



Meeting Summary

Project Name: QUADCO Regional Transportation Plan Update

Meeting Date and Location: October 14, 2014; Moses Lake

Meeting Description: Stakeholder meeting

Meeting Attendees:

Jan Ollivier, Kittitas County
Doug D'Houndt, Kittitas County
Cyndi McGlothern, WSDOT
Greg Wright, Grant Transit Authority
Paul Katovich, Central Washington Grain Growers
Shawn O'Brien, City of Moses Lake
Kell McAboy, SCJ Alliance

Contact: Kell McAboy, SCJ Alliance 360.352.1465

Welcome & Introductions

Kell McAboy welcomed the group and thanked everyone for attending the second of four QUADCO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update meetings.

Background and Plan Update

Kell gave a brief overview of QUADCO, its members and the RTP update. Kittitas County is the current lead agency, and the plan will be updated in-house by Jan Ollivier. The expectation is that the plan will be updated and adopted by June 2015.

Website

Kell shared that SCJ Alliance is developing an independent website for QUADCO to be hosted with the State of Washington through their EZ View web service. She talked about the information that will likely be shared such as the current and past plan documents and other items brought up at the stakeholder meeting in Ellensburg earlier in the day.

Open Houses

Kell talked about holding an Open House in late winter, early spring, once a draft plan is ready for public release. There will be one public Open House, or alternative in each county. Cindy expressed importance to reach out to minority groups. Alternatives identified included:

- Spring festival in Moses Lake
- Christmas bizarres
- Farmer's markets
- Grocery stores

It was generally discussed about the audience that QUADCO is trying to reach, whether it is the general public, representatives of industry (growers, fruit, individual trucking companies, etc.) businesses, commuters, transit riders. The key is to find the best venue to allow all interested persons the opportunity to participate.

Survey

Kell talked about the draft survey and its intent to be distributed broadly. The information collected should inform the update of the plan, therefore it is important that we are asking the right questions. Kell will send out an updated link to the draft survey next week for feedback.

Greg stated that Grant Transit Authority (GTA) could get the survey to their ridership. Local jurisdictions could use a direct link to the survey from their websites.

Regional Transportation Network

Kell discussed the regional transportation network as including at a minimum, all state-owned facilities including roads, rail, airfields and trails.

Jan described the regional network as required by the RCW: 1. Crosses member county lines. 2. Is or will be used by a significant number of people who live or work outside of the county in which the facility, service, or project is located. 3. Significant impacts are expected in more than one county. 4. Potentially adverse impacts of the facility, service, program, or project can be better avoided or mitigated through adherence to regional policies. 5. Transportation needs addressed by a project have been identified by the regional transportation planning process and the remedy is deemed to have regional significance. 6. Provides for system continuity.

Regionally Significant Projects

Shawn talked about SR 17 and I-90 widening project, which is now complete. There are not any regionally significant projects at this time in the Moses Lake area, although a second lake crossing is on the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

Jan asked about a north-south alternative to I-5 for redundancy from Mexico to Canada. Cindy stated that would likely be a US 395 extension, but that WSDOT is focusing on transportation alternatives to adding capacity because of fiscal constraints.



Paul said that spring weight restrictions on non all-weather roads cause delays in travel for trucks hauling grain and that the Douglas County section of the Moses Coulee corridor really needs improved.

Doug talked about equipment needed in the region for all-weather road assessments. A cost-benefit analysis could be done to determine the feasibility of upgrading key trucking routes to all-weather roads.

Cindy asked how we could improve the rail system to accommodate more goods in order to take trucks off roads.

Paul talked about the need to update the PCC Rail line. If the region invested 10 million dollars in 108 miles of track, that would allow for train speeds up to 25mph, keeping it very competitive with barging grain down the Columbia River. Utilizing the PCC line for grain transport keeps trucks off all of the north-south roads in the region from Douglas County south to the Columbia River. It is more efficient to move goods on rail than on local highways given the lack of funding for road improvements.

It was discussed that the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad has a bottle neck at the tunnel at Stampede Pass by only being able to accommodate single stack trains and that BNSF cannot handle more traffic through Wenatchee. Trains are sent to grain facilities in Portland.

It was discussed that other agricultural products, such as hay, are shipped in container trucks and hauled via I-90 to the Ports of Tacoma and Seattle.

Paul discussed SR 155 that leads to/from Grand Coulee dam, originally designed as a heavy haul road to handle equipment and replacement parts for the dam. This road has outlived its life expectancy and is in major need of repair. Both the Central Washington Grain Growers and WSDOT have gone after TIGER funds. Both grant requests were unsuccessful. Jan asked if listing this specific project in the RTP as regionally significant would elevate the probability for grant funding.

Greg talked about the GTA staying engaged with transportation agencies to look for partnering opportunities such as incorporating bus turn-outs and sidewalks into a road project. GTA is working with the City of Moses Lake on these safety and congestion improvements at Strafford and Kender now.

It was discussed that the human services needs are expanding and it is expected that ridership will continue to increase in Grant County. Ridership has traditionally been from those who have limited transportation choices due to economic situations, whereas there is a trend toward ridership being from those who move from metropolitan areas where they are more likely to use transit service and young people choosing not to drive.



Park and rides are a big need in convenient locations. GTA is working on getting a multi-modal transit center funded to include stops for Greyhound and Trailways and 37 parking stalls. GTA is also interested in connecting with Link Transit in Wenatchee related to a health shuttle.

END OF MINUTES