

**GREAT FALLS METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS
POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

April 9, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm in the Rainbow Room of the City Civic Center by Chair Pro Tem Fred Burow.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

PCC Members present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title/Representing</u>
Jane Weber	Cascade County Commissioner
Carl Donovan	Chairman, Great Falls Transit District Board
Jerilee Wiebel for Dave Hand	District Administrator, MDT Great Falls
Nate Weisenburger	Chairman, Great Falls Planning Advisory Board
Fred Burow	Great Falls City Commissioner
Stuart Boylan	Chairman, Cascade County Planning Board
Kevin McLaury	Division Admin., Federal Highway Administration

OTHERS PRESENT

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title/Representing</u>
Andrew Finch	Sr. Transportation Planner, Great Falls MPO
Jeff Key, Consultant	Robert Peccia & Associates
Jim Helgeson	General Manager, Great Falls Transit District
Carol Strizich (by telephone)	MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Supervisor
Lloyd Rue	Federal Highway Administration-Montana

MINUTES

Prior to the meeting, Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) members were provided a copy of the minutes of the last PCC meeting held September 17, 2013.

MOTION: That the Policy Coordinating Committee minutes of September 17, 2013 be approved.

Made by: Ms. Weber
Second: Mr. Weisenburger

Vote: The motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Provided for each item listed under this agenda heading was a written report for PCC consideration. A copy of each is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Item 6A. Elect Chair

Mr. Finch stated that the PCC Bylaws require the Chair to be elected at the first meeting of each

calendar year. This being the first meeting of 2014, a Chair must be elected. Past practice has been to alternate the Chair position between the City and County representatives. Mr. Finch concluded by stating that the election was, however, up to the members of the PCC.

MOTION: That Jane Weber be elected as Chair of the Policy Coordinating Committee for 2014.

Made by: Mr. Boylan
Second: Mr. Donovan

Vote: The motion carried unanimously.

Item 6B. Long Range Transportation Plan Update

The consultant, Jeff Key of Robert Peccia and Associates, provided a power point presentation on the subject item (attached to and made a part of these minutes). Mr. Key noted there was an extensive public outreach effort, including three formal public meetings and 26 public outreach meetings with stakeholders, a facebook page and a website. He also mentioned some of the groups with which they met. He also noted the final comment period resulted in 6 written comments. Mr. Key mentioned the outreach noted some key areas, such as River Drive North, I-15 Interchanges, wayfinding, jobs.

Mr. Key said about half the study area was City jurisdiction, the other half Cascade County. About 87% of the County population is found within the study area.

He gave an overview of the chapter 3, the Plan's goals and objectives, how they tie to local plans, and how they compare with state goals and MAP-21. He said they cross-referenced the goals with the MAP-21 Planning Factors to see how they compared, and concluded the Plan compared well.

Chapter 4 is a robust chapter, focusing on existing conditions. Mr. Key reviewed the major data-gathering efforts contained in the chapter, including intersection analysis, crash hotspots and major roadway volumes. He mentioned the Great Falls Transit District's TDP (Transit Development Plan) was a recent document that was referenced. He said his team better integrating everything in the Plan, compared with the 2003 Plan, including transit.

Mr. Key noted the Plan focuses on the major street network, not local roadways, and explained why. He said they were tasked with looking at 80 intersections. Downtown signals were not looked at, as they were recently studied in the Downtown Access, Circulation & Streetscape Study.

From a review of existing conditions, Great Falls looks pretty good for intersection capacity and volume to capacity concerns on roadways. Great Falls does not have major congestions concerns like some communities. But, River Drive is a concern, and the Warden Bridge. Mr. Key referenced a slide that showed areas of concerns.

Non-motorized transportation was looked at from a "clean slate" to help craft a comprehensive system. For example, one of the key questions was, "how do we get people from neighborhoods to the River's Edge Trail?" Also, there are areas that lack sidewalk connectivity. He also reviewed transit's existing routes, as well as a pavement conditions survey and database.

Our planning horizon was 2035, and to project conditions, the study effort used MDT's traffic demand model, which asks for growth in housing and retail jobs and non-retail jobs. We are anticipating a growth of 5,100 housing units and 11,000 jobs. The consultant team worked with local planners to take those figures and distribute them among areas where growth is likely to occur – for example, to the north of Great Falls, some to the southeast, in the medical district. He then reviewed the traffic model, and different model scenarios and results.

He then briefly reviewed the Safety, Freight and Security chapters, including freight projections, crashes and the crash density map, and that many of the crashes are behavioral or impairment caused, which cannot be solved by engineering. He mentioned the Cascade County Emergency Operations Plan guides security responses, including transportation-related.

Mr. Key then proceeded to review the Facility Recommendations chapter, outlining major street project recommendations, committed projects and short range project recommendations. He emphasized the need for fiscal constraint, and the fact that those projects that are not fundable are shown as "illustrative" projects. He noted River Drive North, 36th Avenue Northeast area intersections, and an interstate corridor study were the recommended major street network projects. Further, he gave an overview of short range projects.

Mr. Key reviewed the non-motorized chapter, noting the intent was to create a long-range vision. If and when the system develops, the vision would be better thought out than in past plans. They provided multiple options on particular bike facility segments that can be considered when development is contemplated. The chapter also includes some policy-type recommendations for the community to consider. It includes pedestrian facility recommendations, including new sidewalks and crossings.

Lastly, he reviewed the financial plan and the Fiscal Constraint chapter, noting that it compares what the area typically receives in funding to the proposed expenditures. Mr. Key also summarized environmental mitigation, the future major street network, and the air quality conformity determination.

He summarized the written public comments, including the concern about a conceptual trail on the Sun River levee, which was subsequently removed from the future non-motorized trail system map.

Mr. Key concluded his presentation, and Chair Weber asked for questions from PCC members.

Mr. Boylan asked about the County's Growth Policy and its inclusion. Mr. Key noted it was included and referenced, but was noted as a draft document.

Mr. McLaury, asked what ADA elements were included. Mr. Key noted it was a plan for all users, and the ADA community was part of the process. He noted crossing alleys and ADA ramps as part of the analysis.

Mr. Rue expressed his appreciation for Jeff Key addressing short-range pavement preservation and safety projects. Mr. Rue noted the Plan is a local document, and FHWA does not approve the plan, but is involved in conformity with EPA. FHWA will do a conformity piece with EPA on the plan. As far as he knows, the fiscal constraint and air quality conformity piece should sail right through. He thanked Jeff and Andrew for their efforts.

MOTION: That the Policy Coordinating Committee approve the 2014 Long Range Transportation Plan Update.

Made by: Mr. Donovan
Second: Mr. Boylan

Vote: The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Finch offered Mr. Boylan a training session, as a new member. Mr. Boylan said he would appreciate an overview, and Ms. Weber suggested it be sent to all other members for their possible interest in sitting in on a refresher.

Ms. Weber commented she attended the public meetings and was impressed by the way the outreach actively engaged the public.

There was no other business and no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Burow made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Boylan. The meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm.