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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RUSSELL STREET BRIDGE TRAFFIC CHANGING

Montana Department of Transportation to change driving lane configurations in preparation of new bridge opening

MISSOULA, Montana (April 11, 2019) – The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) announces that drivers will soon be transitioned onto the newly-constructed Russell Street Bridge. Prior to that time, beginning **the week of April 15**, drivers will experience lane reductions and detours to make room for temporary traffic signals.

Northbound drivers planning to head east toward downtown will not be able to make a right turn at the intersection of Broadway and Russell. To provide access to this area, there will be a marked detour. The detour will continue north on Russell Street, west onto Birch Street then east onto Broadway Street. The map to the right outlines this route. There will also be a lane closure for drivers heading east on Broadway looking to take a left turn on to Russell Street. There will be additional detour routes. Maps with this information can be found on the [project webpage](#).



Purple line indicates Broadway Street

“We understand that limiting access along the Russell Street – Broadway to Dakota project area will cause some delays – especially along Broadway - and we are committed to doing all we can to minimize these impacts,” Missoula District Construction Engineer Bob Vosen said. “We need to install temporary traffic signals to finish the roadway between the new bridge and Russell and Broadway Streets. The temporary signals take up some room and we made the decision to reduce travel lanes for the safety of the traveling public.”

With temporary signals, roadway work, and bridge construction all taking up real estate on Russell Street, there will be lane restrictions. While delays will be limited as much as possible, MDT anticipates that drivers will have a longer commute throughout the next few months within the Russell Street – Broadway to Dakota project limits. As such, alternative routes are advised.

Temporary signals will be installed to assign and facilitate safe traffic flow while crews construct new intersection improvements. The temporary signals will operate until the bridge is fully constructed and permanent signals are installed in the coming months.

All travel – vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian – is anticipated to be routed on to the new bridge in early May. The new configuration for the east half of the new Russell Street Bridge will maintain two-way traffic. Drivers will be familiar with the lane configurations. The only big change will be the addition of a shared-use path on the eastern side of the bridge.

However, at that time, there will be additional impacts to travel on/from River Road and Liberty Lane.

Once traffic is swapped to the new bridge in May, **only right turns will be allowed out of River Road – heading south on Russell Street**. There will be no other turn options to/from River Road until the west half of the bridge is completed. For drivers looking to access River Road, the detour route will be west on Wyoming Street to Curtis Street, then north on Curtis Street to River Road.

There will also be **intermittent closures on Liberty Lane** in order to build the new west half of Russell Street. The detour will be on/off of Broadway Street from Cooper Street, near the McDonalds restaurant approach.

Additional information about these impacts will be shared as plans are finalized.

Safety is always the top priority for vehicular, pedestrian, and non-motorized traffic. To maintain safety for the public, there will be detours for all modes of travel. There will also be trail and road closures to ensure that the public is kept safe from construction activities. Signs will be posted to inform the public of detours. All are reminded to please follow signage as posted.

April 8-12 marks “National Work Zone Awareness Week.” Governor Bullock has designated that Montana recognize this week “in remembrance of Jeffrey Dykeman, Billings District Engineering Project Manager, who was tragically hit and killed while working along I-90 South in Billings.”

The Russell Street – Broadway to Dakota project is one of the largest infrastructure projects in the Missoula Valley. While progress has been made, it is still an active work zone. As such, ensuring the public is well informed of progress and plans is critical to maintaining a productive and safe area for travelers and workers alike. All are encouraged to sign up for regular updates by texting “Russell” to 41411 or by sending a request to Katie at katie@bigskypublicrelations.com.

The project continues to stay on schedule. The west section of the bridge is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2019, with all elements of the bridge finalized in 2020. This will include landscaping, surfacing, and formalizing all intersection connection points. The signal at the Russell Street and Milwaukee Street intersection is anticipated to be delivered later this spring and will be operational by the end of the summer. The Milwaukee Trail pedestrian underpass will be open for use in the fall and Riverfront Trail connections will be formalized and open upon full completion of the Russell Street Bridge.

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