

Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium Face-to-face meeting group memory
Driggs City Council Chambers, 60 S Main St., Driggs ID
November 12th, 2013, 1:00-4:30 p.m.

Present: Wendy Green Lowe (P2 Solutions), Heather Higinbotham (YBP), Jan Brown (Linx), Jason Boal (Teton County ID), Jeff Patlovich (Island Park), Zach Smith (Victor), Wanda Adams (Fremont County), Brittany Skelton (Victor), Ashley Koehler (Driggs), Alex Norton (Jackson/Teton WY), Lee Einsweiler (Code Studio)

Objectives

The objectives for the November face-to-face meeting include:

- HUD update, budget and work plan (if any) – Tom Cluff
- Model Code update and Victor/Driggs charette outcomes – Code Studio
- Sustainability Indicators report – The Brendle Group
- Multi-modal final report – Jan Brown
- Housing study priority review – Heather Higinbotham
- Other grant element updates as relevant

All present introduced themselves. We welcomed new consortium attendees Jeff Patlovich with the City of Island Park and Jason Boal, the new planning administrator for Teton County ID. Jeff requested that all consortium information be placed on the Fremont County website and linked to the WGYC website. Jeff felt that this grant is a significant enough amount of money that residents in the consortium region, and Fremont County especially, should be able to access information on the grant and what the money is being used for. Wanda Adams took note of this request and will pass along to the appropriate folks at Fremont County.

HUD Update

Heather reviewed what Tom emailed her regarding an update from HUD. Tom believes that he has finally gotten everything to HUD that they need to take care of the modification to the grant. HUD communicated to Tom that they think they can have it processed and give the consortium an official decision by the end of the month (November). So far, they've been pretty positive about the likelihood of approving it. This is a sooner deadline than the anticipated end of the year message we received earlier. Tom will provide another update at the December consortium meeting.

Code Studio presentation

Lee Einsweiler with Code Studio was in Jackson and Teton Valley for meetings November 11-12. Lee provided an overview of the project to bring the new consortium members up to speed. The original volunteer for the concept of the model code project was Teton County, ID. Due to a shift in politics, the focus has shifted to the cities of Driggs and Victor. Lee will be presenting the charette report tonight to the joint city council and P&Z commission in Victor. Code Studio is also working on a side job with the Town of Jackson and Teton County WY on public design studios and plan refinement for the Town of Jackson and the core downtown area. Next steps with Victor and Driggs are to start drafting the code. They are working on visual presentations and thinking about character areas specific to Driggs and Victor. The model code will be an extraction from this work.

Jeff asked how Code Studio plans to meld the model code to cover the full consortium area. Lee said that this work is more relevant to the Eastern Idaho side, and the ID and WY state statutes don't match. They may be able to engage Teton County ID but the next work will be in the Drictor corridor area. They are looking at pieces that would have application in the other counties. Currently they are waiting to see where Teton County ID goes with the current draft created by Stephen Loosli. The draft (which will be presented to the County Commission this afternoon and the planning and zoning commission this evening) is essentially a 1-zone default with space for other zones to be added. Alex said that Teton WY's code is one zone, and it is performance-based. It has been in place since 1994. They are moving to 2 or 3 zones.

Lee said that they don't want the other good HUD work tainted by the other outcome of rural lands work.

There are huge policy decisions, and the county has no stomach for downzoning. The current zoning is 3 zones (1 parcel per 20 acres, 1 per 5 acres, 1 per 2.5 acres). There are people who wish the 1/5 and 1/2.5 zones would go away, and that all zones would be 1/20 or even 1/100 so growth would be discouraged in portions of the county. Stephen Loosli's model allows the marketplace to decide, where people can buy up development rights. He is proposing 1 parcel per 25 acres so in some ways it is downzoning, but people can buy back density in trade for public benefit.

The WY side is focused heavily on the natural environment in their zoning. The WY political will was supportive of wildlife and scenic resources. This is not the primary focus on the Idaho side; there is not a consensus on wildlife and scenic resources. Island Park does have a performance-based ordinance for wildlife.

Lee said the best thing Code Studio can do to code for the GY-Framework and help in the county is to make Driggs and Victor put people in the cities. The Island Park planning commission has buy-in to follow the GY-Framework to the extent possible. The GY-Framework is the whole foundation of the grant. Jeff asked if the model code would have rural districts, or only tackle towns, nodes and corridors? Or would they pick a model and fine-tune it for outlying areas? It's a huge challenge, especially in a down economy to suggest modifications to property rights.

Code Studio will be writing a full ordinance for both Driggs and Victor, and possibly have a design project for the Drictor corridor. It will depend on the community's tolerance for changes in rules such as landscaping, density and setbacks. There could be a city along the whole corridor and some see nothing but opportunity (landowners). The scenic corridor is the commons; it's in everyone's self interest to ruin it, and everyone's shared interest to preserve it. It would make the county commissioners look good to tackle the corridor. They have been able to stay within the intent of the original scope despite the shift in focus.

Heather asked if focusing the model code on cities only would be a disservice to the rest of the consortium? The model code project needs to be applicable to the entire consortium. Lee said they are holding off on decisions specifically relating to Teton County to see what happens with Stephen Loosli's proposed code. He said it's easy to code for a place where you don't have to implement it (i.e. the model). What will help are the Drictor rules they come up with regarding the rights and how to strengthen nodes. In Louisiana, they solely wrote a model code. So far, 2-3 years after, only 1 community has implemented the model. A few took pieces of the model. It was intended to make them more resilient in advance of the next storm. Alex said if the intent was to have a model for them to pull from, then it hasn't failed. An example for this area was food trucks—they have been successful in Driggs, but Victor is not interested. The idea is to act incrementally.

Jeff said part of the intention of the Henry's Lake Flat area was to define the area of impact. They want to force commercial into zones and not allow sprawl outside of commercial zones. Jan asked if there would be an option with the budget redo to take a look at the Island Park boundaries? Jeff said the current officials have no appetite for a forced annexation. There is tremendous interest in taking control of private land.

Lee said at the end of the process in Louisiana they took a 10-day road trip to different communities to present the code. ½ of the road trip was sponsored by the National Association of Realtors Smart Growth fund. They found support to take the story, what would need to change to "right size", on the road. The hope was that they could give everyone tools to illustrate the intent of the direction.

He said this should be done in our project as well, to go on a road show and present the model code. He thought the focus would be on the Idaho counties, as that's where it's most relevant. Heather talked about having two tracks with relation to the GY-Framework—one for the cities and one for the counties/rural areas. Alex agreed, and said that when they went through the process, there was a lot that was not applicable at the county level or at the town level; we need 2 separate tracks for the end result.

Lee said the prerequisites in LEED are part of what makes that rating system function, and the main thing we need to do is design it so that local governments can make sure the prerequisites are achieved no matter what. Teton ID is not ready to say xx parcel of land is appropriate for development and yy parcel of land is not. We could write performance standards for "resource" land and "development" land. There is a fight against the requirement to define habitats and resources before development. That is a fundamental component. Heather gave the example of having a LEED platinum development in a migration corridor.

Jeff said that Fremont County has done away with base standards. Wendy asked from a public participation standard if there has been consensus at charettes? Lee said no. He said this is common everywhere. Planning is easy; zoning is tough. They have found a strong amount of planning level agreement that has been pretty similar across the board.

There are 2 properties that differ in thinking:

1. Victor: the HUB is a big empty foundation, that could be a node of some kind
2. Driggs: the piece between Huntsman and Main Street has the potential to be an artsy center. Right now it's just gravel and metal; it could become a cool live/work space

Zoning has to be political, as it's voted on. It will be a tough decision.

Wendy asked what we are doing to include disenfranchised populations. The terminology is difficult to define. Have we cast a wide enough net? Lee said we can't possibly include everyone. They didn't see renters, or the people with two jobs; those populations will remain underrepresented communities. Presumably the planning community is making decisions that are best for these disenfranchised populations. One way to get perspective benefits is in reaching out through churches and schools.

Jeff shared that 85% of houses in Island Park are transient rentals (vacation homes), where owners spend a few weeks a year in IP and rent the rest of the year. It's creating a problem because they are not paying bed tax.

Generally in Teton Valley people know the project exists, but until it's up for adoption it's hard to define the public participation outreach.

Jan said that it's our job to define the underrepresented populations; HUD doesn't know. We just have to make sure we give it our best effort.

**Amendment to minutes, additional information provided by Jerry Royster with HUD:*

HUD **does** define underserved populations. On page 13 of the SCRPG NOFA –

16. Underserved Populations. *The term —underserved populations//means groups of individuals who fall within one or more of the categories protected under the Fair Housing Act and who are:*

a. of an immigrant population (especially racial and ethnic minorities who are non-English speaking or have limited English proficiency);

b. in rural populations;

c. homeless;

d. persons with disabilities (e.g., physical or mental) who can be historically documented to have been subject to discriminatory practices not having been the focus of federal, state, or local fair housing enforcement efforts;

e. persons in areas that are heavily populated with minorities where there is inadequate protection or ability to provide service from the state or local government or private fair housing organizations, or

f. populations that have faced generational economic disadvantage, job dislocation, or other forces that prevent them from achieving individual and family self-sufficiency.

The Brendle Group presentation

The Brendle Group was not in attendance at the meeting. This agenda item will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

Multi-Modal project final report

Jan gave an overview of the whole assessment, development plan and contract. They took a serious look at the possibilities for a concept level recreational trails network, which would link the four counties. There was an advisory team and the first project was to take an inventory of trails.

Katie Wilson has taken on the project as a grad project; she is a subcontractor to Linx. At the end we will get a platform that everyone can share.

Currently they are using the free trial software, and are looking to find out if there is a possibility through ISU to get the full version for free or a lower cost. The planning tool is not designed for the public to design hiking trail maps; internal folks can input new trails, etc. It includes winter use, summer use, motorized, non-motorized, etc.

It is a platform for further visualization and mapping for all four counties. Jan will get on all the council agendas and give a 10-minute presentation to demonstrate. In December she will start making presentations. She is already on the agenda for Island Park.

A high priority need is to get from the state line up to the pass on the WY side—that is the next major connection. Jan heard that on the WY side the Forest Service was not being cooperative? Zach said on the ID side the Forest Service is willing to give a right of way. For an existing grant, they applied to use engineer skills for \$100K match but this was not allowed; now they have to come up with the match. They are looking at the FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program) grant for \$1.5M on the ID side. The deadline for WY is Jan. 10.

Jan said that for the multi-modal work, they decided to call the pieces “initiatives” rather than a “project” or “program”. It is a long-term multi-faceted initiative for a network within the four counties. There are four total initiatives (spelled out in greater detail in the plan—see attached draft final report). They specifically looked at the transportation credits in the GY-Framework.

For the mobility resource roster section, Jan took a delegation from Rexburg to Bozeman to visit the Streamline system—they had 16 people go. Rexburg is serious about creating a fixed route system but they want to make sure they connect to the rest of the region. They felt that TRPTA’s proposal didn’t meet their needs. They are trying to get students to leave their cars at home when they come to school.

They were awarded a grant from CTAA (Community Transportation Association of America?) to help implement their plan. Rexburg has a full day meeting with CTAA and a planner from Washington DC.

It was an educational process to identify all the mobility players and figure out who does what or who funds what, to understand processes like what FLAP is, what map 21 means, all of the vernacular, how to take an idea to the planning phase, and who’s doing what in the region. There is a component in the Jackson transportation plan—should we form a regional transportation entity? It’s so easy to work at cross-purposes in this arena.

Yellowstone Teton Clean Energy Coalition (YTCEC) is working in the arena of reduced emissions; Jan felt that we need an initiative of four counties to align with fleets and idle-free zones, and use the resources we have. See the annotated table of contents for more detail on all of these components).

Jan reviewed the Yellowstone Pilot schedule

The red, green and purple lines were 100% funded by the WYDOT grant. The orange and blue lines were not grant funded. By far the green line was the most successful (Jackson to Lake and vice versa).

After August 23, the schedule was strictly the grant-supported routes.

They ran into capacity issues; when that arose, they prioritized full fare passengers first, then employees who had to get back to their job.

They have a clear profile of the ridership. 67% was employees; second highest was international guests who don’t want to drive; third was cyclists and hikers.

They received 1,550 phone calls over 7 weeks, the highest being from international visitors (even foreigners that live in NYC, etc.).

With the current system, they are looking at a way to get people from Rexburg or Jackson to Driggs in the winter by noon, so they could do a ½ day skiing at Grand Targhee. They are also looking at the Jackson to Bozeman route.

The intercity bus connecting the four counties is what's missing. Through the DCC (District Coordinating Council) process, they are looking at 5311 funds and encouraging Rexburg to sponsor the connection to Driggs/Victor.

Initiative 3 is more collaborative marketing of all mobility options.

Initiative 4 is looking at specific low emission travel to address the transportation credits in the GY-Framework. Jan will have a summary of all of the recommendations in the final report.

The Jackson driver actually lives in Driggs. He would take the bus home with him to Driggs, then drive it to Jackson each morning to start the route. After learning he lived in Driggs, they realized they could get reimbursed from the state line.

Ashley asked about complete streets, and said that information should be on the website. Jan shared information about the work Joe Gilpin did (with Alta Planning) on the complete streets workshops in each county.

Jan is working on getting on all the city council agendas to present the final report, and intends to set up a display pre/post-meeting. She will invite the local trails groups to join.

Driggs City Council is the first and third Tuesday. Jan will call Ashley to schedule. Victor is the second and fourth Wednesday, except only one meeting in December. Jan will shoot for January 8th for Victor. She is on the schedule in Jackson for January 6th.

The consortium had a discussion on what the format should be for the final reports. Everyone felt it was important to have a PDF version for the public, and a word or editable version for the backdoor for the consortium to lift info.

Jan shared that Linx has been financially distressed. On the last three years of the pilot, it lost \$150K (\$73 of which is owed to YBP). They are seeking debt restructuring, working with CTAA in DC. If Linx is a good idea, we'll see if this is viewed as a worthwhile investment.

There is a question if it could grow with the proper level of marketing. We didn't have the funds to sufficiently market (one quote received was \$1.5M for proper marketing). Salt Lake Express believes running the bus is the best advertising. They would rather run at a loss, and said that on average it takes 4-5 years for a new line to break even.

Jan will include the conversations with the park service in the final report. She said that all superintendents at parks that have public transit hate it and the public loves it. It's a noose around the budget and raises people's expectations. It's a system-wide issue.

Housing study: review priorities outlined in draft RFP

Heather reviewed the priorities from the draft RFP and the consortium discussed what needed to be left in and what's changed in the past year. The RFP was sent out, but there were questions about how the RPSD would integrate and how it would be impacted by the budget reallocation. There was a discussion to take out the policy development piece from the housing study and have that work done through the RPSD.

The consortium discussed the point of surveying and felt we needed to focus on that to get a better picture of housing availability, and be able to tease out complexities like the data between Rexburg and unincorporated areas of Madison County. Heather reminded the group about the survey work already done in Ashton by Habitat for Humanity; they surveyed every home and went door-to-door.

Brittany shared that she has a background in affordable housing and offered to join the advisory team for this study.

The modifications decided on were to remove the objectives & strategies piece, which will be developed through the RPSD, and to replace with some general report that has a lesser level of public engagement and policy. Heather will input the comments and distribute the draft priorities (see attached) to the consortium for review, then will revise the RFP with the advisory team and present before the December meeting. The consortium will review and vote on whether to approve the RFP at the December meeting.

The survey needs to happen during the summer months, and must be completed by August so the policy work done in the RPSD can be done in the fall of 2014. They missed the release for spring/summer last year due to the budget changes and work plan revision with HUD, so had to wait. The target release now for the RFP is January/February.

Other Project Updates as needed

The consortium reviewed the protocol for voting. We changed it to six voting members. We've had meetings where we don't have 6 voting members (out of 24 total votes); we can't do business unless we change the protocol. It's a bigger problem with engagement and participation.

Priorities for HUD pamphlet on projects that support the livability principles: the group discussed some possibilities for inclusion in the pamphlet. Jan suggested Mountainside Village as a possible case study. Folks felt that it had a good intent in the design but would be better closer to downtown, although it has a great connection to nature. It depends on the type of person you're marketing to. Brittany felt that it will eventually be a success. The price points are similar to other properties by square foot. Brittany asked if Mountainside Village was not there, would people not pick Victor as a place to live? The goal was for it to be a lifestyle choice.

Jan asked how HUD was defining success? It seems to be defined according to the livability principles.

Heather asked about highlighting the recreational trails network concept, pathways programs, and the economic development concepts with projects such as Cycle Yellowstone. Jan will talk to Katie Wilson.

Jan said that Yellowstone Park brags about sustainability but fails to embrace transportation. It's in the park plan to have a regional network by 2020.

The next consortium call is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10 at 1:30-3:00 p.m. If we have HUD approval, there will be a lot of decisions to make. We need the consortium fully represented at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.