

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD ZONING COMMISSION

APRIL 10, 2012

Source

Great Falls Downtown Master Plan

Requested Action

Approve Amendment 1 to the FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program to include the Downtown Access, Circulation & Streetscape Study.

Attachment A

FFY 2012 UPWP Amendment 1

Project Planner

Andrew Finch

AMENDMENT 1- FFY 2012 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

SUMMARY

Overview

Annually, the Planning & Community Development Department prepares a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), as required by Federal Transportation Planning requirements. The UPWP outlines the various work activities to be performed during the next federal fiscal year, as well as projected staff hours and funding.

When additional major work activities are proposed, especially those to be funded with Federal Transportation Planning (“PL”) funds, a UPWP Amendment is necessary.

The major partners in the Transportation Planning Process - the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and Federal Highway Administration - will need to consider and approve the amendment, as well.

Background

Downtown Access, Circulation & Streetscape Study

In September 2011, the Planning Board approved a Downtown Master Plan that provides the community with a strategically focused, goal driven blueprint for the future of downtown Great Falls. Included in the plan are 5 goals, 26 objectives and 82 strategies focused on downtown vitality, aesthetics, accessibility and livability. The design, function and aesthetic quality of downtown’s built environment, including the area’s

streets and roadways, have been identified as important elements in achieving the community’s vision for downtown. To begin to implement key recommendations in the Plan, staff has proposed development of a Downtown Access, Circulation and Streetscape Study, to be developed through consultant services and financed with PL funds.

The Downtown Access, Circulation and Streetscape Study will examine the function and form of the street environment - making recommendations, outlining process and providing cost estimates for implementing key objectives of the Downtown Master Plan, including the following:

- Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety downtown.
- Reduce or eliminate downtown one-ways.
- Develop a comprehensive downtown bicycle network to connect into a city-wide system.
- Optimize downtown parking for all stakeholders.
- Develop a comprehensive downtown wayfinding system.
- Expand and enhance the existing downtown streetscape.

The objectives are intended to create a safe, attractive, efficient and welcoming downtown street environment.

To implement these key objectives, the Study will include at a minimum the following four components:

- A Downtown Parking Study that assesses inventory, availability, utilization and management of existing parking facilities, both public and private. The study will recommend changes to the City administered parking program based on analysis of data and input from residents, business owners and building owners.
- A Downtown Streetscape and Roadway Characteristics Plan that creates a comprehensive, unified plan for the form, function and aesthetics of public rights-of-way downtown. In addition to such givens as safety and efficiency, the Streetscape Plan shall include gateway and wayfinding features and be designed to facilitate a healthy, active and vibrant downtown and consider the historic and cultural character of the City center.
- A One-way to Two-way Conversion Study that evaluates the conversion of one-way streets in and leading to the downtown area to two-way travel. The study will explore the costs and benefits of full or partial conversions based on research, analysis and modeling, and recommendations should be based on these findings and community input and preference, as well as concurrence by the City's partners in the Transportation Planning Process. The Study will include 1st and 2nd Avenues South and 5th and 6th Streets.
- An Implementation Plan including prioritization, phasing and conceptual cost estimates of improvements.

Some recommendations in the Study would subsequently be considered for incorporation into the Great Falls Area Transportation Plan. The full Downtown Plan can be found at the following web address: <http://www.greatfallsmt.net/records/minutes/yr2011/DTMP.pdf>.

UPWP Amendment

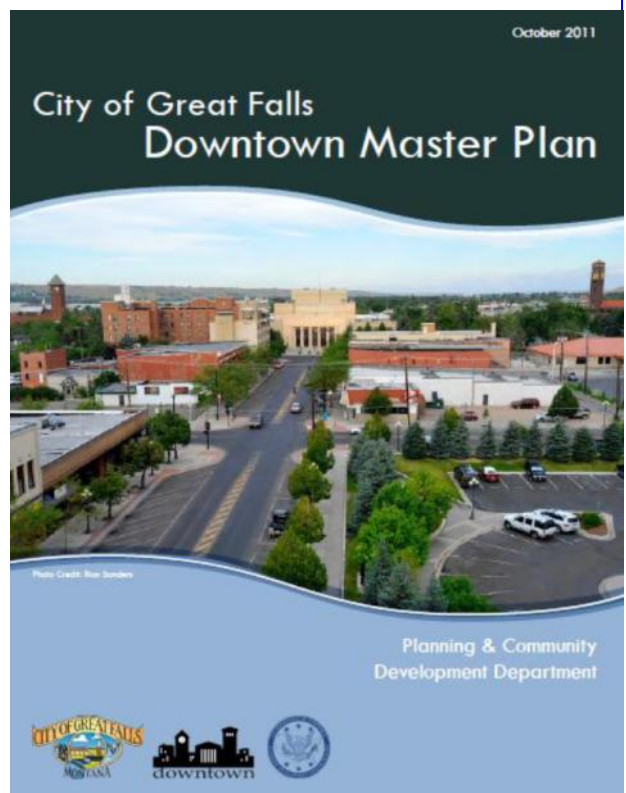
To initiate the Study, the funds and the work activity must be formally identified in the Unified Planning Work Program. The Planning Board is being asked to consider this addition through approval of Amendment #1, attached as Exhibit A to this Report, and to direct staff to initiate the Study.

Concurrences

In December 2011, TAC approved a motion to concur in the need for the Downtown Access, Circulation and Streetscape Study, and supporting preparation of the Study by the Great Falls Planning & Community Development Department. In January 2012, the Policy Coordinating Committee approved a similar motion. At that meeting, staff reported "...if PCC concurs, staff will also pursue the use of "PL", or Federal Transportation Planning funds, for plan preparation." TAC and PCC will consider the UPWP Amendment at their meetings in April.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Planning Advisory Board approve Amendment 1 to the FFY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program to include the Downtown Access, Circulation & Streetscape Study."



41.13.01 - LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING - SYSTEM LEVEL

WORK ELEMENT:

302 Transportation Reviews, Analysis, Assessments & Consistency Determinations

Objectives:

- 1) To conduct periodic reviews of the Transportation Plan, including analysis of projected traffic volumes, land use, accidents and funding data.
- 2) To maintain accurate estimates of socioeconomic indicators.
- 3) To maintain accurate and updated records of accident data.
- 4) To address transportation-related energy planning requirements in the Transportation Study Area, as appropriate.
- 5) To assure that the Transportation Plan is consistent with social, economic and environmental objectives established for the Transportation Study Area and the State of Montana, as well as Federal Transportation Planning guidelines.
- 6) To support MDT use of TransCAD software and analyses in the transportation planning process.

Previous Work: In cooperation with the MDT, staff has conducted periodic reviews of the Transportation Plan. Additionally, socioeconomic estimates were monitored for population, dwelling units, school enrollment, auto ownership and employment for the Transportation Study Area. Population for the City of Great Falls, Transportation Study Area, Planning Board Jurisdictional Area, Malmstrom Air Force Base, and Cascade County were estimated. Graphic displays of the estimates were updated. Prepared and adopted a 2009 Transportation Plan.

Methodology: Transportation-related energy planning needs in the Great Falls area will be addressed to the extent appropriate.

The coordination of air quality and transportation plans and programs will continue to the extent appropriate and in accordance with applicable requirements. Other environmental factors such as noise, water quality, aesthetics, etc., will be considered to the extent appropriate during major transportation planning decisions in accordance with applicable requirements.

When a new transportation authorizing act is passed, review of the Transportation Plan for compliance with new regulations and guidance will be performed under this element.

Livability, smart growth and land use/transportation planning opportunities in the Great Falls area will be investigated to the extent appropriate.

Socioeconomic indicators will be reviewed and updated in conjunction with a Growth Policy Update. Upon passage of a new Federal transportation act, the Plan will be reviewed for compliance. Amendments to the Transportation Plan will be considered, as appropriate.

A consultant will be hired to perform a “neighborhood” or “sub-area” Transportation Study for the Medical District. Product will look at traffic demand and future growth, bicycle and pedestrian flow, and transit demand. Areas of improvement for all three modes will be a component. Various improvement scenarios will be modeled.

Anticipated Study Cost/Participation:	PL/State	\$25,000
(final negotiated cost may be higher or lower)	Local	\$10,000

Note: anticipated costs are included in funding summary below

302 Transportation Reviews, Analysis, Assessments & Consistency Determinations (cont.)

A consultant will be hired to perform a “sub-area” Transportation Study for downtown Great Falls to review access, circulation, and streetscape design, and make recommendations for same. Specific components will include parking demand, traffic flow and lane configuration, street amenities, wayfinding options and pedestrian and bikeway improvements.

Anticipated Study Cost/Participation: PL/State \$100,000
(final negotiated cost may be higher or lower)

Note: anticipated costs are included in funding summary below

<u>Staffing:</u>	<u>Administrative</u>	<u>Technical</u>	<u>Clerical</u>		
(Weeks)	2	24	2		
<u>Funding:</u>	<u>PL</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>FTA</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>Total</u>
GFPB (FY11)	34,632	5,368	0	0	40,000
GFPB (FY12)	58,000 144,589	8,991 22,411	0	10,000	177,000

Functional Agency Responsibilities: GFPB will be responsible for all work.

Products:

- 1) Cooperation among transportation and environmental quality planning agencies regarding the consistency of the transportation plan with air quality plans, as well as noise and water quality.
- 2) A compliant long range Transportation Plan.
- 3) A Medical District Transportation Study.
- 4) A Downtown Access, Circulation and Streetscape Study.**