

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES –February 15, 2022

DRAFT TO APPROVED BY A MOTION

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 the meeting date. All e-mails received prior to this time will be read into the record for the public hearing.

Member Participants: Commissioner Denis Pitman, Board of County Commissioners; Bill Cole, Mayor, City of Billings; Rod Nelson, MDT District Office; Planning Board President Dennis Cook, Yellowstone County Planning Board

Staff Participants: Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator, Planning & Community Services Department; Elyse Monat, Alternative Modes Coordinator, (Virtual); Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner, (Virtual); Tammy Deines, Planning Clerk

Other Participants: Michael Taylor, MDT; Ted Thronson, MDT, Katie Potts, MDT Planning; Kenn Winegar, MDT Planning, Debi Meling, Director, City of Billings Public Works; Tim Miller, Director, Yellowstone County Public Works, Mike Black, Yellowstone County Public Works

1. Call to Order: City Council called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Public Comment/Communication from the Audience

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

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

There was no communication from the audience regarding agenda items or future agenda items.

3. Minutes of November 16, 2021

Motion

A motion was made by Mayor Cole and seconded by Planning Board President to approve the meeting minutes of November 16, 2021. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

4. Old Business: There is no Old Business.

Pitman, Cook, Mayor Cole chairman for the 2022 term. He welcomed Dennis Cook to the Committee.

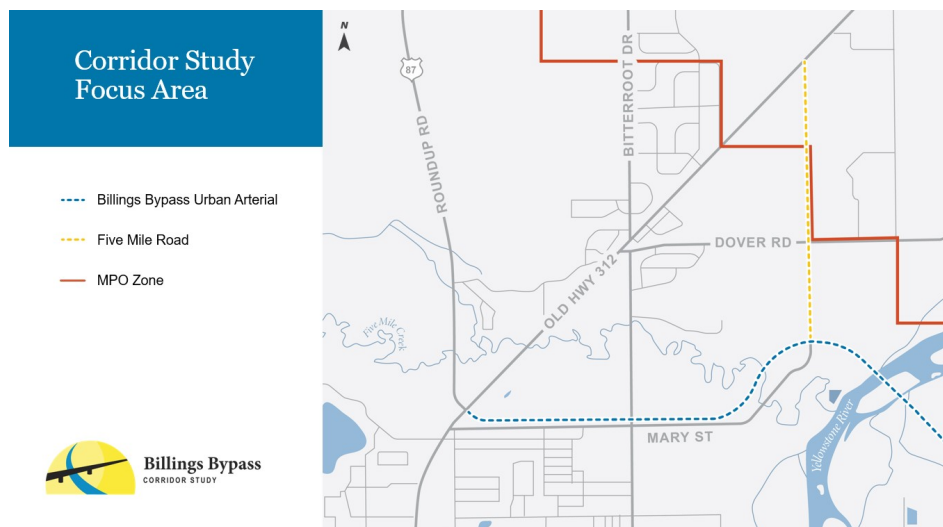
POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES –February 15, 2022

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5. New Business

5a. Project Update. North Bypass Corridor Study

Scott Walker opened this agenda item. He gave an overview stating this study explores planning opportunities along the corridor for the potential growth anticipated to result from this new roadway and corresponding connectivity on the northwest portion of the Billings Bypass. Scott commented that this corridor may be similar to the buildout that took place along Shiloh Road. The goal is to develop a guidance document that integrates existing infrastructure plans. The first public open house is completed. The Draft Billings Bypass Corridor Study is in progress, and a second public open house will be held in the next few months. The study is projected to be finalized during late spring or late summer. <https://www.billingsbypasscorridor.com>



Discussion

In response to question by Mayor Cole, Scott Walker said a press release will be posted for the open house and the draft document will be available to the public prior to that date. Commissioner Pitman said the community is excited about this project and the potential impacts of development in this area. Mayor Cole asked if the draft plan dictates residential and commercial development nodes similar to the West Billings Neighborhood Plan. Scott Walker said this plan will draw out *general* areas for residential and commercial development. Dennis Cook asked if the next phase will be the interchange on Johnson Lane. Rod Nelson said the plan has been modified and they have moved to the phase for the construction of the bridge over the railroad tracks along Colson Road. Commissioner Pitman asked if traffic counts will be taken once this engages. Rod Nelson said a study has been completed but this will have to be considered again as things change.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES –February 15, 2022

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5b. Project Update. Community Transportation Safety Study. Planning Staff

CTSP Lead: Billings-Yellowstone County MPO, Planning Staff –Lora Mattox, Scott Walker, Elyse Monat, and Director Wyeth Friday. Consultant: DOWL – Lisa Olmsted, Doug Enderson, and Hannah Olson. Scott Walker opened this agenda and commented on the recent gathering for the Community Safety Summit & Public Meeting. The purpose of the CTSP process is to identify transportation safety issues within the Billings MPO planning area. Using a data-driven approach and reduce fatalities and serious injuries through a culture of safety for all travelers. He continued and reviewed a chart, “5-Year Comparisons: Crash Factors”. The study’s emphasis areas are impaired driving, inattentive driving, lack of restraint use, and speed related, with a focus on young drivers, (less than 18 years of age). The next steps are: school walk/bike route maps, project selection and prioritization and completion of the draft plan document.

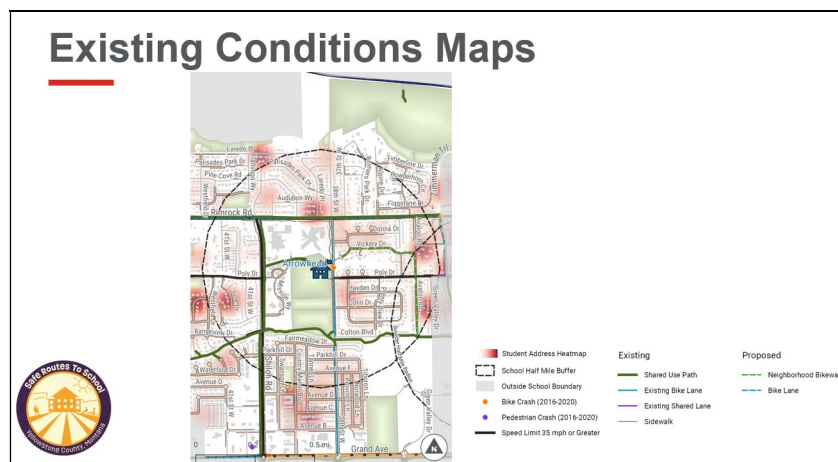
www.BillingsCTSP.com

Discussion

Dennis Cook asked about slowing of traffic with the use of roundabouts on Highway 312. Rod Nelson said roughly five years ago, turn lanes, safety projects, and features were added to the intersections. The Highway 312 Corridor study will be revisited. Dennis Cook asked if the 50 mph speed limit along Dover Road and Highway 312 will be considered. Rod Nelson noted recent improvements on Bench Boulevard to Hawthorne for sidewalks and Hawthorne to Bitterroot for pedestrian safety.

5c. Project Update: Safe Routes to School Study. Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner

Elyse Monat opened this agenda item. This study considers the twenty-two elementary schools in School District #2. Audits were completed at all of the schools at either arrival or dismissal. Maps were created for each of the schools depicting the existing conditions. A list of projects will be prioritized weighed through safety, variables, and community priorities. Next steps: School Walk/Bike Route Maps; Project Select and Prioritization, Draft Plan Document.



POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES –February 15, 2022

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Discussion

Mayor Cole said City Council was interested in the older grades and asked if this can be done in the future. Elyse Monat replied and said this is the work plan as a Phase II study.

5d. Project Update. Inner Belt Loop/Skyline Trail Study. Debi Meling, City of Billings Public Works Director

Debi Meling opened this agenda item and said the draft agreement is projected to be in place in June. The environmental documents have been accepted and the right-of-way appraisals have been done. They hope to have this done at the same time as the agreement. The bidding process should follow and this project will begin in the fall. Staff provides updates to City Council on a monthly basis. In response to question by Mayor Bill Cole, Ms. Meling said bidding at the height of construction season should not be a problem. Commissioner Pitman commented that residents are eagerly awaiting this project. Ms. Meling said they are unable to go out for bid without the agreement in place, and they are projecting this to take place during the fall of 2022. Mayor Bill Cole asked regarding the amenity component on the Skyline Trail. Scott Walker said he will provide this information at a future meeting.

5e. Project update. I-90 Bridge Reconstruction Project and Exposition Drive Project. Ted Thronson, District Engineer, Construction, MDT

Ted Thronson, MDT, opened this agenda item. This project was awarded August 26th, 2021 and will be done in four phases. Phase 1 has been completed and Phase 2 will begin this spring targeting March 14th. Traffic will be rerouted and demolition will begin on the westbound structure. Construction of the new bridge will begin. Phase 2 is projected for completion during late fall of 2022, and Phase 3 during the summer of 2023. The project completion is targeted for the summer of 2024. In response to question by Commissioner Pitman, Mr. Bronson said delays can be expected while this project progresses. Weekly updates are posted on the website:

[MDT Public Involvement I90 Yellowstone River Project Billings](#)

Discussion

Mayor Cole asked about the MDT “wish list” when these large projects are completed. Rod Nelson said other segments of highway need preservation and working to ensure they are not neglected as a result of these other larger project. Mayor Cole said the Johnson Bridge reconstruction should address pedestrian and bicycle access across the Yellowstone River. Rod Nelson said MDT is putting together a series of projects to be consistent with the Billings Bike and Pedestrian Plan. Mike Taylor, MDT District Pre-construction Engineer, said the Preliminary site investigation was recently completed and the alignment upgrade will follow. Invitations will be sent to stakeholders this week. The next milestone is to establish the scope of work. Right-of-way, (ROW), authorization will be obtained to engage in some of the ROW activities. Commissioner Pitman said the latest draft of the Metra Park Plan is available. Mayor Cole voiced concern with the Exposition Gateway design moving forward with the Master Plan “up in the air”. Commissioner Pitman said the plan was adapted to the location of the ingress

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES -February 15, 2022

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and egress areas; helping define the interior portions of the Metra Park grounds to make it attractive and functional. The tentative construction plan is slated for June 2024.

6. Other Business: There is no Other Business

7. Future Agenda Items

ADJOURNMENT: 12:56 PM

DRAFT. To be approved by a motion during the next scheduled meeting.

Tamara L. Deines, Planning Clerk