MONTANA WILDLIFE & TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT PROGRAM

DETAILED PROJECT APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Refer to this Detailed Project Application Guidance for instructions on completing each section of the application. Include the necessary attachments.

The on-line fillable project application form is available at:

MWTP Program Application Form

Incomplete applications and applications received outside of each application cycle will not be evaluated during the current application cycle. The Committee encourages applicants to be as concise as possible, while still providing sufficient detail to understand all facets of the proposed project and evaluate the merits of the project based on the selection criteria.

I. APPLICATION INFORMATION (not scored)

A. Applicant Name, Affiliation, and Contact Information (mailing address, phone, email)

B. Contact Person and Contact information (if different than applicant)

C. Landowner and/or Lessee Name(s) and Contact information Include names and property addresses of immediately adjacent and directly impacted landowners, both public and private. This information is available from Montana Cadastral. Note whether you have discussed the project with these individuals. Discussion with adjacent landowners may not be necessary for some projects that are small scale, limited scope, and/or occur only within the highway right-of-way.

II. PROJECT INFORMATION (not scored)

A. Project Name Use a descriptive project name that includes the general location and project type (e.g., Happy Valley Overpass; Underpasses Hwy 123 west of My Town; Wildlife Fencing at Cold Creek Bridge)

B. County

C. Highway and Mile Markers Mile Markers (MM) can be found by searching the Planning Tool. Include MM to the 0.10-mile if possible. Include discrete MM locations for spot improvements (e.g., sign location, structure, jump-out

location). Include MM ranges for longer stretches of treatments (e.g., runs of fencing).

D. **Geographic Location** Described by Township Range Section (TRS), Lat/Long, or precise geographic location. TRS can be found on Montana Cadastral.

E. **Provide a brief overview of your project** Identify the challenge, proposed solution, and expected benefits in a few sentences to one paragraph in length.

III. NEEDS and BENEFITS (Max 20 points, Weighted x 3 = 60 points)

A. **Describe the PURPOSE and NEED of your project. (Score 0-5)** Include a detailed description of the challenge, proposed solution, and expected benefit. This section should highlight the justification for your project. While this section should summarize the following B, C, and D responses, it should be able to stand alone as the primary story of the project's purpose.

B. **Describe and provide the DATA that support your project purpose and need. (Score 0-5)** Reference and/or provide the data summaries, analyses and other information sources used and describe how they support the project's purpose and need. Include both broad scale and localized (fine-scale, project level) data summaries and analyses, if possible. Identify sources for data and/or analyses. Include original data summaries or analyses as attachments.

   Example data sources may include but are not limited to: Montana Wildlife & Transportation Partnership Planning Tool, scientific or practitioner literature citations and references, collar data from public agencies, camera trap data, documented observational data (tracks, hair, paths, etc.), analysis results from public agencies or university research, relevant citizen-science datasets, wildlife habitat/movement models from various sources, and local knowledge. Using the Planning Tool, identify the score of each of the project highway segments within the project area and the average score over all the segments in the project area. Described how the Planning Tool informed the selection of the general project area.

C. **Describe your PROJECT PROPOSAL. Include detailed description of the specific features and strategies proposed in your project. (Score 0-5)** Describe specific features and strategies for addressing each aspect of the purpose and need described above. Include number, size, location, extent, length, etc. Projects can be a range or combination of scopes or

scales (e.g., fencing, overpass, signage, or all of the above). Include whether the project is a proposal for new infrastructure or includes a retrofit or modification of existing infrastructure.

D. **Describe the expected BENEFITS of your project (safety/connectivity). (Score 0-5)** Include case study examples, expert opinion, and/or scientific literature that support or illustrate the expected benefits of the proposed accommodation features and strategies by showing the type and extent of expected change in condition or consequences of project implementation. Describe how you expect your project to achieve these benefits. Describe how the project features and strategies reduce wildlife-vehicle conflict and/or help improve connectivity within the broader landscape.

IV. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (Max 20 points)

A. **Describe the LANDOWNER and COMMUNITY involvement and support of your project. (Score 0-5)** There are several ways to demonstrate landowner and community involvement/support. Possible examples include project endorsements (i.e., letters of support), development of working groups or partnerships, public meeting comments, etc.

It is critically important to garner the involvement and support of landowners of property immediately adjacent to the project, or if consequences of the project have the potential to directly affect property owned or managed by others. This is true of all property outside of MDT right-of-way, be it private, public, tribal, or other. Describe the extent to which you have engaged these individuals and describe their feedback on the project proposal.

B. **Describe the LAND PROTECTIONS and LAND USE on the properties adjacent to or directly affected by your project. (Score 0-5)** This can include conservation easements, land use/zoning type, restrictions, requirements, or covenants, public land, nearby conservation investments and activities, and adjacent current, planned, or future land uses and activities.

This may include management direction that impacts the project area, including relevant plans, reports, or guidance from MDT, FWP, USFWS, USFS, BLM, Tribes, or local government, such as county or city growth policies or management plans, the Statewide Transportation Improvement

Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan, SO 3362 MT Action Plan, National Forest Plans, BLM Resource Management Plans, etc.

C. **Describe other PLANNED or COMPLEMENTARY EFFORTS (public or private) that add value to your project. (Score 0-5)** Describe any efforts completed, underway, or planned within or outside of the highway corridor and in the vicinity of the project that would add value to a wildlife accommodation project. These may include but are not limited to human-wildlife conflict mitigation projects (e.g. securing attractants, electric fencing, range riders or shepherds), wildlife-friendly fencing projects, or habitat restoration projects. These may be associated with agencies, organizations, private individual efforts, or others. Identify the status of the effort and the implementing entity(ies).

D. **What PARTNERSHIPS are in place in support of your project and what ROLE does each partner play in project implementation? (Score 0-5)** Identify the project partners and describe the role of each partner in developing, implementing, and/or funding the project.

V. FUNDING (Max 10 points)

In this section, we encourage you to work with an engineering firm or MDT staff to assist you in building the cost estimate.

Note: An example of a completed Project Budget Worksheet is included in Appendix B for your reference. Ensure you download the MWTP Project Budget Worksheet Template, under a new name, then upload and submit your completed worksheet with your project application. Complete both the Costs and Revenue tabs and submit one Project Budget Worksheet for your project.

A. **Provide the COST ESTIMATE for your project. (Score 0-5)**
Provide the total estimated cost of project implementation, including project development, design, and construction to the extent possible. **Feasibility, Engineering Design and Construction Engineering are all auto-fill costs based on the construction subtotal.** Include estimates for major line items in your proposal. Average bid prices from the most current year are available from the MDT Contract Archives website. **Note:** These prices include labor and equipment costs associated with installation of that item. Contingency is calculated based on the level of design that has been completed. If you only have a few items identified, select “no level of design

is complete". If you have enlisted the assistance of an engineer and they have calculated the major design features (e.g., bridge, culvert, fencing, and associated roadway impacts), select "design complete". If a feasibility study has been completed for the project, select "feasibility study is complete". MDT will provide standard values for inflation and indirect cost allocation plan (ICAP) in the template on an annual basis. For inflation, you will need to assume the year construction will take place. For a minor vegetation or fencing project, assume 2 years. For a larger/major project with funding in place, assume 3 years. For all other projects, assume 5 years. MDT personnel, engineering consultants, product or material vendors, or contractors may also be able to assist with cost estimation.

B. Describe the FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS and SOURCES proposed for your project. (Score 0-5)

Funding does not have to be fully secured to submit an application. Describe how you anticipate securing funding for the project. The project funding must be secured to proceed beyond the feasibility study phase. On a case-by-case basis (e.g., no federal funding involved at the time and a less complex project proposal), MDT may proceed into the project development phase when sufficient funding is in place to complete the design, regardless of project phase. Describe the project funding plan, including a description (i.e., amount and status) of anticipated funding sources for your project. Indicate if funding is secured, pending, or possible and identify timeframes and steps required to secure funding sources. The spreadsheet will calculate the difference between the cost estimate and the projected revenue. If the spreadsheet shows a positive value for "Current Gap in All Funding" describe options you propose to cover that gap, if known. Describe opportunities and potential for procurement of additional funding for project implementation, if needed.

VI. PRELIMINARY PROJECT FEASIBILITY and OPPORTUNITY (Max 25 Points)

In Section VI, information requirements will depend on the scope of the project. All projects may not require each component listed below. To help with determining what is required, some information requests have been split between less complex projects and more complex projects.

Less complex projects may include the following: Minor fencing or wing-fencing, signing, vegetation management within the right-of-way (ROW), no major equipment operation or earth moving activities, minimal ground disturbance, limited design requirements, no system impact, authorizations

limited to an encroachment permit authorized by MDT. A system impact is considered a disruption to traffic flow or the travelling public and any effects or modifications to infrastructure or appurtenances within the right-of-way of highways and roadways under MDT jurisdiction. An encroachment permit is an authorization granted by MDT for entities other than MDT to perform work or maintenance within the highway ROW. The Encroachment Permit Application is available at https://app.mdt.mt.gov/mntencr/.

More complex projects may include the following: Additions or modifications to existing infrastructure with system impact, longer stretches of wildlife exclusionary fencing with jump-outs, replacement of existing wildlife crossings, new structures on any facility, projects where engineering and design is required, and projects likely to require authorizations and/or agreements from multiple entities/agencies. More complex projects will likely require an engineering survey and analysis of the proposal to determine the design and construction feasibility of the proposed project. This analysis can be performed by the applicant but is not required at the time of the application. If not completed, MDT or an outside firm may be required to perform the analysis prior to moving toward project design and implementation.

A. Describe input received from ENGINEERING OR TECHNICAL EXPERTS regarding the reasonable feasibility of your project proposal. (Score 0-5)

Describe which engineering and/or technical experts (MDT, FWP, Tribal, other) you worked with and what assistance or information they provided in assessing and evaluating the design/construction feasibility of your project proposal. This could include identification of red flags that resulted in a change to proposed project features, location, or extents, identification of items that may require further investigation and evaluation in the feasibility study phase, or other input that informed your project concept and proposal. Document any endorsements, concerns, or potential drawbacks of your project identified through this consultation.

Include specifics, if provided through your consultation, that will assist in determining the feasibility of the proposed project. For example, the local terrain and 20’ fill section provides adequate depth for a culvert/bridge underpass. Alternatively, the local terrain and 5’ fill section will likely require a substantial grade raise to accommodate the proposed underpass. Another example might be, the topography within the project area (e.g., rock outcrops, steep cut sections) provides logical end points to tie-in exclusionary fence, guiding wildlife to the crossing. Alternatively, the topography within the project area (e.g., graded agricultural land, flat grades

between the roadway and the adjacent ground) is not ideal to tie-in exclusionary fence. Additional measures to prevent animals from entering the highway side of the fence (end-runs) may be required.

B. Describe input received from WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS, TRANSPORTATION ECOLOGISTS, or OTHER EXPERTS regarding the identified challenge, purpose and need, proposed solution, and expected benefits. (Score 0-5) Describe which biologists, road ecologists and/or technical experts (MDT, FWP, Tribal, other) you worked with and what assistance or information they provided in assessing and evaluating the feasibility of your project proposal. This could include information that the project is not situated appropriately in the landscape based on their knowledge/data of where the elk herd crosses the highway, or new ownership of a property and subsequent operations have changed the movement pattern of the local deer herd. Other input or suggestions for improvements or modification to the project concept may assist in more appropriately addressing the challenge, fulfilling the stated purpose and need, identifying the appropriate solution, and supporting the expected benefits associated with the project. Other road ecology experts or scientists can be consulted for additional support of your proposal. Document any endorsements, concerns, or potential drawbacks of your project identified through this consultation.

C. Describe your proposal for CONSTRUCTION of your project. (Score 0-5) Explain who/which entity you are anticipating will administer the bidding and construction of the proposed project (e.g., MDT, local/tribal government, or a private entity). If not MDT, include contact information and other pertinent information regarding the experience and ability of this entity to bid and/or construct your project. Contractors must meet applicable licensing, insurance, and bonding requirements.

For less complex projects, construction is typically expected to be completed by the applicant or their agent (consultant/contractor) through an MDT encroachment permit (see link above in section VI). Describe if the work will be performed from the adjacent land (outside of MDT R/W) or within MDT R/W and to what extent.

D. Describe your proposal for POST-CONSTRUCTION MONITORING of your project effectiveness and benefit. (Score 0-5)

All projects will require some post-construction monitoring. Not all wildlife accommodation projects necessitate a comprehensive research study to evaluate accommodation effectiveness in providing safe passage for

wildlife and reducing wildlife-vehicle conflict. In-depth research may be warranted for projects that employ novel strategies or designs and/or for species for which there is limited research regarding use of crossing structures. For other projects using more standard strategies and designs, simply comparing 5-year pre- and post-construction wildlife-vehicle conflict rates (crash and carcass data) will usually provide sufficient evaluation of wildlife accommodation project effectiveness. The deployment of camera traps to monitor the use and refusal of crossing structures and movement at the fence ends and/or jump-outs can help capture changes in movement and permeability/connectivity.

Describe your monitoring plan and personnel/entity(ies) expected to evaluate and document to what extent you are achieving the purpose and expected benefits of the project, lessons learned, and any unforeseen consequences or adaptive management recommendations.

E. Describe your proposal for SHORT AND LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE and OPERATION of the proposed infrastructure and features associated with your project. (Score 0-5) For all projects, day–to-day maintenance (e.g. vegetation management, fence repair, etc.) is expected to be performed by the applicant or their agent. Maintenance agreements will be required and must be between MDT and a governmental entity such as a local or tribal government, or a subdivision of a local government such as a Conservation District. MDT will be responsible for the maintenance of project features on the interstate system and long-term inspection, maintenance, repair or replacement of structures or other major facilities. Operation of implemented project features (e.g., power, solar, lights, cellular, VMS signs, electronics, etc.) may be the responsibility of others as executed through agreements. If the project was executed through an encroachment permit (i.e., less complex projects), it is expected that the permit would extend to the maintenance activities. If no encroachment permit was obtained for the project (i.e., more complex projects), an encroachment permit will be necessary for the performance of maintenance activities by others.

Describe your proposal for the short- and long-term maintenance and operation of the project features and identify the responsible party(ies) or individuals. Include a proposed schedule and means of inspection of the affected features.