

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

In Person/Virtual Video Conference

MINUTES –JUNE 15, 2021

DRAFT TO APPROVED BY A MOTION JULY 20, 2021

NOTICE

Public comment will be taken only during the Public Comment periods as indicated on the agenda. Comments may be sent to Board via email before 10:00 AM on Tuesday, June 15, 2021. All e-mails received prior to this time will be read into the record for the public hearing.

Member Participants: Chairman Denis Pitman, Vice Chairman, Board of County Commissioners Bill Cole, Mayor, City of Billings; Rod Nelson, MDT District Office; Planning Board President Woody Woods, Yellowstone County Planning Board

Staff Participants: Wyeth Friday, Director, Planning and Community Services; Manager; Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator, Planning & Community Services Department; Monica Plecker, Planning Division Manager, Planning & Community Services Department; Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, Planning & Community Services Department

Other Participants: Parker Osterloh, MDT; Katie Potts, MDT; Ryan Hammond, FHWA; Alan Woodmansey, FHWA; Debi Meling, Director, Billings Public Works, Lucia Olivera, FHWA; Mattie Alpert, Senator Tester’s Office; Tory Kolkhorst, Senator Daines Office; Cade Overstreet, Congressman Rosendale’s Office; Kristi Drake, Executive Director, Billings TrailNet; Jennifer Owen, Chair, Heights Neighborhood Task Force

1. Presentation. City of Billings BUILD Grant Kickoff: Mayor Cole kicked off the event by thanking everyone for attending! This is a time for the community to celebrate the BUILD grant. The Mayor then introduced the members of the PCC, Denis Pitman, Woody Woods, and Rod Nelson. The Mayor then gave an overview of the project and how the completion of the Skyline Trail as part of the Marathon Loop and the Inner Belt Loop is a long-time project coming to fruition.

The Mayor then thanked members of the Billings delegation and took the lead in bringing this application and project to Washington, DC. The delegation included himself; Dan Brooks, Chamber of Commerce; Steve Arveschoug, Big Sky Economic Development; Kristi Drake, Billings TrailNet; and Wyeth Friday, Director, Planning and Community Services Department.

The Mayor then asked the congressional representatives to speak. Mattis Alpert from Senator Jon Tester’s office read a statement from the Senator congratulating the community on the award. Next, Tory Kolkhorst from Senator Daines office provided a video message from the Senator congratulating the community on success. Last, Cade Overstreet from Congressman Rosendale’s office provided a

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video message from the Congressman congratulating the Mayor and community of receiving BUILD grant funds.

The Mayor then asked Lucia Olivera, Division Administer from the Federal Highway Administration to give a few remarks. She is excited to bring \$11.6 million of federal funding to the Billings community, with the community's contribution, the entire project is \$18.7 million. Billings was one of many projects approved to receive BUILD funds and FHWA looks forward to working with local officials. She introduced Brian Hasselback and Alan Woodmansey from the Montana FHWA District offices and the local contacts the community will be working very closely with. There is a very rigorous process to a BUILD grant and currently the grant agreement is being developed. There are many steps to the agreement development and could take several months. Once the grant agreement is signed, this allows FHWA to reimburse the city federal funds.

The Mayor next introduced Wyeth Friday, Director of the Planning and Community Services Department. Wyeth states that this event starts a landmark event. The community commitment has been overwhelming and thanks all that have been involved.

The Mayor next introduced Kristi Drake, Executive Director, Billings TrailNet to speak. Kristi is excited about this game changer project for the community, there has been so much cooperation from everyone and specifically mentions the Billings TrailNet board who have spearheaded and approved the use of almost \$400,000 in TrailNet funding to engineer the Skyline Trail. The Mayor thanked TrailNet and also reminded that the Inner Belt Loop will also have a separated pathway.

The Mayor also gave a shout out to the Billings Chamber and Big Sky Economic Development for the valuable economic data provided in the grant and the help coordinating the Washington, DC trip.

Woody Woods comments how bike and pedestrian safety is very important to him and the Lockwood community. He's very excited to see the project completed.

Denis Pitman thanked everyone involved in receiving this grant. The Inner Belt Loop was a priority when he sat on the City Council and he is happy to see it being built.

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The Mayor asked if Jennifer Owen from the Heights Task Force would like to make some comments. Jennifer states that this is such a huge project for the Heights- ever since the Father's Day tornado demonstrated the desperate need for alternate routes and connectivity in the Heights.

Rod Nelson from MDT offered congratulations and thanked the grant selection committee for reviewing all the grant application submitted, it's not an easy job!

The Mayor asked Debi Meling, Director of City Public Works to give an update on the status of the project. Debi states that this grant is challenging and they are learning as it goes. The NEPA (environmental documentation) process has started and most of the requirements before signing the grant agreement is tied to completion of tasks required by NEPA. Engineering hopes to have a preliminary report for FHWA review in July. Once NEPA documents are approved, the final engineering, right-of-way purchase and grant agreement can be completed. The Mayor asks if there are any problems with the current cost of construction materials. Debi hopes that by the time the City is ready to bid, some of that may have calmed down.

Scott Walker provided an event wrap up by thanking Jo Ann Olsen and Bill Troe from SRF Consulting for helping us develop a winning application. He also thanked all of the city staff that helped move this project forward. And finally, Katie Potts and Parker Osterloh from MDT for their support.

Mayor thanked everyone for coming including Council members Kendra Shaw and Denise Joy and the rest of the council for their support.

2. Call to Order: Commissioner Pitman called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Public Comment/Communication from the Audience

The Public may call in during specific Public Comment periods at (406) 237-6165. All callers will be in a queued system and are asked to remain on hold and be patient. Calls will be taken in the order in which they are received. Callers will be restricted to 3 minutes of testimony as is customary. Live coverage can be viewed:

<https://www.facebook.com/Billings-Planning-Community-Services-Department-1738982159659260/?ref=bookmarks>

A. Comments on items not on the agenda and requests to add items to future agendas.

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B. Comments on items on the Non-public and Public Agenda Items

Planning Clerk Tammy Deines received no calls from the public. There was no communication from the audience regarding agenda items or future agenda items.

4. Minutes of April 20, 2021

Motion

A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes of April 20, 2021. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

5. Old Business: There is no Old Business.

6. New Business

6a. Discussion. Appearance Improvements to the Dick Johnson Bridge and the new Lockwood Interchange

Planning Board member Woody Woods wanted to bring item up as an opportunity to create an aesthetic bridge crossing as an entryway in Billings and the Metra. He is asking Rod Nelson, MDT, for suggestions on how to make this happen. Commissioner Denis Pitman gave the example of the bridge over Alkali Creek along Aronson. Mayor Cole suggests that now is the time to work with the community and MDT to develop some of those ideas. Rod Nelson thinks this is a great idea, a citizen advisory committee to work through this would be beneficial. Ryan Hammon, FHWA, reminded the PCC that any aesthetic inclusions would have to conform to the MUCTD guidelines set forth by FHWA. The Mayor states that we have to be mindful on what we build as we will need to work out maintenance for anything constructed. Rod Nelson will assist in setting up the citizen committee.

7. Other Business: None

8. Future Agenda Items

a. Motion. FFY 2021 Billings Urban Area Unified Work Program, Amendment 1, Scott Walker, Transportation Planning Coordinator

ADJOURNMENT: 1:00 PM

Approved be approved by a motion on June 15, 2021

Tamara L. Deines, Planning Clerk