

# **POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES AUGUST 29, 2023**

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 Planning Staff 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:** Chairman John Ostlund, Board of County Commissioners; Planning Board President Dennis Cook, Yellowstone County Planning Board, Kurtis Schneiber, MDT.

**Staff Participants:** Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator, Planning & Community Services Department; Rusty Logan, Transit Manager; Sarah Graham, MET Administrative Coordinator; Brenda Berns, Planning Clerk

**Virtual:** Wyeth Friday, Direction Community Services Planning Dept; Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner.

**Call to Order: 12:03 PM.** Chairman Ostlund called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **3. 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 were no comments from the audience regarding agenda or future agenda items.

## **4. Motion. Minutes of July 18, 2023**

**A motion was made by Planning Board President Dennis Cook, seconded by Yellowstone County Planning Board member Kurtis Schneiber to approve the minutes of July 18, 2023. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

**4. Old Business:** There is no Old Business.

## **5. New Business**

**5a. Motion. 2024 Billings Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Scott Walker, Transportation Planning Coordinator; Rusty Logan, Transit Manager.**

Scott Walker opened this agenda item stating the 2024 UPWP is the fiscal budget for our staff on the MPO and Transit sections and presented an overview of the program.

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Policy Coordinating Committee review the Final Draft of the 2024 UPWP and act at this meeting. Action should be consistent with the individual approvals already conducted by the City of Billings, Yellowstone County, and the Planning Board.

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## **Background**

The City-County Planning Division is presenting the 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the Billings Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC). At this meeting, the Committee is scheduled to review the document and act on the UPWP. The UPWP is primarily for the purpose of programming the federal dollars that Billings receives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for transportation planning and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for transit (MET) planning. These funds are passed through the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). All transportation planning activities are included in the UPWP so that it represents a comprehensive document for the urban transportation planning program. This UPWP proposes planning activities for Federal Fiscal Year 2024, which runs from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. This UPWP corresponds directly with the Planning Division's annual work plan. The significant changes in this year's program include completion of the update to the Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan, transportation specific analysis and updates to two neighborhood plans as well as a feasibility study for the 21st Street Underpass. The Transit section is Chapter II of the UPWP. The document is consistent with past programs in its content and format.

## **Fiscal Effects**

Approval of the 2024 UPWP allows the City to access Federal funds for transportation planning in the community. Federal and local funds are combined to provide most of the planning work done by the Planning Division for the City and the County. If the UPWP is not approved, there would be a significant loss of resources for community planning and the community's ability to manage transportation planning projects and programs would be severely limited. The breakdown of funding sources for the FY 2024 UPWP is estimated below: \$260,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (City of Billings) \$170,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (Yellowstone County) \$525,000 Yellowstone County Planning Levy \$1,447,790 Federal Planning (PL) Allocation \$2,472,790 Total Local and Federal Program Funding (UPWP).

**Rusty Logan, Transit Manager** gave an overview of the Transit Section of the UPWP, He noted it is structured into separate elements with specific activities and functions outlined within each element. The two MPO's coming on board must be fully functioning before any impact is seen on the Transit side. There has been an increase in Federal funding for the Transit planning urbanized area, with a little carry-over from the previous year.

Transit 2023 projects have required plan updates, (PTASP, DBE, TAM), and continued development and implementation of policy and practices to support training and safety. Transit has seen completed implementation activities, including route timings, schedule creation, along with the completed Master Bus Stop plan.

Transit 2024 priorities are the ongoing capital and equipment planning, including a complete Transit Sustainability and Governance Study. We will be assessing current Paratransit

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eligibility processes and recommend or develop improvements, along with analysis of fares and services.

Scott Walker continued with the 2024 UPWP Review Schedule and requested the recommendation to move the UPWP document forward to MDT, FHWA, and FTA.

### **Discussion**

Chairman John Ostlund referred to a previous conversation regarding the Complete Streets and stated it was very important issue. He said the State of Montana and Yellowstone County did not adopt Complete Streets in approving the Unified Planning Work Program that references Complete Streets, instead of Alternative Modes of Transportation. He noted, with the Complete Streets language, it could jeopardize the County's funding and increase the amount of engineering that would be necessary for the road system. He would accept a motion to approve the 2024 UPWP that clearly denotes that Yellowstone County and the Department of Transportation do not and have not approved Complete Streets.

Chairman Ostlund asked Scott Walker to cease from referring to Complete Streets in the UPWP. Scott said the previous Commissioners meeting conversation regarding the Complete Streets language, was taken to heart. Chairman Ostlund commented he did not believe it was considered. Scott stated it was taken out of the document as it relates to Yellowstone County. Scott continued, the language remained in the document as it relates to the City of Billings but was removed as it related to the County.

Chairman Ostlund said the document did not refer to the State, and the State was a big part of the whole process, for which they are not included. Scott said he is aware the State has not accepted it.

Board member Schneiber asked what the specific language is in the document.

Scott Walker said the document was amended regarding the reference to Complete Streets, as it referred to Yellowstone County and that was taken out per the Commissioner's request. There is no other reference to Complete Streets as it refers to Yellowstone County in the document.

Chairman Ostlund asked if there was a reference to Complete Streets in the document as it refers to the Department of Transportation or if there is clarity in it.

Scott stated there was not.

Chairman Ostlund stated he wanted the motion to include that Alternative Modes of Transportation are of the 2024 renewal, but the Complete Streets does not apply to Yellowstone County or Department of Transportation.

Scott offered that a special notation could be added to make the distinction requested by Chairman Ostlund. He reaffirmed the document only references the City, and that's all it references as it stands today.

Board member Schneiber said it seemed fair in his opinion.

### **Motion**

**Chairman Ostlund; Motion.** PCC will approve the 2024 UPWP but would eliminate any language that refers to Yellowstone County or Montana Department of Transportation with

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regards to Complete Streets and include only Alternative Modes of Transportation the Federal Government wants.

**Motion by Board member Kurtis Schneiber, and seconded by Planning Board President Dennis Cook to approve with amendment, the 2024 Billings Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) presented by staff.**

### **Discussion**

Chairman Ostlund asked if there was any discussion on the Motion. There was no discussion. **The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

Chairman Ostlund expressed additional concern, stating the Complete Streets program the department has statewide, will create a funding mechanism for the County that will be hugely expensive.

Scott Walker said Federal guidelines are being followed.

**6. Other Business** There is no Other Business.

### **7. Future Agenda Item**

- a. Transportation Improvement

**ADJOURNMENT: 12:21 PM**

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

*Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk*