns largely overlap and coincide with snowshoe hare populations, as hares compose a majority of the cats' diets. Lynx also need persistent, deep snow, which limits competition for hares between lynx and other predators. Breeding habitat generally consists of log piles, windfalls, or dense vegetation that provide security for kittens. Most lynx habitat in the United States occurs on public lands (USFWS 2013). The Study Area is located outside of designated Canada lynx critical habitat (USFWS 2014a).
- ◆ *Grizzly Bear*- The grizzly bear population within Montana is called the Northern Continental Divide population. The grizzly population in this area includes Glacier National Park and adjacent areas in Canada, and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (USFWS 2017). Grizzly bears are largely solitary creatures except during mating season and when females are accompanied by young cubs. They are North America's largest omnivores, eating 80 to 90 percent vegetation and the rest of their diet compromised of meat. Most of the meat is composed of insects and carrion of large game animals, although they will occasionally prey on smaller mammals. Grizzly bears must build up fat stores to sustain their long winter hibernation (from October to March or April). Generally, they seek a high, remote mountain slopes to dig their hibernation dens, where deep snow will serve as insulation until spring (USFWS 2007b). Grizzlies once lived in much of western North America; however, European settlement gradually eliminated the bears and their habitat from much of this range (National Geographic Society 2015). The primary threat to grizzly bears is human-bear interaction (USFWS 2007b).
- ◆ *Bull Trout and Critical Habitat*- Bull trout are a member of the *Salmonidae* family and are native to the northwestern United States. Bull trout have the most specific habitat requirements of salmonids including cold waters, stable stream channels, spawning gravel, complex vegetative stream cover, and unblocked migration corridors. Some populations of bull trout are migratory, while others are considered resident and spend their entire lives in one stream (USFWS 2015). Threats to bull trout include alterations of river flows from dams,



forest management practices, livestock grazing, transportation networks, and urbanization of habitats (USFWS 2012). Critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for the bull trout. The nearest critical habitat is located within the Flathead River approximately 1.4 miles east of the Study Area.

- ◆ *Yellow-billed Cuckoo*- Yellow-billed cuckoos breed throughout much of the western United States and migrate through Central America. Yellow-billed cuckoos require dense, wooded habitat, including nearby water sources, such as, in overgrown orchards, abandoned farmlands, and other areas with low, scrubby vegetation. Caterpillars are the primary prey for the yellow-billed cuckoo, including other insects, frogs, fruits, and seeds in the winter. Primary threats to the species are conversion of riparian habitat and collisions with manmade structures, such as buildings, electrical lines, and wind turbines (USFWS 2014b).

3.7.1.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative - The No-Build Alternative would not impact ESA-listed species because the Project would not be constructed and therefore there would be no change in existing conditions.

Build Alternative - The effect determination for each species and critical habitat is discussed as follows:

- ◆ *Canada Lynx and Critical Habitat*- Kalispell and the Study Area are located outside of USFWS designated Canada lynx critical habitat (USFWS 2014a) and no suitable habitat exists within the Study Area. Due to the lack of suitable habitat located within the Study Area, the Project would have *no effect* on the Canada lynx.
- ◆ *Grizzly bear*- Due to the urban nature and location of the Project and the lack of suitable habitat within the Study Area, the Project would have *no effect* on the grizzly bear.
- ◆ *Bull Trout and Critical Habitat*- Due to the onsite stormwater management practices that would be in place, as well as contractors implementing a SWPPP and SPCC plans, there would be no potential for harmful stormwater to travel or spill into the Flathead River or surrounding water bodies. No impacts to the bull trout or its associated critical habitat would occur due to construction or operation of the Rail Park or Kalispell Trail; therefore, the Project would have *no effect* on the bull trout.
- ◆ *Yellow-billed Cuckoo*- Due to the urban nature and location of the proposed Project and the lack of suitable habitat within the Study Area, the Project would have *no effect* on the yellow-billed cuckoo.

The City solicited comments from USFWS regarding the Project in 2015. The USFWS responded that there would be no anticipated significant, adverse effects from construction or operation of the Project to any listed species within the Study Area, due to its urban location and lack of suitable and/or critical habitats. Based on the information exchanged between the City and USFWS, FRA determined that the proposed Project would have *no effect* on the aforementioned protected species or critical habitat. Please refer to **Appendix A, Solicitation of Views Package and Responses**.

3.7.1.3 Mitigation

Potential impacts from the proposed Project are limited to impacts to local surface water. However, most construction is limited to disturbed urban lands and distant from sensitive environments. Measures to minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species would include the appropriate BMPs, such as silt fencing and reseeding disturbed areas to control soil erosion and minimize the



potential for runoff to affect adjacent water bodies. Any storage bins containing liquids would be sealed to prevent wildlife from accessing them, and proper speed limits and restrictions would be followed on roadways to prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions. To minimize the effects of overhead utility lines on birds in flight, any overhead lines impacted or installed would be marked with bird diverters, and new placements or extensions of utilities would be placed underground.

3.7.2 Wildlife, Fish, and Vegetation

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), 916 USC § 703–711, provides protection for 1,026 migratory bird species, 58 of which are legally hunted. The MBTA regulates impacts to these species such as direct mortality, habitat degradation, and/or displacement of individual birds. The MBTA defines “taking” to include by any means or in any manner, any attempt at hunting, pursuing, wounding, killing, possessing, or transporting any migratory bird, nest, egg, or part thereof.

Protection is provided for bald and golden eagles through the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA). The BGEPA of 1940 (16 USC § 668–668c) as amended, was written with the intent to protect and preserve bald and golden eagles, both of which are treated as species of concern within the Department of the Interior. The BGEPA prohibits the taking, possession, or commercial use of bald and golden eagles. Under the BGEPA, to “take” includes to pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest, or disturb, wherein “disturb” means to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to the degree that interferes with or interrupts normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits, causing injury, death, or nest abandonment.

Since 1985, The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) has been compiling and maintaining an inventory of animal and plant species, communities, or other biological features that are rare, endemic, threatened, or endangered throughout their range in Montana (MTNHP 2016). A Species of Concern Report to identify Potential Species of Concern, Species of Concern, and Montana Special Status species was requested from MTNHP on April 25, 2016. Please refer to **Appendix A, Solicitation of Views Package and Responses**.

The Montana State Code provides protection from the spread of noxious weeds through the County Weed Control Act (MCA Section 7-22-2116¹³). The act states that “It is unlawful for any person to permit any noxious weed to propagate or go to seed on the person’s land...” The law also established weed management districts through the state to set responsibly on county boards to administer the district’s noxious weed program (Montana War on Weeds 2009). The proposed Project area is under the jurisdiction of the Flathead County Weed Control District.

Potential habitat and background information for biological resources was analyzed to develop a Study Area by using NAIP imagery, USFWS guidance, MTNHP Species of Concern reports and Species Occurrence data, MTFWP Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, and on-site observations. Based on the urban setting of the Project, the lack of recorded observations of Species of Concern near the

¹³ http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca_toc/7_22_21.htm



Project Area, and USFWS-recommended avoidance distances for eagle nests¹⁴, a Study Area of 1,000-foot surrounding and including the Project Area was used for this analysis.

3.7.2.1 Affected Environment

A majority of historically present potential wildlife habitat was removed in the past to develop the urban Kalispell area. The Study Area consists of municipal, urban, and residential uses with little suitable habitat or vegetation for wildlife including: the vegetation-bare rail tracks; roadways; abandoned gravel pit; urban plantings; and small portions of the Stillwater River Riparian area. Wildlife present within the Study Area consists of species largely adapted to urban settings: raccoons (*Procyon lotor*); eastern fox squirrels (*Sciurus niger*); least chipmunks (*Tamias minimis*); rabbits (*Sylvilagus spp.*); and various other rodent and migratory bird species. Any small patches of habitat are largely fragmented, making dispersal into and throughout the Study Area difficult for terrestrial wildlife.

The Stillwater River, located in the Study Area, may provide habitat for various fish species, including brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), mountain whitefish (*Prosopium williamsoni*), and brook stickleback (*Culaea inconstans*) (MTFWP undated).

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) utilizes riparian habitats and wooded areas bordering lakes, especially during the breeding season in Montana. They may use upland sites sporadically and during winter. Nesting sites are most commonly near water bodies where prey, such as fish or waterfowl, are readily available. Bald eagle pairs tend to use the same nest year after year, building atop the previous year's nest (BOR 1994). Based on MTFWP data, one historically recorded bald eagle nest classified as "No Evidence of Breeding," is recorded within the Project Area of the proposed Rail Park. In addition, a portion of a 1-mile nesting area surrounding a MTFWP recorded bald eagle nest enters the Study Area. The physical nest is located 1.2 miles east of the Project Area, far outside of the USFWS recommended construction nest buffers. Please refer to **Figure 23, Historically Recorded Eagle Nest Locations** which shows any recorded nests within 1,000 feet of the Project Area.

¹⁴ Appropriate buffers are based on topography, ecological characteristics of surrounding area, visibility of activities from the nest, and the nature of the proposed activity. Based on the urban location of the Project, if construction activities would be visible from a nest, a 660-foot buffer is recommended; if construction activities area not visible from the nest, 330 feet is recommended (USFWS 2007a).



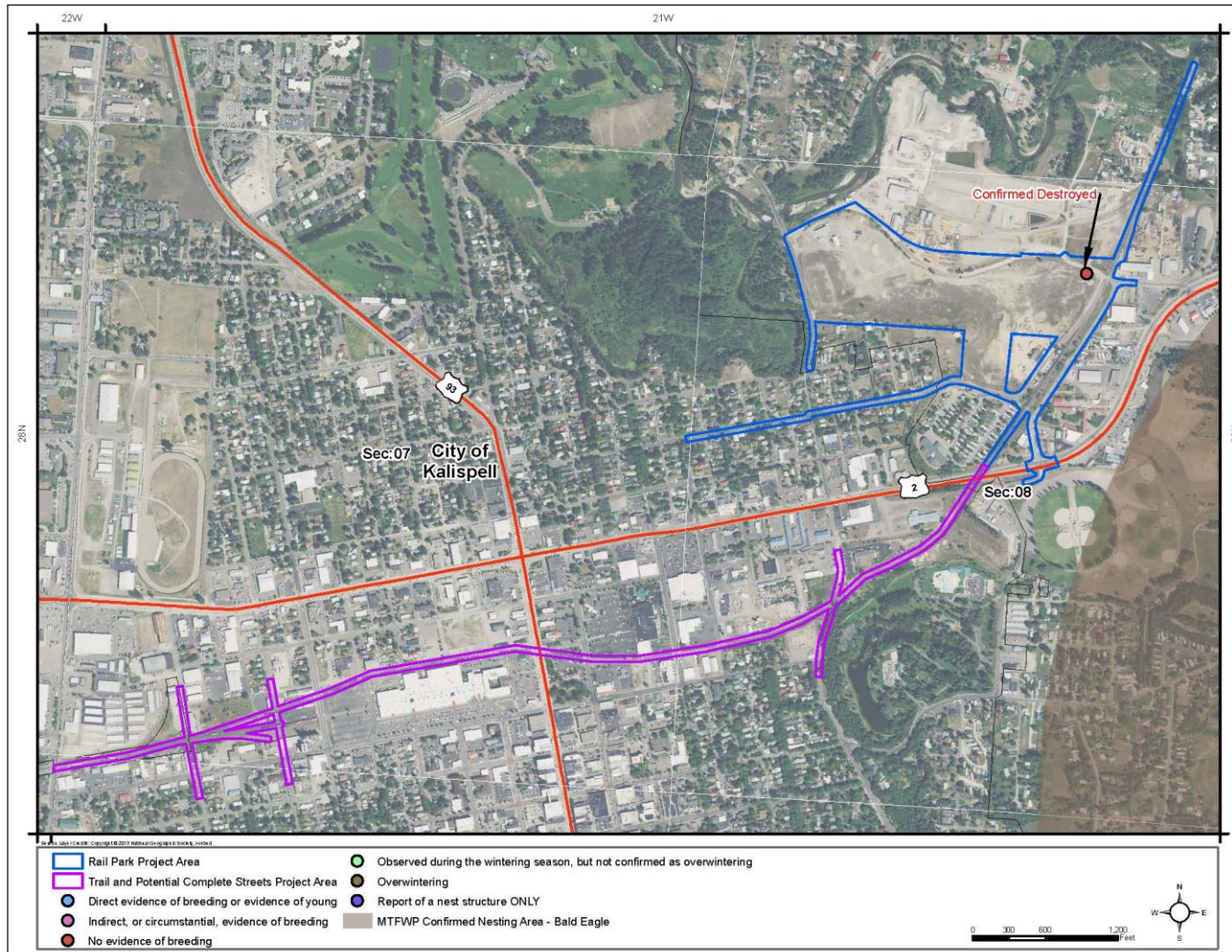


Figure 23, Historically Recorded Eagle Nest Locations



The recorded nest located within the northeast corner of the Project Area no longer exists based on field visits to the site (Mark Rohweder; KLJ, Project Manager, April 2016). From historical aerial imagery, no suitable habitat has existed in the Project Area since at least 1990. Urban development and buildings have replaced any



Figure 24, Location of Historically Recorded Eagle Nest within Project Area (View South)

historic habitat; no suitable trees, nesting habitat, or nests currently remain within the identified nesting areas. Please refer to **Figure 24, Location of Historically Recorded Eagle Nest within Project Area (View South)**.

The golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) in Montana nests on cliffs and in large trees and hunts over prairies and open woodlands. A majority (62 percent) of golden eagle nests are located on cliffs between 4,000 to 6,000 feet of elevation and are associated with sagebrush and grassland areas. Golden eagles will occasionally nest in Douglas fir trees and are less likely to nest in ponderosa pines, cottonwoods, or on the ground (Montana Field Guide undated). The Study Area and surrounding landscape does not contain any suitable habitat for golden eagles, nor has any historical recording of golden eagles occurred in this area.

No Species of Concern or State-listed species were identified in the Study Area by MTNHP (MTNHP 2016).

Flathead County, Montana has declared several plant species as noxious weeds and has identified other noxious species with the potential to occur in the county. Noxious weeds are non-native plants that may damage ecological patterns, crop yields, and recreational opportunities or decrease land values. These plants are regulated by the Flathead County Weed Control District. Management of these species includes containment or eradication, where appropriate (Flathead County 2016a). Please refer to **Table 6, Noxious Weeds**. No federally listed plants were identified in the USFWS inquiry (2016b).

Table 6, Noxious Weeds

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	FLATHEAD COUNTY LISTED
Common yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	
Absinth wormwood	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	
Creeping bellflower	<i>Campanula rapunculoides</i>	
Baby's breath	<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i>	X
Kochia	<i>Kochia scoparia</i>	
Scentless chamomile	<i>Matricaria perforate</i>	
Russian thistle	<i>Salsosa trangus</i>	X
White campion	<i>Silene latifolia</i>	X
Tumble mustard	<i>Sisymbrium altissimum</i>	X

3.7.2.2 *Environmental Consequences*

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would not impact wildlife, fish, or vegetation because the Project would not be constructed.

Build Alternative – The Study Area is a largely developed area, containing residential, commercial, and industrial lands, and includes rail tracks, roadways, and the abandoned gravel pit (all devoid of vegetation); urban landscape plantings; and small portions of the Stillwater River’s Riparian area. Any small patches of habitat are largely fragmented, making dispersal into and throughout the Study Area difficult for terrestrial wildlife. The Study Area contains little natural vegetation limiting the habitat value for wildlife; as such, it would be unlikely to attract or hold significant numbers of migratory birds or other wildlife not adapted to urban landscapes. No eagle nests remain present within the Study Area, no in-channel construction activities are proposed, and BMPs would be implemented to protect the Stillwater River. Vegetation and general wildlife habitat is lacking within the Study Area, and noxious weeds would be appropriately managed per Flathead County Weed Control District regulations (Flathead County 2016a). The proposed Project is not anticipated to impact any species of concern or significant ecological communities throughout the state, as none were identified by MTNHP within the Study Area.

No significant, adverse impacts to wildlife, fish, or vegetation would result from construction or operation of the Project.

Construction Impacts

Due to the presence of small amounts of riparian habitat within the Study Area adjacent to the proposed Rail Park, and the likely presence of wildlife adapted to urban areas throughout the Study Area, wildlife may be present near construction areas during construction and thus, could be affected by related activities. Such effects may include avoidance or displacement from the Study Area due to visual or sound effects. Visual disturbance and noise are expected to be temporarily higher than baseline levels during construction and could disturb terrestrial wildlife that may be present. In the context of existing urban development, vehicular traffic, and pedestrian activity, any wildlife present would likely be habituated to human activity and disturbance. Habituation is the process of learning,



where after a period of exposure to a stimulus, the animal becomes accustomed to, or stops responding to stimuli (Breed 2001), which would make the construction effects of the Project on wildlife within the Study Area minimal.

No in-channel construction activities are proposed; therefore, no impacts to fish are anticipated from construction of the Project. Construction contractors hired by the City would be required to implement SWPPP and SPCC plans.

Soil disturbance, such as grading activities, can introduce or allow noxious weeds to establish more readily at a site. Removal of the existing rail tracks containing un-vegetated rail beds and construction of the Kalispell Trail, which would be landscaped, maintained, and managed for weeds by the City of Kalispell, would provide the benefit of additional urban habitat areas and areas more easily regulated and monitored for noxious weeds.

Eagles or eagle nests would not be impacted by construction of the proposed Project. The historically recorded nest within the Rail Park Project Area (shown on **Figure 23, Historically Recorded Eagle Nest Locations**) no longer exists. The nest located 1.2 miles east of the Project Area is well outside of the 1,000-foot Study Area and the USFWS-recommended construction activity buffers (USFWS 2007a). In addition, topographic, urban structures, and dense vegetative cover occur between the suitable nesting areas of the riparian corridor of the Flathead River and the Study Area, and construction activities would not be visible from any nest locations in those areas.

Operational Impacts

Activities associated with the operation of the proposed Project may result in the displacement of terrestrial wildlife species; however, in the context of the existing urban development, vehicular traffic, and pedestrian activity, the effects on wildlife would be minimal due to the likelihood of habituation. Any wildlife present in the Study Area would likely be adapted to urban locations. Operational activities could also result in wildlife injury or death from operating equipment, locomotive engines, or vehicles; however, those potential impacts currently exist with the existing freight rail operations in the Core Area and the existing urban traffic, and would not increase due to operation of the Project.

As a possible outcome of the trail, wildlife species may find new habitat or food sources. Because of the proposed onsite stormwater management practices that would be put into place and the distance construction would occur from the Stillwater River or surrounding water bodies, its anticipated no harmful stormwater would reach any water body. The proposed stormwater systems may increase water quality by collecting and treating stormwater, which is not currently treated, before running-off roadways or the industrial location of the Rail Park. No impacts to fish species are anticipated due to operation of the Project.

Based on the lack of presence of eagles or their nests in the Study Area, no impacts to bald or golden eagles throughout the operation of the Project are expected.

3.7.2.3 Mitigation

Measures to minimize impacts to wildlife and fish would include the appropriate BMPs, such as silt fencing and reseeding disturbed areas, to control soil erosion and minimize the potential for runoff to affect adjacent water bodies. Any storage bins containing liquids would be sealed to prevent wildlife from accessing them and proper speed limits and restrictions would be followed on roadways to

prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions. To minimize the effects of overhead utility lines on birds in flight, any overhead lines impacted or installed would be marked with bird diverters, and new placements or extensions of utilities would be placed underground.

Should eagle nests be discovered during construction of the Project, to avoid disturbing nesting bald eagles, USFWS recommends (1) keeping a distance between the activity and the nest (i.e. 330 to 660 feet distance buffers depending on visuals from the nest¹⁵); (2) maintaining forested or natural areas between the activity and around nest trees; and (3) avoiding certain activities, such as tree removal, during the breeding season (USFWS 2007a).

Per Flathead County Weed Control District Revegetation Policy, disturbed areas would be reseeded and reclaimed as soon as possible after construction with a Flathead County Weed Control District-approved seed mix¹⁶ and shall occur after completion of the Project, either between April 15 and June 15 or October 1 and November 15.

3.8 Energy Use

Energy use was evaluated by reviewing energy requirements for construction and operation of the proposed Project. The energy use Study Area includes the Project Area, as well the surrounding Core Area.

3.8.1 Affected Environment

Energy use addresses the energy requirements, including fuel and power consumption, associated with construction and operation of a project. A principal factor in energy use is vehicle fuel consumption, which is affected by total miles traveled, the number of stops and starts, sudden acceleration or deceleration, congestion, and grade steepness. Energy use within the Study Area includes vehicle fuel consumption and electricity, natural gas, and other fuel consumption for power by residences and businesses.

Moving freight by rail is four times more fuel-efficient than transportation by truck. Based on 2015 fuel efficiency measures, one gallon of diesel fuel moves one ton of freight an average of 473 miles. This fuel efficiency reduces GHGs by 75 percent compared to moving freight by truck (AAR 2016). The EPA estimates that freight railroads accounted for only 0.6 percent of total GHG emissions (EPA 2014a).

New technologies and operational changes in the railroad industry, such as reducing idling through “stop-start” systems, distributed power, rail lubrication, and aerodynamic drag-reducing devices, are

¹⁵ Appropriate buffers are based on topography, ecological characteristics of surrounding area, visibility of activities from the nest, and the nature of the proposed activity (USFWS 2007a).

¹⁶ Certified weed seed-free blend absent of legumes and broadleaves (so as not to attract deer) that contains a mixture of 34 percent Potomac Orchard Grass, 33 percent Smooth Brome Grass, and 33 percent Fawn Tall Fescue must be used. Grass seed percentages should not exceed + or – 2 percent variance. Orchard grass shall be of minimum 85 percent germination, Smooth Brome shall be a minimum of 95 percent germination, and Tall Fescue shall be a minimum of 95 percent germination (Flathead County 2016a).



all in practice in recent years and contribute to limited energy use and its associated impacts (AAR 2016).

3.8.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would have no effect on current or future energy use because the Project would not be constructed. The No-Build Alternative would not need energy for construction. Alternative modes of transportation made possible by the Kalispell Trail, which would limit vehicle emissions, would not occur. Traffic congestion would continue, as construction of complete streets or removal of the tracks bisecting the Core Area would not occur. Vehicle idling and the number of decelerations and accelerations associated with traffic congestion would remain, thereby increasing vehicle fuel consumption and creating emissions.

Build Alternative – Construction and operation of the proposed Project would require energy use. Energy demand during construction of the Project may temporarily increase; however, any increases in energy resource demand would be temporary and are not anticipated to exceed existing capacity of the City’s infrastructure. The number of trains would not increase due to the Rail Park; rather, the number of railcars per train set would increase. The grain trucks that previously traveled to Lewiston, ID from the Polson, MT area would now travel fewer miles to Kalispell to unload grain at the CHS facility. The Kalispell Trail would result in reduced vehicle idle times and overall improvement of traffic flow; as such, a reduction in vehicle consumption of fuel is anticipated. The Kalispell Trail would also provide the opportunity for alternative, non-motorized modes of transportation for pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. throughout Kalispell, reducing energy use and emissions. The Project is not anticipated to have significant, adverse impacts on energy resources and would likely result in beneficial impacts.

Construction Impacts

Construction of the proposed Project would temporarily increase energy consumption within the Project Area. Energy would be used by heavy construction machinery in the form of fuel and electricity or battery power of smaller tools. This energy consumption would be temporary in nature and only last for the duration of the construction activities. Electricity is currently, and would continue to be supplied to the Rail Park site. Electricity and energy resource demand would increase slightly during construction activities; however, any increases in electricity and energy resource demand would be temporary and are not anticipated to exceed existing capacity. Construction of the Project would not impact energy supplies or the Study Area’s energy use.

Operational Impacts

The operation of the proposed Rail Park is not anticipated to increase train traffic to the area. For the new Rail Park operations, CHS does not anticipate the need for additional trains or locomotives, but when the new facility is at full capacity, an additional five to six railcars could be added to the current train sets, which would result in approximately 30 railcars per train. Operation of the proposed Rail Park would not increase energy use due to locomotives from current levels.

Placement of the Rail Park in the northeast portion of Kalispell would shorten the distance trains would need to travel through the Study Area for deliveries to rail-served businesses by approximately 1.3 miles. Due to the shorter distance trains would need to travel for deliveries through the Study Area, energy use may decrease from current operating levels. Please refer to **Table 7, Rail Park Operational Fuel Use**.



Table 7, Rail Park Operational Fuel Use

	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE	BUILD ALTERNATIVE
Freight train trips per month	12	12
Distance traveled through Study Area (miles)	1.93	0.6
Total Miles of freight travel through Study Area per month (miles)	23.16	7.2
Fuel Use per month within Project Area (gallons) ¹⁷	165.42	51.4

Farmers in northwest Montana currently truck their grain to Lewiston, Idaho. At a regional scale, the proposed Rail Park would consolidate rail loading and unloading to one location and convert current long-haul truck trips to short-haul truck trips, which would support the local economy. Farmers in northwest Montana would truck their grain to Kalispell, reducing vehicle miles traveled by approximately 300 miles. Long-haul truck transportation would be replaced with rail moving freight long distances, which is four times more efficient than truck transportation (AAR 2016). The proposed Rail Park would provide northwest Montana a direct link and better access to moving freight by rail, creating a beneficial effect to energy use.

A detailed cost/benefit analysis was conducted to estimate the savings in gallons of fuel saved by replacing truck hauls with train hauls. Based on a 2.73-dollar price per gallon of fuel and the vehicle miles trucks travel to ship freight, such as grains, to west coast ports (i.e., Seattle/Portland area), an estimated fuel savings of up to \$7.1 million and a \$1.4 million reduction in emissions due to operation of the Rail Park is anticipated over a 20-year timeframe. Please refer to **Appendix D, Cost Benefit Analysis**.

Operation of the proposed Kalispell Trail and completion of street connections would reduce consumption of fuel by providing non-motorized transportation options, removing idling vehicular traffic waiting for trains to pass, and increasing traffic efficiency by completing up to three street connections across the Kalispell Trail. In the long-term, overall emissions and energy use in the Study Area could decrease. Furthermore, it would no longer be necessary for commercial truck and train traffic to pass through the Core Area. This would remove some emissions in areas of residential and highly accessed public and commercial areas, such as Depot Park, Super 1 Foods, and the Mall, and provide a beneficial impact to the Study Area.

No significant, adverse impact to energy resources and a likely long-term benefit are anticipated due to the Project.

3.8.3 Mitigation

Minimization measures to limit energy use and emissions during construction and operation of the proposed Project would include limiting equipment idling (i.e., “stop-start” on train engines), locating

¹⁷ Freight trains received an estimated 0.14 mile per gallon in 2012 (USDOT 2013).



staging areas as near to work sites as possible throughout construction, and strategically delivering construction materials to the Rail Park site to limit traffic congestion and detours.

3.9 Visual Resources

Visual resources are the natural and human-made features that give a particular setting or area its aesthetic qualities. Visual impacts involve the viewer's response to a resource change and the degree of change or influence an action or modification has on a view, scenic resource, or man-made feature. The visual quality of an area may be affected by the introduction of new buildings, structures, landscape modifications, or other features. Viewer groups can be primarily distinguished based on whether they are experiencing views from the Project Area (e.g., employees of the Rail Park businesses, pedestrians, drivers, and passengers) or views toward the Project Area (e.g., residents, drivers, and passengers) (FHWA 2015).

Visual resources were evaluated based on a review of existing documentation, including NAIP and Google Earth© aerial photography, photographs, and ground-level observations taken during onsite visits. The effects on visual resources were analyzed by evaluating preliminary design information to estimate the potential visual effect of proposed construction and operations on the visual landscape and its users. The Study Area is considered 0.5 miles surrounding and including the Project Area; although, in most areas of the Study Area, the ability to see beyond 20 to 100 feet is limited due to the presence of existing structures and vegetation, and topography.

3.9.1 Affected Environment

The current viewshed within the proposed Rail Park portion of the Study Area includes an existing nonoperational, vacant gravel pit. The area immediately surrounding the proposed Rail Park is largely industrial, including highways, industrial and commercial businesses to the east, and an active lumber yard (Klingler) and stone supply company to the north of the Study Area. A mobile home park and residential area are located in the southern portion of the Study Area, directly south of the proposed Rail Park (City of Kalispell Zoning & Floodplain 2016).

A hill forms a natural, topographic barrier on the south side of the proposed Rail Park site. This topographic feature creates a visual buffer between the majority of the neighborhoods to the south and the proposed Rail Park site. The hill acted as a visual buffer during construction and operation of the former gravel pit, and would remain in place for the proposed Rail Park. The City is not aware of any complaints from the adjacent neighborhood concerning the former operation of the site as a gravel pit and concrete batch plant, which operated daily year-round from approximately 1915 to 2009, or from the railroad that has been present in Kalispell since 1892 (T. Jentz, personal communication, April 2017).

A portion of the Stillwater River and associated riparian area is located to the west-northwest of the Study Area.

The area immediately surrounding the proposed Kalispell Trail and proposed street connections includes an entirely urbanized area. The current viewshed within the proposed Kalispell Trail portion of the Study Area includes a largely un-vegetated rail corridor with ballasted rail bed and steel tracks paralleled by chain-link fencing. The existing railroad track, which would be abandoned and converted to the Kalispell Trail, is surrounded by commercial and industrial properties, vacant lots, and a small portion of

residential parcels (City of Kalispell Zoning & Floodplain 2016). The proposed street crossings provide views of local businesses, residences, and the existing rail track. The Study Area of both the proposed Rail Park and Kalispell Trail are intersected by, and adjacent to, multiple existing streets, including local streets and larger highways. A large majority of those streets in the Core Area do not include curb, gutters, or sidewalks. Those sections of the streets that lack the curb, gutters, and sidewalks detract from the appearance of the neighborhood, since the overall integrity and design of streets help to define the quality and appearance in a particular neighborhood.

3.9.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would have no impact on visual resources, as the current conditions would remain unchanged. Residents, travelers, and pedestrians within the Core Area would not receive the benefits of removing the existing railroad track bisecting downtown, and the current visual conditions (e.g., unvegetated rail bed, vacant properties, chain link fencing) would remain. In addition, large freight trains would continue to pass through the Core Area to access the existing location of rail services, temporarily obstructing views of downtown for users approximately 12 times per month.

Build Alternative – The Build Alternative would have temporary visual impacts associated with construction of the proposed Project; however, visual benefits from operation of the Kalispell Trail would be expected. Views into and from the Rail Park are not anticipated to significantly change as compared to existing conditions, and no change in the overall visual setting of the Rail Park would occur. There would be no long-term impacts to visual resources associated with construction or operation of the Project.

Construction Impacts

Construction would temporarily impact visual quality in the Study Area due to the presence of construction equipment, staging areas, and equipment operation. Because of the existing industrial and commercial visual features of the Project Study Area, as well as the temporary nature of construction activities, no significant, adverse impacts to the visual setting are expected due to construction.

Operational Impacts

The extent of potential contrast or compatibility of visual effects related to adjacent landforms and land uses and are addressed from two vantage points: the user within the proposed Rail Park and/or Kalispell Trail and those viewing the Project Area.

The construction of new railroad tracks within the proposed Rail Park may result in views of rail cars for viewers looking in from the east along Flathead Drive or west from Whitefish Stage Road. Infrastructure associated with businesses operations, such as buildings, warehouses, or grain bins, would be developed within the Rail Park to accommodate businesses that would utilize the Rail Park. However, due to the existing industrial and urban features of the proposed Rail Park location, the addition of buildings or infrastructure would have little impact on, and would not change the overall feel and setting of, the surrounding viewshed. In addition, views of the proposed Rail Park site by the residents of the mobile home park and residential area and travelers along East Oregon Lane south of the Rail Park are obstructed by topography, i.e., the hill located in the southern portion of the proposed Rail Park site. The views of the proposed Rail Park by the mixed-used residential and commercial area

in the northwest portion of the Study Area are blocked by trees along the Stillwater River. As a result, the proposed Rail Park would not be visible by viewers at nearby residences and therefore there are no new visual impacts would result from the proposed Rail Park. Please refer to **Figure 25, Topography Constraint for View into and Out of Rail Park (View South)**.



Figure 25, Topography Constraint for View into and Out of Rail Park (View South)

The addition of the parallel railroad tracks east of the proposed Rail Park would have no impact to the viewshed or users because the new tracks are directly parallel to, and would be constructed at the same elevations as, the existing tracks. Trains frequently pass through the Study Area and the new tracks would not add additional train trips nor alter the existing topography or viewshed. Please refer to **Figure 26, Train Passing to the East of the Rail Park**. The viewshed from within the proposed Rail Park looking out would not change or be impacted due to operation of the Project.



Figure 26, Train Passing to the East of the Rail Park

Regarding the proposed Kalispell Trail, small residential blocks occur north of the Mall and 4th Avenue East-North and East Center Street. Travelers along local roadways that pass through the Study Area would be considered viewers of the Kalispell Trail, as well as residents accessing the surrounding public, industrial, and commercial areas adjacent to the Kalispell Trail. Operation of the proposed Kalispell Trail would provide beneficial visual effects to both users of the Kalispell Trail and viewers looking toward the Study Area. Removal and conversion of the existing railroad tracks into a public-use trail would remove large train cars from traveling through the Core Area of Kalispell. The existing un-vegetated rail beds would be converted to a landscaped, visually-appealing green space. The area north of the Mall would become visually appealing and more easy to access. This could attract future developers and provide the potential to substantially improve the viewshed of the Core Area for users and viewers by removing vacant, abandoned, and un-developed lots. Please refer to **Figure 27, Current View North of Mall (Top Right), Conceptual View of Mall Plaza and Kalispell Trail (Center)** and **Figure 28, Current Viewshed of proposed Kalispell Trail (top right) Conceptual Kalispell Trail (center)**.

During Phase II of the proposed Project (Kalispell Trail), up to three streets within the Core Area which currently lack curb, gutters, urban trees, and sidewalks, would be completed with those features added. This would improve the visual appeal and fit with the current visual setting of the other improved streets within the Core Area. Operation of the proposed Kalispell Trail would positively benefit the surrounding viewshed.

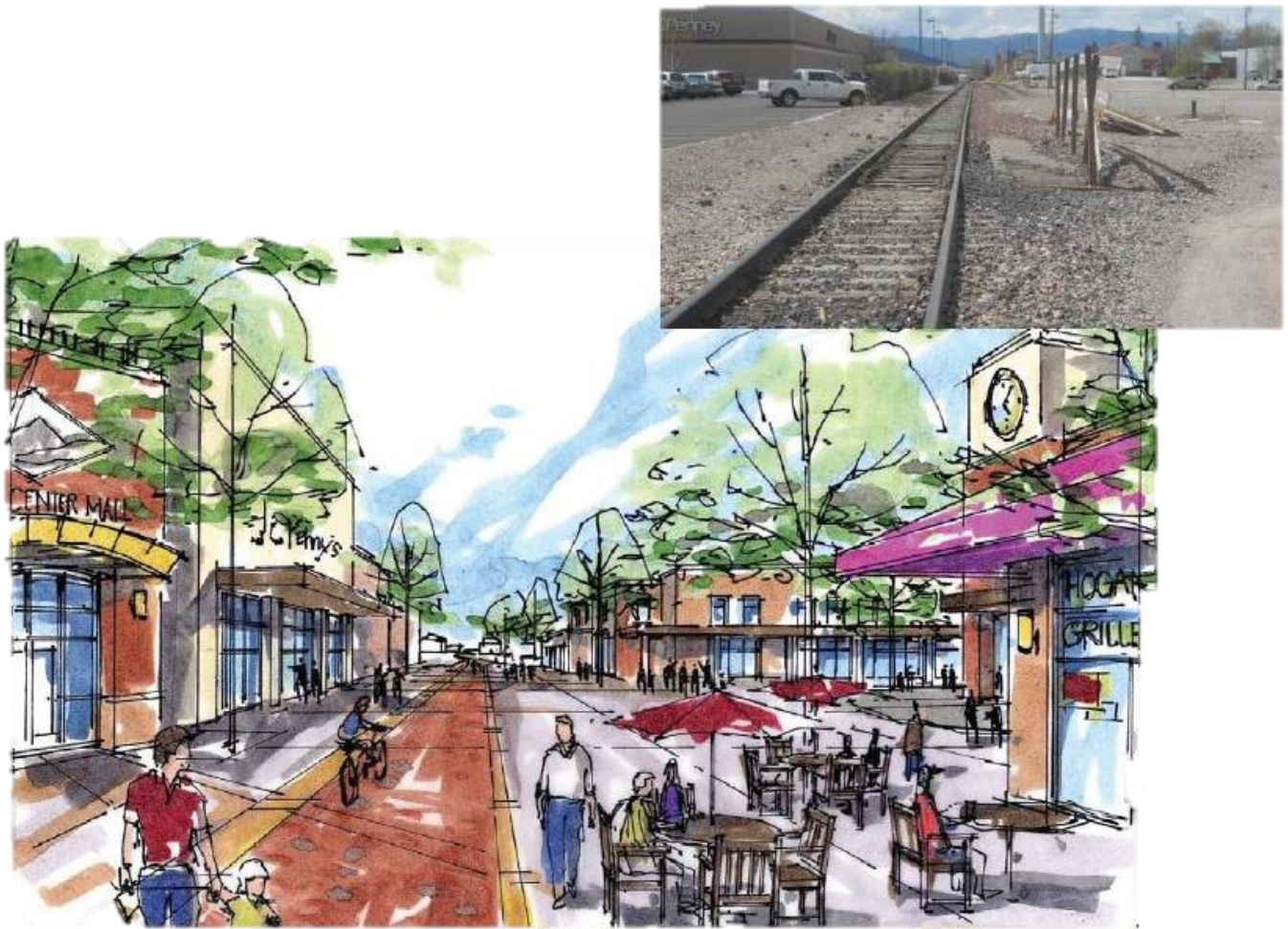


Figure 27, Current View North of Mall (Top Right), Conceptual View of Mall Plaza and Kalispell Trail (Center)

3.9.3 Mitigation

No permanent, significant, adverse impacts would occur to viewsheds; therefore, no mitigation is proposed.

3.10 Traffic and Transportation

Traffic and transportation was evaluated by reviewing MDT Traffic Count data, examining aerial imagery, and correspondence with Kalispell residents and local business owners for information on the local transportation corridors and the existing infrastructure in the Project Area and vicinity. The effects on transportation modes are discussed in this section. The Study Area for traffic and transportation includes the railroad, roadway intersections, roadway-railroad crossings, recreational trails, and sidewalks within the Project Area and the Core Area.



Figure 28, Current Viewshed of proposed Kalispell Trail (top right) Conceptual Kalispell Trail (center) View West

3.10.1 Affected Environment

3.10.1.1 Rail

WATCO is currently under contract with BNSF to provide freight rail service on the existing tracks to businesses in Kalispell. These freight lines within the Study Area are owned by BNSF and leased by WATCO. WATCO operates the line that begins in Columbia Falls, Montana, and extends southwest to Kalispell. WATCO serves 12 customers at 15 locations (2 customers within the Study Area), primarily moving building materials, grain, fertilizer, and scrap metal (WATCO Companies 2016). Currently no passenger rail service operates in Kalispell.

3.10.1.2 Buses and Motor Vehicle Traffic

US Highway 2 is a major arterial roadway located approximately 500 feet east of the Project Area for the proposed Rail Park and 750 feet north of the Project Area for the proposed Kalispell Trail. US Highway 2 extends through the City of Kalispell, traveling northeast toward Columbia Falls, Montana. Minor collector roads near the proposed Rail Park include Whitefish Stage Road (west), East Oregon Lane (east and south), and Flathead Drive (parallels the east side of the existing BNSF rail line). Please see **Table 8, 2015 MDT Average Daily Traffic** below for detailed average daily traffic data.

Table 8, 2015 MDT Average Daily Traffic

TRAFFIC COUNT LOCATION	AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC 2015	AVERAGE DAILY COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC 2015	# OF LANES	MAX CAPACITY(A)
Whitefish Stage	5,470	91	2	12,000
East Oregon Lane	NA	NA	2	12,000
Flathead Drive	NA	NA	2	12,000
US Highway 2	20,860	778	5	36,000

Eagle Transit provides public transportation for the general public, elderly adults, and people with disabilities within Kalispell and Flathead County. Routes operate within and from Kalispell to Whitefish and Columbia Falls. Community connector routes originate in Bigfork, Montana, on Mondays and Wednesdays and Lakeside/Somers, Montana, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Eagle Transit offers a Dial-A-Ride service, which is appointment based, door-to-door ride service for elderly adults and people with disabilities (Flathead County 2016b). Bus routes travel and have stops along US Highway 2, Center Street, and 2nd Avenue East within the Study Area. These routes would remain operational during construction and operation of the proposed Project.

As a rural community, schools are heavily dependent on busing to transport children to and from school each morning and afternoon. There are five public schools within 3,500 feet of the proposed Kalispell Trail. Kalispell Public Schools carry children on buses and across the six-existing railroad at-grade crossings within the Core Area more than 32,000 times each school year (M. Flatau, personal communication, April 2014).

There are unsafe conditions, and long vehicle delays at the intersection of US Highway 2, Flathead Drive, and Woodland Park Drive. From January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012, there were 11 collisions at this intersection; four of those with injuries involved (KLJ 2013b). The existing conditions of Flathead Drive do not meet collector standards and the lack of left-turn signals poses safety concerns for travelers on US Highway 2 and those accessing the park. Turning radius at the intersection is lacking for truck traffic that would access the proposed Rail Park. In addition, KLJ’s Final Update to Traffic Impact Study (2015), indicated that without a traffic signal at this intersection, the average intersection delay per northbound vehicle is 530 seconds (8.8 minutes).

AN AT-GRADE CROSSING IS AN INTERSECTION WHERE A RAILROAD CROSSES A ROADWAY AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THE ROADWAY AS OPPOSED TO UTILIZING A BRIDGE OR TUNNEL TO SEPARATE THE TWO

The existing railroad tracks in downtown Kalispell limit north-south traffic movement to six intersections across the entire two-mile width of the City, diverting an inordinate amount of local traffic to US Highway 93 and causing traffic congestion



and delays. Trains make deliveries to the two rail-served businesses within the Study Area 12 times per month on average. Anytime a 28-car train is loaded with grain at the CHS grain elevators in the Study Area, the train blocks three of the six north-south at-grade crossings in the City. If a 48-car train is used for deliveries, it blocks all six north-south crossings (M. Lalum, personal communication, June 2016). When trains are passing through, delays in travel and large queues for vehicles develop at the six existing at-grade rail crossings, creating congestion and unsafe conditions in the downtown area.

An average of 50 large grain trucks (with a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 80 during peak harvest season from August to December) visit CHS each day (M. Lalum, personal communication, April 12, 2017). Grain trucks back up on 5th Avenue Northwest waiting to unload grain at the CHS facility and exit onto West Center Street. The local roads in the Study Area are not designed for large truck turning radius' or to be used as staging areas. Grain trucks crowd narrow, congested streets at the height of summer, the area's busiest tourist season. In the case of 5th Avenue West North, if trucks are lined up waiting to unload, this forces other vehicles to pass in the opposing lane, creating safety hazards.

3.10.1.3 *Bicyclists and Pedestrians*

The current railroad track location hampers regional and local pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Many streets within the Study Area do not contain sidewalks or marked pedestrian crossings; none contain designated bike lanes. This leaves bicyclists and pedestrians to negotiate streets in mixed traffic. For example, at Main Street (US Highway 93), bicyclists and pedestrians are forced to cross five vehicle lanes without adequate safety signage or pedestrian designations. Since 1995, Kalispell has had four pedestrian fatalities, fifty percent of which occurred within 200 feet of the proposed Kalispell Trail within the Study Area and one at the Montclair Drive and US Highway 2 intersection near the proposed Rail Park (R. Nasset, personal communication, June 22, 2016; KLJ 2013b).

There are numerous recreational trail options surrounding Kalispell; however, there is no direct linkage or access to these facilities for pedestrians or bicyclists within the Study Area. The Great Northern Historical Trail, an extensive trail system following part of the original trail of the Great Northern Railway, runs 22 miles between Somers, located south on Flathead Lake, to the northern community of Kila, Montana (TrailLink 2016). There would not be a direct connection between the Kalispell Trail and the Great Northern Historical Trail; however, the Great Northern Historical Trail originates directly northwest of the termination point of the proposed Kalispell Trail, across Meridian Road. Currently, there is no trail connection from the Great Northern Historical Trail to the Core Area and traditional downtown.

3.10.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – Under the No-Build Alternative, there would be no change in impacts to transportation modes including buses, freight trains, trucks, automobiles, bicyclists, and pedestrians compared to existing conditions. Motor vehicles would continue to experience delays and queues due to the existing railroad tracks bisecting the Core Area and having to wait at roadway-railroad grade crossings for trains to pass. Grain trucks would continue to congest already busy streets, and buses would continue to have to stop at the tracks multiple times each day. Traffic would still be constrained by the limited number of existing railroad crossings (six in a two-mile area). Bicyclists and pedestrians would not benefit from the added efficiency and safety of a connected trail network or improved street connections.

Build Alternative – There would be beneficial impacts to all transportation modes due to the construction and operation of the Project. Temporary detours and/or delays for motor vehicles, buses, and pedestrians may occur during construction of the Project. Permanent, beneficial effects on truck and freight rail transportation would be expected in the form of shorter travel distances for deliveries. CHS's ability to increase grain handling capacity within the proposed Rail Park would reduce the distance of grain trucks traveling 300 miles from Polson, MT to Lewiston, ID to only 50 miles to Kalispell. Bus and motor vehicles would benefit from the removal of the railroad tracks through the Core Area, eliminating six at-grade railroad crossings and associated idling and wait-times. The relocation of CHS to the proposed Rail Park would also remove grain trucks from congesting traffic along 5th Avenue West North and West Center Street and increase safety for motor vehicles that may otherwise pass idle trucks waiting to unload at the current location of the grain elevators. The proposed Kalispell Trail would benefit bicyclists and pedestrians by providing safe, efficient options for alternative modes of transportation and would provide a direct connection of the Core Area to extensive trail systems outside of the Study Area. The July 2015 Traffic Impact Study (KLJ) recommended a new traffic signal at Flathead Drive/US Highway 2/Woodland Park Drive. The signal would reduce average vehicle delays, increase safety for motor vehicles, and provide a controlled point for pedestrians to cross US Highway 2, in addition to the Kalispell Trail bridge that would span US Highway 2.

3.10.2.1 *Rail*

Construction Impacts

The BNSF lines east of the proposed Rail Park and through the Study Area would remain operational while the Rail Park is under construction and the parallel lines were laid. Freight rail service would continue to be provided to the rail-served businesses located in the Core Area throughout the duration of the construction of the Rail Park, until the Rail Park is operational, and the existing rail users have relocated to the Rail Park.

Only after construction of the Rail Park is completed, the Rail Park is fully operational, and existing rail users have relocated to the new Rail Park, would BNSF abandon rail service on the existing tracks through the Core Area. After completion of the abandonment process between BNSF and STB and subsequent acquiring of the ROW by the City, construction of the Kalispell Trail portion of the Project would begin.

Current freight rail operations would remain fully functional throughout Project construction; therefore, the proposed Project would not result in disruption or other effects to rail transportation.

Operational Impacts

Operation of the proposed Project would benefit WATCO and BNSF by providing a slightly shorter distance to travel for deliveries from the east and the elimination of six at-grade crossings along with the safety and maintenance issues associated with at-grade rail crossings.

3.10.2.2 *Buses and Motor Vehicle Traffic*

Construction Impacts

Construction equipment and machinery may temporarily add more traffic and congestion to the roadways in the Study Area; though final routes for equipment are not determined yet. Major arterials such as US Highway 2 and US Highway 93 would be anticipated to be utilized by heavy equipment mobilizing to the construction site and staging areas.



Bus and automobile traffic would experience temporary delays and detours during construction of the proposed Project. Construction of the Rail Park and associated roadway improvements may cause delays and detours along roadways used to access the Rail Park, including Montclair Drive, Flathead Drive, Woodland Park Drive, and East Oregon Lane. Removal of the tracks and construction of the trail could temporarily effect vehicle traffic on the following streets:

- ◆ 5th Avenue West North
- ◆ Main Street
- ◆ 1st Avenue East North
- ◆ 3rd Avenue East North
- ◆ 4th Avenue West North
- ◆ Meridian Road

Temporary delays or detours may occur on streets that are selected for construction of connections across the trail and associated improvements. Potential delays or detours due to construction of street connections and improvements may impact the following streets:

- ◆ West and East Center Street
- ◆ 8th Avenue West North
- ◆ 6th Avenue West North
- ◆ Whitefish Stage Road to Woodland Avenue

Temporary delays and detours would not occur at every intersection simultaneously; construction would be staggered across intersections and street connections.

A Traffic Impact Study was completed in July 2015 to determine the ideal placement for a traffic signal to access the proposed Rail Park. The study determined the primary site access to the Rail Park and the traffic signal should be installed at the intersection of Flathead Drive (north leg), Woodland Park Drive (south leg), and US Highway 2 (KLJ 2015). Construction of this traffic signal would address the multiple safety concerns at this intersection. Minor delays may occur during installation of the signal, but detours are not expected. A Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) Plan would be developed as part of the design and the public notified in advance of closures and/or detours, if needed.

Operational Impacts

For the new Rail Park operations, CHS does not anticipate the need for additional trains or locomotives, but when the new facility is at full capacity, an additional five to six railcars could be added to the current train sets, which would total approximately 30 railcars per train (M. Lalum, personal communication, June 2016). At the new Rail Park, locomotives could pass through the Flathead Drive/East Oregon Lane crossing up to three times an hour as they move railcars into position, for two daytime hours, causing delays for westbound traffic on Montclair Drive accessing the Rail Park or eastbound traffic accessing Montclair Drive from the Rail Park interior road.



Relocation of the existing rail service to the proposed Rail Park would remove large, heavy grain trucks from traveling through the Core Area of Kalispell and would relieve the associated traffic congestion. Grain trucks would no longer back up onto 5th Avenue West North and there would no longer be delays and safety issues for travelers trying to pass idle trucks. The relocation would also remove trains from traveling through the Core Area, which would eliminate traffic delays and queues at the six at-grade crossings.

Operation of the Kalispell Trail would relieve traffic congestion by providing the additional use of up to three complete street connections within the Study Area. This would alleviate bottleneck traffic funneled to US Highway 2 and US Highway 93 caused by the limited number of crossings in the Study Area. In addition, residents and visitors would have increased travel options and more efficient ways to access downtown by foot (e.g. bike, rollerblade) due to the Trail, possibly reducing traffic levels.

Operation of the Project would have a beneficial impact on bus and motor vehicle traffic within the Study Area.

3.10.2.3 *Bicyclists and Pedestrians*

Construction Impacts

Due to the lack of current bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Study Area, construction of the Project would have no significant impact on bicyclists and pedestrians. Should bicyclists or pedestrians be in the Study Area, they would experience the same previously discussed delays and detours at the same locations as buses and motor vehicles.

Operational Impacts

The Kalispell Trail would provide a safe, efficient way for bicyclists and pedestrians to access the Core Area. The Kalispell Trail would improve connectivity of the downtown area and Great Northern Historical Trail, which accesses surrounding areas of the county, including Flathead Lake. There is not a direct connection between the proposed Kalispell Trail and the Great Northern Historical Trail; however, the Great Northern Historical Trail originates directly west across Meridian Road. Completion of the proposed street connections with improvements, including sidewalks, would also provide connectivity for pedestrians in areas previously void of those facilities (e.g., north of the Mall). Removal of the railroad tracks would eliminate pedestrian/train conflicts, reducing costs associated with pedestrian fatalities in the Project Area. Please refer to **Appendix D, Cost Benefit Analysis**. In addition, signed crosswalks and designated pathways would improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians by providing a safe, separated pathway for travel throughout the Core Area.

3.10.3 **Mitigation**

Temporary delays and detours would not occur at every intersection or roadway simultaneously; construction would be staggered across intersections and street connections. Access to all businesses and residences would be maintained throughout construction. Detours would be signed and marked clearly for travelers and a Work Zone Safety and Mobility Transportation Management Plan and Maintenance of Traffic Plan following MDT guidelines (MDT 2015) would be developed and adhered to by the City's contractor. The public would be notified in advance of closures or detours through means of local news stations, newspapers, and/or radio announcements.

To mitigate existing unsafe conditions and long queue times for vehicles at the US Highway 2 and Flathead Drive/Woodland Park Drive intersection (e.g., the primary access to the Rail Park), an actuated traffic signal would be installed and the roadway widened to accommodate large trucks turning into the proposed Rail Park. Installation of the traffic signal would reduce delays at the intersection from 530 seconds, to 18.1 seconds on average.

ACTUATED SIGNAL CONTROL IS A TYPE OF SIGNAL CONTROL WHERE TIME FOR EACH PHASE IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY CONTROLLED BY DETECTOR ACTUATIONS (FHWA 2017)

To determine if signalization would be warranted at the completed street connections, future traffic signal warrant studies on the completed street connections would be completed after construction of the complete streets. If the traffic signal warrant studies indicated a need for signalization, traffic

signals would be installed in the future by the City, separate from this Project.

For pedestrian and bicyclist safety, warning or stop signs would be installed at the road crossings, and curb bump outs are proposed to restrict the distance that they must cross roads. A Traffic and Pedestrian Control Plan would be submitted and approved by the Public Works Department for all work within the public ROW. The latest edition of the MUTCD would be followed to create the Plan (City of Kalispell Standards for Design and Construction 2009).

Construction and operation of the Rail Park and Kalispell Trail would have a beneficial impact on freight rail service, buses, vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians within the Study Area and the entire community of Kalispell. The only mitigation proposed is development and implementation of a Maintenance of Traffic Plan to alleviate any temporary construction impacts to the traveling public and nearby residents and businesses; and traffic signal warrant studies at the completed street connections to indicate whether signalization is required at the subject intersections.

3.11 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

This section describes the demographic characteristics (i.e. general population, elderly, handicapped, and low income and minority populations) and the economic makeup of the Kalispell community. Socioeconomic conditions depend on the character, habits, and economic conditions of people living within the Project Area. Business, employment, transportation, and utilities are factors that affect the social climate of a community. Other factors that distinguish the social habits of one particular area from another include the geography, geology, and climate of the area.

Consistent with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, measures must be taken to avoid disproportionately high, adverse impacts on minority or low-income communities. Minority populations, as defined by CEQ guidance under NEPA (40 CFR § 1500–1508), include individuals in the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black, not of Hispanic origin; or Hispanic. Minority populations should be identified where either: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.

Low-income populations are determined by the US Census Bureau based on poverty thresholds developed each year. Data from the US Census is used to determine whether the populations residing in the study area constitute an “environmental justice population” if: (a) at least 50 percent of the population is of minority or low-income status or (b) the percentage of the population that is of minority or low-income status is at least 10 percentage points higher than the entire State of Montana. The CEQ states low-income populations should be identified with the annual statistical poverty thresholds from the Bureau of the Census Current Population Reports, Series P-60 on Income and Poverty (CEQ 1997).

3.11.1 Affected Environment

Socioeconomic and environmental justice conditions in the Study Area were evaluated based on a review of existing documentation (i.e. 2010 Census tract data) applicable to the Study Area, including demographic and economic data. The Study Area used for analyzing social, economic, and environmental justice impacts includes the Project Area and the area bounded approximately by 3rd Street West to the south, Three Mile Drive to the north, Meridian Road to the west, and US Highway 2 to the east. The Study Area is larger than the Project Area because the potential social effects of the Project could extend into the local community beyond the physical footprint of the Project Area. More specifically, the Study Area includes portions of census tracts 40075.8, 40075.9, 40075.10, 40075.11, and 40075.12 (US Census Bureau 2011).

The Study Area is largely located in the Core Area, or downtown, of Kalispell, Montana. Kalispell supports amenities such as restaurants, grocery stores, hotels and gas stations. Schools, hospitals, churches and public parks are located in the vicinity of the Project Area. The community is located in a tourism hotspot due to its proximity to outdoor recreation opportunities such as Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake, Whitefish Mountain Resort and Blacktail Mountain Ski Area. Top employers by industry in Flathead County include health care, manufacturing, warehousing and recreational facilities (Kalispell Chamber of Commerce 2006).

3.11.1.1 Demographics and Economic Characteristics

Demographics include a description of population and housing characteristics in the Study Area. Residences including single family homes, mobile homes, and apartments are located within the Study Area.

According to the 2010 Census, there were 19,927 people and 8,638 housing units in the City of Kalispell. Of those housing units, 741 were vacant at the time of surveys. The population is 94.2 percent white/Caucasian and the predominant minority is made up of American Indians (US Census Bureau 2010). Please refer to **Table 9, Demographic Trends**.



Table 9, Demographic Trends

LOCATION	POPULATION IN 2010	POPULATION IN 2015	% CHANGE IN POPULATION 2000–2015	PREDOMINANT RACE	PREDOMINANT MINORITY
Kalispell	19,927	21,142	+6%	White (94.2%)	American Indian (1.3%)
Statewide	989,415	1,014,699	+3%	White (89.4%)	American Indian (6.3%)

Source: US Census Bureau 2010 Census, American Community Survey 2011-2015

The average household size in Kalispell is 2.08 people with a median age of 34.7 (US Census Bureau 2010). The 2015 Census Bureau places the poverty threshold for a family under 65 years old, of two at \$16,337 and a family of three at \$19,096 (US Census Bureau 2015); all census tracts within the Study Area have median household incomes above the poverty level. Median household and per capita income in Kalispell is lower than the statewide averages. The unemployment rate in Kalispell is slightly higher than the state average, at 7.4 percent compared to 6.2 percent statewide. Census tracts 8, 10, and 11 within the Study Area have unemployment rates higher than the statewide average; census tract 11 is higher than the average but does not meet CEQ-defined environmental justice thresholds. A vast majority of the housing units are valued between \$150,000 to \$299,000. Median home values have remained stable from 2011 to 2015 (US Census Bureau 2015). Please refer to **Table 10, 2015 Economic Characteristics**.

Table 10, 2015 Economic Characteristics

LOCATION	PER CAPITA INCOME	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	INDIVIDUALS LIVING BELOW POVERTY LEVEL
Kalispell	\$22,782	\$41,097	7.4%	17.1%
Statewide	\$26,381	\$63,139	6.2%	15.2%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey

Currently, potential users and businesses avoid locating to lots adjacent to the Study Area near the proposed Kalispell Trail because of restricted access and general appeal of the area. This has resulted in 44 acres in the Core Area being left blighted and vacant (T. Jentz, personal communication, October 2015).



3.11.1.2 *Elderly and Disabled Community*

Within Kalispell, 3,074 people are over the age of 65 (US Census Bureau 2010). A number of assisted living and nursing facilities are located in the Study Area.

Flathead Industries, a local non-profit organization that serves clientele with wide ranging physical and/or mental disabilities, is located immediately north of the proposed Kalispell Trail along 4th Avenue West-North. Flathead Industries works with about 150 disabled clients at any given time and connects them to vocational rehabilitation counselors, employment specialists, and others to design and implement a personal plan for career success. Clients receive appropriate training, supportive services, and job placement.

3.11.1.3 *Community Cohesion*

A cohesive community is one where there is common vision and a sense of belonging for all residents. There are 4 parks, 10 schools, 23 churches, 8 hotels, 1 cemetery, and 10 assisted living facilities within the Study Area. The hospital and a golf course are located just north of the Study Area. Flathead Industries is a local non-profit organization that serves up to 150 clients that are referred by agencies including the Department of Veterans Affairs, Montana Vocational Rehabilitation, Montana State Fund, and private vocational rehabilitation agencies.; approximately 98 percent are not licensed to drive (V. Poynter, personal communication, May 2015). These community facilities are located both north and south of the existing railroad tracks through the Core Area. Please refer to **Figure 29, Community Structures and Facilities of Importance.**

The existing railroad tracks that would be converted to the Kalispell Trail bisect the Core Area. Surrounding neighborhoods (e.g., City Center, Northridge Heights, East Idaho Street/7th Avenue North) experience connectivity issues north and south of the railroad tracks (Neighborhood Scout 2016). Kalispell's northwest Montana Head Start (i.e., pre-school program for economically disadvantaged children) located north of Woodland Park, is separated from the park by the railroad tracks. The connectivity problems, and associated isolation stem from the existing roadway facilities (e.g., US Highway 2 and 93) and the existing railroad tracks that limit street crossing locations. The neighborhood north of the tracks near the Mall, is completely isolated with multiple dead-end streets (4th, 3rd, 2nd, and 1st Avenues West) and no connections to the area south of the railroad tracks. Pedestrians cross these tracks illegally in some areas and none of the at-grade crossings provide adequate pedestrian facilities or safety features such as crossing gates across the sidewalks.



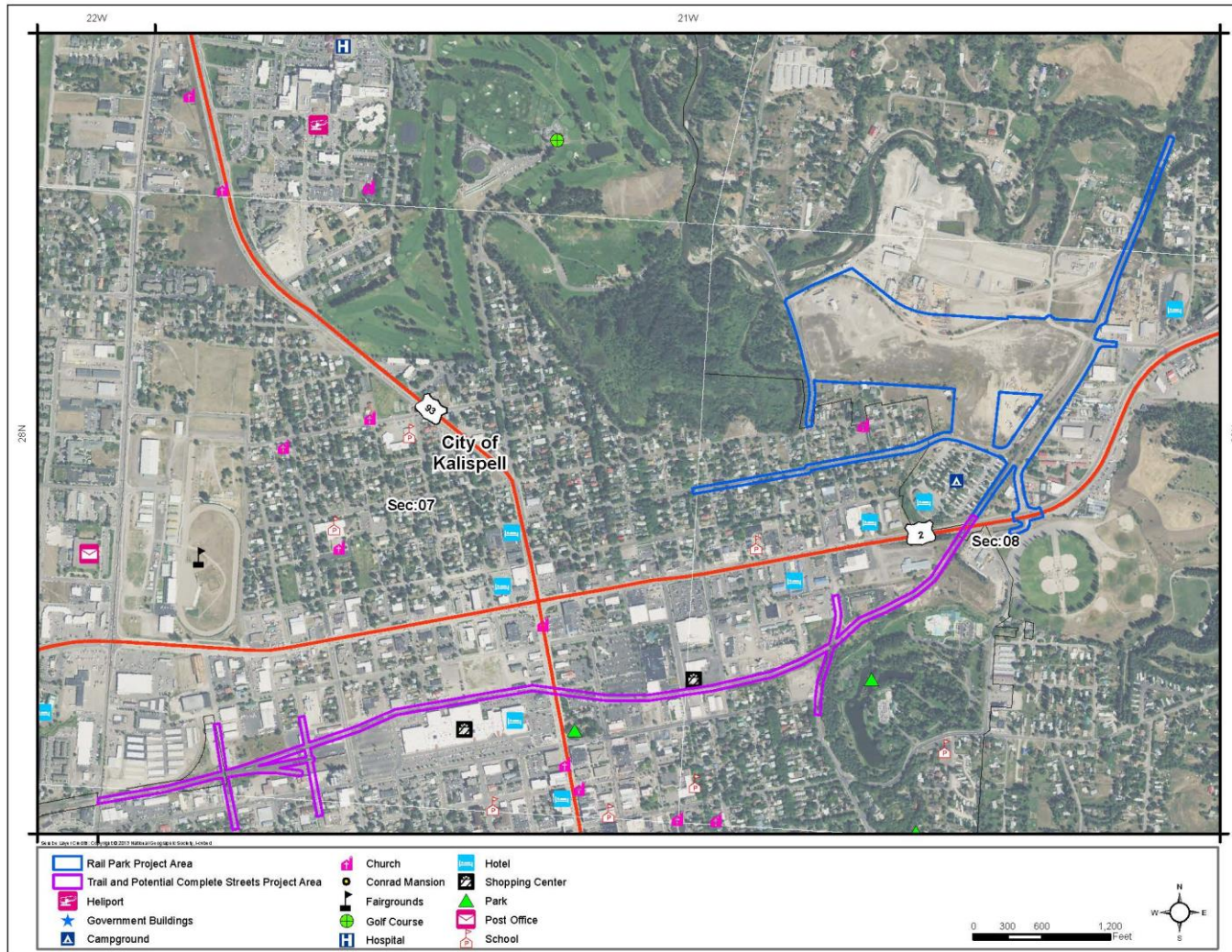


Figure 29, Community Structures and Facilities of Importance



3.11.1.4 *Environmental Justice*

The population of Kalispell is predominantly white (94.2 percent), with American Indians comprising the predominant minority population (1.3 percent). These demographics are well below 50% or levels of the general population outlined by the CEQ. None of the census tracts within the Study Area have a minority population greater than 50%. The proportion of minority and low-income populations in Kalispell are similar to those in the State of Montana.

Median household income levels for all census tracts within the Study Area are above poverty level. The 2015 Census Bureau places the poverty threshold for a family under 65 years old, of two at \$16,337 and a family of three at \$19,096 (US Census Bureau 2015). All census tracts within the Study Area have median household incomes above the poverty level. Please refer to **Figure 30, Census Tracts**. Census tracts 10 and 11, median household incomes are below state averages but are not low-income for purposes of this environmental justice analysis because they do not meet the CEQ defined thresholds of low income or minority (City of Kalispell 2015). The average household size in Kalispell is 2.08 people with a median age of 34.7 (US Census Bureau 2010).

3.11.1.5 *Businesses*

There are two businesses that receive rail shipments to their current location in downtown Kalispell. These businesses include CHS and Northwest Drywall; both would relocate to the proposed Rail Park before abandonment and removal of the existing railroad tracks.

The 2013 Market Analysis and Feasibility Study for the proposed Rail Park indicated the Rail Park would connect businesses within a 100-mile radius of Kalispell to the Great Northern Corridor, as well as Canadian ports. Please refer to **Appendix E, Market Analysis and Feasibility Study**. Three out-of-state businesses, three Montana businesses, and one Canadian business have contacted FCEDA for Rail Park information. These companies are manufacturers of wood or metal value-added products, agricultural value-added businesses, and businesses shipping product to Canada. Additionally, a number of businesses that are interested in transload services have contacted FCEDA for information. A number of downtown businesses have started to develop plans for expansion once the railroad tracks are removed from downtown. In addition, FCEDA has received several inquiries from out-of-town businesses and developers about the planned removal of the railroad tracks and availability of commercial property in and around the proposed Project (Kim Morisaki, Flathead County Economic Development Authority; Business Development, personal communication, March 2017; T. Jentz, personal communication, April 2017).



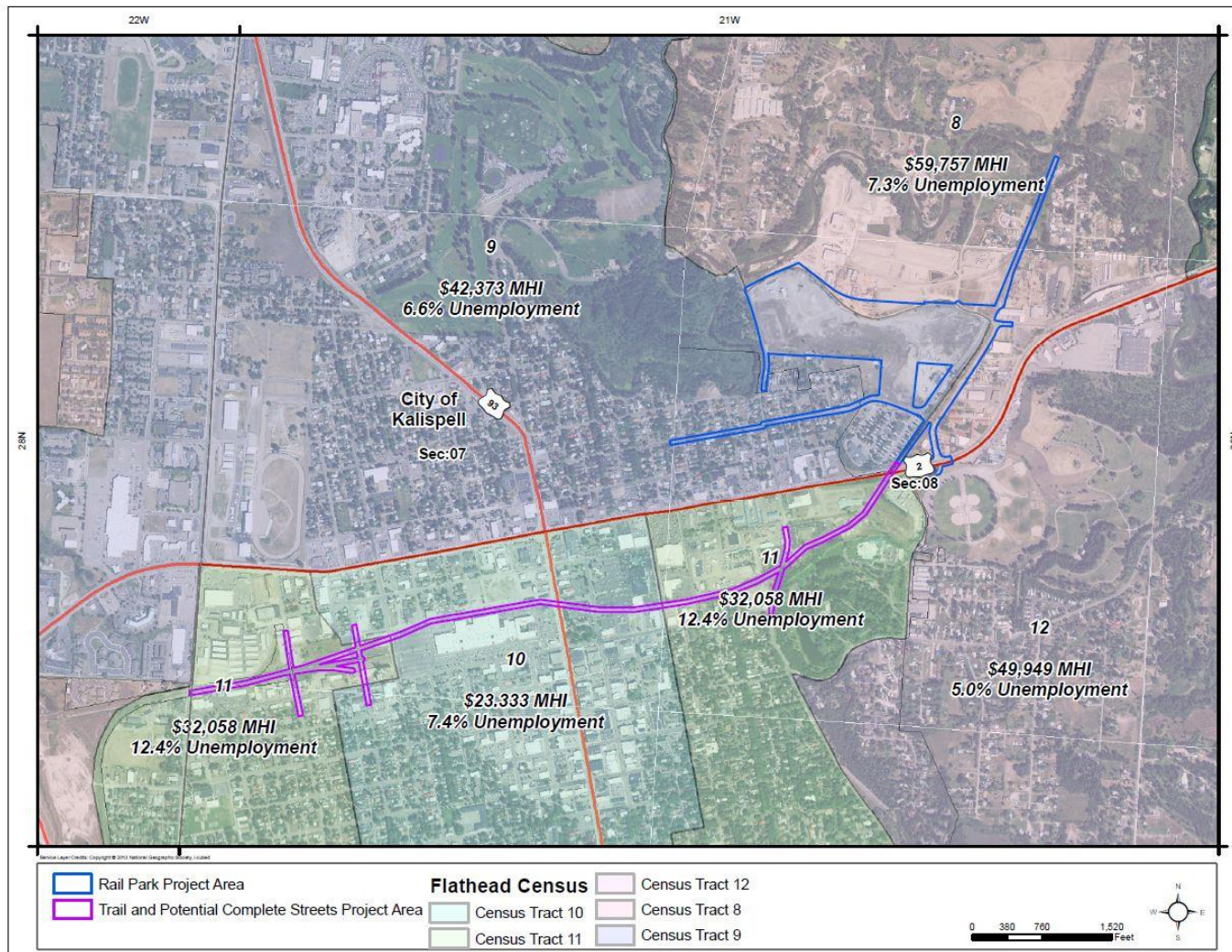


Figure 30, Census Tracts



3.11.2 Environmental Consequences

3.11.2.1 Demographic and Economics

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would have no significant impacts to demographics or economics within the community; however, Kalispell nor the region of northwest Montana would capitalize on the added economic and trade value of creating jobs and attracting new businesses to the Rail Park or Kalispell Trail areas. Construction of the Kalispell Trail would not occur, and the lack of connectivity in the community would continue. Access to business districts, grocery stores, schools, child and elder care, healthcare and workforce training, and employment assistance for disabled, elderly people or those lacking driver’s licenses who utilize the Project Area would continue in the present condition. Redevelopment in the heart of the community, including 44 acres of vacant or underdeveloped properties, would not occur and would not provide the associated economic and social benefits to the community.

Build Alternative – Construction and operation of the proposed Project would not have significant adverse impacts on demographics within the community. It would have beneficial impacts to the economics of the City and the region.

Construction Impacts

There may be temporary, localized impacts to surrounding residential or commercial communities during construction of the Project. Impacts would be temporary and localized to the construction areas in the form of noise above ambient levels, visuals of construction equipment, or air emissions from equipment. Pedestrians and automobile traffic may experience temporary delays during construction of the Kalispell Trail, traffic signal installation, and street connections.

A natural, topographic barrier in the form of a hill exists on the south side of the proposed Rail Park, which buffers the vast majority of the southern neighborhood both visually and from a noise standpoint. This hillside has acted as a buffering screen during the previous gravel resource development and would remain in place. The City is not aware of any complaints from this neighborhood concerning the previous operation of this site as a gravel pit and concrete batch plant which operated year-round, sunrise to sunset or from the rail road whose presence has been within Kalispell since 1892 (T. Jentz, personal communication, April 2017).

Operational Impacts

The Build Alternative would not cause adverse impacts to the demographics, land use patterns, neighborhoods, or other related community characteristics. Instead, it is anticipated that the Project would spur development, improve traffic circulation, remove blighted and vacant properties from the Core Area, and increase community cohesion, providing a benefit to residents and users. Traffic would access and exit the proposed Rail Park primarily from an intersection with US Highway 2, located in an industrial and commercial area. This would limit disturbance to any residential neighborhoods near the Rail Park.

The proposed Rail Park is not anticipated to significantly impact the socioeconomic conditions within the Study Area, but it does have the potential to yield beneficial impacts through the creation of jobs associated with the construction of the Rail Park. Employment would be gained through the additional businesses operating inside the Rail Park site. The Core Area would also benefit from the removal of



industrial operations out of the higher density, residential and commercial area, to the less populated industrial site proposed for the Rail Park. Creation of the Rail Park would allow CHS to expand its operations, provide rail access to local businesses, and attract new businesses looking for rail access. Replacing the railroad tracks downtown with a trail and connecting up to three north-south roads would improve traffic flow, increase access to properties currently limited by the railroad track, and provide additional transportation options (e.g., walking and biking).

The proposed Kalispell Trail and complete streets would increase access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation. By removing the physical barrier of the railroad tracks, the trail would provide opportunities for neighborhood revitalization. The Kalispell Trail would be constructed and operated consistent with the requirements of the ADA. Improving community access and the visual appeal of the Core Area through operation of the Kalispell Trail would create a more attractive environment for new businesses to establish within the Core Area. The establishment of businesses and new jobs would be created in areas currently vacant or underutilized along the proposed Kalispell Trail.

Overall, the proposed Project would provide long-term benefits to the community by creating additional jobs and relocation of industrial operations to a less populated location on the outskirts of city limits, buffered from residences. Economically, construction of the Kalispell Trail and associated removal of the existing railroad tracks would be expected to increase surrounding property values due to the increased connectivity and access and decreased noise and vibration of the adjacent tracks.

No significant, adverse impacts or shifts in demographics or economics are anticipated.

3.11.2.2 *Community Cohesion*

No-Build Alternative – There would be no significant impacts to community cohesion associated with the No-Build Alternative; however, the railroad tracks through downtown Kalispell would remain in place, bisecting the north-south connectivity of the community. Trains and heavy truck traffic would continue to travel through the downtown area to access CHS on 5th Avenue West, impeding traffic flow and pedestrian travel. MDT 2015 Traffic Count Data indicated that an ADT of 5,860 vehicles travel on 5th Avenue West, 45 of which are commercial trucks. Additional travel options for pedestrians in the form of a safe, efficient, public-use trail would not be available. Complete street connections to allow access to, and future redevelopment in, previously cut-off parcels of the Core Area, especially north of the Mall would not be constructed. Cohesion for the community, including for economically disadvantaged and elderly people, to business districts, grocery stores, schools, child and elder care, healthcare, workforce training, and employment assistance, would continue to be lacking.

Build Alternative - Construction and operation of the proposed Project is not anticipated to have significant, adverse impacts on community cohesion within the community; rather, beneficial impacts to economics and community cohesion are expected.

Construction Impacts

There may be temporary, localized impacts to surrounding residential or commercial communities during construction. Pedestrians and motor-vehicle traffic may experience temporary delays during construction of the Kalispell Trail, traffic signal installation and street connections at up to three locations. To minimize these temporary impacts, signed detours and alternative travel trails would be

provided to users including a Maintenance of Traffic Plan and corresponding public outreach as outlined by MDT.

Operational Impacts

Currently, there are only six at-grade crossings through the two-mile width of town. Many city streets were developed with no sidewalks, making alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, difficult for travelers. Relocating the freight rail users to the proposed Rail Park would allow for the removal of 1.6 miles of railroad track, and subsequently, removal of six at-grade rail crossings in downtown Kalispell. The railroad corridor would be replaced with a linear public-use trail, including the bridge over US Highway 2, opening up pedestrian access to an area previously void of such facilities. It would also allow for the construction of up to three north-south complete street crossings, offering vastly improved pedestrian and vehicle access in the Core Area of Kalispell, and connecting people and neighborhoods with jobs, services, and goods.

Construction of the trail would connect the community, including economically disadvantaged and elderly people, to business districts, grocery stores, schools, child and elder care, healthcare, workforce training, and employment assistance. The removal of railroad track would spur redevelopment in the heart of the community, including 44 acres of vacant or underdeveloped properties.

No significant, adverse impacts would occur to community cohesion as a result of the proposed Project.

3.11.2.3 Environmental Justice

No-Build Alternative – There would be no environmental justice concerns associated with the No-Build Alternative because the Project would not be constructed.

Build Alternative – None of the surrounding census tracts or populations located in the Study Area qualify as a low-income or minority populations; therefore, no environmental justice populations would be impacted by the Project.

3.11.2.4 Businesses

No-Build Alternative – There would be no significant impacts to businesses associated with the No-Build Alternative; however, the existing freight rail served businesses would not benefit from the relocation to the proposed Rail Park location. In addition, new rail-served businesses would not be attracted to Kalispell, and therefore, the associated economic benefits to the community and northwest Montana would not be realized. Furthermore, the railroad tracks bisecting the Core Area have limited usefulness for business development.

Build Alternative – The proposed Project would benefit two existing freight rail-served businesses located along the existing railroad tracks through the Core Area: CHS and Northwest Drywall. Both businesses intend to relocate and consolidate their downtown operations to the proposed Rail Park. A central location for uninterrupted rail service would allow for improved truck and rail access, increased rail car and freight storage, reduced distance required for staff to offload freight, and room to expand operations. These businesses may experience temporary impacts due to the Project, such as temporary short term impact from moving business operations, equipment, and inventory, and added work hours. However, these businesses would see long-term benefits in the ability to expand operations. The proposed Project would provide economic incentives and development opportunity for Kalispell, as



well as improved rail freight access for northwest Montana and beyond. No significant, adverse impacts to businesses due to construction or operation of the proposed Rail Park or Kalispell Trail are anticipated. For further discussions on impacts to businesses, please refer to **Section 3.12, Relocations**.

Construction Impacts

Construction of the proposed Rail Park would not have permanent adverse impacts to any businesses. Operations of CHS and Northwest Drywall, two business relocating to the Rail Park, would remain functioning at capacity throughout the relocation. The existing railroad track would not be abandoned or removed until the new Rail Park, CHS, and Northwest Drywall were fully functional.

Businesses along the proposed Kalispell Trail, including potential complete street connections, may experience temporary, adverse impacts during construction. These impacts may include changes to business access for consumers, delays in traffic surrounding their businesses, and additional traffic congestion. These impacts would be temporary, and access to all businesses would remain open during construction, as detours would be provided, as necessary and as outlined in the Maintenance of Traffic Plan and associated information provided to the public.

Operational Impacts

Construction of the proposed Rail Park would increase connections for rural Montana to domestic and international ports, allowing Montana's small businesses, agricultural producers, manufacturers, and consumers to efficiently ship, receive goods, and create more job opportunities.

CHS and Northwest Drywall may experience temporary, adverse effects due to the relocation period to the Rail Park, including additional working hours for employees to relocate inventory and operations to a new site. Operations of the businesses would function at capacity throughout the relocation; existing railroad tracks would not be abandoned or removed until the new Rail Park and businesses are fully functional. Similar temporary, adverse impacts to 535 East Center Street may occur, should the Whitefish Stage Road (7th Avenue East-North) to Woodland Avenue street connection be constructed as they relocate facilities used for training purposes at their site (see **Section 3.12, Relocations**). Per coordination between the business owner and the City, the owner has expressed willingness to work with the City to accomplish the Project.

Construction easements and/or permanent ROW totaling approximately 0.11 acres would be required from 1003 East Idaho Street. This business is a custom shed building business that leases the lot northeast of the Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 intersection and adjacent to Flathead Drive. Placement of their inventory of sheds would have to be rearranged, and traffic access to their lot would be restricted along US Highway 2. Expansion of Flathead Drive would remove space used for current showcasing of their inventory and would restrict movements within the lot, as inventory would be forced to consolidate to a smaller area. Permanent, adverse impact would occur to the business located at 1003 East Idaho Street due to a reduction of frontage to US Highway 2 by 15 linear feet, which result in a loss of inventory display space, and to restrictions on vehicle access along Flathead Drive from the intersection to existing paved approach. Per coordination between the business owner and the City, the owner has expressed willingness to work with the City to accomplish the Project.



3.11.3 Mitigation

To minimize temporary delays due to construction activities, signed detours and alternative access routes to businesses would be provided. BMPs, such as watering methods and limiting idle times, to control dust and emissions would be implemented during construction.

To address pedestrian and bicyclist safety, warning or stop signs would be installed at the road crossings, and curb bump outs are proposed to restrict the distance that they must cross roads. A Traffic and Pedestrian Control Plan would be submitted by the contractor and approved by the Public Works Department for all work within the public ROW. The latest edition of the MUTCD would be followed to create the Plan (City of Kalispell Standards for Design and Construction 2009).

In cases where business, residential, or commercial displacements or relocations must occur, the City would comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) and amendments, state law, and its own adopted policies and procedures to protect the interests of current landowners or landowners' leases. Compensation and assistance in relocations would be provided consistently and equitably with applicable state and federal laws and procedures. Properties to be acquired would be independently appraised for fair market value. Eligible individuals, families, businesses, or organizations may receive moving costs, housing replacement, rental assistance, or business relocation benefits to minimize hardship and provide the assistance necessary to accomplish this consistently.

3.12 Relocations

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) and amendments provide important protections and assistance for people affected by federally funded projects, which though designed to benefit the public as a whole, may result in acquisition of private property and displacement of people from their homes, businesses, or farms.

3.12.1 Affected Environment

Currently, BNSF owns or has rights along 1.6-miles of track which would be abandoned by BNSF and acquired by the City to complete the proposed Kalispell Trail, completely within the acquired BNSF ROW. While the actual amount of ROW from BNSF to build the trail has not been determined or agreed upon, BNSF has filed the application for abandonment with the STB.

FCEDA currently owns the 40-acre site of the proposed Rail Park and would allow the City to construct the Rail Park on FCEDA property. To improve the layout of the proposed Rail Park and provide larger lot sizes as well as improve the interior road, 3.38 acres of BNSF property would be purchased by FCEDA on the north boundary of the proposed Rail Park.

The construction of the traffic signal and intersection improvements to the primary access to the proposed Rail Park (Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 intersection) and the potential street connections would require modifications to lease agreements or easements and/or relocations or buy-outs for some existing businesses and leaseholders within the Project Area. The following businesses may be temporarily or permanently impacted in the form of relocations and/or land acquisitions by roadway improvements and/or the potential street crossings:



Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 Traffic Signal and Intersection Improvements

Construction easements and/or permanent ROW totaling approximately 0.11 acres would be required from 1003 East Idaho Street.

8th Avenue West-North to West Center Street at 8th Avenue West

Potential relocations and/or property acquisitions would be required to complete this street connection. Several commercial business structures are in the proposed street connection ROW, including 71 8th Avenue West-North (0.40 acres) north of the proposed Kalispell Trail, and 749 (0.16 acres) and 747 West Center Street (0.03 acres) to the south. ROW acquired from BNSF for this street connection would total 0.14 acres.

6th Avenue West-North to West Center Street at 6th Avenue West

Several structures associated with a commercial fuel station (0.39 acres) are located within the proposed street connection ROW (600-698 Railroad Street West) and would need to be removed; this may include underground tanks. Decisions regarding the need to remove the underground tanks, and appropriate hazardous materials analysis, would occur during final design of the proposed Project. The current operations and commercial buildings of CHS (505 West Center Street) are located south of the location of the proposed Kalispell Trail. CHS intends to relocate and consolidate its downtown operations to the proposed Rail Park and transfer ownership of its downtown buildings and lands totaling 0.21 acres to FCEDA, after which, the street connection could be completed. ROW acquired from BNSF for this street connection would total 0.03 acres.

Whitefish Stage Road (7th Avenue East-North) to Woodland Avenue

Potential relocations and/or property acquisitions would be required to complete this street connection. An electric facility used to train employees of Flathead Electric Cooperative is located within the proposed street ROW at 531-535 East Center Street (0.37 acres). A total of 0.42 acres would be acquired from 79 7th Avenue East-North. ROW acquired from BNSF for this street connection would total 0.40 acres.

3.12.2 Environmental Consequences

No Build Alternative – There would be no relocations or buy-outs associated with the No-Build Alternative because the Project would not be constructed.

Build Alternative - The proposed Project would benefit two rail-served businesses currently located along the existing railroad tracks through the Core Area: CHS and Northwest Drywall. Both businesses intend to relocate and consolidate their downtown operations to the proposed Rail Park, during which, there would be temporary impacts to business operations and staff. A central location for uninterrupted rail service would allow for improved truck and rail access, increased rail car and freight storage, reduced distance required for staff to offload freight, and room to expand operations. Several businesses are located in the complete streets ROW and would require buy-outs and/or relocations by the City. All landowners, including BNSF, have been contacted about the Project and have participated in public meetings.

Flathead Drive/US Highway 2 Traffic Signal and Intersection Improvements

Construction easements and/or permanent ROW totaling approximately 0.11 acres would be required from 1003 East Idaho Street. Placement of the business' inventory of sheds would have to be



rearranged and/or consolidated within the lot and traffic access to the lot would be restricted along Flathead Drive. Expansion of Flathead Drive would remove some space used for current showcasing of their shed inventory and would restrict movements for large trucks within the lot. Inventory would be forced to consolidate to a smaller area, potentially making deliveries and maneuvering of the sheds difficult; however, inventory would still be located on the lot. Access to the lot would not change from US Highway 2, and access would remain along Flathead Drive at the current paved approach. Overall, the business would not need to be relocated and would continue to operate at its current location; therefore, no significant, adverse impacts are anticipated from the ROW acquisition.

8th Avenue West-North to West Center Street at 8th Avenue West

Three non-historic buildings are located within the proposed ROW for this street connection and would need to be removed (71 8th Avenue West-North, 749, and 747 West Center Street). The three buildings are not currently running operational businesses and would not experience any permanent impacts from relocation or buy-out. Landowners may experience temporary impacts while moving possessions from the buildings. No significant, adverse impacts to businesses or landowners would occur with this proposed street connection.

6th Avenue West-North to West Center Street at 6th Avenue West

Several non-historic structures associated with a commercial fuel station would need to be removed to complete this street connection. CHS operations are currently located south of the proposed Kalispell Trail; however, CHS would relocate their operations to the Rail Park after construction and would transfer their ROW to FCEDA. FCEDA would then remove two non-historic buildings to complete the street connection. Grain elevators to the west of the connection, which are considered historic, would remain in place. CHS and staff may experience temporary impacts while relocating to the Rail Park in the form of overtime to move operations and inventory to the Rail Park; however, operations would not be interrupted by construction of the Kalispell Trail, as the existing railroad tracks would stay in service until completion of the Rail Park. No significant, adverse impacts to businesses or landowners would occur with this proposed street connection.

Whitefish Stage Road (7th Avenue East-North) to Woodland Avenue

There are extensive aboveground electric structures located within this business parcel that would require relocation; however, none of the facilities supply power to any residents or businesses, as they are used solely for Flathead Electric Cooperative training purposes. Landowners and/or staff may experience temporary impacts while moving possessions and inventory from within the buildings. No significant, adverse impacts to businesses or landowners would occur with this proposed street connection.

3.12.3 Mitigation

In cases where business, residential, or commercial displacements or relocations must occur, FRA would require the Project sponsor to comply with the aforementioned Uniform Act, state law, and its own adopted policies and procedures to protect the interests of current landowners or landowners' leases. Compensation and assistance in relocations would be provided consistently and equitably with applicable state and federal laws and procedures. Properties to be acquired would be independently appraised for fair market value. Eligible individuals, families, businesses, or organizations may receive moving costs, housing replacement, rental assistance, or business relocation benefits to minimize hardship and provide the assistance necessary to accomplish this consistently.



3.13 Public Health and Safety

This section addresses the potential for the Build Alternative to affect the health and safety of the general public, and discusses key health and safety risks. Public health and safety were evaluated by reviewing existing operations and construction protocols, and train and vehicular-pedestrian collision records.

Public health and safety impacts can extend beyond the Study Area, such as in the case of construction-related traffic. Therefore, the Study Area for public health and safety addresses potential impacts to the public in Kalispell as a whole.

3.13.1 Affected Environment

Public health concerns related to the proposed Project include unauthorized access to work zones and train/vehicle-pedestrian collisions. There are six at-grade railroad crossings in the Core Area used by freight rail, vehicular traffic and pedestrians. Since 1995, Kalispell has had four pedestrian fatalities, two of which occurred within 200 feet of the proposed Kalispell Trail within the Study Area and one at the Montclair Drive and US Highway 2 intersection near the proposed Rail Park (R. Nasset, personal communication, June 22, 2016; KLJ 2013b).

3.13.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – Multiple public health and safety concerns would continue within the Core Area under the No-Build Alternative. The existing rail service is located adjacent to primary residential neighborhoods and downtown business districts. Commercial traffic is currently directed through residential streets and the Core Area to access the freight railroad, potentially exposing local business patrons, residents, and visitors to vehicular and pedestrian accidents, as well as noise and air pollutant emissions from vehicle and equipment operation. In addition, obstructions occur on pedestrian and vehicle at-grade crossings as a result of trains delivering materials, switching, separating, and coupling within the City. This, in turn, contributes to traffic congestion and poses a hazard to users of the grade crossings (including the train operators) because of the potential for vehicle or pedestrian-train collisions.

Build Alternative – No significant, adverse impacts to public health and safety are anticipated due to the construction and operation of the proposed Project; rather, multiple benefits to the public are expected. These effects, as well as minimization measures to ensure no effects to public health and safety would occur from the Project, are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Construction Impacts

The proposed Project would require the use of heavy equipment and construction vehicles within the Project Area, which could present a potential safety risk to construction staff or the general public if they were to enter the site on foot or by vehicle.

As indicated previously, construction would result in a minor, temporary degradation of air quality due to the generation of fugitive dust and emissions from construction equipment and vehicles. Because of the localized and temporary nature of these effects and implementation of the appropriate BMPs, no significant effects on human health are anticipated.



Operational Impacts

The completion of the proposed Rail Park and Kalispell Trail would improve public health and safety by facilitating the relocation of the existing railroad tracks, which serve current industrial operations within the Core Area, from residential and commercial areas in the center of Kalispell to an industrially zoned parcel buffered from the populated City center (City of Kalispell Zoning & Floodplain 2016). The decrease in freight rail traffic and commercial traffic on residential and downtown business streets, as well as on public grade crossings would improve public, pedestrian and vehicular safety. The relocation of the freight rail operations to an area away from the population center of the City would also benefit public health by reducing localized air pollutant emissions.

3.13.3 Mitigation

The potential for public safety impacts during construction and operation of the proposed Rail Park and Kalispell Trail would be minimal. Public access to the 40-acre Rail Park Project site would be limited and standard safety features would be implemented. To minimize the potential for unauthorized access to any work zones, public access to work zones would be restricted by fencing around its perimeter and standard safety features, such as site lighting, backup lights, and alarms on equipment, would be installed. Fencing in poor condition around the proposed Rail Park would be replaced with new, permanent fencing around the Rail Park to restrict unauthorized entry. Construction workers would comply with all safety regulations. Any, and all pre-construction and construction work near active tracks, would be completed in compliance with federal, local and host railroad worker and work zone regulations. Flaggers would be used any time construction activities have the potential to interfere with train or vehicle operations. Any roadway work would provide appropriately signed detours, and contractors would follow MDT Work Zone Safety and Mobility Guidelines (MDT 2009).

Additional trail work and utility infrastructure would be installed, including lighting, fire hydrants, and modern safety equipment associated with trail operations.

3.14 Hazardous Waste

This section addresses the potential for hazardous materials and wastes to occur in the Project Area and the potential for previously contaminated sites to occur in the Project Area. It also addresses the potential for the Build Alternative to generate hazardous wastes.

The Study Area for analysis of potential impacts due to hazardous wastes corresponds to the Project Area. This is because the Project Area corresponds to ground disturbance work and the potential to encounter hazardous materials existing from past railroad and industrial operations. The presence of hazardous materials, wastes, or contaminated sites at or near the Study Area was determined by conducting visual inspections of the Study Area and reviewing existing, publicly available databases. Impacts were evaluated by reviewing Project information and the Project's potential to affect existing contamination sites or to generate hazardous wastes.

3.14.1 Affected Environment

3.14.1.1 Brownfield Site

A brownfield site is a property in which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of the site may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant



(Columbia CNMTL 1999). EPA's Brownfields program provides grants and technical assistance to communities, states, tribes, and stakeholders to provide the resources they need to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields (EPA 2016f).

Through an EPA Envirofacts search for Brownfields Cleanup Sites within the Study Area, one site was identified within the Study Area (former Knife River Property). A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) and a Phase II ESA were completed in 2010 and 2011, respectively. Classes of contaminants found at the site during the Phase I and II ESAs included petroleum products, asbestos, lead-based paint, and other metals. Cleanup and remediation of the brownfields site has been completed (EPA 2014b).

3.14.1.2 Resource Conservation and Recovery and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act Sites

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) regulate hazardous materials, wastes and environmentally contaminated sites. Past and present activities on RCRA and CERCLA facilities typically result in the release of hazardous waste and constituents into the soil, groundwater, surface water, sediments, and air, requiring initial investigation and cleanup or remediation of these hazardous releases (EPA 2016e).

The EPA Envirofacts Website was searched for RCRA and CERCLA sites within the Study Area. There was a total of approximately 37 RCRA and CERCLA sites (active and inactive) found within a one-mile radius of the Study Area. One RCRA site, McElroy and Wilken, Inc. (former Knife River property), is located within the Project Area in the northwest corner of the Rail Park site near Whitefish Stage Road. The chemicals listed for the site includes generation of corrosive wastes (EPA 2016e). One CERCLA site is located in the northeast corner of the property and falls within the boundary of the RCRA site; a group of three CERCLA facilities were identified as the BNSF Railway KRY Site Petroleum Cleanup by EPA Envirofacts. These contaminated soils down to the groundwater table were remediated by BNSF in 2011 to 2012; however, contamination to groundwater is a concern and may still be present (EPA 2016g).

No recorded previous spills or hazardous waste sites are known to exist within the Study Area associated with the proposed Kalispell Trail according to EPA Envirofacts records (EPA 2016e).

3.14.1.3 Underground Storage Tanks

The MTDEQ also maintains databases of permitted underground storage tanks (USTs) and leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs). The UST and LUST databases revealed five active USTs within the Study Area. The five USTs are located along 6th Avenue West North at 600-698 Railroad Street West, a potential street connection, and are owned by Herron Development to store diesel, gasoline, and heating oil. No LUSTs were identified in the Study Area (MTDEQ 2016).

3.14.1.4 Asbestos

Asbestos is defined as a group of naturally occurring fibrous minerals, including chrysotile, amosite, crocidolite, anthophyllite, actinolite, and tremolite, that presents a potential exposure and health hazard.

As delegated by the EPA and the Asbestos Control Act of Montana, MTDEQ administers regulatory requirements from sections of the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP)



and Montana Administrative Rules, governing building demolitions, asbestos disposal, and other asbestos-related activities. Asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are any materials that contain more than 1 percent asbestos. An asbestos project is work that involves the removal, encapsulation, enclosure, repair, or disturbance of friable or non-friable asbestos, or any handling of asbestos material that may result in the release of asbestos fiber (MTDEQ 2017).

3.14.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – The No-Build Alternative would not impact known contaminated sites or result in the production or release of hazardous waste to the environment in the Study Area, because the Project would not be constructed. However, propane and fertilizer would continue to be stored within the Core Area.

Build Alternative – The construction or operation of the proposed Project would not use large amounts of hazardous materials or generate large amounts of hazardous wastes. No significant, adverse impacts due to hazardous wastes are anticipated due to the construction and operation of the Project.

Construction Impacts

Ground-clearing activities run the risk of encountering contaminated soils during construction. The release of such materials to the environment via air, water, and soil could adversely affect natural resources and human health and safety. Considering the design and planned construction activities of the Project, it is not anticipated that hazardous materials or hazardous wastes would be present in amounts or locations that would pose an unacceptable risk to the general public or natural resources. In addition, previously recorded RCRA and CERCLA sites in the Study Area associated with the proposed Rail Park have been remediated, and no such areas were recorded or identified within the Study Area associated with the proposed Kalispell Trail. Ground-clearing activities would be shallow and would not likely reach contaminated groundwater within the Knife River site.

Depending on final road design and location, during construction, no impacts would be expected on the five USTs located along 6th Avenue West-North, as ground-disturbance would not likely reach a depth that would impact the USTs. If it is determined that the USTs would be impacted or require removal, appropriate mitigation measures outlined below would be completed, and MDEQ guidelines and procedures followed. No recorded previous spills or hazardous waste sites are known to exist within the Study Area associated with the proposed Kalispell Trail according to EPA Envirofacts records (EPA 2016e).

Construction of both the Rail Park and the Kalispell Trail may require the use of small amounts of hazardous materials (e.g., cleaning agents, lubricants, fuels, solvents, fertilizers) and may result in the generation of hazardous waste (e.g., oily rags, used chemical containers, chemical waste, used oil).

Buildings may need to be demolished to construct the complete street connections. A Montana-Accredited Asbestos Inspector would inspect any buildings planned for demolition for ACMs prior to demolition activities. If ACM is found and the Project becomes an "asbestos project" involving ACMs greater than 10 square-feet, 3 linear-feet, or 3 cubic-feet, the owner or operator of the facility (i.e., FCEDA) would use an asbestos abatement contractor certified to remove ACM and must have the ACM removed before demolition would begin (MTDEQ 2017).



Considering the purpose, design, and operation activities of the Project, it is not anticipated that hazardous materials or wastes would be present in amounts or locations that would pose an unacceptable risk to public health or the environment. No significant, adverse impacts from historic environmental contamination, the use of hazardous materials, or the generation of hazardous wastes are anticipated.

Operational Impacts

The operation of the Rail Park may use of small amounts of hazardous materials, such as cleaning agents, lubricants, fuels, and solvents. The use of these hazardous materials could result in the generation of hazardous waste in the form of oily rags, used chemical containers, chemical waste, and used oil. Flathead County holds an annual Small Business Hazardous Waste Collection Event in conjunction with a certified hazardous waste disposal company to provide small businesses that are classified as conditionally-exempt small-quantity generators (i.e., generate less than 100 kilograms of hazardous waste or less than 1 kilograms of acutely hazardous waste per month) to dispose of any wastes accumulated (Flathead County 2017). Rail Park tenants could utilize this program for small disposals. Tenants of the Rail Park would be responsible for the necessary permits and environmental compliance related to hazardous materials.

Operation of the Kalispell Trail would not transport or generate hazardous materials; no effect to public health or impacts from hazardous wastes are anticipated due to this phase of the Project.

3.14.3 Mitigation

In the event that previously unknown contaminants are discovered during construction or a spill occurs during construction, work would cease until the National Response Center (1-800-424-8002) has been notified by the contractor. If contamination is encountered, the MTDEQ would also be notified. Any contaminated soil that is encountered would be temporarily stockpiled and sampled to determine disposal requirements. Contractors would obtain a Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit (MPDES) and implement and follow SWPPP and SPCC plans. All hazardous wastes generated would be handled in accordance with the RCRA Subtitle C waste management program and the requirements and regulations of the MTDEQ.

Although the Project would not have a significant effect on hazardous materials requiring mitigation, measures to minimize potential impacts would be implemented, including:

- ◆ Performing ESA Phase I or II studies, as needed, within the portion of the Project Area for the Kalispell Trail, CHS, and Northwest Drywall sites
- ◆ Implementing SWPPP and SPCC plans and contractors obtaining necessary permits
- ◆ Proper notifications would occur if an unknown hazardous material or site is discovered during construction or operation of the Rail Park and Kalispell Trail
- ◆ Known contaminated areas would be identified on construction drawings
- ◆ Construction equipment and materials would be stored in appropriately marked containers and used properly



- ◆ Should removal or decommissioning of USTs be needed, they would be conducted and inspected by qualified, trained and licensed individuals in accordance with MDEQ guidelines
- ◆ Should USTs be left active, they would be properly managed and monitored for releases in accordance with MDEQ guidelines

Should ACM be present in any building to be demolished, a project permit from the Asbestos Control Program (regulated by MTDEQ) would be obtained five to 10 working days prior to the commencement of demolition activities. Asbestos removal would be scheduled to be completed by certified removers with a Montana Contractor/Supervisor or Worker accreditation. ACM that would be impacted by renovation or demolition activities would be removed before demolition or renovation activities begin.

3.15 Cultural Resources and Historic Properties

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (54 USC § 306108) (Section 106) requires that federal agencies take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. A historic property is any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included on, or eligible for inclusion on, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Section 106 review process is defined in regulations promulgated by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR Part 800). Historic properties are further protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC § 303) (Section 4(f)). Under Section 4(f), a federal transportation agency may not approve the use of a Section 4(f) property, including historic sites, unless it determines that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to avoid the use of the property and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use, or the project has a *de minimis* impact. Section 4(f) is further discussed in **Section 3.16**.

The City hired two cultural resources consultants to identify historic properties within the proposed Project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). The APE includes all areas where ground disturbing activities would occur, to take into account the potential presence of and effects to archaeological resources. The APE also includes an additional area to account for potential direct and indirect effects (i.e., noise, visual) on architectural resources, such as buildings within and adjacent to the proposed Rail Park site and buildings adjacent to the existing railroad (the location of the proposed Kalispell Trail) and proposed complete street locations.

Adverse effects to historic properties may occur when an undertaking may directly or indirectly alter characteristics of a historic property that qualify it for inclusion in the NRHP. Examples of adverse effects include but are not limited to physical destruction, damage, or alteration; removal of a property from its historic location; neglect leading to deterioration; change in use; and introduction of visual, atmospheric, or audible elements.

Information provided in this section was derived from the *Class III Cultural Resource Investigations of the Glacier Rail Park in Kalispell, Montana; Phase I, Parcels A & B*, conducted by Historical Discoveries (2016); and *Section 106 Cultural Resources Inventory Glacier Rail Park/Kalispell Core Area Development and Kalispell Trail Project City of Kalispell, Flathead County, Montana*, conducted by Rabbitbrush Archaeological Services LLC. (2016). Both reports are available on the City's website at http://www.kalispell.com/community_economic_development/Environmental.php.



3.15.1 Affected Environment

Background research and the pedestrian survey of the portion of the APE encompassing the proposed Rail Park did not identify any properties that are eligible or listed on the NRHP.

Background research and the pedestrian survey of the portion of the APE encompassing the proposed Kalispell Trail identified a total of 103 historic-era properties, 11 previously recorded historic-era properties, and one historic-era archaeological site, for a total of 115 resources. Of these, the Great Northern Railroad (24FH0350) is the only historic property within the proposed Project's direct APE. The remaining 114 resources are within the indirect APE. Fifteen newly identified resources and seven previously recorded resource were formally evaluated because they are adjacent to the direct APE. The remaining 92 resources are either in the indirect APE, but not adjacent to the direct APE, or are located in an area where effects from the Project would be temporary. Please refer to **Table 11, Cultural Resources Identified**.

Table 11, Cultural Resources Identified

SITE NUMBER	SITE TYPE	NRHP STATUS	EFFECTS DETERMINATION
24FH0350	Great Northern Railway	Eligible	Adverse Effect
24FH0704	Kalispell Four Mill	NRHP - Listed	Adverse Effect
24FH0697	Great Northern Railway Depot	NRHP - Listed	Adverse Effect
24FH0693	Flathead Wholesale Grocery	NRHP - Listed	Adverse Effect
65 8 th Ave. - 24FH1285	1968 commercial	Not Eligible	N/A
640 W. Montana St. - 24FH1291	1965 commercial	Not Eligible	N/A
54 6 th Ave. - 24FH1284	1920 residence	Not Eligible	N/A
915 W. Center St. - 24FH1296	1947 residence	Not Eligible	N/A
735 W. Center St. - 24FH1294	1964 Auto Equip Service	Not Eligible	N/A
707 W. Center St. - 24FH1293	1946 flex warehouse	Not Eligible	N/A
647 W. Center St. - 24FH1292	1950 warehouse	Not Eligible	N/A
50 1 st Ave.- 24FH0689	Destroyed	Not Eligible	N/A
55 1 st Ave.- 24FH0688	Continental Oil Company Warehouse and Garage	Not Eligible	N/A
20 N. Main – 24FH0460	Destroyed	Not Eligible	N/A
52 N. Main - 24FH1283	1930 restaurant	Not Eligible	N/A
4th Ave NE	1949 service garage	Not Eligible	N/A



SITE NUMBER	SITE TYPE	NRHP STATUS	EFFECTS DETERMINATION
427 E. Center St. - 24FH1286	1945 residence	Not Eligible	N/A
503 E. Center St. - 24FH1287	1937 residence	Not Eligible	N/A
507 E. Center St. - 24FH1288	1909 residence	Not Eligible	N/A
511 E. Center St. - 24FH1289	1950 residence	Not Eligible	N/A
900 E. Idaho St. - 24FH1295	1957 commercial, multi-purpose, retail, single occupancy	Not Eligible	N/A
555 10th Ave. - 24FH1290	1971 residence	Not Eligible	N/A
Woodland Park - 24FH0675 – Eastside Historic District	1911	Historic District – NRHP Listed	No Adverse Effect

3.15.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – No impacts to cultural resources would occur under the No-Build Alternative, because the Project would not be constructed.

Build Alternative – As described in the cultural resources report for Phase II of the proposed Project, the proposed Kalispell Trail would have a direct adverse effect on the Great Northern Railroad (site 24FH0350) through removal of the railroad tracks and conversion of the ROW to a public-use recreational trail, thereby removing the historic transportation function of the railroad that contributed to the development and prosperity of Kalispell and the region. In addition, three previously recorded and NRHP-listed properties, the Flathead Wholesale Grocery (site 24FH0693), the Great Northern Railway Depot (site 24FH0697), and the Kalispell Flour Mill (site 24FH0704), would be indirectly adversely affected by construction and operation of the proposed Kalispell Trail.

In a letter dated March 15, 2016, FRA initiated Section 106 consultation for the proposed Project with the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer (MTSHPO). In letters dated May 16, 2016, FRA notified the following federally-recognized Native American Tribes about the proposed Project and invited them to participate in Section consultation: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, Fort Belknap Indian Community of the Fort Belknap Reservation of Montana, Crow Tribe of Montana, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, and Blackfeet Nation. Of the Tribes contacted, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation responded in a letter dated June 28, 2016, indicating that they were not aware of any sites of interest in the APE and expressed approval of the Project; no other tribes responded. On April 26, 2016, February 23, 2017, and March 10, 2017, FRA invited the Northwest Montana Historical Society (Historical Society), the Kalispell Business Improvement District (KBID), the Great Northern Railway Historical Society (GNRHS), FCEDA, and STB to participate in Section 106 consultation. The Historical Society, KBID, FCEDA, and STB accepted the invitation to consult, and GNRHS declined the invitation to consult.



Background research and the pedestrian survey of the APE associated with the Rail Park phase of the proposed Project did not identify any properties that are eligible or listed on the NRHP, and therefore no impacts to historic properties would result from construction or operation of the proposed Rail Park. Therefore, the discussion below relates only to Phase II of the proposed Project (Kalispell Trail).

FRA submitted its findings regarding the identification of historic properties and determination of effects to MTSHPD in a letter dated February 22, 2017. MTSHPD concurred with FRA's identification of historic properties and determinations of effect in a letter dated March 14, 2017. Please refer to ***Appendix F, Section 106 Coordination***.

Construction Impacts

Construction of the proposed Kalispell Trail would result in an adverse effect to four historic properties, as described below.

The NRHP-eligible Great Northern Railroad would be directly adversely affected through the removal of the rail, ties, ballast, and conversion of the ROW to a public-use trail. In addition, the proposed Kalispell Trail would have indirect effects on the three NRHP-listed architectural properties, as described below.

The Flathead Wholesale Grocery is currently known as "The Loading Dock" and houses an Irish pub and other businesses. Removal of the rail line would affect the integrity of location, setting, and association for the Flathead Wholesale Grocery. Furthermore, the removal of the rail, ties, and ballast would remove the last vestige of the functional railroad. The construction of this building adjacent to the railroad was a direct result of the Great Northern Railway servicing Kalispell by importing goods, playing a significant role in the early development of the City.

The Great Northern Railway Depot building (Depot) is directly and inherently related to the presence of the railroad. The Depot is located within a 3.7-acre City park called Depot Park. The Depot was historically a passenger station served by the Great Northern Railway; it is currently the offices of the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce and visitors center. The removal of the rail, ties, and ballast would affect the integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association between the Depot and the railroad that it was historically served by.

The Kalispell Flour Mill, currently operating as CHS, presently uses the Great Northern Railway railroad tracks as part of its operations, as it has since 1909. This is an example of the rail-served industries that were historically important in City's development. The six concrete grain towers constructed in 1909 are extant and are original to the Flour Mill. The removal of the rail, ties, and ballast would affect the integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association between the Kalispell Flour Mill and the railroad that it was historically, and is presently, served by.

Operational Impacts

Operation of any of the proposed street connections, the increased vehicle traffic, and non-motorized recreational use of the proposed Kalispell Trail would not have any impacts on historic properties located in the indirect APE. Active city streets are already part of the location, setting, feeling, and association for these resources, and use of the new rail by pedestrian, bicyclists, etc. would largely be confined to the trail itself and would have no impact on adjacent properties.



3.15.3 Mitigation

Because this is a “rails-to-trail” project, the adverse direct and indirect effects to historic properties cannot be avoided.

FRA, MTSHP, the City, the Historical Society, FCEDA, and KBID developed a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) pursuant to the Section 106 regulations (36 CFR Part 800.6) to resolve the adverse effects of the proposed Project on the aforementioned historic properties. The draft MOA stipulates mitigation measures including: leaving a small portion of the tracks in place near Depot Park and installing accompanying interpretive signage; installing interpretive signage along the Kalispell Trail that describes the importance of the railroad in the City’s history; potentially acquiring and placing a rail car on the remaining portion of track; and planting cherry trees interspersed along the Kalispell Trail, with emphasis in the former location of the Flathead Lake Cherry Growers Association Warehouse at 20 North Main Street, to commemorate the area’s history of agriculture, particularly cherry orchards along Flathead Lake to the south, and the impact of this agricultural product on the local and regional economy and the importance of the railroad in shipping this agricultural product. The draft MOA is included in **Appendix G**. A final MOA would be executed among FRA, the City, and MTSHP prior to FRA making its NEPA decision.

3.16 Section 4(f) Properties

Section 4(f) prohibits federal transportation agencies from approving a project that uses land from publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historical sites unless (1) the agency determines that there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative to the use of that land and the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f)-protected property resulting from such use, or (2) the agency determines that the use of the property would have a *de minimis* impact. The use of a Section 4(f) property occurs when the property is permanently incorporated into the transportation project through a taking of the land, when it is temporarily occupied, or when a project’s proximity impacts are so severe that the activities, features, or attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f) are substantially impaired. The latter scenario is known as a constructive use. Substantial impairment occurs when the protected activities, features, or attributes of the Section 4(f) property are substantially diminished. This generally means that the value of the resource, in terms of its Section 4(f) purpose and significance, would be meaningfully reduced or lost. A determination on constructive use takes into account mitigation measures that can reduce the proximity impacts to a Section 4(f) property.

FRA may determine that an impact to a Section 4(f) property is *de minimis* if:

- ◆ The proposed Project would result in a Section 106 finding of no adverse effect on a historic property or no historic properties affected and FRA receives written concurrence from SHPO on its determination; or
- ◆ The proposed Project would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes qualifying a park, recreation area, or refuge for protection under Section 4(f) and FRA receives written concurrence from the official with jurisdiction after providing the public with notice and an opportunity to comment.



Section 4(f) properties located within the Study Area are listed and described in the following subsections. Any Section 4(f) use, or lack of use, determined for each property is summarized below. Historic properties are considered Section 4(f) resources, and therefore the field investigations performed by Rabbitbrush Archeological Services and Historical Discoveries to identify NRHP-eligible or listed properties were used in the identification of Section 4(f) resources. The other types of Section 4(f) resources, such as public parks and recreation areas, were identified through mapping and field visits. Because FRA has determined a Section 4(f) use would result from the Project, this portion of the EA serves as FRA's draft Section 4(f) determination, including the required assessment of feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives and measures to minimize harm. FRA will make its final Section 4(f) determination when it makes its final NEPA decision, and after the required consultation has occurred with the officials with jurisdiction over the 4(f)-protected resources and the US Department of the Interior.

3.16.1 Affected Environment

3.16.1.1 Woodland Park

Woodland Park is a 42.8 acre, large urban park owned and managed by Kalispell Parks and Recreation. It includes a waterpark, skate park, large pond, trails, playgrounds, small gathering shelters, restrooms, and, during winter, an ice rink and warming house (City of Kalispell Parks and Recreation 2006). The park is located a quarter of a mile south of the proposed Rail Park site and directly west of the potential Woodland Avenue to 7th Avenue East North street connection.

3.16.1.2 Heritage Park

Heritage Park is a small, 3.5-acre park owned and managed by Kalispell Parks and Recreation. It is considered a natural open space that provides opportunities for nature-based recreation such as wildlife viewing, nature photography, and environmental education. A shared-use trail along Woodland Avenue provides connection to Woodland Park to the north (City of Kalispell Parks and Recreation 2006). Heritage Park is located approximately 0.25 miles south of the potential street connection along Woodland Avenue.

3.16.1.3 Conrad Complex

Conrad Complex consists of four baseball diamonds and is open to the public. It is located south of the proposed Rail Park site and across US Highway 2. A traffic signal is proposed to be installed at the intersection of US Highway 2 and Woodland Park Drive, just north of the complex.

3.16.1.4 Lawrence Park

Lawrence Park is a public park made up of both a large community park and land classified as open space. The total acreage of the park consists of 80 acres of active, community space and 37.6 acres of open space. Lawrence Park includes a playground, playing fields for soccer, disc golf and ultimate Frisbee, three pavilions, climbing boulders, and a shared-use trail which travels along and across the Stillwater River (City of Kalispell Parks and Recreation 2006).

Lawrence Park is owned and managed by Kalispell Parks and Recreation. It is located a quarter of a mile west of the proposed Rail Park site, west of Whitefish Stage Road, and four City blocks north of the proposed Kalispell Trail. The active space of Lawrence Park accessible to the public is buffered by park



open space, including a large riparian, forested section of the Stillwater River. This riparian area blocks line-of-sight from Lawrence Park to the proposed location of the Rail Park, and the existing urban development and riparian area block line-of-sight from Lawrence Park to the proposed location of the Kalispell Trail.

3.16.1.5 *Depot Park*

Depot Park is owned and managed by, and classified as a special use, by Kalispell Parks and Recreation (2006). Uses that fall into this category include boat ramps, botanical gardens, memorials, community gardens, or sites occupied by buildings. The NRHP-listed Great Northern Railway Depot is located within Depot Park. Depot Park sits on 3.7 acres and is used a public gathering area in the summer with a gazebo, sidewalks and benches, sculptures, and a Veterans' Memorial.

The proposed Kalispell Trail would bisect a portion of Depot Park where the existing railroad tracks, owned by BNSF, are currently located. Please refer to **Figure 31, Depot Park**. The existing tracks and subsequent train traffic impede pedestrian movements, compromise park user experience, and create safety hazards. Events held at the Great Northern Railway Depot building or park gazebo are subject to interruptions caused by the noise and vibration of passing trains.





Figure 31, Depot Park

3.16.1.6 Great Northern Historical Trail

Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana, a nonprofit citizen’s organization, has paved more than 10 miles of the Great Northern Trail around Kalispell, from the town of Somers on the north shore of Flathead Lake west to Kila bordering the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area, much of which is built on former railbeds of the Great Northern Railway (Kalispell Montana 2016). The trails are on Flathead County property and are managed in cooperation with the local Rails to Trails organization. The Great Northern Historical Trail begins west of Meridian Road. The proposed Kalispell Trail would terminate east of the existing trailhead on the west side of Meridian Road and would not be tied directly to the Great Northern Historical Trail, but could be accessed by linked sidewalks. Please refer to **Figure 32, Great Northern Historical Trail Trailhead**.



Figure 32, Great Northern Historical Trail Trailhead

Section 4(f) affords protection to “historic sites,” which are historic properties, including archaeological sites, that are listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP. Such sites are not required to be open to the public to be considered a Section 4(f) property. Please refer to **Table 12, Section 4(f) Historic Sites within APE** for a list of historic properties in the proposed Project’s APE that were identified as part of the Section 106 process described in **Section 3.15**.

Table 12, Section 4(f) Historic Sites within APE

SITE TYPE/NAME	NRHP STATUS	RELATIONSHIP TO APE	EFFECT DETERMINATION
Historic Railroad – Great Northern Railway	<i>Eligible</i>	Direct APE	Adverse
East Side Historic District (Woodland Park only) ^(a)	<i>Listed</i>	Indirect APE	No Adverse Impact
Historic Gas Station – Continental Oil Warehouse and Garage	<i>Eligible^(b)</i>	Indirect APE	N/A
Historic Commercial Development – Flathead Wholesale Grocery	<i>Listed</i>	Indirect APE	Adverse
Historic Railroad, Stage Route, Travel – Great Northern Railway Depot	<i>Listed</i>	Indirect APE	Adverse
Historic Commercial Development – Kalispell Flour Mill	<i>Listed</i>	Indirect APE	Adverse

(a) Discussed separately as a Section 4(f) resource in **Section 3.16.2** of this EA.

(b) Recommended by FRA and MTHSPO that this resource is no longer eligible for listing in the NRHP due to compromised integrity of buildings; MTHSPO concurred.

3.16.2 Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative – There would be no use of Section 4(f) resources associated with the No-Build Alternative because the Project would not be constructed.

Build Alternative – No Section 4(f) uses would occur for Woodland Park, Heritage Park, Conrad Complex, Lawrence Park, or the Great Northern Historical Trail as a result of the proposed Project. FRA determined that Phase II of the proposed Project (construction of the Kalispell Trail) would adversely affect four historic properties; the MTHSPO, the official with jurisdiction over Section 4(f)-protected historic sites, concurred with FRA’s determination. However, only one of these historic properties, the Great Northern Railroad, would be directly adversely affected which constitutes a “use” under Section 4(f). Phase II of the proposed Project would have an indirect adverse effect on three historic architectural properties and an effect, but no adverse effect, on one historic district; however, these indirect effects are not of a nature that would result in a constructive use under Section 4(f). While current construction plans for the Kalispell Trail do not require construction activities outside of the existing BNSF owned ROW, FRA has identified the potential for a temporary occupancy during construction (e.g., construction staging activities and/or site access) in a small portion of Depot Park. FRA has preliminarily determined that even if such temporary occupancy is required, it would be a *de minimis* impact to Depot Park.

FRA, in consultation with MTHSPO, determined that Phase I of the proposed Project (Rail Park) would result in “no historic properties affected” because no historic properties are present in this portion of the APE; therefore, construction and operation of the proposed Rail Park would not result in any Section 4(f) use of historic properties.



Additional information to support FRA's proposed 4(f) determinations is provided below.

Construction Impacts

The direct adverse effect to the Great Northern Railroad through removal of the tracks and conversion of the former rail line to a public, recreational use trail would constitute a Section 4(f) use of this NRHP-eligible property.

As described above, the current construction plans do not require any construction activities outside of the existing BNSF owned ROW that currently bisects Depot Park. However, it is possible the City's contractor would require temporary occupancy of a portion of Depot Park (i.e., access, temporary construction easements, and/or construction staging for removal of the rail and improvements to construct the Kalispell Trail). If it is necessary, such a temporary occupancy is anticipated to result in a *de minimis* impact to this Section 4(f) resource. FRA expects that all permanent installations necessary for the new Kalispell Trail would remain in the abandoned railroad ROW and no permanent incorporation of Depot Park lands would occur. Most events and activities occur on the south side of the park between the Depot Building and East Center Street. The rail bisects a small portion of the park on the northern end.

The proposed Project would also result in indirect adverse visual effects to the NRHP-listed Kalispell Flour Mill, the Great Northern Railway Depot, and the Flathead Wholesale Grocery through the removal of the adjacent railroad tracks, which would remove the historically-important association between these three architectural properties and the railroad that once served them. However, these proximity impacts would not be so severe that the activities, features, or attributes that qualify the three historic properties for protection under Section 4(f) would be substantially impaired. The value of these resources, in terms of their Section 4(f) purpose and significance, would not be meaningfully reduced or lost. As described in 3.15 and the draft MOA in Appendix G, interpretive signage would be installed along the proposed Kalispell Trail to highlight the historic importance of the railroad that previously existed there. Furthermore, the abandoned railroad ROW would remain as open space, with no new development that would encroach upon or block views to/from the historic buildings. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in a constructive use of the Kalispell Flour Mill, the Great Northern Railway Depot, or the Flathead Wholesale Grocery.

As described below, the proposed Project would not result in a Section 4(f) use for Woodland Park, Heritage Park, Conrad Complex, Lawrence Park, or the Great Northern Historical Trail.

Woodland Park: No permanent or temporary ROW or easements located on park land would be required to construct the proposed Project. In addition, construction activities and completion of the street connection would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes qualifying the park for protection under Section 4(f). Roadways and traffic currently exist along the park boundaries; traffic noise and the visual setting would not change drastically from existing conditions as a result of the proposed street connection.

Heritage Park: No permanent or temporary ROW or easements located on park land would be required to construct the proposed Project. In addition, construction activities and completion of the street connection would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes qualifying the park for protection under Section 4(f). Roadways and traffic currently exist along the park boundaries; traffic



noise and the visual setting would not change drastically from existing conditions as a result of the proposed street connection.

Conrad Complex: No permanent or temporary ROW or easements located on this sports complex would be required to construct the proposed Project; all work to install the proposed traffic signal would occur within MDT ROW. In addition, construction activities and completion of the street signal would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes qualifying the sports complex for protection under Section 4(f). High usage roadways (US Highway 2) and heavy traffic currently exist along the complex boundaries; traffic noise and the visual setting would not change drastically from existing conditions as a result of the proposed traffic signal or Rail Park.

Lawrence Park: No permanent or temporary ROW or easements located on park land would be required to construct the proposed Project. In addition, construction activities would not be visible from the park or adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes qualifying the park for protection under Section 4(f). Roadways and traffic currently exist along the park boundaries; traffic noise and the visual setting would not change drastically from existing conditions as a result of the proposed Project.

Great Northern Historical Trail: No permanent or temporary ROW or easements located on the existing rails-to-trails property would be required. Roadways and traffic currently exist immediately adjacent to the Great Northern Historical Trail; traffic noise and the visual setting would not change from current conditions as a result of the construction of the proposed Kalispell Trail. Construction activities would be visible to users of the Great Northern Historical Trail, but these activities would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes qualifying the property for protection under Section 4(f). The proposed Kalispell Trail would not directly tie into the existing Great Northern Historical Trail system; however, it is anticipated that users of this existing trail would readily use the proposed Kalispell Trail, and vice versa.

Operational Impacts

As described above, the construction, and subsequent operation, of the proposed Kalispell Trail would have a direct adverse effect on the Great Northern Railroad through the cessation of rail operations and removal of the tracks, thereby removing the visual evidence of the historic transportation function that once contributed to the development and prosperity of Kalispell. This direct adverse effect would constitute a use under Section 4(f). As described below, FRA has determined there are no feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives to the use of this Section 4(f) property and has identified, through the Section 106 process, measures to minimize harm to the property.

An integral part of the Purpose and Need for the proposed Project is the “rails-to-trails” component, which is contingent upon the abandonment of rail service and removal of a portion of the rail line. Without this conversion, the Project would not meet its Purpose and Need described in Chapter 1. The proposed Project would address several needs for the community of Kalispell, including correcting inefficient traffic operations, providing safe non-motorized travel options, providing a central location for business and economic diversity and growth for industrial rail users, and creating an attractive public-use recreational trail for residents and visitors, enabling community revitalization and infill at the heart of the City. None of these needs would be met without the conversion of the existing BNSF rail line to the proposed Kalispell Trail.



From a safety perspective, the current location of the existing railroad tracks causes several dead-ended streets traveling north-south, creating traffic back-up and six unsafe at-grade railroad crossings. The current location of the railroad tracks and rail-served business (CHS) causes large grain trucks to back up onto 5th Avenue West North while waiting to load and unload, thereby creating safety concerns for other motorists trying to pass stationary grain trucks in the opposite traffic lane. In addition, these large grain trucks clog local roadways in the Core Area that are not built for heavy truck traffic or wide turning radii, especially in the height of the tourism season which coincides with grain harvest. Currently, options for non-motorized travel are lacking in the Core Area. Pedestrians and bicyclists unsafely navigate streets that do not have designated pedestrian crossings or bike lanes.

The conversion of the historic Great Northern Railroad is necessary to meet the Project's Purpose and Need and FRA has determined there are no feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives that could also achieve the Project's Purpose and Need. In addition, taking the preservationist purpose of Section 4(f) into account, while the rail-to-trail conversion would result in an adverse effect to the historic railroad, it would be converted into a public-use, recreational resource and would therefore continue to be considered a Section 4(f) resource.

As previously noted, an MOA has been drafted through consultation among FRA, MTSHP, the City, the Historical Society, KBID, and FCEDA pursuant to Section 106 that includes mitigation measures to resolve the adverse effects of the Project on historic properties. The draft MOA is included in **Appendix G, Draft Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement**.

The three historical architectural properties would not be directly impacted by the proposed Project. No permanent or temporary ROW or easements would be required from any of these properties. Roadways and traffic currently exist adjacent to these properties; traffic noise and visuals would not change from current, baseline conditions as a result of the Kalispell Trail. In addition, construction activities would be temporary and operation would not impact the defining features or attributes of the three architectural properties that warrant Section 4(f) protection. As described above under *construction impacts*, the indirect effects to Flathead Wholesale Grocery, Great Northern Railway Depot, and Kalispell Flour Mill do not rise to the level of a constructive use under Section 4(f).

Regarding operational impacts to the 4(f)-protected parks and recreational areas, see the analysis presented above under construction impacts.

3.16.3 Mitigation

To identify measures to minimize harm to the Great Northern Railroad, FRA has consulted and continues to consult with MTSHP, which is the official with jurisdiction over 4(f)-protected NRHP-listed or eligible properties. FRA, MTSHP, the City, the Historical Society, KBID, and FCEDA, are continuing Section 106 consultation to resolve the adverse effects of the proposed Kalispell Trail to historic properties. Mitigation measures stipulated in the draft MOA include retaining a small portion of the tracks in place near the Great Northern Railway Depot within Depot Park. This would preserve actual track at the most appropriate location, and provide a location for placement of a rail car in the future if it is desirable by the community and feasible to obtain. The draft MOA also calls for the installation of interpretive signage at six locations along the proposed Kalispell Trail that would highlight the historic importance of the railroad to the development and prosperity of Kalispell and the region. Last, as stipulated in the draft MOA, cherry trees would be planted interspersed along the



proposed Kalispell Trail with emphasis in the location of the former Flathead Lake Cherry Growers Association Warehouse at 20 North Main Street, which would commemorate the area's history of agriculture, particularly cherry orchards along Flathead Lake to the south, and the impact of this product on the area which provided greater economic diversity for the community of Kalispell. The draft MOA is being circulated with this EA for a 30-day public comment period. The MOA would be executed prior to FRA making a NEPA decision. Please refer to **Appendix G, Section 106 Draft Memorandum of Agreement**.

FRA will notify the City of Kalispell's Parks Director, who is the official with jurisdiction over Depot Park. Circulation of this EA serves as the public's opportunity to comment on FRA's proposed *de minimis* impact determination regarding Depot Park. Written concurrence from the City of Kalispell's Parks Director, as well as any mitigation commitments that may need to be negotiated among FRA, the City, and the City of Kalispell's Parks Director to address temporary construction-period impacts to Depot park, would be required prior to FRA making a final Section 4(f) *de minimis* determination and prior to FRA making a NEPA decision.

3.17 Cumulative and Indirect Impacts

Cumulative impacts result from incremental consequences of an action "when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions" (40 CFR 1508.7). Effects of an action may be minor when evaluated in an individual context, but these effects can add to other disturbances and collectively may lead to a measurable environmental change. By evaluating the impacts of the proposed action with effects of other actions, the relative contribution of the proposed action to a projected cumulative impact can be estimated.

CEQ defines indirect effects as those "which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable." Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems (40 CFR 1508.8). Few resources would result in indirect effects, but they are discussed in the following subsections, as applicable.

3.17.1 Affected Environment

The following subsections identify past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects and actions planned within the vicinity of the proposed action. Individually, these projects and actions result in direct and indirect impacts on environment, and together they result in cumulative impacts on the environment. For the purposes of this analysis, the geographical area considered for potential cumulative effects focuses on projects and actions within the vicinity of Kalispell (i.e., 0.5-mile radius of the city limits). This spatial area is expected to encompass potential cumulative effects applicable to all resource areas considered.

The MDT, in coordination with state and federal agencies, local and Tribal governments, metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), public agencies, citizens, and other interested parties, developed the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is in accordance with the requirements of 23 USC § 135, and lists transportation projects and needs for the state of Montana



during the upcoming fiscal years 2016 to 2020. According to the STIP, the following eight projects are located within 50 miles of the Project Area (MDT 2016).

- ◆ **Kalispell Bypass** – completed 2016.
- ◆ **Restriping of Main Street (US Highway 93)** – Location: US-93; FY 2016.
- ◆ **UPN-6848 Swan River-5M Big Fork** – Location: S-209; Bridge Replacement; FY 2016.
- ◆ **UPN-8083 S FK Flathead – Hungry Horse** – Location: US-2; Bridge Replacement; FY 2017.
- ◆ **UPN-7884 SF 119-Slope Flatten S-206** – Location S-206; Slope Flattening; FY 2017.
- ◆ **UPN-8626 SF 139-Dern Spring Reconstruct** – Location: US-2; Intersection Improvements; FY 2017.

Consistent with the CEQ guidance (1997; 2005), FRA and the City of Kalispell did not consider cumulative or indirect effects on resources that were not adversely or permanently affected by the proposed Project. Considering that the Build Alternative would have no effect on water resources, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, bald and golden eagles, wildlife, fish and vegetation, visual resources, and public health and safety, it would not contribute to a cumulative effect on these resources.

As described in Chapter 3 of this EA, there is a potential for minor impacts due to the Build Alternative on air quality, noise and vibration, land use, energy use, socioeconomics and environmental justice, cultural resources, hazardous waste, and Section 4(f) properties. A discussion of the potential cumulative impacts and indirect (if applicable) for each of those listed resource areas is included in the following subsections. The proposed Build Alternative is not anticipated to result in significant, cumulative impacts.

3.17.1.1 Air Quality

Temporary, minimal impacts on air quality would be associated with the Project and reasonably foreseeable projects due to construction activities and the generation of fugitive dust. Impacts from each project would be localized and temporary in nature, and therefore, would result in a negligible, cumulative effect on this resource.

Indirect impacts could result based on tenants that move to the Rail Park during future operations. However, any future businesses relocating or leasing within the Rail Park would be required to obtain individual MTDEQ- and EPA-required air quality permits, as needed.

3.17.1.2 Noise and Vibration

Moderate increases in noise would be associated with the Rail Park and surrounding areas; however, noise sources would be removed from the Kalispell Trail areas due to track removal. Also, since trains are already active on the existing mainline, the noise of locomotives, coupling of railcars, train horns, and other rail-related noise sources already influence the surrounding soundscape. In addition, train operations are expected to be infrequent (up to 12 days per month) and during daytime hours. Due to



these reasons, including the existing presence of trains, the proposed Project would not result in any cumulative effect on noise and vibration.

Noise and vibration impacts throughout the Core Area would indirectly decrease from the removal of the existing rail tracks and associated train traffic.

3.17.1.3 Land Use

The proposed Rail Park would convert a former gravel pit and EPA brownfield into a functioning industrial use area. The Project would convert land in current industrial uses to a recreational, green space and public-use trail. The reasonably foreseeable future projects would not result in large land conversions, as a majority of those projects are already functioning as transportation corridors. Due to the benefit to land conversions associated with the proposed Kalispell Trail and lack of land conversion in future projects, there would be a negligible, cumulative effect on this resource.

Land use may indirectly change near the proposed Kalispell Trail by spurring development of new businesses throughout the Core Area. This would be a beneficial change in land use, from vacant and blighted lots to a vibrant community development.

3.17.1.4 Energy Use

The proposed Project would increase the efficiency and capacity of rail operations in the Project Area and would result in reduced traffic delay times and a decrease in fuel usage. Construction of the Project and other future, reasonably foreseeable projects would temporarily increase energy use through equipment and other construction activities. However, the Project and reasonably foreseeable future projects are anticipated to also increase efficiency and safety along other transportation corridors. When considered with the reasonably foreseeable future actions, the Project would result in a negligible, cumulative effect on this resource.

Community growth and development because of the proposed Project may increase the energy demand on the City. All growth impacts resulting from the Project would be consistent with applicable land use planning documents and zoning, and indirect impacts to energy use are anticipated to be minimal.

3.17.1.5 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

The proposed Project and the reasonably foreseeable future actions are anticipated to help foster future economic growth and add employment to the local community. It is not anticipated that the future growth from the reasonably foreseeable future actions, in combination with the Project, would result in negative, cumulative impacts to the Study Area. The proposed Rail Park and Kalispell Trail are expected to increase community cohesion and safety for residents within the Study Area, as are the reasonably foreseeable projects. The jobs created, increased community cohesion, and increased safety resulting from the Project and reasonably foreseeable future actions are anticipated to have a beneficial, cumulative effect on socioeconomic resources in the Study Area.

Indirectly, the proposed Project may increase community growth and development due to the planned infrastructure associated with both the Rail Park and the Kalispell Trail. The Kalispell Trail would provide an attractive community area to establish businesses with more efficient access by traffic and pedestrian transport compared to current conditions, which would increase jobs and economic



opportunity within the community. The Rail Park may also incentivize new industrial businesses to establish within Kalispell, which would drive economics and attract people for employment. This intensification of future development could result in ambient effects, such as additional lighting, grading/soils disturbance, and increased impervious surfaces. Anticipated growth impacts resulting from the proposal would be consistent with applicable land use planning documents and zoning and are anticipated to be minimal.

3.17.1.6 *Hazardous Waste*

The Project is not expected to encounter environmental contamination, disturb existing USTs, use large amounts of hazardous materials, or generate large amounts of hazardous wastes. In general, development projects improve conditions because of required cleanups, permits, and Phase I and II ESAs; therefore, the Project in conjunction with reasonably foreseeable projects is not likely to contribute to cumulative effects regarding hazardous waste.

No indirect, hazardous waste-related impacts are anticipated due to the Project.

3.17.1.7 *Cultural Resources*

The second phase of the proposed Project, construction of the Kalispell Trail, would have an adverse effect to four historic properties. The Great Northern Railroad would be directly adversely affected by removal of the railroad tracks. Three historic architectural properties adjacent to the current railroad would be indirectly affected by removal of the railroad tracks. These adverse effects would be resolved through the Section 106 consultation process. No significant, cumulative impacts to cultural resources are anticipated.

No indirect effects are anticipated.

3.18 Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitments of Resources

As with any construction project, certain irreversible and irretrievable commitments of natural resources, manpower, material, and fiscal resources are required. Use of land is considered an irreversible commitment during the time period that the land is used for a transportation facility. However, if a greater need arises for the use of the land, or if the transportation facility is no longer needed, the land could be converted to another use. At present, there is no reason to believe that such a conversion would be necessary or desirable.

Considerable amounts of fossil fuels, labor, and construction materials (i.e., steel, cement, aggregate and bituminous material etc.) would be expended to complete the proposed Project. Additionally, large amounts of labor and natural resources would be used in the fabrication and preparation of construction materials. These materials are generally not retrievable once used, although all reasonable measures to recycle and reuse materials would be encouraged such as steel rail lines would be reused when possible; rail too worn would be sold as scrap metal and/or recycled. Any construction would require a substantial one-time expenditure of local, state, and federal funds, which are not retrievable; however, the anticipated beneficial effects of construction and operation of the proposed Project would counteract the irretrievable commitment of resources.



3.19 Permits

The following permits are expected to be required for the proposed Project. All needed permits, listed here or other, would be obtained prior to the beginning of construction. Please refer to **Table 13, Anticipated Permits**.

Table 13, Anticipated Permits

PERMIT	JURISDICITONAL ENTITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Montana Stormwater General Permit	MTDEQ	Contractor
Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System	MTDEQ	City
Contractors Right of Entry	BNSF	Contractor
Third Party Work Plan	MTDEQ	City
Encroachment Permit	MDT	City
Asbestos Demolition Notification (as needed pending inspection by certified ACM inspector)	MTDEQ	City



CHAPTER 4 COORDINATION AND COMMENTS

Coordination efforts began in the early stages of project planning and are intended to maintain consistent communication with residents, public officials, businesses, property owners, regulatory and resource agencies, and other stakeholders during from early planning through to project design and construction. This process affords interested parties to review and comment on key issues associated with the overall project. Public participation is encouraged through public meetings held in an effort to provide information to interested stakeholders and to receive community input regarding the alternatives being considered, potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed project, and other concerns.

4.1 Agency Coordination

Early communication and coordination was initiated through an early scoping package sent by the City of Kalispell to Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies and other interested parties on May 23, 2013 and May 8, 2015 to ensure that social, economic, and environmental effects were considered in the development of the Build Alternative. This scoping package included information on the proposed Project and solicitation for comments or concerns.

Twenty responses to the both scoping packages were received by the conclusion of the scoping periods from May 23, 2013 to June 23, 2013 and May 8th to May 29, 2015. The comments provided valuable insight into the evaluation of potential environmental impacts. The comments were considered where appropriate within the environmental impact categories analyzed in this EA. Please refer to **Appendix A, Solicitation of Views Package and Responses**.

Section 106 coordination began on May 10, 2016 with a kickoff meeting. Representatives from FRA, the City, MTSHPO, FCEDA, and the Northwest Montana Historical Society were present. Please refer to **Appendix F, Section 106 Materials**.

4.2 Public Outreach

This EA is being made available for a 30-day public review and comment period, to satisfy the public involvement requirements of NEPA, Section 106, and Section 4(f). The EA will be posted on the City's and FRA's websites, as well as made available in hard copy at City Hall (201 First Avenue East, Kalispell) and the Imaginelf Library (247 First Avenue East, Kalispell). Notice of the document's availability will be posted via the City of Kalispell website, Facebook, RSS newsfeed, and Twitter. In addition, a public open house where attendees will be able to offer comments on the proposed Project and the EA will be held in concert with the 30-day comment period. Notices for the public meeting and the availability of the EA will be published in the local newspaper (The Daily Inter Lake) and other readily available public outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

Any substantive comments received during the public comment, particularly those that warrant additional analyses in order to determine the effects of the proposed Project on the human environment, will be addressed in FRA's final NEPA decision document.



4.2.1 Past Public Outreach

The proposed Project is the result of a major community planning effort known as the Kalispell Core Area Plan, funded by a Brownfields Area Wide Planning Pilot Program Planning Grant from the EPA. The plan development and community outreach has extended for over two and a half years. The Kalispell Core Area Plan included an area of 450 property owners. Of those 450, 140 property owners were interviewed by City staff, representing 60% of the plan area land ownership. Six newsletters were mailed out to all 450 property owners, elected officials, and media outlets during the planning process. Open houses were held in March and December 2011 and August 2012. Core Area Steering Committee public meetings were held on April 10 and 25, May 23 and June 26, 2012. A booth at the county fair was staffed for five days in August 2012. In August 2012, the City presented the Core Area Plan to 214 people at the monthly Kalispell Chamber of Commerce Luncheon. Public access TV ran the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce presentation for one month after the luncheon. Televised Planning Board hearings were held in September and October 2012 and were repeated on the public access channel for one month. Televised City Council hearings were held in November and December 2012 and were repeated on public access television for one month. Please refer to **Appendix H, Public Outreach**.

Since the City Council adopted the Core Area Plan in December 2012, the proposed Project has been the focus of 12 public presentations by City staff to such organizations as the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Leadership Flathead, Kalispell Lions, KBID, Kalispell Development Association, and Brown Bags at the Community College, Kalispell School District 5, and the Kalispell Urban Renewal Association. The Kalispell City Council traveled to Washington, DC in both 2014 and 2015 to solicit support from Montana's Senators and Congressmen for the proposed Project. Each trip was preceded and followed up by a series of televised public meetings and council presentations.

4.3 Applicable Regulations and Rules

The following statutes and orders apply to the proposed Project and were considered during the preparation of the EA:

- ◆ Endangered Species Act, as regulated at 50 CFR Part 17
- ◆ Public Law 91-190, National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 USC § 4321 et seq., signed January 1, 1970
- ◆ Public Law 95-217, CWA of 1977, 33 USC § 1251-1376
- ◆ Sections 9 and 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, 33 USC § 401
- ◆ Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 54 USC § 306108
- ◆ Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended, 49 USC § 303
- ◆ Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA), 33 USC § 1344
- ◆ Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, 16 USC § 460
- ◆ Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 42 FR 26951, signed May 24, 1977



- ◆ Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 42 FR 26961, signed May 24, 1977
- ◆ Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 59 FR 7629, signed February 11, 1994



CHAPTER 5 LIST OF PREPARERS

This chapter identifies the names and qualifications of the principal contributors to this EA. In accordance with Part 1502.6 of the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA, the efforts of an interdisciplinary team comprising technicians and experts in various fields were required to accomplish this study.

Table 14, Preparers

AFFILIATION	NAME	TITLE	PROJECT ROLE	
Federal Railroad Administration	Laura Shick	Environmental Protection Specialist and Federal Preservation Officer	Lead Federal Agency; Document Review	
	Valarie Kniss	Regional Manager Northwest Regional Manager	Lead Federal Agency; Document Review	
VOLPE Center	Mark Hardgrove	President, Planning Innovations, Inc.	Document Review	
	Travis Mast	Biologist	Document Review	
	Jennifer Papazian	Environmental Protection Specialist	Document Review	
City of Kalispell	Katharine Thompson	Assistant Director for Community and Economic Development	Senior Review	
	Tom Jentz	Planning & Building Director	Senior Review	
KLJ	Mark Rohweder	Municipal Engineer	Project Manager	
	Grady Wolf	Environmental Planner	Senior Internal Review	
	Becky Baker	Environmental Planner	Senior Internal Review	
	Jessica Aasand	Environmental Lead	Impact Assessment, Primary Author	
	Jim Welch	Archaeologist	APE Development	
	Duane Kaul	GIS Analyst	Digital Mapping; Exhibit Creation	
	Dirk Peterson	GIS Analyst	Digital Mapping; Exhibit Creation	
	Historical Discoveries	Dagny Krigbaum	Archaeologist	Cultural Survey; Cultural Report Author
	Rabbitbrush Archeological Services	Brian Herbel	Archaeologist	Cultural Survey; Cultural Report Author
	Big Sky Acoustics, LLC	Kristin Connolly	Noise and Vibration Analyst, Author	Noise and Vibration Study and Report
Sean Connolly		Noise and Vibration Analyst, Author	Noise and Vibration Study and Report	



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