

Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium Monthly Phone Conference
August 12, 2014 - 1:30-3:00 p.m.
Group Memory

Consortium Steering Committee: Brent McFadden (Madison County), Heather Higinbotham (YBP), Brittany Skelton (Victor), Patty Parkinson (St. Anthony), Jason Boal (Teton County, ID), Jan Brown and Wanda Adams (Fremont County), Doug Self (Driggs), Liz Yo (Bridger-Teton NF), Jeff Patlovich (Island Park), Ashley Koehler (Driggs)

Consultants/HUD: Wendy Lowe (P2 Solutions), Jerry Royster (HUD), Lee Einsweiler (Code Studio), Dave Wortman (The Brendle Group)

Consortium MOU

The updated MOU was distributed July 1 to all consortium partners for obtaining signatures. It reflects the addition of the Town of Jackson, Wyoming, and the Bridger-Teton National Forest, and the removal of sentence about consortium partners' obligations to follow through on recommendations. We are required to have a complete MOU with original signatures for the HUD audit at the conclusion of the grant.

All active consortium members need to submit the updated MOU to Wanda or Jan with original signatures by Aug 31, 2014. Original copies of the MOUs can be submitted by mail or in person to the Fremont County office.

The Bridger-Teton National Forest's attorney has determined that they are not legally able to be a voting member of the consortium, but will participate fully as a consortium partner without voting rights. There may be a need to change the operating protocol to reflect the correct number of voting members if other federal agencies come to the same conclusion due to recent rulings. This determination is not anticipated to impact state agencies. The consortium will review the operating protocol at the September face-to-face meeting.

Status/Remaining Work/Completion Schedules of Projects and Contracts

Model Code and Drictor Charrette Work

Lee Einsweiler from Code Studio will be in Victor and Driggs August 18-19. A full-day open house will be held on August 18 at the Teton County Courthouse for public viewing/comments on the maps of existing zoning districts as drafted. On Tuesday Lee will be working directly with Driggs/Victor/Teton County staff. Tuesday evening he will participate in the Teton County Planning & Zoning meeting to discuss how the districts for the rural area might work. August 29 is the deadline for delivery of the full codes for Victor and Driggs. Code Studio will then shift its focus to the County districts and code.

Lee will meet with consortium members on August 19th at 1:00 pm at the Teton County Courthouse to discuss how the final model code product relates to and will be integrated into the RPSD, and the requirements for the final HUD work product that may differ from the community work product. Code Studio's goal is to be done with the local codes by the end of 2014 and deliver the model code in January.

Brittany Skelton shared some outreach strategies that the planners in Driggs, Victor and Teton County have utilized for the model code work that may be applicable in other jurisdictions. They have hosted booths at the Teton County Fair, Music on Main, and Driggs Farmer's Market, and have had a good number of people stop by to ask questions and learn about the upcoming open house.

The November consortium face-to-face meeting has been rescheduled to November 20 to align with Code Studio's visit and allow for a final presentation on the model code work to the consortium.

Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development

Heather Higinbotham is working on the revisions to the local government requirements for the GY-Framework 2.0, based on input from the credit workshop. She will be working closely with Jackson/Teton County WY and Driggs/Victor/Teton County ID to put together the documentation submittals for certification, so that the reviews may be completed by the end of the grant period. She is also coordinating with Code Studio to incorporate the model code work into the GY-Framework requirements and vice-versa. YBP intends to submit all of their grant deliverables by November 30, 2014.

Housing Assessment

Heather Higinbotham provided the update report from Shawn Hill of Frontier Forward, who was unavailable for the call. The Frontier Forward team has completed all of the survey collection and is in the process of data analysis. Once the analysis is complete and they have been able to make adjustments to the weighting, they will be able to report on the survey data and any trends. Frontier Forward will make a full presentation on the findings to the consortium at the September 18 meeting.

Frontier Forward did interview a few of the consortium planners who reported that the questions and recommendations were relevant, and that most of their concerns, including concerns about the statistical analysis, had been addressed.

Heather will schedule time for Frontier Forward to meet with the Housing Advisory team prior to September 12 and go over the data and results. If anyone has questions or requests for specific data, please let Heather know in advance and she will share with Frontier Forward prior to the September meeting.

Consortium-Approved Technical Assistance and Research Agreements

St. Anthony Greenway Project

St. Anthony has made progress on securing professional services for bridge design as part of the Henry's Fork Greenway Project, which by affording a safe river crossing, will create a loop trail. The City has negotiated a contract with J-U-B Engineers out of Idaho Falls, and it is awaiting signature by Mayor Thueson.

Wayfinding Signage

The MOU for this project has been signed by the Driggs City Council and soon will be executed by Fremont County. Their intent is to design signage for the City of Driggs that also can serve as a template for communities across the region. In order to do so, they will need to involve stakeholder communities in the design process. The design process will start in late September and conclude by the end of 2014. Please contact Doug Self if you are interested in being part of the signage design process.

Bridger-Teton Certification Analysis

At the July 1 meeting, the consortium voted to allocate \$5,000 to the Bridger-Teton National Forest for an analysis of their new office design against the GY-Framework requirements. The Bridger-Teton withdrew their request primarily because they could not commit resources to pursue future GY-Framework certification, which was a condition set by the consortium. The consortium also realized that federal grant funds couldn't be allocated to another federal agency.

Greater Yellowstone Trail

The City of Victor is now sponsoring this work as a technical assistance project, but the portion funded by the HUD grant has been reduced to \$30,000. The City of Victor has approved an MOU with Fremont County for the grant funds and have negotiated and approved a contract with Wyoming Pathways to implement the project, which received unanimous consent of the Consortium on July 1st.

Local Foods Assessment

Jan reported that the High Country RC&D and the University of Idaho had not yet negotiated a service agreement, so Fremont County was looking at other means to complete the assessment of local food, growers, and the wood products industry. The U of I modeling capability is viewed as a great benefit to the project. The project budget also needs to be reduced by an amount commensurate with the Greater Yellowstone Trail project (25%) to ensure that sufficient funding can be allocated for public outreach – per HUD’s request.

[NOTE: Following the Consortium call, the University of Idaho and RC&D successfully negotiated a scope of work under a reduced budget, which eliminated the forest products analysis. An MOU for \$21,375 was negotiated between Fremont County and the High Country RC&D, which has now been approved by the RC&D executive committee for execution by Fremont County. This local foods assessment will be critical to enhancing the section of the Teton View RPSD related to preserving the region’s agricultural heritage.]

[NOTE: On August 13, 2014, guidance from HUD was received encouraging Fremont County to submit both an extension and work plan/budget modification request that would, as a priority, strengthen and reinforce the regional plan. In response the budget being submitted to HUD reallocates the \$75,000 formerly supporting the IP Futures Study in this manner: \$50,000 to enhance RPSD development and final publication, and \$25,000 for technical assistance. A 60-day extension is being requested, although all contractors still need to plan on finishing by the original January 31 deadline should the request not be approved.]

Sustainability Indicators Report and Presentation

Dave Wortman with The Brendle Group presented the survey results on the Quality of Life questions. RRC, a firm out of Colorado, is doing the data analysis on the 4,000+ survey responses received.

Dave provided the consortium with a one-page memorandum that summarizes the process, and a PDF report on the survey results (see attached). The survey asked three Quality of Life questions:

- Please rate your current quality of life (excellent to poor)
- Why do you choose to live in the region? (12 categories presented from clean air and water to job opportunities, rating each one from strongly agree to strongly disagree)
- What do you see as the greatest threats to quality of life in the region? (15 categories presented from jobs to transportation accessibility and land development, rating each one from strongly agree to strongly disagree)

The survey also asked open-ended questions and provided narrative comments. The open-ended questions resulted in more than 90 pages of content that will be placed on the website, organized by county. The next steps are to apply the survey responses to the potential indicators that will be included in the public review draft of the RPSD.

There was a question about whether the additional paper surveys distributed in Fremont County received a good response rate. The housing study team, Frontier Forward, tracked where all responses came from and will be able to determine the response from that additional effort.

One interesting response was the agreement among all four counties on the importance of living wage jobs. We need to ensure that we are putting enough efforts into this category, and to make sure we compare with housing affordability and the spectrum of wages in different communities.

Update on Teton View Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

RFQ Respondents and Selection

Fremont County received three responses to the Requests for Qualifications it issued in July. Responses were evaluated using a scoring system. The highest scoring team was comprised of Logan Simpson Design, The Brendle Group, and Harmony Design & Engineering. Contract negotiations have begun between Fremont County and the selected team. Dave Wortman with The Brendle Group will be assisting Tom Keith, the primary author from Logan Simpson proposed for the natural resource planning team. Bruce Meighen is identified as the primary author of the rural community planning sections. Jim Carter of Logan Simpson is identified as the legal and code reviewer. The supporting resource team includes Jennifer Zung and Randy Blough with Harmony Design, Casey Smith of Logan Simpson on GIS, and Rebecca Fedak and Shelby Sommers of The Brendle Group for sustainability and planning expertise.

This team is charged with compiling and writing six sections of the RPSD's public review draft and the final document; their contract does not include the design and publication of the document itself. The costs for the final layout and publication are being included in the enhanced "Compile RPSD" budget line item.

The Logan Simpson team will attend the September 18 consortium meeting to present their planning approach followed by a day-long kickoff meeting on September 19 for all those working on the RPSD to finalize timelines and work scope assignments.

Jan Brown is currently drafting a comprehensive list of references that we feel it important for our consultants to consider in developing the RPSD sections. She requested that all consortium members provide her with comprehensive plans, economic development plans, transportation plans, or other relevant plans so they can be shared with the RPSD team. Additional studies that are not online that are important for characterizing a town, city, or county (such as Envision Madison) should also be provided to Jan.

Public Involvement Plan Update

HUD has told us on several occasions that we need to make more investment in public outreach and engagement. In response, Wendy is seeking to subcontract with Tight Line Media, a firm that specializes in media communications. She has decided not to contract with MetroQuest as a public engagement strategy, but will help Fremont County explore the use of a less expensive, more nimble survey instrument in coordination with our RPSD contractor. An internet-based tool is important because there are stakeholders who will be interested in providing comment that may not be in residence during the winter months. Mindmixer and Crowdbite were two platforms that were recommended by Dave Wortman.

Our goal is for Tight Line Media to produce a 5-10 minute video that will built around stakeholder perceptions or aspirations for sustainability and the future of the region. The video will be an effective introduction to the regional plan for use in the public involvement sessions that Wendy intends to hold in each county during the public comment period. We want the video to be visually exciting and motivational, enticing people to get involved and look at the draft regional plan.

Wendy requested a list of people who might be really good on camera to tell their stories. The stories will be about why people live here and what their aspirations are for the future; we want to tell the story of our RPSD through our people. Consortium members are to email Jan suggestions of potential interviewees/storytellers, particularly in terms of the six major sections of the regional plan: agriculture, small cities, large city centers (Jackson and Rexburg), four-season recreation, regional infrastructure, and wildlife/public lands. Interviewees don't necessarily need to have been involved in project thus far.

Other Updates

Wendy Lowe is still compiling the consolidated list of public involvement efforts to date, including attendees, time, and location for all events. Please send records of any public involvement efforts to Wendy.

The consortium team was approved to attend the “Transition to Implementation” workshop in Oakland, California, Oct. 20-22, 2014. The team includes representatives from all 4 counties, and there is an option to stay for the job/workforce/economic development workshop for which we have applied. The team was awarded scholarship funding for more than 50% of the travel and lodging costs, which will extend the available consortium training dollars for other purposes.

Next Meetings

- September 18 face-to-face consortium meeting - Bridger-Teton National Forest office, Jackson WY
 - 9:00-4:30 unless agenda items require more time
- October conference call: Oct 14, 1:30-3:00 pm
- November 20 face-to-face consortium meeting (location TBD)
 - Whoever doesn't host the final project summit will be host community for November (i.e. if the final summit is in Rexburg, the Nov. meeting would be Teton Valley, and vice versa)