

West Fork Road
Public Meeting April 29, 2015

Present: John Prinkki, Greg Gifford WFLHD Project Manager, Jason Hahn, WFLHD Project Engineer, John Overton, Shirley Overton, Terry Steinert, Keith Brighton, Angela Newell.

6:00 Commissioner John Prinkki started meeting and introduced Jason and Greg. Greg has been working on the West Fork project for 10 years, including the 6 it took to secure project funding.

Greg gave a schedule update. Roadway design and right-of-way acquisition have been completed. The project was advertised for bids April 27th. The bid opening is slated for June 2nd in Helena and the Notice to Proceed is expected to be issued by July 23rd. Construction will take place summer 2015 to the fall of 2016. The fixed construction completion date is October 31, 2016.

The roadway has been designed within the existing County right-of-way so it was not necessary to purchase any right-of-way. It became too difficult to secure a right-of-way easement with the Tipi Village Property Owners Association to straighten out the road, and the roadway was redesigned so that the easement was not necessary.

Greg noted that funding has been an interesting aspect of the project over last 10 years. The project received an Public Lands Highway Discretionary (PLHD) earmark, approximately 12 years ago, for the preliminary engineering. The Forest Highway program funded completion of the design and will also fund a portion of construction. That program has been transitioned into the MAP 21 Federal Land Access Program. Under MAP 21 the full funding for the project is secured and obligated so once a bid is awarded the project should be able to move forward rather quickly.

The roadway will be 30ft wide with 11ft driving lanes and 4ft shoulders to accommodate bike and pedestrian traffic. The more narrow driving lanes will hopefully help reduce vehicle speeds on the roadway. Although some changes will be made to sections of the road, overall there will not be significant changes in the road alignment or profile.

Under the MAP 21 funding, Carbon County is required to provide a match of \$325,000. Most of the match will come from in-kind work including administration, right-of-way acquisition, vegetation management and clearing, realignment of the Wapiti Road intersection, and the final chip seal on the road surface. Funding for the in-kind work is coming from the Red Lodge Mountain resort tax collections.

Jason gave an overview of what landowners can expect during construction. He has attended the City of Red Lodge's meetings with Goran regarding the Highway 212 reconstruction and believes he has an idea of what the community's communication expectations are. Jason will coordinate with the County so that information can be sent out via the West Fork email list serve and posted to the County's website on at least a monthly basis. Some of the impacts to landowners will not be determined until a contractor is selected and they determine where equipment will be staged and where gravel will be hauled from. During construction there will be some delays, but they should not exceed 30 minutes. Over the winter of 2015-2016 the road will be patched so that it has an asphalt surface. There are two large box culverts that will need to be installed and two retaining walls that need to be put into place. One retaining wall will be constructed to stabilize the road to the Canyon Ranch Estates subdivision and the other will be part of the realignment of the Wapiti Road intersection. The realignment will also require approximately 150ft of ditch to be piped and covered. The contractor will ultimately determine when they will do each portion of the reconstruction, but Jason expects that in the summer of 2015 the contractor may work on bank stabilization, culvert work, and may be able to start on retaining walls in the fall. Jason said emergency personnel will be able to get through the construction at all times and recommends that residents with emergencies call 911 to bring emergency responders to them rather than trying to get through the construction on their own.