

Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium Monthly Phone Conference
(866) 740-1260, access code 1587264#
January 21st, 2014, 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Present: Jason Boal (Teton ID), Wendy Green Lowe (P2 Solutions), Heather Higinbotham (YBP), Ashley Koehler (Driggs), Brittany Skelton (Victor), Jan Brown (Fremont ID), Tom Cluff (Fremont ID), Brent McFadden (Madison ID), Alex Norton (Jackson/Teton WY), Patty Parkinson (St. Anthony), Jerry Royster (HUD)

Objectives

The objectives for the January meeting include:

- HUD update, budget and work plan – Tom Cluff
- Model Code update – Doug Self, Ashley Koehler, Brittany Skelton
- Regional Recycling System study update – Heather Higinbotham
- Sustainability Indicators update – Tom Cluff
- Multi-modal update – Jan Brown
- Housing study update – Heather Higinbotham
- Island Park Caldera National Monument Study – Jan Brown and Tom Cluff
- Other grant element updates as relevant
 - Teton WY/Jackson GY-Framework
 - Broadband
 - Website
- Next meeting: March 6 Face-to-face, Rexburg City Council Chambers

HUD update, budget and work plan – Tom Cluff

The latest update is that everything we submitted looks good, and it is making its way through their process but they don't have a definite date they'll be done with it. This is not really news, but no news is good news in this case. We have several elements that we can continue to work on regardless, such as the model code, recycling study, sustainability indicators, and housing study. These are all part of the original approved work plan. The preliminary steps for the RPSD are starting to roll out and Jan will talk more about this later. We are starting to explain what will be involved in the process and introduce people to the work that will be done, even though we aren't actually starting on the work until we get approval from HUD. Jan said that the only difficulty has been that people are interested in seeing the work plan—Jeff Patlovich really wants to see work plan posted on the sustainableyellowstone.org website and we all agree it should be posted there, but we can't post it until it's officially approved. We don't want to put something up there that's out of date.

Model Code update – Ashley Koehler, Brittany Skelton, Jason Boal

Brittany received an email from Code Studio with updated dates, apologizing and saying that they have overextended their small office “with the best of intentions for providing quality work to everyone”. Originally both Victor and Driggs were supposed to receive drafts of complete codes for each city this month, but were informed by Lee Einsweiler that this has been pushed back to September for the complete codes. They are supposed to get use maps in February. The new schedule sent by Code Studio is as follows:

- New downtown-related district dimensions and uses – end of Feb
- Remaining Code provisions – April/May
- “Drictor” exercise (with Teton County) – June/July
- Complete codes – September

Tom felt strongly the need to schedule a call between Teton Valley and Code Studio and Fremont County to talk about the schedule and the other hard deadlines that this delay will impact. When Tom talked with Lee last spring as they were finalizing contract details, Lee assured Tom there was plenty of time to complete everything in the scope of work according to that schedule. We need to revisit these conversations directly. Brittany agreed that would be very helpful. This has been a huge delay, and we need to be a little more proactive. Tom specifically asked Lee about it because Code Studio took on the LA code after already committing to our project; he assured us he had time to do both. Jan pointed out that this schedule gives us no buffer at all for public involvement for the full RPSD. Wendy asked if we could get a better handle on what it means to go straight to final code from a draft? Ashley agreed that we would be losing public momentum if we don't get the complete draft code until September. Brittany has a list of things she wants to see incorporated in the code. It sounds like they haven't started, because the email said he'd have questions "once they begin the work".

Jason shared that he has had several conversations recently as they are anticipating work on the process of adopting their new code throughout the year. Lee worked closely with Driggs and Victor, and Jason understands there were some issues with Teton County last year. The County is concerned that they may be partially or completely left out of the process. He needs to sit down with Code Studio, Driggs and Victor and figure out what can be done and when.

Tom suggested that after the consortium call is over, we get together and figure out when we can all talk to Lee. He says Wednesday or Thursday next week will work. Heather will send out email to everyone to finalize a time.

Jan reiterated that we all feel really positive about Teton County, and expressed congratulations to Jason for getting the county reengaged. She is hoping it helped being up there and reminding the commissioners that they're part of this whole HUD project. Jason said he wasn't here for a lot of the issues, but now it seems like there is an understanding that what happened in the past is past and the county wants to take advantage of the great resource with HUD for this work. Everyone seems to be on board and is excited for the opportunity. Jan will be in Driggs tonight to present to the city and invited Ashley and all other consortium members to attend.

Regional Recycling System study update – Heather Higinbotham

The recycling study is on track. LBA Associates is working on the MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) alternatives and will have the draft report ready for review in late February. Heather and the LBA team held a series of conference calls with each county to get their input on the concept of development of a regional solid waste organization to support new recycling infrastructure. There was good representation from Teton WY and Madison ID. Teton ID shared feedback via email and there were no representatives from Fremont ID. Topics covered during the calls included:

- List of abilities & authorities the organization should have
- List of responsibilities the organization should have
- Funding flexibility needed
- Who organizational members should be (counties, cities, non-profit, private or combination)
- What type of organizational model to be pursued (solid waste district/joint powers, intergovernmental agreement, non-profit) – see the attached comparison of this options
- Ancillary issues

Jan shared that she had a good conversation with Laurie the other day about transportation resources. It's an interesting twist that this recycling study is going to automatically involve more counties than the four in the consortium area. Jan feels we need to consider this as we think in terms of strategy. What does it mean

when a project we investigate and launch includes more counties, and is looking at a location in Idaho Falls? Laurie was really earnest, and Jan thinks will be a good report.

Sustainability Indicators update – Tom Cluff

The Sustainability Indicators team is planning on being at the consortium face-to-face meeting in March. Tom will confirm with the Brendle Group. They will have some things to present, and will have an initial assessment based on picking a handful of the indicators they've identified so far. They will give an example of how these indicators can measure sustainability in the region so we can get more feedback on how an indicators project can benefit us. The face-to-face meeting will be the real work time. Tom will ask them about getting a sample assessment ahead of time so consortium members will be able to review prior to the face-to-face.

Brendle Group will be attending the consortium meeting as well as doing additional work while they're here. Tom will see what they are suggesting when they send him the draft schedule. Ashley said she would be happy to work with Tom on that project if he needs additional eyes. She has worked with them previously.

Multi-modal update – Jan Brown

Jan shared that there is a lot going on with the multi-modal project, and there is still a lot more to come. Jan said the most important thing she needed to share is that she has been sick for three weeks, and only functioning at half power. At least she has been able to complete most of presentations; she made a commitment to go to every local government/elected body and give update, not just on the multi-modal project but the overall HUD grant, to help people understand what's going on big picture and that Jan's now working for Fremont County. She said it's been very helpful to spend this time with everyone, and they have all been cordial and complementary. Most folks were aware to some extent about what is going on with the HUD grant. She has three more presentations: Driggs tonight, St. Anthony Thursday night, and Ashton Feb. 12.

She has gradually been trying to get all the chapters that needed significant editing onto the website as she has been able to complete them. She started with the ones that are the most substantial and had the most recommendations in them. Chapter four was uploaded to the website today. There are several goals within each chapter, using an incremental approach to building a regional public transportation system. Jan emailed the consortium detail on goal #3, outlining that circumstances have driven us to make our first attempt at funding a connector for the four counties for 2015. This funding process goes right into the application process for ITD. It was decided last minute that Linx was ineligible to apply because while it is incorporated as a non-profit under Idaho law, it's not recognized as such at the federal level. The City of Rexburg has stepped up as the lead applicant with less than 24 hours' notice. Jan also sent a description excerpt from chapter four that talks about the need for this connector service and what it amounts to, including a draft budget.

In a nutshell, TRPTA offers a commuter service M-F between Rexburg and Driggs. It was Jan's understanding that TRPTA wouldn't apply for funding, but they did submit a pre-application. This service has had approx. 1 rider per day. The feedback Jan got is that what is most needed is a mid-day connection between Teton Valley and Jackson and Rexburg to Driggs to increase the connectivity. One can connect to SLE heading south in the AM bringing passengers all the way from Bozeman and West Yellowstone. Jan outlined the whole situation in her proposal. It is designed as a purchase of service concept where money is used to put out to bid for any public transportation provider who's licensed to operate one of the two legs. She requested special service on Sat and Sun b/c START doesn't operate on weekends. This will provide better connections for Jackson and Teton Valley, allowing passengers to get back to Rexburg by 10:30 pm. She is presenting it to the city council; they will let her know what they decided about supporting TRPTA proposal vs. this one. The draft budget is \$105K; we would need to raise \$36,500 match. It's shown in the budget

that theoretically, if everyone gave a little bit, even the smallest towns gave \$500, it could be the very first time we all come together as a consortium to contribute a little to make this happen. It's proposed as a pilot demo for 150 days. *(Amendment post-call: The final budget and schedule will be sent with the group memory. We are now proposing two complete bus routes without counting on START Bus seating capacity. Total budget is \$126,000 with \$80,700 in federal subsidy and a target of \$48,000 in match).*

Jan asked for feedback from folks on whether it's most important in summer or winter? Doug with Driggs felt summer is better. Brittany said it's hard to say summer vs. winter, but she was sure the council/mayor would have opinion on season.

The budget may change with adding an extra Sat and Sun. Jan is asking for the consortium to review and provide feedback. Brittany said that Victor is definitely interested in a weekend service to Jackson.

Jan will need an answer and letter of commitment from everyone. The proposal is due on Feb. 10 so she will collect all letters by Feb. 7. *(Amendment post-call: the application deadline is being moved later into February since ITD's online application form is not quite ready for use).* This is the first time the City of Rexburg has entered into a grant application process with ITD, and Jan thinks this bodes well for all of us. We have the opportunity to work on a transit project we can design, as we would like, to purchase the kind of services that are most in need.

Other aspects include the Yellowstone pilot demonstration, and summarizing all existing plans and services in the region and national parks. It's been a real challenge to distill all of this into a readable document. It needs to be in Jan's opinion not just a study on the shelf but a resource that someone new to the region can read and get a sense of what's going on. To the extent that it truly reflects what's happening in each county, please let Jan know. Tom said that Fremont has almost nothing for transit, and in the past they have basically just referred folks to TRPTA.

The rest of the chapters will be posted as Jan finishes edits. She apologized that it is not all up at once. Jan has been working with Nelson, and everyone agrees that having the chapters broken into pieces is much more manageable than just one long document.

We don't know yet about the WYDOT grant for Linx to continue its 4th year operating in YNP. She estimated mid-January for a response, and is hoping to hear on that any day. Now that she is working for Fremont County, she hopes that she can be more active with TVMAC (Teton Valley Mobility Advisory Committee) and working with Jim Charlier on the Integrated Transportation Plan for Teton County/Jackson, so we are sure that this project isn't outdated in 6 months. It's important to keep it current and moving forward.

Brittany asked regarding the budget that was sent out with each agency's suggested contribution, will those numbers go up with the inclusion of a Sat/Sun service, or will the contribution amounts be the same? Jan is fairly certain she didn't calculate to include the weekend service and figures would go up. She will do a revised budget with two columns, an A/B alternative. She did find out through partnership work with Linx/YBP that no one likes to give more than \$2,500. Even the largest cities feel like that's doable; it's an attempt for no one to have to go above that number. She is not sure we'll succeed with hospitals and chambers, the folks who aren't just looking at social service transportation. We need to look at benefits from tourism, etc.

The proposal does include capital costs for bike carriers; providers can get 92% of cost covered, and the same goes for standing kiosks. In part it's also seeing how people adapt to technology. Brittany said she would incorporate a presentation for the council meeting tomorrow night and try to get their support. If folks feel generous and want to contribute a higher amount, the system could operate more than 150 days.

Housing study update – Heather Higinbotham

Heather shared that the housing RFP has been distributed, and the advisory team has received questions from 3 contractors so far. The advisory team is meeting on January 22 to formulate responses. Responses to questions are due Monday, January 27 and final proposals are due February 7. Interviews will be conducted February 18-20, and the advisory team will present a recommendation to the consortium for approval. The target contract award date is February 28; the advisory team and Tom will decide if the consortium approval can happen via email in that timeframe or if it needs to be presented at the March 6 face-to-face meeting. Scheduled date to finalize agreement, scope and fee is March 14.

Island Park Caldera Futures Study – Jan Brown and Tom Cluff

We are changing the name from “National Monument” to “Futures study” or “resource assessment”. Tom likes the term “futures study”. The Watershed Council likes “assessment” because it’s more scientific. Jan presented to the Watershed Council last week, and gave a power point/handout that folks could take home with them. There were about 45 people in the room and she was last on the agenda. It appeared that a lot of folks were there specifically to hear about the study. She started out with the background on the entire HUD grant, and shared the other topics that are being dealt with.

For February, the Watershed Council moved their regular second Tuesday meeting to the third Tuesday of the month, Feb. 18, for a project launch in Rexburg at the Marriott Springhill suites. Jim Caswell and Steve Woodruff will be there in person to kick things off with the whole history of the potential monument discussion. Jim made a recommendation back in 2008 that the whole Island Park area should be part of a study for possible designation. The meeting will be a full day, providing a series of additional perspectives and explaining how the schedule is embracing GY-Framework categories. After meeting with Council co-facilitators Dale Swensen and Brandon Hoffner, they agreed that a Council subcommittee should be established as an advisory committee to work in depth between meetings. To encourage folks to participate, we suggest that up to \$2,500 stipends be considered to offset travel and other costs for a year of participation. Jan is trying to have the National Wildlife Federation support this advisory committee with an additional \$25K. For 20 years the Watershed Council has used an internal checklist WIRE (Watershed Integrity Review and Evaluation) to determine if the group as a whole can endorse any given project. It’s essentially a sustainability checklist that was created before that term became popular. The Council wants to apply the WIRE checklist to evaluate the overall process and ensure the involvement of agencies and specialists who have a responsibility or jurisdictional role in the Caldera. They are finalizing the agenda for this meeting.

March 11 is the confirmed date for a winter recreation session in Island Park. Fremont County Parks and Recreation Director Tamra Cikaitoga will be presenting the background on Island Park snowmobiling history and Yellowstone NP will be asked to outline the new winter use plan and the impacts it may have. The Council will look at Nordic and other snow sports as well, and winter/spring diversification. From there, they will look at the rest of the topics and get a sense of where studies are really needed. In April, the Council will be presented with a comparative analysis of FS, BLM, State land policies, Island Park and Fremont land use plans – specifically looking at where there are vulnerabilities, strong protections, or opportunities to do things with greater coordination and collaboration. She said she could see other topics in Island Park, such as terrestrial resources, which would probably be most controversial or interesting, as important to bring out ranchers, folks who want to see wildlife from bears to wolves, and others not represented. This will happen over two days in August; day one will be a full day of meetings and day two will be in the field to attract more participation. These days are right in line with the Watershed Council schedule for an August field trip. There also is an open date in Oct. in case of contingency. The annual conference in November will conclude the process with presentation of final recommendations.

Wendy is helping with this shaping the Watershed Council process. . In the process, she is looking forward to getting approval from HUD to start talking about Public Participation support around what the Watershed Council is doing. The council process is “not the end all for public participation”. Wendy talked about how this needs to happen in parallel with online and other types of opportunities for topics throughout the year. Jan thinks every consortium member with interest in what’s happening in Island Park will want to get involved in this; it should be an intriguing dialogue. Jan has already had one hydrologist from Idaho Falls volunteer to be on the subcommittee. Subcommittee membership is not restricted to Watershed Council members; it will be open to anyone.

Jan’s Watershed Council presentation on January 14 was about 40 minutes, and there was a lot of interest from the Forest Service and Fish and Game. There was even one question asking, “If a national monument designation will be proposed, will it fall under an Interior agency or USDA?” Jim Caswell always said his idea is to have it under the National Forest umbrella. Jan made it clear that it’s still very theoretical, and the commissioners by no means endorse a monument designation but are supporting this study and want to make the most out of looking at the opportunity.

Jan shared her new contact information for her new position with Fremont County. Her new cell phone (208) 604-4404; her old phone number won’t work after Saturday. She said she would also appreciate if everyone could start using her Fremont County email address, as she transitions away from her YBP email. jabrown@co.fremont.id.us.

Jan reiterated that if anyone were interested in hearing from the horse’s mouth, Jim Caswell’s representation on the history of this would be very valuable. He was the one who spurred the commissioners to action. The February 18 meeting will be an all day meeting, starting at 8:00 or 8:30 and going until about 4:00. All consortium members are encouraged to attend.

Jerry hasn’t heard anything from HUD; he apologized and said he never thought it would take this long. Jan said we need to move forward with the Watershed Council because of timing constraints, but we can’t move forward with anything else until we have HUD approval.

Jan also made a presentation to the Island Park City Council, so that all city officials now have the same heads up as the county commissioners. There was a lot of curiosity about where this might head with communities. Jan talked with her neighbors and church as well and encouraged them to pay attention and become involved.

Patty said that this would be a topic to brush on Thursday night in St. Anthony. Jan said se will mention it for sure.

Jan will send everyone info on February 18 Rexburg meeting. The Watershed Council is still finalizing the agenda.

Other grant element updates as relevant

Teton WY/Jackson GY-Framework

Alex said that they are still working on the LDR updates, and are right now going through the administrative procedures. After that they will jump into the GY-Framework, and apply those pieces.

Broadband

Tom said that they have finished the study. He suggested that we invite Scott Johnson to the face-to-face meeting on March 6th to give a report on the completion of this project. Heather will invite Scott.

Website

Heather is working to keep the website up to date, and has been making sure all of the meeting minutes, reports and documents are posted. She has been updating the Model Code document library, as well as getting the recycling, multi-modal and housing documents posted. She encouraged all consortium members to review the website and let her know if there is missing information.

Baltimore PSC training March 11-13

Heather emailed the consortium information about an upcoming training from the Partnership for Sustainable Communities in Baltimore on March 11-13. The training is on "Building a Sustainable Economic Future through Equity and Inclusion". There is no cost for the training, and travel expenses will come out of the grant's travel budget. Brittany Skelton and Jason Boal expressed interest. Any consortium member interested needs to get in touch with Heather. Applications are due January 29th. Heather will work with Tom to finalize the agenda.

Next meeting: March 6 Face-to-face, 10:00-4:00, Rexburg City Council Chambers

Meeting adjourned.