

Draft plan cites need for Tribal Trail link

By Michael Polhamus | Posted: Wednesday, September 17, 2014 4:30 am

A bridge spanning the Snake River to Teton Village isn't likely, but a new road surface extending Tribal Trail Road to Highway 22 is.

The county most likely should partner with the Wyoming Department of Transportation, the town of Jackson, and possibly the National Park Service in a regional transit program.

These and several other findings are contained in an early draft of what will become a countywide integrated transportation plan.

Jim Charlier, the consultant responsible for it, reported Tuesday afternoon on his progress to elected officials, town and county staff, nonprofits and the public.

Much of what the draft suggests is directed by the 2012 Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan. That includes building a much-objected-to new roadway past the Indian Trails subdivision to connect the area north of Jackson Hole Middle School directly to Highway 22.

Another high-priority project is rebuilding the "Y" intersection at the junction of Highways 89 and 22, north of Albertsons, to better accommodate buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

Extending Tribal Trail Road to Highway 22 could reduce the size and the number of lanes a future "Y" intersection might need, the draft states.

Consideration of the topic is due, Pete Jorgensen, Jackson's former statehouse representative and a traffic engineer, said after the meeting.

"They really need to work on that ... because it's going to be a big problem," he said. "The trigger is the 'Y' intersection, because that's so key to a lot of things, and part of the relief to the 'Y' is Tribal Trails."

By describing needed improvements to cope with existing and future traffic demands, and by describing what traffic numbers will trigger those improvements, the public and elected officials can make informed choices, Jackson Hole Community Pathways director Brian Schilling said.

One implication of existing traffic patterns, the draft states, is a wider Highway 22, as WYDOT officials have predicted.

The county might be well-served by collaborating more with WYDOT as that approaches reality, Charlier said.

The same is true for creating a regional transit authority, he wrote.

Teton County's transportation needs can't be met by collaborations between and funding from the town

and county alone, Charlier stated. WYDOT and the National Park Service must be included as well.

Wyoming Pathways Director Tim Young said that was a “powerful idea worth considering” that the Park Service shoulder some responsibility for public transit inside the county.

A public workshop on its findings and direction is scheduled for Oct. 29.