

GREAT FALLS URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jim Rearden called the Great Falls Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to order at approximately 9:34 a.m. in the Rainbow Room of the Civic Center, #2 Park Drive South.

ROLL CALL OF TAC MEMBERS & ATTENDANCE

TAC Members Present/Represented:

Jim Ekberg	Deputy Director, Cascade County Public Works Department
Don Sims (for Susan Conell)	Director, Cascade County Planning Department
Dave Dobbs	City of Great Falls Engineer
John Faulkner	Director, Great Falls International Airport Authority
Andrew Finch	MPO, Sr. Transportation Planner, City of Great Falls
Jim Helgeson	Manager, Great Falls Transit District
Galen Steffens (for Craig Raymond)	Director, City of Great Falls Planning & Community Development
Jesse Patton (for Courtney Lyerly)	Civil Engineer, Special Projects, City of Great Falls
Jerry McKinley	Traffic Supervisor, City of Great Falls
Kas Manderle (for Christie McOmber)	District Project Engineer, GF District MDT
Jim Rearden	Director, City of Great Falls Public Works Department
Rick Schutz	Cascade County Public Works
Bruce Treis	Environmental Health Specialist, City-County Health Department
Jim Turnbow	Street Supervisor, City of Great Falls Street Division
Doug Wilmot (for Jerilee Weibel)	Right-of-Way Supervisor, Great Falls District – MDT

TAC Members Absent/Not Represented:

Brian Clifton	Public Works Director, Cascade County
Bill McLaughlin	Deputy Base Civil Engineer, Malmstrom Air Force Base
Carol Strizich	Statewide & Urban Planning Section, Helena MDT

Recognition of Others Present:

Shyla Patera	North Central Independent Living Services
--------------	---

MINUTES

Prior to the meeting, Committee members were provided a copy of the June 11, 2015 TAC meeting minutes. Mr. Helgeson moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Dobbs. All being in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

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. CMAQ Sidewalk project – priority areas

Mr. Finch said TAC members had discussed narrowing down priority projects for sidewalks at the previous meeting. He said the needs are many while opportunities for funding are few, and previous discussion suggested focusing priorities on the major street network. The Transportation Plan identifies some of the gaps, and the local priority is to fill the gaps on the major street network. He said the City, and probably the County, do not have match funds for off-system sidewalks, but MDT does.

Four TAC members had provided some suggestions for projects, and Mr. Finch has provided TAC members with a list of suggestions from MPO staff, MDT staff and the City Street Division. He asked for input on nominating the projects. Mr. Turnbow said it is not a foregone conclusion that the City has no match for off-system sidewalk, and although there will not be a large sum available, it does depend on approval of City budget. He asked if there was going to be a more formal application process. Mr. Finch said the first process moving forward is to select sidewalk locations for the existing sidewalk project in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The second process is to come up with new CMAQ funded projects, which can be another sidewalk project, equipment purchase, capacity expansion, or intersection improvement. He has not yet received nominations from the Committee on the second process, and he hopes that can be discussed at the August TAC meeting. Mr. Turnbow said he emailed equipment suggestions to Mr. Finch, and the match is available through the equipment revolving fund. Mr. Finch said green fleet conversions are also a possibility. He said the deadline for projects for that list is July 30.

Mr. Helgeson asked about sidewalks in the new WalMart development area. There was discussion about how far the sidewalks will go, the gaps in that area, and water issues. Costs related to building pedestrian facilities are eligible under CMAQ funding as far as the budget will allow. There was further discussion about costs and installation challenges.

Mr. Finch said he would entertain a motion to table this issue for another month or two until City funding becomes more clear.

MOTION: That this matter be tabled until the next meeting, and that in the meantime, more definitive information be gathered.

Made by: Mr. Dobbs
Second: Mr. Ekberg

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

There was discussion about bus stops; Mr. Finch said there were no fixed routes in the system. Mr. Helgeson said Transit works on a 90% flag basis and the shelters are fixed stops. Mr. Finch said Ms. Patera and her constituents are more than welcome to provide a list for TAC. She said the ADA Committee looked at a lot of drop off areas around the schools and she will provide that information. She said her biggest issue is 25th Avenue Northeast by the Old Havre Highway, and the Northwest Bypass area, because that is where she lives. Mr. Finch said 25th Avenue NE is now on the MDT list and is a school route for people in Black Eagle.

5B. Potential Additions to Urban System

Mr. Finch said the list he provided TAC is a list of potential additions to the urban system that he picked from the map on the Long Range Transportation Plan. He said not all the major roadways are on the urban system. He said there are more stringent rules for projects on system, but also those projects are

eligible for pavement preservation funds. He noted the urban pot of money is limited, and adding segments doesn't add money. He said the reason for this process is to facilitate the removal of Airport Drive from the urban system, which TAC supports. He said our expectation is that we don't lose the ability to maintain our current urban mileage. The last time TAC added a roadway to the urban system, the Transportation Commission required removal of a like amount of mileage, and while MDT staff says that is not a requirement, for practical purposes it has been, and Mr. Finch said TAC does not want to lose any mileage.

There was discussion about adding back the portion of Giant Springs Road that was removed in the past. Mr. Finch requested TAC members review the list following this meeting and come up with their top five preferences. A selection can be made at the next meeting.

Mr. Rearden asked if it made sense to target growth areas, as the City seems to be growing to the north. There was discussion about roadways in that area of the City, as well as the area around 23rd Street South. Mr. Rearden suggested paring individual lists to the top three preferences. There was continued discussion about possible selections. It was decided that TAC members would submit their top three selections by July 30 to Mr. Finch.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Faulkner said Airport Drive improvements will be done in phases. The easement agreement is not yet done. They will begin construction on the portion which comes after the water tower and around the terminal loop. They are working with MDT for transfer of ownership of the roadway. Next year they will build a new taxiway and overhaul one of the runways, which is about an \$8-9 million project. MANG will make some changes to their gate and the Airport will be changing signage to blue to differentiate from the highway signs. In addition, the exit is being moved, and the rocks from the rock sign there will hopefully be moved along the road. MDT suggested a letter of support from TAC for leaving the rocks in the right-of-way, which the Airport is working to acquire.

Mr. Finch suggested he draft a letter to MDT for signature summarizing discussions TAC has had about removing that roadway from the urban system. There was general agreement to that suggestion.

Mr. Rearden raised some questions about ownership of the roadway, and Mr. Faulkner said in almost every state, airports are a quasi-municipality and a public entity that can hold public infrastructure. He said the roadway in discussion is a public road. Mr. Finch said the intent is to include language in the easement agreement with the City that the City has the right to maintain utilities in the roadway. Mr. Faulkner said that intersections in that area will need improved functionality.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Finch moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Helgeson. All being the favor, the meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.