MONTANA WILDLIFE AND TRANSPORTATION

STEERING COMMITTEE
Meeting Notes
December 7, 2021

PURPOSE: To review draft mapping product and support the Data and Information Work Group's progress, determine purpose and structure for Committee working meetings, develop project selection strategy and determine roles and responsibilities for Committee and each entity in project selection

Objectives:

- Share and develop ideas for initial use of the D&I product by various user groups and ensure Committee efforts are supporting the D&I group timeline tasks
- Identify purpose and structure for SC working meetings
- Understand status of Transportation Commission funding approval, and MDT's progress on project implementation process development and documentation
- Share and further develop other criteria and strategy for identification and selection of projects
- Determine roles and responsibilities of the Committee and member entities in identifying and selecting projects at each scale
- Determine agenda topics for the next steering committee meetings

ATTENDEES:

- Steering Committee (SC or Committee): Ken McDonald (FWP), Deb O'Neill (FWP), Dwane Kailey (MDT), Tom Martin (MDT), Kylie Paul (MSWP), Stephanie Adams (MSWP)
- Agency Staff: Bill Semmens (MDT), Dustin Rouse (MDT)
- Data & Information Work Group (D&I): Adam Messer (FWP), Justin Gude (FWP), Brian Andersen (MDT), Gabe Priebe (MDT), Paul Sturm (MDT), Liz Fairbanks (MSWP), Andrew Jakes (MSWP)
- Planning and Implementation Team (PIT Crew): Deb Wambach (MDT), Nick Clarke (MSWP), Hannah Jaicks (MSWP), Barb Beck (FWP), Brooke Shifrin (MSWP)

AGENDA:

1. Introduction
    a. Deb O'Neill introduced herself to the Committee as new FWP representative replacing Charlie Sperry. The Committee members introduced themselves to Deb.
    b. Brooke Shifrin was introduced to the Committee as a new MSWP representative on the PIT Crew
    c. Members of the Data and Information Group introduced themselves to the Committee

2. D&I workgroup draft product
    a. Work group members presented the draft product
        i. Brian Anderson displayed the storymap (ESRI app) and walked the Committee through the tool. He explained that there are an infinite number of possibilities on the display and that the D&I group has used its best judgement on selecting the most appropriate display options for consideration.

ii. The tool displays the areas of greatest need for wildlife accommodations associated with Montana's highways at a high level. This will be the first release with opportunities for improvement in the future.
iii. He showed the landing page and explained that it could be either linked or embedded in other sites for the public to access. The scrolling storymap is intuitive. Text explaining the five Needs Assessment Criteria (NACs) are shown up front in the storymap along with the percentage each NAC has contributed with the five totaling 100%.
iv. There are breakouts of information under each of the NACs showing the ranking within each NAC. The SC had already seen the first four NACs. The D&I group added a fifth NAC since meeting with the SC. Roads as barriers had been only minimally considered in the first four NACs and was believed not to be appropriately contributing to the map, so it was pulled out into a 5th criterion. The 5 NAC together more appropriately represent areas of interest, based on the combination of these criteria.
v. The D&I group also documented data limitations and gaps.
vi. Brian demonstrated other capabilities of the tool, such as use of dashboards for drilling down into the data and linking to more detailed metadata and additional resources.

b. The Committee discussed options for display for the overall map (top 2.5%, 5% or 10%, no filter, or all of these) and the geographic representations (statewide, by MDT district, by FWP region, etc.)
    i. The Committee expressed a desire to receive recommendations from the D&I group for the display of the tool
    ii. The group discussed who the users will likely be and the needs of the majority.
    iii. There was some desire for making all three of the percentage cutoffs available and having the statewide map plus the other two options, at least initially.
    iv. Most felt that the more information that could be displayed the better. The public is the primary audience, but different members of the public will have different needs. This tool should provide a one stop shop to see both the statewide picture and be able to look at more local areas (district and/or region) for considering project opportunities. The intent of the tool is to educate ourselves and the public about areas of greatest need.
c. Justin Gude presented slides to explain the process the D&I group went through to develop the percentages assigned to each NAC and what the NACs represent. They used the likelihood point method based on personal judgement. This method produces consistent results by using knowledgeable individuals to weight elements.
d. SC members provide feedback and ask questions
    i. The SC members were pleased with the tool as presented and appreciated the work that has gone into this application. The D&I members reiterated that this is not by itself a decision-making tool, but one piece of how projects might be identified and selected. Other factors, to be determined, will need to be considered in the final decision making for project selection.
e. SC members provide guidance on D&I workgroup questions
    i. The D&I group posed several questions to the SC.
        - The SC approved use of the fifth NAC, the weightings developed for the fifth NAC, and the weightings for the five NACs combined.

- The SC expressed trust in the judgement and some deference to the recommendations of the D&I group regarding the various display options. The SC thought that refinements and final decisions could be made to these items based on feedback from the beta test planned for early 2022.

f. SC members identify next steps and approach for determining and coordinating initial intended uses of the product with the D&I group
    i. MDT will check with MDT legal counsel on the storymap language
    ii. Generally, it was believed that one version is appropriate for public and internal release, including all layers and data within the tool
    iii. The beta test should include some instructional guidance and "directed feedback" or survey questions to ensure D&I and SC are receiving desired feedback to hone the tool

<u>Outcome</u>: List of any needed modifications to the draft product and identification of next steps for determining how the product will be used

- SC members will prioritize providing answers to D&I questions posed and continue to discuss next steps and initial intended uses of the product during their working meetings beginning in January
- SC will determine how the D&I tool fits into their strategy for project selection
- Intended uses, limitations of tool, guidance/instructions for use, and possibly sign in "acceptance acknowledgement" will be considered by the Committee and coordinated with the D&I group prior to public release

3. SC working meetings
    a. Understand the purpose of the SC working meetings based on identification of <u>key elements</u> to be addressed in coming months
        i. The purpose of the working meetings is to maintain momentum, prepare for delivery of a project(s) mid-summer 2022, achieve tangible goals in step with the new opportunities presented in the federal infrastructure bill
    b. Determine the structure, frequency, and duration of SC working meetings
        i. Every two weeks for 1-2 hours
        ii. Define a clear purpose and objective for each meeting
        iii. Focus on one topic at each meeting until that task is complete
    c. Determine expectations, roles and responsibilities for SC members and PIT Crew for SC working meetings
        i. SC members will serve as rotating chair and secretary monthly or as determined for each meeting
            1. Dwane (MDT) is January chair
            2. Kylie (MSWP) is January secretary
        ii. Prepare agenda and notes for each meeting, focus on action items
        iii. Identify homework and communication protocols between meetings
        iv. Develop "task teams" who work independently on certain items and bring pros/cons and recommendations back to the group
    d. Determine how to accomplish homework and communicate between meetings to accomplish SC goals over the coming months
        i. Consider where do we want to be in 6 months and work backwards from there

ii. First meeting will identify key actions and chart a logical path to accomplish those actions to meet 6-month goal(s)
iii. A few items that rise to the top:
    1. D&I product rollout and use
    2. Project selection approach and criteria
    3. SC roles and responsibilities in project selection

Outcome: Understand the purpose and determine the structure and logistics of meetings, and how homework and communication will occur between meetings.

(*short break*)

4. SC project selection strategy

This item was tabled due to lack of remaining time and will be addressed during a working meeting

a. MDT will share progress on MDT processes for project development and implementation at various scales and Transportation Commission funding approval
b. SC members discuss the following questions:
    - How do you envision projects being selected? Does that vision differ depending on the type of project? What about project selection for feasibility funding?
    - What are some important elements of project selection processes?
    - What is the role of the SC in selecting projects at each of the 3 levels?
    - What is the role of the SC in selecting projects for feasibility funding?

Outcome: Identify next steps and action items for process documentation and options for project implementation. Develop key elements and approach to project selection and clarify the role of the SC and member entities in project selection.

5. Report out from each entity for the good of the group
6. Review and Close
    a. Next quarterly meeting March 2022 – date TBD during working meetings
    b. First working meeting January 3, 2022
    c. Second working meeting January 19, 2022