

MEDIA RELEASE



Contact: Billy Kirk, Teton County Public Information Specialist

Phone: 307.732.5786

Email: wkirk@tetonwyo.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of Commissioners Outline Tribal Trails Connector Project Public Process

Jackson, WY, June 20, 2017 - On June 12, 2017, the Board of County Commissioners sent a Cooperative Agreement Request letter to WYDOT related to the connector road known as Tribal Trails. As outlined in the Integrated Transportation Plan, any prioritized project of this scale requires and relies on public engagement and oversight to be successful.

Currently, the Tribal Trails Connector project has not entered the formal “project charter” phase. Essentially, a “project charter” is the official, binding, publicly-vetted plan for any project. As the project moves forward and the Board of Commissioners formally initiates the charter process, there will be multiple opportunities for public input and involvement. The formal project charter will eventually require approval by the Board of Commissioners and will be made public for comment and feedback. Once approved, it will serve not only as the official project plan, but as a tool for mutual accountability between the Board of Commissioners and the public. When the public charter process outlined in the Integrated Transportation Plan begins, it is the hope of the Board of Commissioners that concerned and interested citizens lend their voices to the process.

Additionally, as clearly stated in the second paragraph of Cooperative Agreement Request, “This request is made with the understanding that Teton County will have the ultimate say in the final design and implementation of this project” – this is a critical, foundational precondition of any potential agreement. In the same paragraph, it is stated that the “priority will be to meet the needs of our community rather than the needs of WYDOT”. This language is very deliberate to make very clear to WYDOT that Teton County is by no means ceding local control of this project, and will not enter into any agreement that jeopardizes local control.

Following the June 12, 2017 letter to WYDOT, the Board of Commissioners is waiting for a proposed Cooperative Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding - MOU) from WYDOT for this project. Consideration of the proposed MOU will be a public process, as are all contracts and actions of the Board of Commissioners. This will be an additional opportunity for members of the public to weigh in on the project and process before it begins.

Finally, concerns have been raised that the request to consider a cooperative agreement could supersede the upcoming Traffic Demand Study, for which the County will be reviewing proposals beginning on July 10, 2017. However, the Tribal Trails project is in the very beginning stages, and the Traffic Study will proceed as planned and inform the project, as outlined in the Integrated Transportation Plan.

The Teton County Board of County Commissioners and the County government remains committed to working cooperatively and transparently with all citizens. This project will reflect that commitment and the open processes outlined in both the Comprehensive Plan and the Integrated Transportation Plan.

Additional detail on the timeline of the project charter for Tribal Trails will be forthcoming from the Board of Commissioners.

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