

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024

DRAFT TO BE APPROVED BY MOTION

NOTICE

Public comments 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; Mayor Bill Cole; Woody Woods, Yellowstone County Planning Board President; Kurtis Schneiber, MDT.

Staff Participants: Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator; Brenda Berns, Planning Clerk

Virtual: Katie Potts, FWHA

Call to Order: 12:00 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 November 21, 2023

A motion was made by Bill Cole, seconded by Woody Woods to approve the minutes of November 21, 2023. The motion was carried with a unanimous voice vote.

4. Old Business: There is no Old Business.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024



5. New Business

5a. Motion. Safe Routes to School Plan, Phase II. Submitted by Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner.

Erin Claunch with Sanderson Stewart gave an overview of the purpose of the project.

- Address capacity and mobility needs, safety issues, and drainage issues within the project area.
- Infrastructure improvements include upgrades to
 - 1) Intersection and roadway capacity
 - 2) Storm drain system
 - 3) Roadway lighting
 - 4) Pavement
 - 5) Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (shared use path, sidewalks, crossings)

The Safe Routes to School program was founded on the simple idea that together, the City of Billings, Billings MPO, Billings-area School Districts, Yellowstone County, MDT, and parents can make our streets safe enough for students to walk and bike to school. Some of the goals and objectives are:

- Evaluate current conditions
- Identify barriers or issues
- Develop list of prioritized project schools

Discussion

Chairman Ostlund asked the Board if there were any questions or discussion. There was none.

Motion

Motion by Bill Cole, seconded by Woody Woods to approve the Safe Routes to School Plan Phase II, as submitted by staff. The motion was carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Discussion

Bill Cole mentioned that when the SRTS plan was presented to the City Council, there was a suggestion to postpone it until a more thorough transportation plan for the downtown area could be carried out. This was to prevent any potential clashes between present and future projects. Thankfully, the City Council opted to proceed with the SRTS plan.

5b. FY2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program – Administrative Modification. Action. Submitted by Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator

Lora Mattox pointed out that the Administrative Modification made to the TIP program, which was approved last month, was aimed at incorporating a new funding source: Carbon Reduction Funds. This modification will open up funding to do ADA upgrades.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024

Motion

Bill Cole made a motion, seconded by Woody Woods to adopt and approve the TIP Administrative Modification as presented by staff.

5c. Project Update Presentation. Lockwood Interchange. Presented by Nick Pavia, HDR

Mr. Pavia provided an update on the Lockwood Interchange project in Billings, highlighting its goal of widening Interstate 90 to three lanes in each direction between the Lockwood and Johnson Lane Interchanges. The interchange's reconstruction aims to enhance traffic operations and ensure safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. Following thorough analysis, a Diverging Diamond design was chosen, with US Hwy 87 slated to cross over and motorists guided to the left side of the road. Additionally, Mr. Pavia discussed potential alternatives to bolster safety at the Coburn Road access point, alongside proposals for beautification and landscaping enhancements.

Discussion

Woody Woods raised concerns about traffic issues, particularly regarding the left turn lane. He pointed out that there seems to be insufficient signage for merging and continuing towards the Hardin area. While there isn't a current solution, MDT is actively working to resolve the issue.

Mayor Cole mentioned that plans for the Coburn intersection include either a roundabout or a traffic signal. However, he expressed concerns that while a roundabout might benefit vehicles, it might not be ideal for pedestrians. Mr. Pavia added that MDT is actively addressing the matter but has yet to finalize a decision.

Mayor Cole also discussed landscaping concerns, noting the city's historical difficulty in maintaining landscaping around roundabouts. Mr. Pavia mentioned they are exploring options such as steel artwork that would withstand the elements for an extended period.

5d. Project Update Presentation. 1st Avenue North & Exposition Drive. Presented by Shaun Sampson, MDT.

Mr. Sampson outlined the project's objectives, which encompass addressing capacity, mobility, safety, and drainage concerns. The infrastructure enhancements will involve upgrades to several key areas: • Intersection and roadway capacity • Storm drain system • Pavement • Shared use path with sidewalks and crossings

The targeted enhancements involve altering the westbound approach, incorporating a fourth northbound through lane to Bench Blvd., adjusting the northbound right-turn lane, and installing crossings, a shared-use path, and detached sidewalks. Mr. Sampson mentioned that they are in the process of completing the final designs for the roadway and traffic, while also actively engaging with members of the community.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024



Discussion

Bill Cole discussed the absence of a sidewalk or pedestrian path along the south side of 1st Ave N. Mr. Sampson explained that it's not practical to incorporate a sidewalk on the south side due to its predominantly industrial nature, resulting in minimal foot traffic. However, provisions will be made to facilitate pedestrian movement and ensure full access to businesses situated along the road.

ADJOURNMENT: 12:49pm

Meeting minutes to be approved by motion at the next scheduled meeting.

Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk