

GREAT FALLS URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

Jim Rearden, Chairman, called the Great Falls Technical advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. in the Rainbow Room of the Great Falls Civic Center.

ROLL CALL OF TAC MEMBERS & ATTENDANCE

TAC Members Present/Represented:

Anita McNamara (for Susan Conell)	Cascade County Planning
Dave Dobbs	City Engineer, City of Great Falls
Andrew Finch	Sr. Trans. Planner, City of Great Falls
Jason Handl	Transportation/SID Engineer, City of Great Falls
Mike Haynes	Director, Planning & Community Development, City of Great Falls
Nadine Hanning (for Jim Helgeson)	Great Falls Transit District
Zia Kazini	Statewide & Urban Planning – MDT (via phone)
Jerry McKinley	Traffic Supervisor, City of Great Falls
Jim Rearden	Director, Great Falls Public Works Department
Bruce Treis	Environmental Health Specialist, City-County Health Dept
Robert Vosen	Construction Operations Engineer GF District – MDT
Jerilee Weibel	Right-of-Way Supervisor, GF District – MDT

TAC Members Absent/Not Represented:

John Faulkner	Director Great Falls International Airport Authority
John Hale	Deputy Base Civil Engineer, Malmstrom Air Force Base
Brian Clifton	Public Works Director, Cascade County
Jerry McKinley	Traffic Supervisor, City of Great Falls
Rina Fontana-Moore	County Surveyor, Cascade County
Dave Sutton	Superintendent, Cascade County Road Dept
Jim Turnbow	Street Supervisor, Great Falls Street Division

Recognition of Others Present:

Tom Kahle	Statewide & Urban Planning – MDT (via phone)
Janet Kinney	Statewide & Urban Planning – MDT (via phone)
Diane Burbank	Statewide & Urban Planning – MDT (via phone)
Sherry Marshall	Transportation Planner, City of Great Falls
Phyllis Tryon	Administrative Assistant, City of Great Falls

No members of the public were present.

MINUTES

Prior to the meeting, Committee members were provided a copy of the February 10, 2011 TAC meeting minutes.

MOTION: That the minutes of February 10, 2011 be approved.

Made by: Mr. Haynes

Second: Mr. Handl

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.

MACI Project Selection – TAC Agenda Item 5.A

Mr. Finch presented a summary of five nominated projects for Montana Air and Congestion Initiative (MACI) funds. Members had been asked to come up with cost estimates, and in two cases it was suggested the projects be funded as much as possible. Mr. Finch stated he assigned costs to Projects 1 and 4, which was open for discussion.

Mr. Finch stated that based on information from MDT-Helena, remaining MACI funds were \$380,000 for a total of approximately \$5.8 million estimated to be available over the next 5 years for air quality improvement projects. He stated all the projects are MACI eligible. The priorities are staff recommendations based on considerations for do-ability and quick turn around. Mr. Finch stated the top two projects seemed to be projects that the community has an interest in moving forward.

Mr. Treis stated there are proposed monitoring changes for our air quality district, and it is being proposed we no longer be a maintenance area. Recommendations are to curtail carbon monoxide monitoring on 10th Avenue South, remove the CO monitoring station there, and change to a particulate monitoring system near Great Falls High School. Mr. Finch stated that probably would not change our status because we are in attainment.

Mr. Vosen asked if the remaining funds needed to be applied to the first project. Mr. Finch stated it was unlikely we would get to the bottom projects. MDT does not traditionally program 5 projects at once, but usually works with one or two through completion. Mr. Finch stated he prioritized based on that information. However, he said that if there was some assurance that all the programs could be running by the end of the year, he would be willing to eliminate number one.

Ms. Weibel commented on number three that given design and permitting issues for the bike-ped, short turn-around is probably not realistic. Mr. Finch noted that it was still possible to begin programming for that project. He also would like to see the emergency lane as the bike-ped lane, which would eliminate any impact on river flow and save on design and costs.

There was some discussion about sidewalk projects. Mr. Rearden registered a concern for the City regarding having matching dollars available. Mr. Finch stated he would work with the City to identify minimum matches that might be available at the time needed. He noted that the City did not want to program a project in which there were no matching funds. He said he understood the State provided matches for sidewalk projects on State routes. The reason the project was number four on

the list was due the matching funds issue. However, he said the need and desire for the project could still be identified at this point to get it on the table.

Mr. Kazimi clarified that \$5.3 million in funds were available now for the projects. There was discussion about set-asides, and it was concluded that set-asides did not work as intended except for Urban set-asides. Mr. Finch recommended not to continue set-asides for MACI.

MOTION: That the TAC committee approves the addition of the projects to the update of the TIP, in the priority shown.

Made by: Mr. Treis

Second: Mr. Dobbs

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

5.B South Central Arterials Improvements Project

Mr. Finch gave an update on the South Central Arterials Improvements Project. He reminded TAC that the intent has been to redirect South Arterial earmark funds to another transportation project, but earmarks were eliminated legislatively. The original project goal was to improve the south arterial routes in existence. The three-part project of 13th Street South, 24th Avenue South, and 26th Street South projects still meet some of the goals and objectives of the South Arterial project. MDT discussed the project with the Federal partners and it was concluded that the project can move forward. Mr. Finch stated it will be included in the new TIP under the name of South Central Arterials Improvements Project. He noted that some Urban funds may need to be directed to this project in the future. Currently there are two Smelter Avenue reconstruction projects moving forward with Urban funds. The Fox Farm Road improvement project will need to be scoped and revisited due to high costs.

Ms. Weibel asked if there was any consideration given for improving the 33rd Avenue South as the roadway that would have been part of the south arterial from 13th to 25th Street. Mr. Finch stated there was no funding source on improving the arterials leading to the south arterial, so the decision was to extend as far south as possible, which was to 24th.

5.C Draft Transportation Bill

Mr. Finch gave a brief update of the Federal Draft Transportation Bill. He stated the Senate was soon to release their version of the bill, and the House of Representatives would release their version after July 4. He noted less funding would likely be available in the future. There is a proposal to eliminate small MPO's, which would then require the Governor's permission to operate or change to a State level program. CTEP, MACI, Scenic Byways, etc. could be melded into a performance-based, competitive program. He stated that ready-to-go projects would be given higher consideration.

5.D. Medical District Transportation Study

Mr. Finch gave an overview of the need for a small area transportation study due to the shifting traffic patterns from changes in land use. He stated that the City would like to partner with Benefis Health Care to have a sub-area transportation study performed. He thought the cost might be around \$30,000, possibly less. Mr. Finch requested approval from TAC. Mr. Handl asked if closing part of 11th Avenue South was being considered. Mr. Finch stated that they are looking at closing a section of that road, as well as 13th Avenue South next to the medical office building. There are concerns about crossings on 26th Street, and discussions about extending 15th Avenue further east and west. Mr. Haynes affirmed the need for such a study considering how the medical building development and growth in Great Falls is changing current traffic flow. Ms. Hanning of the Great

Falls Transit District stated that area was their busiest bus route. She commented that a study should include the impact on public transportation.

MOTION: That TAC supports a small area study in the medical master plan district.

Made by: Mr. Haynes

Seconded: Mr. Treis

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

5.E Transportation Improvement Program: 2011-2015

Mr. Finch stated he will have an update on the Transportation Improvement Program ready for approval at the next meeting. He said MDT suggested lump sum payments instead of the current process. Ms. Burbank said the decision was up to the local level.

5.F. Giant Springs Road – State Scenic Byways Designation

The Montana Transportation Commission approved the first Scenic Byways designation in June, and Giant Springs Road is one of the two designated. Mr. Finch stated it opens up the possibility of applying for national scenic byway grants for improvements along the byway, such as scenic pullouts. He also noted the designation is guaranteed to bring people to Great Falls.

OTHER BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 1:58 p.m.