

GREAT FALLS URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Jim Rearden, Chairman, called the Great Falls Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. in the Rainbow Room of the Great Falls Civic Center.

ROLL CALL OF TAC MEMBERS & ATTENDANCE

TAC Members Present/Represented:

Susan Conell	Director, Cascade County Planning Department
Jim Ekberg	Cascade County Planning Department
Andrew Finch	Sr. Transportation Planner, City of Great Falls
Aaron Jewett (for John Hale)	Deputy Base Civil Engineer, Malmstrom Air Force Base
Jim Helgeson	Manager, Great Falls Transit District
Courtney Lyerly	Civil Engineer, Special Projects, City of Great Falls
Jerry McKinley	Traffic Supervisor, City of Great Falls
Galen Amy (for Craig Raymond)	Director, Planning & Com. Dev., City of Great Falls
Jim Rearden	Director, Great Falls Public Works Department
Rick Schutz	Cascade County Public Works
Carol Strizich (by phone)	Statewide & Urban Planning Section, Helena MDT
Bruce Treis	Environmental Health Specialist, City-County Health Department
Jim Turnbow	Street Supervisor, Great Falls Street Division

TAC Members Absent/Not Represented:

Brian Clifton	Public Works Director, Cascade County
Dave Dobbs	City of Great Falls Engineer
John Faulkner	Director Great Falls International Airport Authority
Christie McOmber	District Project Engineer, GF District MDT
Jerilee Weibel	Right-of-Way Supervisor, Great Falls District – MDT

Recognition of Others Present:

Jeff Key	Robert Peccia & Associates, Inc.
Scott Randall	Robert Peccia & Associates, Inc.
Lee Nellis	Deputy Director, Planning & Com. Dev., City of Great Falls
Gregg Benson	Planner I, City of Great Falls
Jodell Lepley	GIS Technician, Planning & Com. Dev., City of Great Falls
Tom Kahle (by phone)	Statewide & Urban Planning, Helena MDT
Mike Tierney (by phone)	Statewide & Urban Planning, Helena MDT

MINUTES

Prior to the meeting, Committee members were provided a copy of the October 10, 2013 TAC meeting minutes.

MOTION: That the minutes of October 10, 2013 be approved.

Made by: Mr. Finch

Second: Mr. Lyerly

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. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Consultant Update

Mr. Key stated that this is the sixth time RPA is meeting with TAC to discuss the LRTP. The reason for this meeting is to sit down and go through projects that will appear in the LRTP. They are broken up by Major Street Network (MSN) projects and Short Range (SR) projects. MSN projects cost more money, go through different processes, and take much longer to develop. SR projects are typically a little easier to develop, are less costly, and likely come together quicker. One thing unique to Great Falls is Pavement Preservation projects included in the LRTP. Mr. Key stated that RPA is looking at what the proposal is for the City and County for getting those listed out.

Mr. Key stated that though RPA will provide their opinion, they ultimately want TAC's input on what projects show up in the administrative, and ultimately, the final draft of the LRTP. He stated that the biggest shock will be for the non-motorized network recommendations that ALTA has provided. With that, Mr. Key transitioned to discussion about the "visionary plan" that ALTA provided, which includes proposals for: 1) shared use path connections; 2) buffered bike lanes; 3) regular bike lanes; 4) sharrows; 5) shoulder widening; and 6) pedestrian projects. Mr. Key stated that at the moment they haven't prioritized the recommendations yet because they wanted to hear what TAC's initial reaction is. Mr. Rearden said he feels we have to have a plan that we can work towards, and we can show the community we're working on accomplishing in pieces over time, and that we need this to show policy makers. Mr. Turnbow echoed Mr. Rearden stating we can show we're making the initial effort now with sharrows and chip seal projects.

Mr. Finch stated that at this stage it may be difficult to prioritize specific projects, but we can identify the low-cost, low-impact projects as ones that are easily implementable, and those could be the ones identified in the plan. The community could be involved in tackling the next big project because he doesn't feel we've gone through a rigorous enough process to identify what projects should go where and what project is going to be next. Mr. Key stated that part of what Mr. Finch is talking about ties into the other categories for the motorized network projects, i.e. committed projects versus projects recommended for funding, and said maybe those categories could be used for the non-motorized network as well. Mr. Helgeson stated that he felt ALTA has presented a pretty logical layout. Mr. Key agreed stating it becomes a matter of fitting it in and presenting the options. He said that ALTA and RPA are working on the draft language and are figuring out their discrepancies for recommendations that will be in the LRTP.

Mr. Finch stated that one of the feedback items from FHWA and FTA, during an MPO process review, stated that the LRTP needs to better integrate all projects and multiple funding sources, so RPA's recommendations should include non-motorized needs along with road projects. Mr. Key agreed and stated that he's seeing a shift to including facility integrations for LRTPs in general. Mr. Finch asked TAC to ultimately review the recommendations to see if there is anything that just isn't feasible, or that have heavy caveats on them, because when we come to the public comment stage we want to have truthed these as much as possible while keeping a vision. Mr. Helgeson stated that maybe the language could include qualifications and/or identified limitations. Mr. Rearden asked when the draft would be available. Mr. Key said he is hoping for an extension to have the administrative draft out December 2, 2013 instead of the original date of November 29, 2013.

Mr. Key said ALTA is also trying to figure out connecting Black Eagle to the trail system. Mr. Helgeson said they've had discussions about using the superfund site and taking the trail through the old railway bed down to 9th Street. Mr. Finch stated that these kinds of projects could be phrased in the plan with language along the lines of "further analysis to be done". Mr. Key said we're going to talk about the adoption process for this plan, so it behooves us to review the administrative draft as closely as possible so when we go through the public adoption process that it is as palatable as possible.

Mr. Key transitioned to the MSN and SR projects. There was discussion on the preliminary recommendations provided in the draft documents that were emailed to TAC prior to the meeting. Mr. Key reviewed each of those documents in depth to give TAC initial exposure to what they're thinking about, and get confirmation that they're on the right track. Mr. Key asked what Ms. Strizich's perception on having overlays and pavement preservation projects in the LRTP and if it is a mandate or desirable thing. Ms. Strizich stated that the regulations require that you specify short, medium, and long term improvements. Whether or not overlay or preservation projects belong in there is how the MPO might use the Transportation Plan, and if it is beneficial to them to have those included it makes sense to include them, but there are not official requirements to have them in there.

Mr. Finch stated that whatever the road conditions are included in the LRTP would only be a quick snapshot in time. He said he thinks it is very important that we manage our roadways based on road condition, and that the LRTP provide where the worst roads are and that gives the City, County, and State a game plan for the next five years, but that prioritization comes from the road managers. He asked Mr. Schutz and Mr. Turnbow if it would help to have priorities identified in order to sell to decision makers. Mr. Turnbow stated that he thinks there would be some benefit in that, especially if there's a project that's a hard sell. Mr. Turnbow also stated that Cartegraph is doing a road assessment for all roads in the Urban Boundaries, including the County roads, so that condition index will be shared to help prioritize. Mr. Finch asked that TAC look at the recommendations and give him what you see as the top five priorities by Tuesday, November 26, 2013.

Mr. Finch stated that the administrative draft will be available for anyone on TAC to review, and he'll send an email out when we receive a copy. Mr. Key asked Mr. Finch to review the dates and review process, and Mr. Finch stated he would confirm that. Mr. Finch asked Ms. Connell to prep the County Planning Board so they are aware of what they are reviewing. Ms. Connell said she would. Mr. Key stated that the next public meeting will be moved to January 2014. Mr. Finch asked if Mr. Key needed anything from the City and County for the funding projections. Mr. Key stated that he's working with Ms. Strizich and will get more information about the gas tax from the City and County, and that he will work with the State to confirm current account balances. The next meeting RPA will be presenting at will be December 12, 2013.

5B. Urban Funding & Systems Map Update

Mr. Finch stated that he had sent TAC a letter earlier to show what our reduction in funding would be as a result of the Census and the new Urban Area. He said he is just passing on information from the State, and asked Ms. Strizich to provide any additional information. Ms. Strizich stated that this was an informational piece, that the process is completed, and all regions should have the most up to date information. Mr. Rearden asked for confirmation that this was a \$500,000 transfer of funds from MACI to the Urban System. Ms. Strizich stated that is correct, and that addition of funds to the Urban System, from MACI, will be ongoing every year until the next Census, making it a fixed amount of 11.3M annually for the next ten years.

OTHER BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no other business and no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Helgeson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lyerly seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.