

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD ZONING COMMISSION

JANUARY 10, 2012

Source

Great Falls Planning &
Community Development
Department

Requested Action

No Planning Board action is
required.

Project Planner

Andrew Finch

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM—PROCESS UPDATE

SUMMARY

Overview

The City of Great Falls established its Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) in 1993. The project selection process that was created at that time has been in use, with only minor modifications, for more than 18 years. This process included an open, public solicitation for projects, followed by a review, rating and ranking by the Planning Board. The Board then recommended projects to the City Commission for funding. Staff has recently performed a review of the project selection process, and is working with the City of Great Falls to develop an updated process.

Background

Beginning in December of 1991, States have been required to expend 10% of their Federal Surface Transportation funds on projects that would enhance the transportation system. Referred to as the “Enhancement Set-Aside,” these funds must be spent upon projects that meet specific criteria. Eligible projects include bike and pedestrian facilities, historic preservation, landscaping and other non-traditional transportation projects—but all projects must also have a tie to the surface transportation system.

Each State is allowed to establish its own criteria for selecting projects. In Montana, the Montana Department of Transportation established the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) to allocate funds on a per-capita basis to eligible cities and counties. Each local agency was allowed to then establish its own project selection process.

The City of Great Falls and Cascade County passed resolutions in 1993 to establish a local program, appointing the City-County Planning Board as the agency charged with soliciting, reviewing and recommending eligible projects for final selection by the Cascade County Board of Commissioners and the Great Falls City Commission.

The Planning Board’s staff developed a program that established a set of rating criteria, a formal application and a formal selection process. The City-County Planning Board reviewed City and County projects at the same time, and made recommendations to both bodies.

In 2005, the Cascade County Board of Commissioners dissolved the City-County Planning Board. The County Planning Department took over CTEP duties for the County, and the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board and staff continued CTEP solicitation and management for the City of Great Falls.

Although the Program has been reviewed from time to time, the basic process has not changed substantially since its establishment in 1993.

Program Review

As with any long-running program, CTEP should be periodically reviewed for effectiveness. The Planning staff has recently done so, considering either continuing the program in its current format, or recommending

another process that may more effectively forward community goals or better implement the intent of the Federal and State guidelines relating to the program.

After looking at the projects selected over the life of the program, it is clear that CTEP has contributed greatly to the quality of life in Great Falls and has had a significant impact on Great Falls' transportation system. Helping to fund more than \$8.2 million in projects, CTEP has installed roadside landscaping, restored historic buildings, created new urban streetscapes and extended sidewalks and trails (See Attachment A for a complete listing of projects).

However, Staff found that past projects have not always had a clear tie to community goals. As with any public source of funding, it is government's responsibility to ensure monies are expended on projects that have the greatest benefit or are targeted towards the greatest needs. Further, with generally declining revenues Citywide, it became evident that these funds need to be more focused to needed improvements.

Some of the best guides for expenditure of certain "pots" of public dollars are the City's long-range planning documents. The Growth Policy, Transportation Plan, Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan, Medical District Master Plan, West Bank Park Plan and Downtown Plan all contain visions for the future of Great Falls. More specifically, the Plans include goals, objectives and strategies for implementation. A review of these Plans shows that the Community Transportation Enhancement Program could be an important funding source for implementing these community plans, if projects are more carefully tailored to doing so.

Conclusion

The current project selection process is open to any eligible applicant, and does not place heavy emphasis on compatibility with community goals and objectives. To more responsibly expend public dollars, and to more effectively implement the City's long-range Plans, staff will be recommending to the City Commission a change to the selection process to create a more focused, targeted and expedited program.

The updated process would begin with the City's Planning & Community Development Department first reviewing the City's planning documents for eligible projects. Working in coordination with other City Departments and community partners, staff would then develop scopes and cost estimates and identify matching funds for a list of prioritized projects for review and selection by the City Commission. This new process would:

- Move the community toward accomplishment of its stated goals and objectives.
- Spur redevelopment and private investment. Often, one public project can be a springboard to private development.
- Allow for construction of infrastructure investments that have been long postponed due to lack of funding, and that otherwise might not be built.
- Speed the project selection process.
- Allow for a narrow tailoring of project types and locations to reap the greatest benefit. Key areas would be the Riverfront, Downtown, redeveloping areas, underserved neighborhoods, underdeveloped major arterials, areas with safety concerns, and areas of deteriorating infrastructure.
- Leverage scarce local dollars with federal funds.

The Department has provided to the City Commission a memorandum outlining the proposed changes, and has received no comment. The next step will be consideration of a resolution by the Commission for an updated program.

Although this topic may generate discussion, no action is required by the Planning Board.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM - PROJECT STATUS REPORT					
Nov-11	Program Year	Project Description	Estimated Project \$	Project Status/Comment	
1	●	1993	County Courthouse window replacement	\$82,223	Completed.
2	●	1993	CMR Museum landscaping & restoration of historic wall	\$31,964	Completed.
3	●	1993	River's Edge Trail - extension and improvements at three locations, incl. Giant Springs	\$406,900	Completed.
4	●	1993	2nd Ave N. median landscaping from 57th St. to MAFB	\$20,172	Completed.
5	●	1993	Downtown trash containers	\$22,631	Completed.
6	●	1993	26th St. S. sidewalk and landscaping	\$112,885	Completed.
7	●	1993	Paris Gibson Square roof replacement, attic windows replacement & stone cleaning	\$302,635	Completed.
8	●	1993	Ulm Pishkun land acquisition	\$24,747	Completed.
9	●	1993	Pre-Release Center landscaping of vacant lot adjacent to 15th St	\$38,432	Completed.
10	●	1993	Fox Farm Rd. sidewalk and landscaping	\$99,689	Completed.
11	●	1993	Sun Prairie Park sprinkler system	\$20,251	Completed.
12	●	1993	Oddfellows Park trailhead parking improvements and boat launch	\$58,781	Completed.
13	●	1993	Historic train exhibit on River's Edge Trail (decking, etc.)	\$78,763	Completed.
14	●	1993	City street tree replacement, various locations	\$85,523	Completed.
15	●	1993/4	Broadwater Overlook Park/Portage Statue landscaping, lighting, electrical, sprinkler, signs	\$285,735	Completed.
16	●	1993/4/5	Crooked Falls Trail - east extension and extension along north shore near refinery	\$296,588	Completed.
17	●	1994	River's Edge Trail under new 9th/10th St. Bridge, south side	\$57,750	Completed.
18	●	1994	Interpretive trail along the river near the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center	\$193,315	Completed.
19	●	1994/5	Fairgrounds perimeter landscaping & new sidewalk along the NW Bypass	\$181,815	Completed.
20	●	1994/5	Gulch Trail - bike/ped trail from Stockett to Centerville & Miner's Park improvements	\$213,543	Completed.
21	●	1995	County Juvenile Detention Facility landscaping	\$84,319	Completed.
22	●	1995	Fairgrounds 4-H Building roof replacement	\$98,368	Completed.
23	●	1995/6	Paris Gibson Square window replacement, south elevation	\$145,513	Completed.
24	●	1996	River Drive trailhead - parking lot and landscaping east of 6th St NW along River Dr.	\$117,431	Completed.
25	●	1996	Belt Streetscape improvements (sidewalk, lighting, trees)	\$109,513	Completed.
26	●	1996	Landscaping at entrance to Legion (Veterans Memorial) Park	\$79,785	Completed.
27	●	1999	Central Avenue West - period lighting/tree grates/sidewalks	\$163,457	Completed.
28	●	1999	Old County jail rehabilitation - included new roof	\$72,583	Completed.
29	●	1999	Children's Museum exterior rehabilitation, including windows, new entry, brick cleaning	\$116,974	Completed.
30	●	1999	Heritage Building window rehab/replacement	\$157,221	Completed.
31	●	1999	West Bank Connector Trail - between Wastewater treatment plant and 15th St. Bridge	\$752,071	Completed.
32	●	1999	10th St. Bridge monument/accent lighting	\$141,991	Completed.
33	●	2000	Historic Bus Depot - exterior restoration, ADA accessible entryways	\$52,799	Completed.
34	●	2000	Black Eagle Falls Trail - trail near Black Eagle Dam westward	\$264,571	Completed.
35	●	2000	Improvements to Bloomingdale Park, including a welcome sig	\$175,858	Completed.
36	●	2001	Bike/Ped tunnel under Giant Springs Rd.	\$229,584	Completed.
37	●	2001	Great Falls International Airport entrance landscaping	\$190,541	Completed.
38	●	2002	Historic Neihart School rehabilitation (roof, log repair)	\$135,305	Completed.
39	●	2002	North Entry landscaping and welcome sign at 15th St. NE/Old Havre Hwy.	\$154,773	Completed.
40	●	2003	6th St. NW landscaping near Weed & Mosquito facility	\$54,500	Completed.
41	●	2002	Bay Drive Trail - Bike/ped trail along Missouri River and Bay Dr. (south portion)	\$375,942	Completed.
42	●	2003	Bay Drive Trail - Bike/ped trail along Missouri River and Bay Dr. (north portion)	\$910,709	Completed.
43	■	2003	25th St. N. pedestrian bridge over tracks and sidewalk near General Mills	\$192,727	Delayed until issues with BNSF easement over RR ROW can be resolved.
44	●	2006	5th St. S. Streetscape - decorative sidewalk, streettrees and pedestrian amenities	\$165,553	Completed.
45	●	2006	Library Landscaping - pedestrian plaza & amenities in front of Library	\$237,995	Completed.
46	●	2007	Missouri River Scenic Acq- conservation easement	\$66,493	Completed.
47	●	2006	Civic Center Restoration - exterior condition assessment and 1st phase of work	\$75,000	Completed.
48	●	2008	23rd St S Sidewalk adjacent to the McLaughlin Research Institute	\$24,330	Completed.
49	●	2008	Police Dept Rehab- repairs to exterior of building	\$130,800	Substantially Complete
50	■	2008	Riverview Elementary Bike/Ped Path	\$26,826	Design Phase
51	■	2008	Sun River Connection Bike/Ped Path	\$96,722	Delayed
52	●	2009	Gibson Park Lighting	\$120,000	Substantially Complete
53	■	2009	Bike Route Signage	\$23,851	Awaiting PSA from MDT
54	■	2009	1st Ave S Streetscape	\$237,984	Delayed
55	■	2010	20th Street South Sidewalk	\$74,530	Design Phase
56	■	2010	Centene Park Landscaping	\$124,493	Design Phase
			TOTAL:	\$8,211,047	
● = Projects completed or substantially completed				■ =	Projects under development but not expected to reach construction in 2011