



Board of County Commissioners - Staff Report

Meeting Date: December 5, 2022 **Presenter:** Heather Overholser/Amy Ramage
Submitting Dept: Public Works/Engineering **Subject:** WORKSHOP: Tribal Trail Connector

Statement / Purpose

To update the Teton County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on the status of the Tribal Trail Connector (TTC) study and discuss the opportunity to coordinate with Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) and access federal funds for certain aspects of the project by adding the TTC project (in its entirety or specific elements of the TTC project) to the Wyoming Highway 22 (WYO 22) Jackson to Wilson Corridor project.

Background

Tribal Trail Road, a Teton County road, accesses the Indian Trails subdivision off of South Park Loop Road. It is currently a dead end. As platted, TTC is a long-planned, unfinished connection between South Park Loop Road and WYO 22. TTC was first identified in the 1982 Rural and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) study. In 1991 it was included in the Teton County Transportation Plan and was platted in 1992 as part of the development of the Indian Trails and Indian Springs subdivisions. Decisions were made at that time to postpone the connector portion of the road. Throughout the last several decades and in all comprehensive and transportation planning documents the road completion has been identified by the County as a transportation network priority.

From 1992 to 2018, the populations of the Town of Jackson and Teton County nearly doubled; the town's population increased from 5,438 to 10,532, and the county's population increased from 12,198 to 23,464. In the same period, visitation levels roughly doubled, and WYO 22's annual average daily trips increased by 77 percent (10,450 to 18,500). This growth has significantly increased demands on the valley's infrastructure. Local elected officials have expressed concerns about the lack of current roadway network infrastructure, notably the lack of system connectivity and redundancy.

The 2015 *Jackson/Teton Integrated Transportation Plan* (ITP) identified the TTC as a priority project (Town of Jackson and Teton County 2015). To implement the ITP recommendation, the BCC approved a Charter Agreement for the TTC study (Teton County 2018a), which included the project's purpose and need and objectives. According to the Charter Agreement, the county began the TTC study process as follows:

- In March 2018, the Teton County BCC approved a Cooperative Agreement for the TTC study with WYDOT (Teton County 2018b). Under the agreement, WYDOT was contracted to manage the design, and construction process for the Tribal Trail project.
- In July 2018, the BCC approved a charter process for the study.
- In late summer 2018, the BCC appointed a community stakeholder advisory committee (SAC), and staff was tasked with engaging the group in a stakeholder process.
- In March 2019, WYDOT contracted with engineering firm Morrison-Maierle and their subconsultant Jacobs Engineering to manage the design, environmental, stakeholder, and public processes.

The first SAC meeting was held in May 2019. A total of 12 meetings were held, with the most recent meeting held in August 2022, all of which required a significant commitment of volunteer time for the stakeholders. Over the course of the study process, three of the stakeholders stepped down and three new stakeholders



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were appointed by the BCC in May 2021. The SAC has consisted of representatives from the following residential areas and other groups that would be directly impacted by the completion of the connector road:

- Cottonwood Park subdivision
- Indian Trails subdivision
- Indian Springs Ranch subdivision
- Dairy Ranches subdivision
- South Park Loop residents
- Teton Science Schools
- Teton County School District
- Non-motorized transportation
- Transit
- Public art
- Local business
- Tourism
- Wildlife/environmental
- Emergency services

Along with the consultants, the project team includes Teton County Public Works staff, the START director, and WYDOT staff. As assigned by the BCC, staff worked with the stakeholders to refine the project purpose and need using the Project Charter as a starting point. From these documents, the project team and stakeholders developed criteria that were used to screen alternatives. Multiple build alternatives were developed and evaluated in close coordination with the stakeholders to allow staff to present a recommendation for consideration by the BCC that meets the project purpose and need and best addresses the project objectives. Over the course of three years, 41 design alternatives (for the north and south intersections, as well as roadway alignment) were studied and vetted by the SAC and the project team.

In May 2020, the BCC held a workshop at which staff presented two design alternative recommendations and provided information on the overall process. Soon thereafter, at a regular Tuesday meeting on June 2, 2020, the BCC voted 4-1 and directed staff to continue the planning process for this project. The BCC also requested a follow-up conversation about the Teton Science Schools/Indian Springs intersection and its possible connection to the TTC project. In July 2020, the BCC held a workshop and requested that staff work closely with Teton Science Schools, Indian Springs Ranch, and the Jackson Hole Land Trust to identify options for including the Teton Science Schools/Indian Springs intersection in the TTC project to improve safety and convenience. The project team then met with those stakeholders to better understand their concerns and interests. From fall 2020 through summer 2022, the project team and the SAC developed and evaluated additional alternatives for the northern connection to WYO 22, three of which included the Teton Science Schools/Indian Springs intersection.

On April 27, 2022, the county hosted the third TTC public meeting, during which the in-person meeting was paired with a virtual meeting room option. This allowed County staff to reach the broader community and provide an option for those concerned about the novel coronavirus of 2019 (COVID-19). The virtual meeting room included the same information as the in-person meeting and greatly increased the number of comments received, many of which came from outside of the local area. Refer to Attachment 2 for the public meeting summary.

The results of the public meeting were presented to the SAC at their August 17, 2022 meeting. Seven of the ten stakeholders were present at the SAC meeting. One of the three stakeholders absent from the meeting provided an email in advance of the meeting with her project preferences.



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The stakeholders were asked to express their preferences on two items.

Their individual preference on the project:

- Five stakeholders preferred a build alternative.
- Three preferred the No Build alternative.
- Two stakeholders did not provide a preference.

Their individual preference on the four build alternatives:

- Five of the stakeholders preferred N5b, converting the existing Indian Springs Drive and Coyote Canyon Road WYO 22 access points into right-in/right-out, including an underpass to allow for full turning movements.
- One stakeholder preferred N2b, an at-grade signalized intersection within the existing platted ROW.
- One stakeholder preferred N19, where the TTC would be right-in/right-out at two different locations on WYO 22.

After this SAC meeting, the four final design alternatives and the No Build Alternative were to be reviewed with the BCC at a September 2022 workshop. However, WYDOT leadership approached county staff to discuss opportunities and options to merge the TTC project with the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor planning process and provide a federal funding opportunity.

At WYDOT’s invitation, Teton County staff met with representatives from WYDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on October 26, 2022 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the possibility of collaborating with WYDOT to include the TTC (either the project in its entirety or only specific sections) in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor planning process, which would present Teton County with the opportunity to use federal funds for all of

Benefit Cost Analysis. In fall 2022, the project team began preparing a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) for the project to support future federal grant funding applications. A BCA assigns monetary value to the improvements, benefits, and costs associated with an infrastructure project for a uniform comparison.

Project costs would vary depending upon which build alternative is selected, with the N2b alternative being the least expensive. The BCA process identified and monetized considerable project benefits from travel time savings, reduced emissions, and improved emergency response and redundancy.

For example, improved emergency response times with TTC can save lives in emergency situations such as cardiac events—a benefit that was monetized using federally accepted procedures and was verified by running modeled travel time scenarios. Similarly, the current lack of redundancy increases the likelihood of evacuation and emergency response problems during a natural or human-caused disaster during which residents and visitors could become immobilized due to severe congestion or traffic halts, or be stranded if the existing primary access route is cut off. During such events, travelers might be required to use lengthy detours to reach their destinations, including a potential 112-mile detour during certain wintertime scenarios. Also, traffic modelling showed that the TTC would defer the need for major improvements at the Y intersection by as much as 13 years. This deferred capital expenditure is captured in the BCA analysis as a benefit of the TTC project.

the project’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and some of the construction of the TTC project. This opportunity was brought to Teton County staff by the WYDOT Director and executive staff. WYDOT is interested in cooperating with Teton County on this project to achieve a solution that will most safely and effectively serve the travelling public on both WYO 22 and the TTC (to remain a county road). As discussed with WYDOT, merging all or specific elements of the TTC project into the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson



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Corridor planning would allow for the TTC project to be planned concurrently with the larger WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor improvements, as many public comments have requested.

Federal Funding Opportunity with WYDOT

If combined with the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project, sections of the TTC would be eligible for federal funds through WYDOT's surface transportation program (STP). However, funding may be limited and is not guaranteed. Sections of the TTC for which WYDOT STP funds are not made available would be eligible for other federal funding opportunities.

Funding scenarios as proposed by WYDOT are as follows (refer to Attachment 1 for Funding Breakdown graphic):

- NEPA
 - Federal 90%
 - WYDOT 10%
 - Teton County 0%
- ROW acquisition
 - Approach to WYO 22 (outside of county's TTC platted road lot and outside WYDOT ROW)
 - Federal Funds 90%
 - WYDOT 5%
 - Teton County 5%
 - Existing Tribal Trail Road
 - Teton County 100% (could apply for other federal funds)
- Design and Construction, including mitigation
 - Intersection of TTC and WYO 22 within WYDOT ROW
 - Federal 90%
 - WYDOT 10%
 - Teton County 0%
 - New section of TTC outside of WYDOT ROW and outside of the county platted road lot
 - Federal 90%
 - WYDOT 5%
 - Teton County 5%
 - New section of TTC within the county platted road lot and existing Tribal Trail Road improvements
 - Teton County 100% (could apply for other federal funds)

Scenarios and Pros/Cons

This section presents various scenarios on how the BCC could proceed with the TTC project, highlighting merits and limitations of each. Advantages and disadvantages reflect the County's interests, which may differ from WYDOT and FHWA interests. Scenario 1 would require FHWA confirmation of logical termini.



Scenario 1

Include all or elements of the TTC project in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project

TTC improvements, including the intersection with WYO 22, would be included in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor planning process. The FHWA-led NEPA document would encompass WYO 22 and include the TTC from WYO 22 to a logical endpoint, to be determined as part of the pre-NEPA process. The endpoint could be Cherokee Lane (near the existing Tribal Trail dead end), Boyles Hill Road, or another endpoint determined in consultation with FHWA.

Table 1. Scenario 1 Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
Potential for federal funding significantly lowers County’s financial responsibility and could allow County funds to be used for other local priorities.	County gives up sole NEPA/preferred alternative decision-making authority on TTC, sharing decision-making with WYDOT and FHWA.
Would address concerns raised by some members of the public to consider TTC within the larger WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor planning process.	The TTC schedule would be tied with the WYO 22 NEPA, estimated to be completed in 2025 at the earliest. Final design and construction for TTC elements included in the WYO 22 NEPA could proceed after the NEPA decision document. This would delay addressing transportation needs identified in the ITP and TTC Project Charter, such as providing redundancy, improving emergency response and connectivity, and reducing vehicle-miles traveled.
Would allow the County and WYDOT to work together to request amendments to Jackson Hole Land Trust conservation easements as one effort, with a broader, corridor-wide focus, avoiding piecemeal changes.	Dilutes focus on TTC-specific purpose and need; TTC would become part of the larger WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor process, in which the overall project purpose and need will prioritize WYO 22 safety, mobility, and congestion issues.
Likely would shift responsibility to obtain Clean Water Act Section 404 Individual Permit to WYDOT.	
WYDOT will be responsible for ROW acquisition on all state-owned roadway segments and will coordinate with the county on ROW acquisition for county owned TTC elements included in the WYO 22 project.	
Although county staff would be heavily involved in the project with WYDOT and FHWA, they would no longer be leading the project, which would create staff capacity for other Teton County Public Works/Engineering priorities.	
Including the TTC in the WYO 22 corridor project would provide federal monies for the intersection of TTC with WYO 22, which is the most expensive element of the TTC project.	



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Scenario 2

The entirety of the TTC project remains a separate project from the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor planning process.

The TTC would proceed separately as a Teton County project. The County and WYDOT would continue to collaborate on WYO 22 improvements, including identifying a solution for a WYO 22/TTC intersection.

Table 2. Scenario 2 Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
<p>Would allow the TTC to proceed and address TTC purpose and need in a shorter timeframe than that of WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor construction.</p>	<p>County funding will be required for 100% of the project. No federal funding for TTC improvements south of the WYO 22 ROW. The TTC would not be eligible for future federal funds in association with the WYO 22 NEPA process; a separate county-funded NEPA process would be required if other federal funds are desired for the project.</p>
<p>Allows the county to maintain its decision-making authority on the entire length of the TTC, including the existing Tribal Trail Road and the proposed connector segment.</p>	<p>The county maintains responsibility for obtaining a Clean Water Act Section 404 Individual Permit and providing compensatory mitigation.</p>
	<p>If the county proceeds with a connection to WYO 22 that is outside of the county’s platted road lot, the county would be responsible for acquiring conservation easement amendments and ROW, which could require condemnation by Teton County.</p>
	<p>Would not address concerns raised by some members of the public to consider TTC as part of the larger WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor planning process.</p>
	<p>WYDOT maintains decision-making authority on TTC access control to WYO 22.</p>
	<p>A large amount of county staff capacity would be dedicated to the TTC project.</p>



Scenario 3

No Action (that is, No Build) - no improvements to existing Tribal Trail Road, and the existing road is not extended or connected to WYO 22.

The county would stop work on the TTC project. For the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project, WYDOT would not plan for a future connection from WYO 22 to the dead end on the existing Tribal Trail Road. The WYDOT NEPA process would look at possible improvements to the Indian Springs and Coyote Canyon intersection at WYO 22.

Table 3. Scenario 3 Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
Would respond to comments raised by some members of the public that the TTC is not needed and should not be a transportation priority.	Inconsistent with policy objectives outlined in the ITP and Teton County/Jackson Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
Would allow county funds to be used for other transportation priorities.	Would fail to address identified transportation needs, including providing redundancy, improving emergency response and connectivity, lessening traffic through the Y intersection, and reducing vehicle-miles traveled.
Would avoid potential project-related environmental impacts to resources such as wetlands, wildlife connectivity, and neighborhoods.	Inconsistent with community objective for multimodal improvements to improve transit and pathway connections.
Would open up staff capacity for other Teton County Public Works/Engineering priorities.	Would not respond to projected growth in Northern South Park and associated transportation infrastructure needs.
	Would not address Teton County School District #1 identified transportation needs.

Other Details and Considerations for Scenario 1

Agreement between Teton County and WYDOT

- If the BCC approves of federalizing the TTC project and combining it with the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project, the County would enter a new cooperative agreement (or Memorandum of Agreement) with WYDOT.
- The agreement would obligate Teton County to partnering with WYDOT though the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project’s planning process and committing to the preferred alternative outcomes regarding TTC. The County would not be able to later decide not to construct TTC in accordance with NEPA without the risk of being obligated to reimburse federal funds used.
- The funding, mitigation, and ROW responsibilities of each party would be clearly identified in the cooperative agreement.

NEPA

- FHWA confirmed that TTC could be eligible for federal funds, the use of which would federalize the project and require compliance with NEPA, the Uniform Act, and other federal laws that otherwise would not apply.



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- NEPA would require FHWA to review the TTC study process conducted to date and determine what previous work could be used in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor NEPA process. Based on preliminary discussions with FHWA and WYDOT, much of the completed TTC work would be applicable.
- If included in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project, WYDOT may need to broaden the WYO 22 purpose and need statement to include all or some elements of the TTC.
- Folding all or parts of the TTC project into the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project would require that the TTC alternatives process be revisited by WYDOT's consultant team and possibly reconsidered based on the larger WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project's purpose and need.
- If included in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project NEPA process, the final NEPA decision document would include mitigation requirements for impacts of the TTC construction.
- WYDOT will establish a primary advisory group for the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project. If a subgroup for TTC is recommended, this could include members of the County TTC SAC, if they are interested.

Planning and Design

- FHWA would serve as the primary decision maker, followed by WYDOT and Teton County. Specific design elements, such as design speed, would be negotiated with WYDOT and included within the cooperative agreement.
- WYDOT will work with the county on consistent design standards for the TTC project using the following:
 - WYDOT Design Guides (2021) for Non-NHS State Highways
 - Teton County Road Fund Manual
 - Teton County Land Development Regulations

Construction Phasing

- If the TTC and WYO 22 projects are combined, the NEPA/environmental process would need to include both WYO 22 and TTC, but the construction could be done in phases (that is, the TTC could be built before, concurrently with, or after WYO 22 is completed, with proper planning of phases).

Next Steps

Desired Outcome for the Workshop: BCC gives staff direction on whether the board would like to pursue a cooperative agreement with WYDOT to fold TTC into the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project.

If Scenario 1 is desired:

- Teton County staff will write a letter to WYDOT District 3 with a request to include TTC in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project.
- This letter will be brought to the BCC for consideration at a Monday Voucher Meeting under Outgoing Correspondence.
- If WYDOT approves of inclusion of the TTC in the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project, WYDOT and Teton County would develop a cooperative agreement outlining responsibilities for both parties.



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- The Cooperative agreement would be brought in front of County Commission for consideration at a regular meeting.

If Scenario 1 is not pursued:

- Staff will bring TTC design alternatives to the County Commission for consideration at a future workshop and BCC regular meeting.
 - If the County Commission approves moving forward with a design alternative independent of the WYO 22 Jackson to Wilson Corridor project (Scenario 2), county staff will submit an access permit application to WYDOT District 3. The permit may need to be elevated to WYDOT's Access Review Committee for approval.
 - If the BCC does not approve moving forward with a design alternative (Scenario 3 – no action/no build), staff would coordinate with WYDOT to cancel the 2018 Cooperative Agreement with WYDOT for the TTC and cease work on the project.

References

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2011. *County Road Fund Manual, State and Federal Programs*. June. Accessed November 30, 2022.

https://www.dot.state.wy.us/files/live/sites/wydot/files/shared/Management_Services/County%20Road%20Fund%20Manual/County%20Road%20Fund%20Manual%20.pdf.

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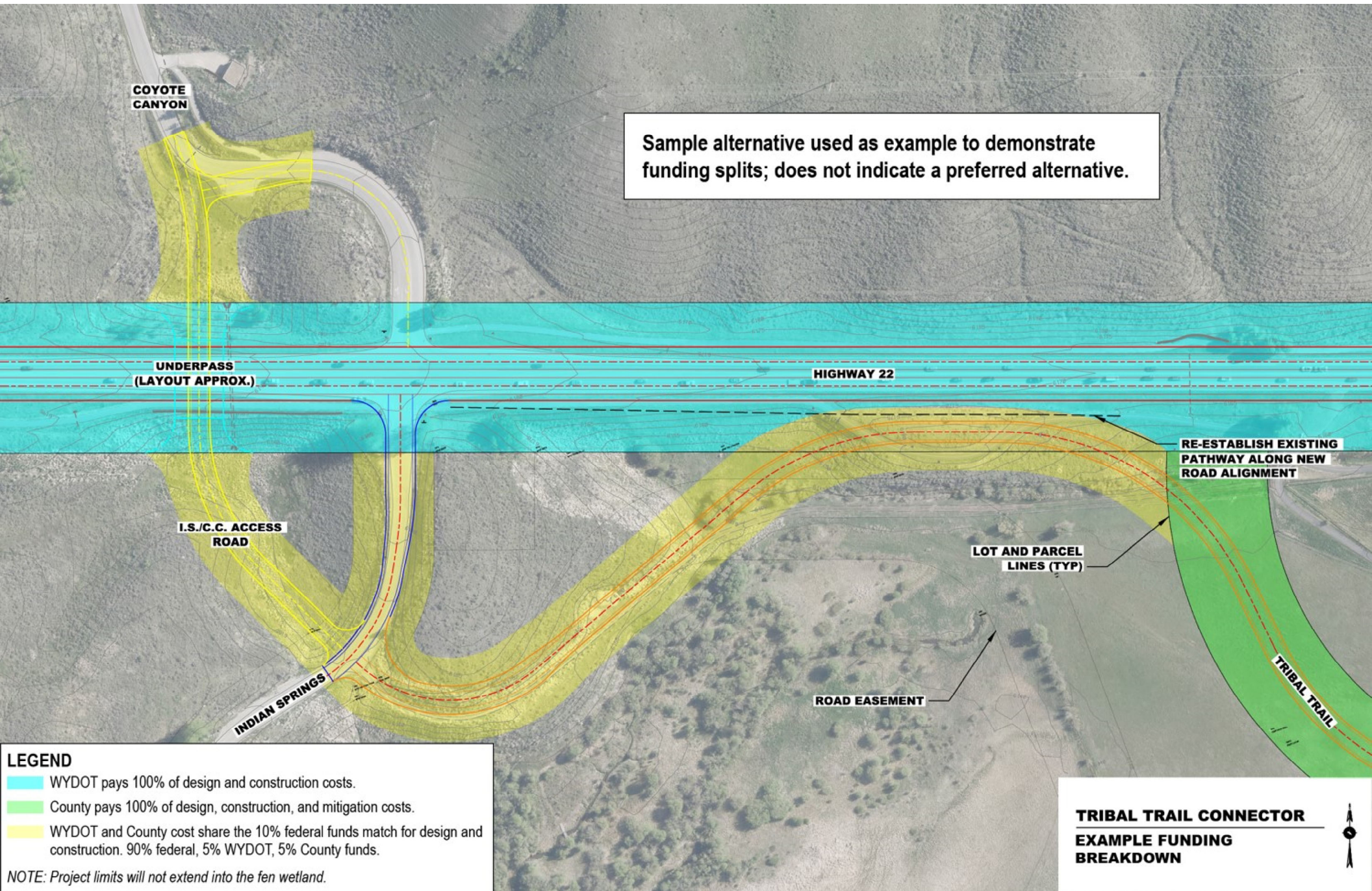
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https://www.dot.state.wy.us/files/live/sites/wydot/files/shared/Project%20Development/Road%20Design%20Manual_1/8-03_2021_JAN.pdf.



Attachment 1
Funding Breakdown Graphic



Sample alternative used as example to demonstrate funding splits; does not indicate a preferred alternative.

COYOTE CANYON

UNDERPASS (LAYOUT APPROX.)

HIGHWAY 22

I.S./C.C. ACCESS ROAD

INDIAN SPRINGS

LOT AND PARCEL LINES (TYP)

ROAD EASEMENT

RE-ESTABLISH EXISTING PATHWAY ALONG NEW ROAD ALIGNMENT

TRIBAL TRAIL

LEGEND

- WYDOT pays 100% of design and construction costs.
- County pays 100% of design, construction, and mitigation costs.
- WYDOT and County cost share the 10% federal funds match for design and construction. 90% federal, 5% WYDOT, 5% County funds.

NOTE: Project limits will not extend into the fen wetland.

TRIBAL TRAIL CONNECTOR
EXAMPLE FUNDING
BREAKDOWN





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**Attachment 2
Public Meeting Summary**



Public Information Session & Open House Participation Summary

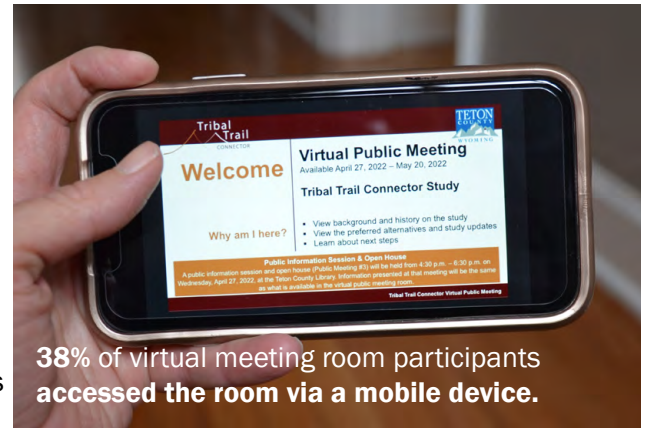
Teton County hosted a public information session Wednesday, April 27, 2022 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at the Teton County Library. An on-line virtual option, which included a [virtual meeting room](#), was made available until May 20, 2022. Both options presented the same content. This event was the third public meeting for the Tribal Trail Connector Study. Comments received by May 20, 2022 are reflected in this summary.

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- » Present background and history of the study
- » Provide study updates
- » Present preferred alternatives for the roadway alignment and Boyle's Hill/South Park Loop Road intersection
- » Present revised alternatives for the northern intersection with WYO 22 and obtain input and next steps

Individuals could submit comments on the project by filling out a comment sheet at the open house, mailing, emailing or faxing comments and/or by submitting a form online via PublicInput.com.



38% of virtual meeting room participants accessed the room via a mobile device.

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

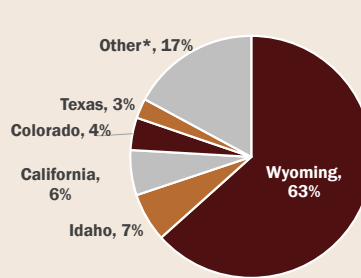


60 people

60 people signed in at the in-person open house held at the Teton County Library.

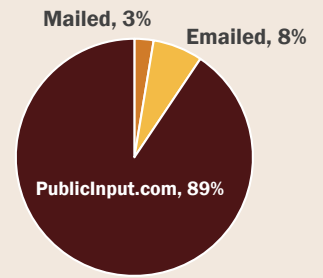
405 web visitors

405 people went to the [virtual public meeting room](#) between April 27, 2022 and May 20, 2022.



WY web visitors

63% of visitors to the virtual public meeting room were from Wyoming.

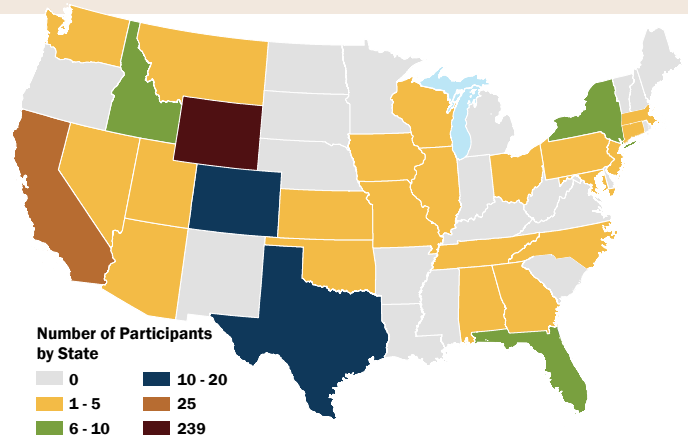


389 commenters

346 commenters submitted via PublicInput.com, 10 mailed, and 33 people emailed comments.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in the public information session was tracked through PublicInput.com and/or self-reported. 61 percent of participants (239) were from Wyoming. 18 participants (5 percent) were from outside of the country.



Based on ZIP codes from PublicInput.com or those that were self-reported. Location information was available for 367 participants

For more information, visit: www.tribaltrailconnector.com

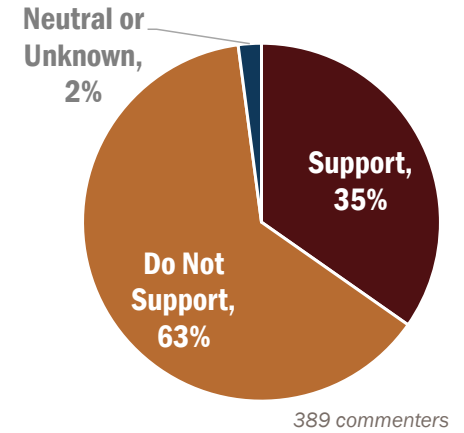
TRIBAL TRAIL CONNECTOR STUDY

COMMENT SUMMARY

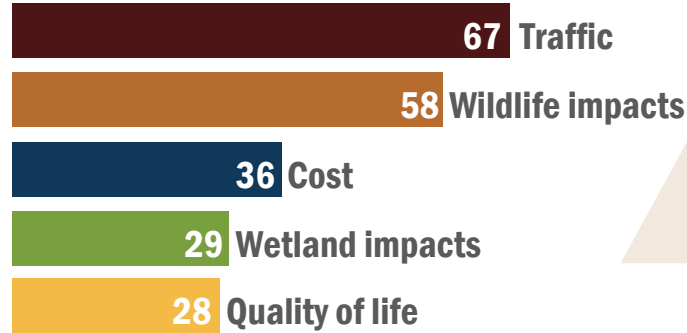
389 comments were characterized based on whether the commenter was supportive of a Tribal Trail Connector. 63 percent (246) of commenters were not supportive of a connector, 35 percent (135) were supportive and 2 percent (8) were either neutral or had an unclear position. Not all commenters responded to each question, which is why the number of comments varies.

The top concerns for those that do not support a connector included increases in traffic, wildlife impacts, project cost, wetland impacts, and impacts to quality of life.

OVERALL PROJECT SENTIMENT



CONCERNS FROM COMMENTERS THAT PREFER NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE



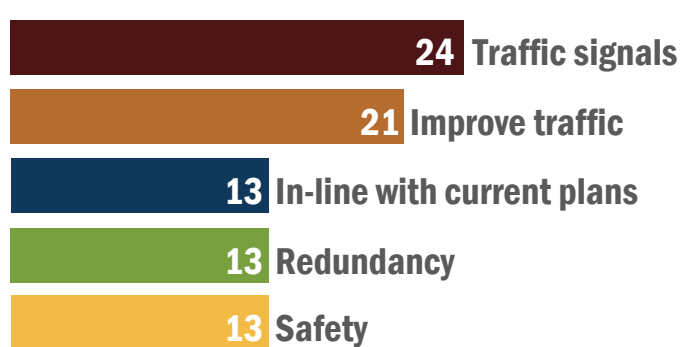
The No Build Alternative is preferred by 51% of local commenters and 70% non-local commenters.

Based on ZIP codes from PublicInput.com or those that were self-reported. 229 of the 389 participants selected the No Build Alternative.

Comments were categorized by topic, 361 topics were identified in 178 comments.

Supporters of the project feel that it is important to limit traffic signals on WY-22. In addition, they feel that the Tribal Trail Connector will improve traffic congestion, redundancy and safety and that it is in line with current plans.

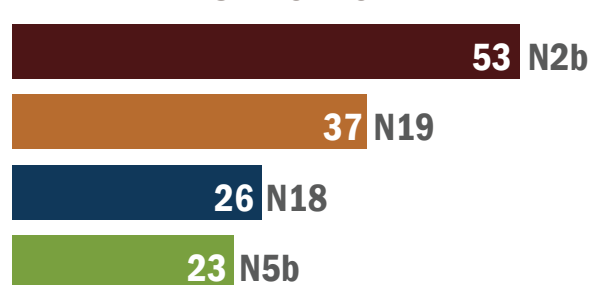
CONCERNS FROM COMMENTERS THAT SUPPORT THE PROJECT



175 categorized by topic from 106 comments.

The most preferred build option was N2b.

PREFERRED BUILD OPTION



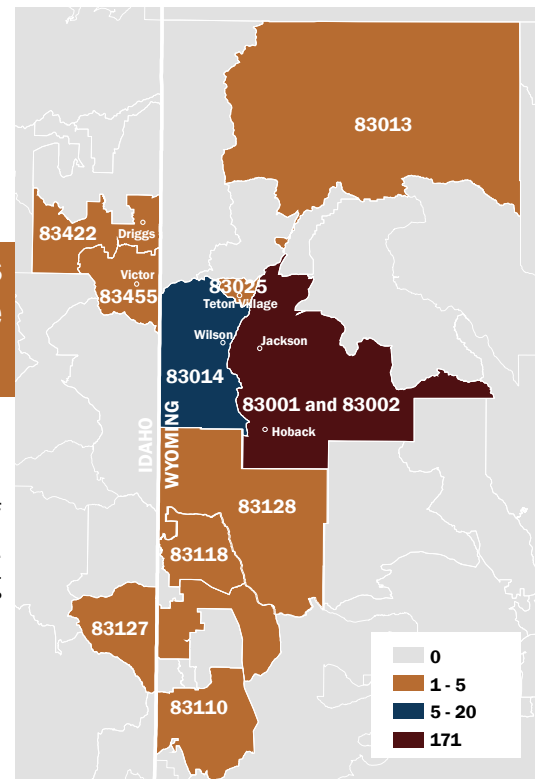
139 commenters indicated a preference between the build alternatives.

LOCAL PARTICIPATION BY ZIP CODE

Participation from individuals near the project area is shown on the map at right.

53% of comments received were classified as local.

The 83001/83002 ZIP codes had the highest number of commenters with 171 people commenting from that area.



Location information was available for 239 commenters based on ZIP code from PublicInput.com or those that were self-reported.