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## **WY 22 CORRIDOR PROJECT**

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**Meeting Name** Project Advisory Committee Meeting #2

**Purpose** NEPA 101 Review, Alternatives Screening Process, Project Goals and Purpose and Need

**Date** 10/04/2023 1:00 -4:00 PM

**Location** Teton County Library  
125 Virginian Lane, Jackson, WY 83001

**Participants**

**PAC Members**

Amy Kuszak (for David Sollitt)  
Amy Ramage  
Andrew Salter  
Charlotte Frei  
Jared Smith  
Melissa Turley  
Renee Seidler  
Ross MacIntyre  
Samuel Petri  
Tyler Sinclair  
~~Frank Lane~~  
~~Jade Krueger~~

**FHWA**

Bob Bonds

**Flitner Communications**

Sara Flitner  
Deb Barracato

**WYDOT**

Nick Hines  
Bob Hammond  
Stephanie Harsha  
Kelly Cope  
Meadow Ridley (via Teams)

**Jacobs**

Jim Clarke  
George Woolley  
Carla Mykytiuk

The second Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the WY 22 Corridor project was held October 4, 2023, at 1 PM at the Teton County Public Library. WYDOT and Jacobs staff led the meeting with Jim Clarke and George Woolley as the main presenters and Sara Flitner as the facilitator. Carla Mykytiuk assisted during the presentation and Nick Hines provided information regarding NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act).

Ten of the 12 PAC members were in attendance. Each member of the PAC was provided with a copy of the agenda prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda, the presentation, and the sign-in sheet is attached. All PAC members will be provided with a copy of the presentation and the meeting minutes.

## 1.1 Agenda Items:

### 1.1.1 Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping

Brief re-introductions for all members of the Project Team and PAC were conducted. WYDOT (Wyoming Department of Transportation) expressed gratitude to the committee members for their continued participation. Sara Flitner reminded the group that they're advisory in nature. WYDOT wants to understand the PAC's interests, priorities, values, and goals; however, WYDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) retain decision making authority.

#### 1. Meeting 1 recap

Carla Mykytiuk reviewed the PAC Meeting 1 discussion, including PAC member roles and responsibilities, ground rules for productive meetings, and an overview of the project and public participation process. No one had any concerns about the meeting minutes.

#### 2. Purpose and Need

Jim Clarke discussed the Purpose and Need (P&N) statement, explaining how PAC input from Meeting 1 is reflected in the revised language. A PAC member expressed concern that the P&N still emphasizes vehicular movements. PAC members recommended making it clearer that safety and mobility applies to all modes of travel, including pedestrian and bicyclist, not just vehicular, and questioned the use of "secondary" to describe some of the identified needs. There was some discussion of the lack of data regarding pedestrian and bicycle crashes, which may not be reported. The suggestion came up of moving wildlife permeability to the Purpose and Need rather than including it as a goal; Jim Clarke explained that Purpose and Need reflects transportation priorities (that focus on moving people), and that Goals provide a way of identifying other community interests such as wildlife permeability that can be used to assess and differentiate between alternatives. Needs, whether secondary or not, have associated screening criteria. The question of whether screening criteria is weighted was asked. Jim Clarke said that criteria will not be weighted.

PAC members made the following language recommendations:

- In the safety section, remove "vehicular" from "vehicular crashes" and clarify "for all users"
- Don't distinguish between primary and secondary needs
- Reducing peak period travel time delay "for all users and modes"
- "Improving" travel mode choice – "Improving" bike/pedestrian connectivity; use "improving" rather than "supporting" or "maintaining" in reference to travel mode choice –
- "Improving" intersection operations for "multi-modal travel"

Based on discussion, WYDOT will consider additional wordsmithing of the Purpose and Need statement and redistribute any further, final revisions via email to the PAC members.

A PAC member expressed concerns about WYDOT comments about being unable to address issues outside its purview. He said that the community has weighed in and is clear, notably with the Comprehensive Plan and Integrated Transportation Plan (ITP), about the need for improved transit. Recent enabling legislation for HOV allows for this to be considered and prioritized. Bob Hammond said that WYDOT was involved in the development of the ITP but doesn't fully support all the items indicated. WYDOT is listening but needs to objectively evaluate proposed transportation improvements.

## NEPA 101

Nick Hines and Jim Clarke gave a brief overview of the basics of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and how it affects decision-making with this transportation project. He emphasized the importance of public involvement in the NEPA process and the tools WYDOT is using for this project.

Nick Hines mentioned that the public involvement being done for this project is above and beyond what WYDOT usually does for an Environmental Assessment (EA).

Note: NEPA slides to be updated to change “man and his environment” to “people and their environment”.

Regarding the Class of Action discussion, a PAC member asked how WYDOT/FHWA determines what category a project will be in. Bob Bonds explained the difference between the three levels of NEPA Class of Action (CE, EA, EIS) noting these determinations hinge on the significance of impacts. Jim Clarke explained that all the fieldwork being completed now will be used in support of the pre-NEPA and NEPA processes.

If PAC members have additional NEPA related questions, they are invited to contact Nick, Jim or George.

FHWA and CEQ Resources

- [nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNepa/ReNepa.nsf/home](https://nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNepa/ReNepa.nsf/home)
- <https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/implementation.aspx>
- <https://ceq.doe.gov/>

Stephanie Harsha briefly discussed the meaning and interpretation of “significant”. Significant impact is defined in the NEPA regulations and is not a subjective measure. Often the public confuses what is significant to them with what meets the definition of significance.

There was some discussion of mitigation. Bob Bonds indicated priority is to avoid impacts, then to minimize and mitigate impacts that can’t be avoided.

A PAC member asked about a type of analysis that considers effects from other projects– not just the roadway being improved - and how it would be incorporated in the WY 22 project. Jim Clarke discussed the complex topic of Cumulative and Indirect impacts. Cumulative and indirect impacts will be considered during the NEPA phase of the project.

(Editorial note: definition added to respond to request for clarification. Definition was not discussed during the meeting.)

*The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines indirect and cumulative impacts as follows:*

- *Indirect impacts: Impacts caused by the action, but that are later in time or farther removed in distance but are still reasonably foreseeable.*
- *Cumulative impacts: Impacts on the environment which result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions.*

After this discussion, a PAC member asked for clarification of the PACs role in the pre-NEPA process – how does it really work in terms of their input on P&N and goals. Is their input discarded or are their names provided as if they endorsed the Recommended Alternative even if they don’t? Jim Clarke mentioned that the summary from meeting #1 addresses this issue: the PAC is intended to help guide the process and provide feedback as well as to ensure that the process is transparent and open. Jim

Clarke explained that WYDOT and the FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) must retain decision-making responsibility because it will fund future improvements and potential liability in any future lawsuit. They will make the decision but want to be inclusive of community interests, values, and concerns, which is why they convened the PAC.

Bob Bonds suggested that the meeting summaries capture the input of the PAC and can be used to assess what feedback was worked into the project process.

### 1.1.2 Project Goals

George Woolley explained that goals become assessment criteria for the alternatives screening process. Goals identify community priorities not directly related to transportation that the project can address, such as maintaining the rural character of corridor or limiting environmental impacts.

Goals need to be reasonably achievable and not addressed by the purpose and need.

Working with the PAC, Town of Jackson, and Teton County, WYDOT previously identified two goals for this project:

**Goal 1: Environmental Protection** – Preserve the high-value natural and social resources through avoidance and minimization of environmental impacts, including consideration of the potential for an alternative to impact wetlands and Waters of the U.S., noise levels, aesthetic quality, historic resources, and conservation easements.

**Goal 2: Wildlife Permeability** – Improve and safeguard the wildlife permeability of WY 22 by creating animal crossing opportunities that work in conjunction with other wildlife-related project elements (i.e., fencing, deer-guards, jumpouts).

#### Group Exercise

Sara Flitner broke the PAC members into two groups and asked them to consider the two existing project goals, goals identified during other transportation planning efforts in the county (and presented to the group on large-format printouts taped to the wall), and any missing priorities. After discussing in groups, the PAC reconvened and discussed their suggested goals.

**Please refer to the “Goal Response Memorandum” for a detailed description of proposed goals and changes to the goals resulting from the PAC “goal setting exercise”.**

### 1.1.3 Alternatives Screening Process

George Woolley walked the group through the alternatives screening process, explaining that it will be used to evaluate alternatives objectively and comparatively. The result will be a Recommended Alternative to move into a subsequent NEPA process.

The project goals are being used to develop screening criteria to evaluate alternatives.

PAC members raised some questions/discussion items:

- 1) A PAC member said that HOV is being incorporated into many large capacity projects. Jim Clarke agreed and clarified that HOV is a solution and that we are not at a place where we are identifying solutions yet. The project will eventually identify solutions that meet transportation needs and the best way to do it.

- 2) Complicated intersections – how will you evaluate them? Will each intersection be considered as a standalone or in conjunction with each other? George Woolley explained that the project will consider different intersection configurations and combine the best set of solutions during the ‘packaging’ phase (Level 3) of the alternatives process.
- 3) Are there any prohibitions on solutions from a funding perspective? Jim Clarke replied that everything gets a fair shake at consideration during the screening process. Bob Hammond stated that the only prohibition would be an alternative that would be ineffective in the design year. Bob said that WYDOT can’t spend money on roadway improvements that fail. Money can be spent on HOV and pathways, but the road must be functional. WYDOT needs to address safety and mobility first.
- 4) Regarding the statement that WYDOT can’t design an improvement that fails, a PAC member asked for a definition of failure. If the goal is moving people, we may have a different definition of failure. Jim Clarke clarified that this is where the screening criteria would come in and should eliminate bias.
- 5) A PAC member asked if goals are considered at Level 2 screening. George and Jim clarified that they are fully considered during Level 2 screening.
- 6) A PAC member asked if there was a way to weigh P&N benefits against each other. George Woolley explained the Level 1 screening is focused on the purpose and need and results in a “yes” or “no” rating. Level 2 is more quantitative and supported with traffic modeling.
- 7) A PAC member asked if goals must be measured by numbers. George Woolley clarified that goals can be measured qualitatively or quantitatively depending on the screening criteria used to measure the goal.
- 8) A PAC member said they were still struggling with the supplemental elements (such as intersections) not being considered until Level 2 screening, when they could enhance the alternatives. George Woolley responded by stating Level 1 will likely include a “low-build alternative” to consider the improvements of intersections in absence of mainline WY 22 improvements. Level 1 alternatives will be developed by the project team and shared with the PAC in future.
- 9) There was some discussion about improving pathways at intersections. The Pratt Road/WY 22 and Spring Gulch Rd/ WY 22 intersections are two areas suggested that WYDOT focuses on. WYDOT needs to consider space limitations for the pathway within the existing right-of-way and potential limitations that WYDOT may have in purchasing right-of-way intended for pathways.

#### 1.1.4 Next Steps/Wrap-Up

##### 1. Upcoming Meetings and Tentative Schedule

Preference for last week of November or beginning of December for the next in-person PAC meeting.

A meeting on Teams will be scheduled prior to that for the purpose of reviewing the screening criteria. Jacobs will distribute the draft criteria and the PAC can provide feedback during the call and/or via email.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m. WYDOT stayed to answer any lingering questions.

## 1.2 Action Items

No.	Item	Responsibility	Status	Deadline
1	The Project Leadership Team (PLT) will consider the feedback regarding Purpose and Need and distribute the final Purpose and Need Statement.	WYDOT	0%	11/1/23
2	WYDOT will provide screening criteria to PAC by email.	WYDOT	0%	TBD
3	As needed/requested, schedule a virtual (Teams) meeting to discuss Level 1 screening criteria prior to PAC meeting #3.	Jacobs	0%	TBD
4	Coordinate the meeting date for PAC meeting #3.	WYDOT	0%	11/15/23
5	Email blast to be sent to project mailing list to talk about project progress and website updates.	Jacobs	0%	11/8/23