

GREAT FALLS URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

Jim Rearden, Chairman, called the Great Falls Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. in the Rainbow Room of the Great Falls Civic Center.

ROLL CALL OF TAC MEMBERS & ATTENDANCE

TAC Members Present/Represented:

Susan Conell	Cascade County Planning Department
Dave Dobbs	City Engineer, City of Great Falls
Andrew Finch	Sr. Trans. Planner, City of Great Falls
Jason Handl	Transportation/SID Engineer, City of Great Falls
Galen Amy (for Mike Haynes)	Director, Planning & Community Development, City of Great Falls
Jim Helgeson	Manager, Great Falls Transit District
Christie McOmber	District Project Engineer, GF District MDT
Jerry McKinley	Traffic Supervisor, City of Great Falls
Jim Rearden	Director, Great Falls Public Works Department
Bruce Treis	Environmental Health Specialist, City-County Health Dept
Jim Turnbow	Street Supervisor, Great Falls Street Division
John Faulkner	Director Great Falls International Airport Authority

TAC Members Absent/Not Represented:

Brian Clifton	Public Works Director, Cascade County
John Hale	Deputy Base Civil Engineer, Malmstrom AFB
Zia Kazimi	Statewide & Urban Planning – MDT
Rina Fontana-Moore	County Surveyor, Cascade County
Dave Sutton	Superintendent, Cascade County Road Department
Jerilee Weibel	Right-of-Way Supervisor, GF District – MDT

Recognition of Others Present:

Moses Leavens	City-County Health Department
Phyllis Tryon	Administrative Assistant, City of Great Falls

MINUTES

Prior to the meeting, Committee members were provided a copy of the April 12, 2012 TAC meeting minutes.

MOTION: That the minutes of April 12, 2012 be approved with corrections.

Made by: Mr. Helgeson
Second: Mr. Dobbs

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Prior to the meeting, TAC members were provided with copies of the TAC meeting agenda. Copies of the agenda and handout materials are attached and incorporated by reference.

5A. MAP-21(Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century)

Mr. Finch presented this highway bill as a discussion/informational item. He explained that some changes to the transportation bill include: revamping some major funding programs, consolidation of funding programs, streamlining of environmental processes, elimination of earmarks, expansion of competitive grant programs, and, from a planning side, emphasis on performance based planning, which included setting up performance standards that match national standards. Mr. Finch said he's awaiting more guidance from the feds and state on at least the initial read for how this will turn out locally and nationally. He's also made contacts with state transportation planning in Helena, and they have agreed to meet with the three MPOs via conference call in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Finch asked to be contacted if anyone wanted to sit in on the call. He said they will be talking about processes, mostly from planning standpoint, but also from funding and programmatic standpoint.

He stated that perceived losses are to bike/ped advocates, but there is more flexibility for states to use the monies on different priorities. The national focus is on "highest and greatest need," though that is interpreted differently for everyone. Mr. Finch also noted that the air quality program continues but is not required to do sub allocations, and the state still is required to spend money on projects that improve air quality, but there is more flexibility to transfer air quality funds to different pots of money.

Mr. Rearden observed that it appears that CMAC is funded at the same level, but that STPE is only being funded at about 29.3% of the 2009 funding level according to the APWA handout. Mr. Finch stated that the law places a greater emphasis on national highway systems and puts more money there, but he will get more answers for what those percentages mean. Mr. Rearden asked if that cut is what affects us the most locally. Mr. Finch confirmed that if the state continues their current method of funding, then yes.

Ms. McOmber was asked if she's heard any internal discussions on the highway bill at MDT. She responded in the negative, stating that part of the combination of making this new highway performance program is that it is not only the interstate, but is also the NHS routes and bridges, so the pot isn't necessarily that much bigger, it is just shifting. She said she doesn't believe we'll see a lot of major changes.

Mr. Finch stated that the new provisions do go into effect October 1st and that it is only a two year bill. He also wanted to point out that he found reference to the amount of money that was transferred from the general fund to the highway trust fund to keep it liquid. In the next fiscal year it is 6.2 billion and then 10.4 billion. Mr. Finch reminded members that this is clearly not a program funded solely by gas tax funds, which should not be referred to as "user fees".

5B TIP Durable Pavement Program Urban Set-Aside

Mr. Finch stated that this came up in a discussion with Jerry McKinley and that the intent of the set-aside is broad, but is intended to keep pavement markings in good condition. One project nominated and approved by the state department for shared use markings was 2nd Street South in conjunction with Park Drive, but when it came up was turned down under the premise that new markings could not be funded under this program and that the intent of the program was for replacement of existing markings. Mr. Finch wanted to see if TAC concurred with the state's interpretation, and if TAC does not concur, do they want to send a reminder letter to the state.

Mr. McKinley provided some clarification on how they've dealt with these markings in the past, and that this is the first time a project has been denied in the past 5 years. Ms. McOmber offered some clarification, stating that in the past MDT had the epoxy program and cities got involved and MDT

requested those cities have a set-aside. The problem arose when the required set-asides were spent on other projects in some towns, so MDT has not been transferring these monies out and has been paying for striping under the STP X program, which is maintenance. She stated that MDT still has a verbal agreement that the City of Great Falls can still submit their \$50,000 in requests and they will get added to the program, but intention of the program is that the epoxy gets repainted.

Mr. McKinley stated that a new difference is receiving two contracts with two people bidding. Mr. Finch asked Ms. McOmber for clarification about the set-aside as to whether they can mix funding. She responded that the current mix is not working. Mr. Finch asked if that change was recent, and Ms. McOmber stated that it was for this year and she is not sure about past years. Mr. McKinley confirmed that he has record of using this same pot for new parking and shoulder line markings. Mr. Helgeson asked who makes the decision if striping gets changed. Mr. Finch responded that changes have to conform to Transportation Plan and fit in TIP regardless of who makes the decision, but that there is not an exact process when an improvement gets made. Ms. McOmber reminded TAC that changes must get approved by MDT and their traffic staff.

Mr. Helgeson asked if that process is already in place, and Ms. McOmber confirmed that it is on federal aid routes. Mr. Finch refuted with a reminder that there is not a process in place for the striping program because traffic did not look at the 2nd street project until it was denied, and that the question is can we put new markings on there, and if so, what is the process. Mr. Rearden proposed a joint process between MDT and the local entity. Ms. McOmber said it's up for discussion. Mr. Finch asked what the best course of action from this group should be and she responded that it be a meeting. Mr. Faulkner proposed bid alternates, but Ms. McOmber reminded that for maintenance projects follow state rules and when you include federal funds you pull in Davis Bacon. Mr. Rearden and Ms. McOmber concurred that a meeting needs to be set up. Mr. Turnbow asked about durable markings coming out of this fund and Mr. Rearden stated we're a long way from getting there, but that it would be appropriate for those funds if it comes to fruition.

OTHER BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS

6 Other Business

Mr. Turnbow asked about the process to nominate projects for preservation and whether they have to be nominated through TAC. Mr. Finch said he'd check with MDT planning. Ms. McOmber said there would probably need to be approval. Mr. Finch said he would check and see if it needs to come through TAC for TIP.

Ms. McOmber asked for an update for Complete Streets and whether it being voted down by City Commission changes any recommendations that TAC made. Mr. Finch explained that since TAC is a separate body, no. The City Commission chose to not approve the policy, but they did not choose to not spend time, money and efforts on bike and ped projects. Mr. Turnbow and Mr. Rearden agreed that it does not change the work that TAC is doing.

7 Public Comment

Mr. Helgeson thanked TAC as a resident of Black Eagle for the improvements to Smelter Avenue. He said it is a huge improvement to the area and that MDT did a great job.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Dobbs made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m.