



Item: Resolution 9954, to redefine the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) project selection process

From: Andrew Finch, Senior Transportation Planner, Planning and Community Development

Initiated By: Planning and Community Development Department

Presented By: Mike Haynes, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development

Action Requested: City Commission accept Resolution 9954

Suggested Motion:

1. Commissioner moves:

“I move that the City Commission (accept/deny) Resolution 9954.”

2. Mayor calls for a second, discussion, inquiries from the public, and calls the vote.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the City Commission accept Resolution 9954 to redefine the project selection process for its Community Transportation Enhancement Program.

Background: Since December of 1991, States have been required to expend 10% of their Federal Surface Transportation funds on projects that would enhance the transportation system. Referred to as the “Enhancement Set-Aside,” these funds must be spent on projects that meet specific criteria. Eligible projects include bike and pedestrian facilities, historic preservation, landscaping and other non-traditional transportation projects—but all projects must also have a tie to the surface transportation system.

Each State is allowed to establish its own criteria for selecting projects. In Montana, the Montana Department of Transportation established the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) to allocate funds on a per-capita basis to eligible cities and counties. Each local agency is then allowed to establish its own project selection process.

The City of Great Falls and Cascade County passed resolutions in 1993 to establish a local program, appointing the City-County Planning Board as the agency charged with soliciting, reviewing and recommending eligible projects for final selection by the Cascade County Board of Commissioners and the Great Falls City Commission.

The City-County Planning Board subsequently established a set of rating criteria, a formal application and a formal selection process. The City-County Planning Board reviewed City and County projects at the same time, and made recommendations to both bodies.

In 2005, the Cascade County Board of Commissioners dissolved the City-County Planning Board. The County Planning Department took over CTEP duties for the County, and the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board and staff continued CTEP solicitation and management for the City of Great Falls.

Although the Program has been reviewed from time to time, the basic process has not changed substantially since its establishment in 1993.

Program Review

As with any long-running program, CTEP should be periodically reviewed for effectiveness. The Planning staff has recently done so, considering either continuing the program in its current format, or recommending another process that may more effectively forward community goals or better implement the intent of the Federal and State guidelines relating to the program.

After looking at the projects selected over the life of the program, it is clear that CTEP has contributed greatly to the quality of life in Great Falls and has had a positive impact on Great Falls' transportation network. Helping to fund more than \$8.2 million in projects, CTEP has installed roadside landscaping and welcome signs, restored historic buildings, created new urban streetscapes and extended sidewalks and trails.

However, Staff found that past projects have not always had a clear tie to community goals. As with any public source of funding, it is government's responsibility to ensure monies are expended on projects that have the greatest benefit or are targeted towards the greatest needs. Further, with generally declining revenues, it was evident that these funds should be more focused to needed improvements.

Some of the best guides for expenditure of certain "pots" of public dollars are the City's long-range planning documents. The Growth Policy, Transportation Plan, Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan, Medical District Master Plan, West Bank Park Plan and Downtown Master Plan all contain visions for the future of Great Falls. More specifically, the Plans include goals, objectives and strategies for implementation. A review of these Plans shows that the Community Transportation Enhancement Program could be an important funding source for implementing these community Plans, if projects are more carefully tailored to doing so.

Conclusion

The current project selection process is open to any eligible applicant, and does not place heavy emphasis on compatibility with community goals and objectives. To more responsibly expend public dollars, and to more effectively implement the City's long-range Plans, staff recommends a modified selection process to create a more focused, targeted and expedited program.

The updated process would begin with the Planning & Community Development Department first reviewing the City's planning documents for eligible projects. Working in coordination with other City Departments and community partners, staff would then develop scopes and cost estimates and

identify matching funds for a list of prioritized projects for review and selection by the City Commission. The City Commission would make the final decision on all projects.

This new process would:

- *Move the community toward accomplishment of its stated goals and objectives.*
- *Spur redevelopment and private investment. Often, one public project can be a springboard to private development.*
- *Allow for construction of infrastructure investments that have been long postponed due to lack of funding, and that otherwise might not be built.*
- *Speed up the project selection process.*
- *Allow for a narrow tailoring of project types and locations to reap the greatest benefit. Key areas would be the Riverfront, Downtown, redeveloping areas, underserved neighborhoods, underdeveloped major arterials, areas with safety concerns, and areas of deteriorating infrastructure.*
- *Leverage scarce local dollars with federal funds.*

The Planning Advisory Board was advised of this initiative on January 10, 2012. The Board did not oppose the change, but indicated it would like to continue to be updated on proposed projects. Staff agreed with this request, and proposes to include the Board on an informational basis. Staff also provided a memorandum to the City Commission on December 8, 2011, attached to this Report as Attachment A.

Concurrences: The City's Public Works and Park and Recreation Departments support the process change.

Fiscal Impact: The revised process would allow the City of Great Falls to utilize its Federal CTEP dollars on projects that are targeted toward stated City goals and priorities, and to construct needed projects that might not otherwise be built due to scarcity of funds. The City would provide matching dollars for some projects (13.42% of project amounts), but staff would strive for public/private partnerships whenever possible, with the matching dollars being provided from non-city sources. The City Commission would continue to make the decision on all expenditures before commitments are made.

Alternatives: The City Commission could deny passage of Resolution 9954, retaining the current project selection process.

Attachments:

- A. December 8, 2011 Mike Haynes Memorandum to City Commission
- B. Resolution 9954

Memorandum



TO: Mayor & City Commissioners

FROM: Mike Haynes, AICP Planning and Community Development Department Director

DATE: December 8, 2011

SUBJECT: Proposed CTEP Administration Changes

The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is a federal-aid program administered by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Currently, 10% of MDT's federal surface transportation funds are devoted to the CTEP program with MDT allocating CTEP funds to Montana cities and counties on a per capita basis. The CTEP program is designed to fund "a variety of (eligible) non-traditional projects" that are "designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects" of Montana's transportation system.

CTEP funds have been used here over the years for many different community projects including construction of trails, sidewalks and handicap ramps, and the installation of streetscape, lighting and landscaping projects. CTEP funds will pay for 86.58% of a project with a 13.42% match required from the public/private partner making the application. Past projects have been matched by groups such as Recreational Trails Inc., the Downtown BID, the Park Trust Fund and the Public Works Department.

The State CTEP program allows local governments to establish their own procedures for project selection, requiring only that there be a public involvement component. Since 1993 the City of Great Falls has employed a process where any eligible agencies, groups or units of government submit applications for projects proposed to use CTEP funds to the Planning Division. The Planning Advisory Board then reviews, ranks and makes recommendations to the City Commission on use of those funds and the City Commission takes final action on funding decisions. Planning staff then implements and administers CTEP-funded projects including soliciting bids, project management, budgeting, accounting, and ensuring adherence to federal, state and local regulations.

We have reviewed CTEP procedures in the light of the city's renewed commitment to creating and updating community plans (Missouri River Corridor Plan, Downtown Master Plan, Transportation Plan, Growth Policy, etc.) and the reality of lower revenues flowing to the city from federal and state sources. Based on that review we recommend making procedural changes to the selection process (while the process for implementation would remain unchanged).

We propose a more focused, targeted and expedited CTEP process where Planning staff reviews community plans for projects eligible for CTEP funding, prioritizes projects based on community goals, and identifies and coordinates with potential partners. Planning staff would then bring forward those recommendations to the City Commission, providing opportunity for public comment.

As an example, this new process would allow the city together with downtown stakeholders to establish a logical, strategic and cost-effective plan for expanding the downtown streetscape using CTEP funds, and work over time towards that shared vision. This is in contrast to funding an uncoordinated and inefficient expansion of streetscape driven by individual property owners or groups seeking funding for streetscape improvements one block at a time.

We believe the benefits of this revised process are many and include:

- Accelerating the CTEP project selection process;
- Implementing projects that the community has identified as key through local planning efforts in a strategic way;
- Focusing on projects that have greatest benefit to the city;
- Spurring redevelopment and private investment; and
- Leveraging scarce local dollars with federal funds.

Also, with so much uncertainty about federal and state funding we want to ensure that we never give up current or future funding because we have not allocated existing funds in a timely manner.

Planning staff recommends the City Commission consider a Resolution to modify the CTEP process to direct funding to projects that more closely aligned to adopted community plans. We invite your comments or questions before we bring forward such a Resolution for your consideration.

RESOLUTION 9954

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE
CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA, TO REDEFINE THE
COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAM PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

* * * * *

WHEREAS, the City of Great Falls receives an annual allocation of Federal Transportation funds through the Montana Department of Transportation's Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) for expenditure on eligible projects; and,

WHEREAS, Resolution 8535, passed by the City Commission on March 16, 1993, authorized the Great Falls City-County Planning Board to serve as the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee to the City Commission, to solicit and recommend eligible projects for use of CTEP allocations; and,

WHEREAS, the City-County Planning Board was dissolved in 2005, and certain duties were assumed by the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board; and,

WHEREAS, the Great Falls Planning & Community Development Department has recently reviewed the current CTEP project selection process for effectiveness, and concluded a modified selection process would be beneficial to the City of Great Falls; and,

WHEREAS, a more focused, targeted and expedited project selection process will allow the City of Great Falls to select projects that implement the City Commission's adopted plans and leverage scarce local dollars; and,

WHEREAS, this Resolution supersedes Resolution 8535.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA,

That the Great Falls Planning & Community Development Department shall identify and recommend CTEP projects for approval by the City Commission.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Great Falls, Montana, on this 7th day of February, 2012.

Michael J. Winters, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa Kunz, City Clerk

(SEAL OF CITY)

APPROVED FOR LEGAL CONTENT:

James W. Santoro, City Attorney