



BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m. - Thursday, September 5, 2019

Ben Franklin Transit, 1000 Columbia Park Trail Richland, WA 99354

1. CONVENE

TAC Chair Matt Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. at Ben Franklin Transit.

2. ROLL CALL

Jurisdiction	Agency
Benton County	Matt Rasmussen, Chairman
City of Richland	Julie West (Alternate to Pete Rogalsky)
Ben Franklin Transit	Keith Hall
City of Benton City	Kyle Kurth
City of Connell	Hallie Tuck
Franklin County	Craig Erdman
City of Kennewick	Cary Roe
City of Pasco	Steve Worley
City of Prosser	Marty Groom
City of West Richland	Roscoe Slade
WSDOT - South Central	Paul Gonseth

BFCG Staff Present:

Erin Braich, Transportation Planning Specialist II
Tony Kalmbach, Transportation Planning Specialist II
Tanner Martin, Transportation Planning Specialist II
Patrick Pittenger, Transportation Programs Manager
Geoff Wagner, Transportation Planning Specialist II

Guests:

Bill Barlow, Ben Franklin Transit
John Christensen, Franklin County
James Coleman, Benton-Franklin Health District
Sorin Juster, City of Kennewick
Spencer Montgomery, JUB Engineers Inc.
Bob Koch, Franklin County
Maria Pena, City of Connell

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Craig Erdman made a MOTION to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, Steve Worley SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously.

4. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

A. Briefing on Connell Rail Interchange Improvement Project

Patrick Pittenger introduced Maria Pena, City Administrator for the City of Connell, to provide a briefing on the Connell Rail Interchange project. The rail interchange is an important project and has approximately \$10 million of Connecting Washington funding.

Maria Pena stated the current rail interchange is congested. Maria explained the plan was to move the rail interchange one mile further south to the industrial lands outside Connell. The new rail interchange will cost approximately \$29 million. The project started back in 2014 and as each year goes by, costs continue to increase. The project did receive Connecting Washington Funding with the help of Senator Mark Shoesler. Connell is currently waiting for BNSF to announce a decision regarding their participation in the project and will notify Connell in January of that decision. Ron Pate took the lead on this project and has been working with other agencies and ports to locate additional funds. Bob Koch asked if the project was planned further south than what was being shown on the map. Bob Koch's concern was that the current overpass on 260 was not wide enough to accommodate two more rail lanes. Maria Pena stated that engineering was at approximately 95% and there was no need for additional land. Hallie Tuck added currently trains have to go to Pasco before they can turn around and this project would allow for the trains to turn around in Connell instead of Pasco.

B. Update on Congestion Management Process (CMP) development

Erin Braich discussed the current status of the CMP. The first meeting occurred in July, the next meeting is scheduled for September 11. Staff are working with a consultant on new types of data. Draft sections of the document went out to the CMP committee for review.

C. Travel Demand Model Work Group

Patrick Pittenger noted Transpo Group is under contract to work with the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) on the travel demand model and CMP. They are conducting a review of the current model and will have their initial review available by the end of the month. The information that will be provided by the consultant can be reviewed with a group of member agencies with particular interest in the modeling process. This group will participate in a review the existing model, help identify areas that jurisdictions have identified for improvement, and discuss interactions between the BFCG model and other related modelling efforts. The results will then be shared with the entire TAC. BFCG is looking for member jurisdictions to be involved in such a group. An initial meeting is expected to be scheduled for the second or third week of October. Cary Roe volunteered Kennewick to be part of the model work group and introduced Sorin Juster of Kennewick staff to the TAC. Bill Barlow noted his interest with respect to the transit elements of the modelling. Matt Rasmussen encouraged the larger cities to be part of this process and provide feedback on

the model. The Cities of Pasco, Richland, and West Richland indicate that they would participate as well.

D. Recommendation to approve the BFCG Performance and Expenditure Annual Report for the period of July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019.

Patrick Pittenger explained that BFCG is responsible to submit a report regarding the previous fiscal year's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Staff has coordinated with WSDOT staff for input in developing this document. From a financial perspective, the agency utilized the funding sources which needed to be expended by June 30th and has federal funding that could be carried over into the current UPWP fiscal year.

Craig Erdman made a MOTION to approve the BFCG Performance and Expenditure Annual Report for the period of July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, Steve Worley SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Recommendation to approve the certification of Benton County's amended comprehensive plan transportation element.

Erin Braich updated the TAC about Benton County amending their comprehensive plan. Throughout this process Benton County worked with BFCG and WSDOT through the amendment process. The plan utilized BFCG's model for Benton County's traffic forecasts in the modeled area. The amended transportation element is attached to the document and BFCG's Growth Management Act (GMA) review.

Steve Worley made a MOTION to approve the certification of Benton County's amended comprehensive plan transportation element, Hailie Tuck SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously.

F. 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) obligation status

Patrick Pittenger informed the TAC that BFCG is approximately \$121,000 short of the obligation target having reached about 94% of the target. Staff is monitoring agencies statewide and the good news is the statewide target has been met. PSRC over obligated by about \$15 million and this helped the local and regional areas to meet the statewide target as a whole. Patrick pointed out the attachment to this item which includes projects that are listed as not moved or obligated and did not make it in 2019. While the deadline is going to pass, these projects can still be obligated in 2019. If projects cannot be obligated they will move to 2020 in the TIP.

Patrick Pittenger introduced Tanner Martin as a new staff member at BFCG and noted that he is working with Geoff on the TIP monitoring and development.

Roscoe Slade mentioned that he needed to de-obligate funding that was left over from one of their projects and asked when the paperwork should be submitted. Patrick Pittenger responded that by deobligating in October, the region's obligations for the federal fiscal year would not be impacted.

G. 2020-2025 Draft Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Open House

Patrick Pittenger stated the draft TIP is out for the public comment period. BFCG has been working with various agencies to ensure that all comments are addressed. The public comment period ends September 17. Staff hosted a public meeting on August 28 and Patrick thanked all of the agencies who participated. Cary Roe asked about regionally significant projects. The City of Kennewick has reached out to discuss several projects that all serve major shopping areas that are regional destinations. The City of Kennewick believes they are regionally significant and would like them added into the regional TIP. Patrick stated that the topic was going to be discussed further in a subsequent agenda item. BFCG is responsible to determine what is considered regionally significant. Additionally, it is always within the authority of the Board to add additional projects to the TIP.

H. Discuss development of Annual Regional Project Prioritization

Patrick Pittenger brought before the committee an information item to get input on creating a legislative priorities list. The state Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) is doing a needs study and while WSDOT South Central already has a list of projects ready to go to the legislature, BFCG needs to provide input as well. BFCG wants to be supportive of regional projects and is seeking input on how our region identifies what projects should be on the list so projects which can be supported and promoted as a region. TAC members expressed their agreement that such a list is important. Additional discussion took place in regards to regional significance of projects and what criteria could be applied to determine if a project would be included. Patrick clarified that the list being discussed under this agenda item is related to, but not the same as, the list of regionally significant projects. Designation of a project as regionally significant can impact inclusion in the regional TIP and STIP, but does not determine inclusion on this list.

Patrick indicated that BFCG staff would send out a request via email to all member agencies - through their TAC members – requesting potential projects. BFCG would then convene a group of TAC members who indicated at this meeting their willingness to work with BFCG staff in developing this list of projects. Jurisdictions which indicated a desire to participate were Benton County, Franklin County, Kennewick, Richland, West Richland. The draft list will be brought back to the TAC at a future meeting for a recommendation to the BFCG Board.

I. Recommendation to approve the BFCG Draft Transportation Improvement program Policies and Procedures

Patrick Pittenger briefed the group about TIP policies and procedures. BFCG is responsible for developing and maintaining the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). The policies and procedures would ensure consistency and clarity in how the agency manages the TIP and how projects are scored. Having a process and policies are important and is a common practice. Patrick presented the group with the federal language which indicates what constitutes a regionally significant project. General consensus of the group was the federal language was a good start. There were suggestions about adjusting the language to better fit our region and address areas outside the urbanized area and for transit projects. It was noted that there is also a need to have a minimum qualification for a project to be considered of regional significance in the urbanized area. The group agreed that representatives of rural areas, urban areas, and transit would provide feedback to Patrick

before the next meetings so input could be used to refine the definition of regionally significant. No action was taken and the matter will be placed on the next TAC agenda for further consideration.

J. Discussion regarding the 2019 call for projects

Patrick Pittenger stated BFCG is planning to conduct a call for projects. He noted the attachments to the agenda item which indicated significant amounts of funds available to program in each year from 2020 to 2023. A plan and schedule for the call for projects needs to be approved by the BFCG Board which will guide the overall process. While there are requirements associated with the process, there are also many options available to BFCG for conducting the process within Federal regulations with WSDOT oversight. Paul Gonseth asked BFCG to outline the federal requirements and their application to this process. Patrick noted that there are funds for "Any Area" which are to be used to fund projects through a regional, competitive process. They are not to be distributed among member jurisdictions by separate formula. Additionally, funds for the rural and urban areas are to be allocated within each of those areas with no allocation specific to jurisdiction.

BFCG seeks input from the TAC with respect to the call for projects process. Many options for consideration are relatively flexible as long as they are within the goals of the Metropolitan/ Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP). Patrick discussed multiple options which are available for consideration. He provided some examples of practices from other areas of the state such as minimum or maximum funding sizes, dedication of a portion of the funding to a specific project type, and the creation of a contingency list. The process must be regional – with the TAC providing input to staff for eventual presentation to the BFCG Board. It was agreed the group would provide feedback and staff would consider input submitted by the jurisdictions to develop a draft process for TAC consideration prior to submission to the Board. This issue will be agendized for further consideration at the next TAC meeting.

5. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Keith Hall – Ben Franklin Transit

BFT has started the Knight Street rehabilitation. Keith Hall thanked the City of Richland for their assistance with the project.

Roscoe Slade – City of West Richland

Bombing Range Road project closure was going to be in November, but after meeting with the consultant it appears that the closure will begin at the beginning of the new year.

6. NEXT MEETING: TAC Meeting

October 3, 2019 – Ben Franklin Transit, 1000 Columbia Park Trail in Richland.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Matt Rasmussen adjourned the meeting at 12:49 p.m.


Matt Rasmussen, Chair TAC