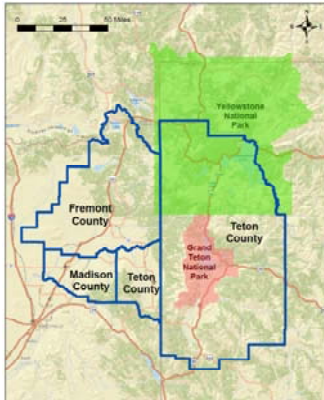


# Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium 2014 Annual Summit

May 7, 2014  
Teton Springs Lodge & Spa  
Victor, Idaho



## Group Memory

Wendy Lowe welcomed the attendees and gave a brief history of the second annual summit and upcoming year. All present introduced themselves.

Attendees: Basil Barna (Yellowstone Teton Clean Energy Coalition), Suzy Barna (Moxy Endeavors), Ed Thulin (Teton Properties LLC), Tim Adams (Teton Valley Trails and Pathways), Charlie Otto (Teton Valley Community Recycling), Rob Marin (Teton County ID GIS), Rick Baldwin (City of Driggs Planning and Zoning), Molly Absolon (Victor City Council), Zach Smith (Victor City Mayor), Brent McFadden (Madison County), Jeremy Casterson (Bureau of Land Management), Liz Davy US Forest Service), Nancy McCullogh McCoy (Powder Mountain Press), Dale Lish (USDA Rural Development), Cleve Booker (Teton County ID P&Z), Billy Siddoway, Marlene Robson (Teton County ID P&Z), Brian McDermott (Teton Valley Business Development Center), Harley Wilcox, Debra Wuersch, Guadalupe Herrera (HUD), Siva Sundaresan (Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance), Tanya Anderson (Teton Valley Community Recycling), Janna Rankin (Valley Advocates for Responsible Development), Heather Higinbotham (Yellowstone Business Partnership), Dave Wortman (Brendle Group), Brittany Skelton (City of Victor), Greg Sanders (City of Victor), Patty Parkinson (City of St. Anthony), Randy Williams (Teton Conservation District), Reid Rogers (Greater Yellowstone Region Geotourism Center), Bill Ward (Teton Springs), Scott Fitzgerald (Pro Guide Direct Inc.), Jim Wertz (EPA), Anna Trentadue (Valley Advocates for Sustainable Development), Ashley Koehler (City of Driggs), Marian Ruzicka, Jan Neish (Island Park News), Jason Boal (Teton County ID), Jeff Patlovich (City of Island Park), Pam Herdrich (High Country RC&D), Cathy Dufault, Jeff Dufault, Donna Batch (HUD), Jerry Royster (HUD), Jan Brown (Fremont County), Wendy Lowe (P2 Solutions), Fletcher White (Pro Guide Direct Inc.), Shawn Hill (Frontier Forward), and Cindy Riegel (Full Circle Education).



Wendy Lowe reviewed the agenda. She asked everyone to please treat others with kindness and respect. All handouts will be posted on the [sustainableyellowstone.org](http://sustainableyellowstone.org) website.

## **History of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development – Tom Cluff**

Tom Cluff provided an overview of the three-year grant, which was awarded to Fremont County by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in cooperation with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (which includes the Environmental Protection Agency—EPA and Department of Transportation—DOT), and identified the consortium partners: Fremont, Madison and Teton County, ID; Teton County WY; Aston, Driggs, Island Park, Rexburg, St. Anthony, and Victor, ID; and Jackson, WY; the Bureau of Land Management; US Forest Service; Idaho Department of Lands; and the Yellowstone Business Partnership. The Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD), which will be referenced throughout the summit, is the overall product of the grant. Tom hopes the document will provide the opportunity for all to look forward for our region as a whole. The original proposal also included several detailed projects and studies, including regional transportation, housing workforce, regional recycling infrastructure, and energy resource assessments; a groundwater pilot project; development of model code for Teton County Idaho; development of regional sustainability indicators to measure regional performance; public participation; and a technical assistance fund. After the grant was awarded it was determined that the workforce, energy, and groundwater studies were not feasible or necessary, either because the timeframe wasn't appropriate or we actually had existing data/efforts that the consortium didn't want to duplicate. Accordingly, the consortium submitted an amendment to HUD to change some pieces of the grant. The changes included shifting resources from the three projects we were no longer doing into the RPSD, adding \$5K for adding the Yellowstone National Park case study to the multi-modal project, and increasing our public participation budget and efforts. There was an effort to conduct a futures study for the Island Park region, which was to be a long-term comprehensive planning type of study. The futures study was to be conducted in partnership with the Henry's Fork Watershed Council (HFWC), but HFWC decided not to participate. As a result the consortium is no longer doing the specific futures study. Instead, there will be smaller economic/community development studies of the Island Park area that have been suggested by the Island Park Chamber of Commerce, which will still occur to help inform the RPSD.

The entire project will be completed in January/February 2015. Everyone in the consortium greatly appreciates everyone's interest and participation. We encourage everyone to remain or get more engaged for the remainder of the grant period.

## **Victor Complete Streets Technical Assistance – Brittany Skelton**

Brittany Skelton, Planning and Zoning Administrator for the City of Victor, ID, gave a presentation on the Complete Streets work and technical assistance support received under the consortium's technical assistance fund. She provided the context of the area and showed on a map where Highways 33 and 31 (two state highways) intersect at the heart of Victor's central business district. The existing conditions are a "main street" (state highway) that is 99 feet from curb to curb. It is difficult to get people to slow down and the street vehicular travel is up to 10,000 average daily trips. Currently this is considered an incomplete street because there are no sidewalks, bike lanes, cross walks, or ramps for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Victor was slated for a beautification project, but the funding was cut. The community completed Envision Victor, another community planning process, in 2009-2011, which garnered extensive community input and visualization for what the community would like see for Main Street.

Victor applied for technical assistance funds from the WGYC to contract with a Complete Streets consultant to help review the history of the effort to date, turn the concepts into a fully developed plan, and to negotiate with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). The end result design includes street trees and sidewalks, among with other improvements (see slide presentation for full details). Construction will begin August 2014 and conclude in October 2014.

## Regional Broadband Study – Scott Johnson, City of Rexburg

Scott Johnson gave attendees the background of how this project started: there was a study already being done by the City of Rexburg that started back in 2010, which included several community partners and BYU Idaho. BYU Idaho is experiencing explosive growth: the University has added 10K full time students since 2000, and they anticipate continued growth. The University is mandating that students enroll in online classes to free up classroom space. It was clear to BYUI that they needed better connectivity to serve their students; this turned out to be a problem community-wide. The City of Rexburg partnered with the WGYC to look at Broadband regionally, beyond just BYUI and Rexburg. The complete feasibility study is on the consortium website. It was a yearlong study, in which they met with all the existing service providers and others who have technology in the area. The study created an inventory of who has what fiber in which location(s). There is a standing committee that has met twice since the study was completed; the most recent meeting was with the current providers. Scott shared more detail on the technology of broadband, history of the local and regional effort, the scope of the study, and the findings.

The key findings included confirming the increased demand for broadband. Key action items for the path forward include: exploring public-private partnerships and utility partnerships; developing a common fiber overlay plan and open ditch policy; and coordinating broadband improvements with public safety improvements.

### Attendee Questions:

*What is the cost of lighting up the fiber network?* The cost is really not the fiber itself—the real cost is the switching. There are big computers that push light through the fiber. They are pushing your packet of info through a tiny strand of glass using light.

*What is your confidence level that you can raise the money?* This is a critical issue for every community in the consortium region. Rexburg is not sure exactly what role they will play and what role the providers will play. It's unclear if their role is to actually install the fiber or just to help with interconnectivity.



*Is there the will and the funding available to make this kind of change?* There is, and there isn't. Current providers receive federal funding already. As needs are identified, a lot of times they can get funding. The City of Rexburg asked providers to do quick pilot program in a portion of Rexburg: serving approximately half of the community was a \$3M project to install fiber to homes and businesses in that area. Silver Star wants connectivity from Driggs to Rexburg; it's unclear who will install or pay for that.

The study has been incorporated into the overall RPSD. The City of Victor is already benefiting from the study: they were able to reference the study and findings to strengthen a grant application.

*Is there a sense of how we stack up currently with other rural Rocky Mountain communities?* In a recent nationwide study, Idaho as a state ranked dead last in connectivity. Idaho's connectivity was lower than Puerto Rico.

*Did the study include RF and cellular links or just broadband?* Just broadband.

## **Regional Recycling Infrastructure – Heather Higinbotham, Yellowstone Business Partnership**

Heather Higinbotham, Director of Sustainability Programs for the Yellowstone Business Partnership, provided the final study results from the Regional Recycling Infrastructure Study conducted by LBA Associates out of Denver, CO. The biggest finding from the study was that the WGYC region could turn a \$4.8M/year cumulative loss associated with landfilling recyclables into an opportunity. Other key findings include:

- There is a reliance on collecting source-separated materials that hinders increased diversion by generators and commingling is a challenge with the nearest full scale material recovery facility (MRF) being more than 250 miles away
- There is an absence of policy that encourages a culture change and drives new recycling success
- Low population densities in the WGYC area may not cost-effectively support regional recycling infrastructure
- Leadership does not yet exist among interested stakeholders to champion and lead new regional solutions

The study looked at four alternatives:

1. Single Stream MRF, WGYC (four counties) area (94,000 population)
2. Single Stream MRF, expanded study area (366,000 population; WGYC area plus Bannock, Bonneville, and Jefferson counties)
3. Dual Stream MRF, WGYC area
4. Creation of a regional solid waste district under Idaho State Statute

Full details on the study findings can be found on the WGYC website.

## **Multi-modal Strategy – Jan Brown, Fremont County**

Jan Brown, Special Projects Coordinator for Fremont County, ID, provided a brief overview of the multi-modal transportation assessment and strategy. She emphasized that the intent of this study was not to try and get people out of their cars, but to work to accommodate the folks that really can't or don't want to drive a car.

The two major cities in the consortium (Rexburg and Jackson) are leading the way. START Bus in Jackson has the highest ridership in the entire Greater Yellowstone region, even including Billings. The Town of Jackson and Teton County, Wyoming have contracted with Charlier & Associates to prepare an integrated transportation plan for their area. The City of Rexburg is evaluating the feasibility of a fixed-route bus system for their community given that BYU-Idaho is promoting a pedestrian-friendly campus for the 15,000+ students.

The completed multi-modal study report and plan are available on [www.sustainableyellowstone.org](http://www.sustainableyellowstone.org).

There was a question and some confusion about whether there was duplication with the consortium work and Linx, the Greater Yellowstone Regional Transportation Cooperative. Jan Brown provided a brief overview of Linx (it was formed as a result of a large American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant through Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), and clarified that Linx is a co-op. Start Bus is one of the co-op members (there are approx. 20 provider members). Linx ran a 3-year pilot demo in Yellowstone

National Park and lost \$185K in performing that service. The national park concession employees dominated ridership: 75% of riders were park employees, yet they supported financially only 15% of cost.

*Have the small vendors for mobility-impaired passengers coordinated with this study?* They have coordinated with the Linx concept. The small providers are very tied into Medicare. Linx was trying to promote an online trip planner and ticketing service for interested passengers. Many small providers felt that they were already providing the service needed for their customers. But there is a regional connection many folks don't realize: for instance, the St. Anthony clinic draws 25% of its clients from Teton Valley. There is a lot of opportunity to work with medical facilities.

## **Teton Valley and Model Development Code – Jason Boal, Teton County WY**

Jason Boal, Planning and Zoning Administrator for Teton County, ID, provided an overview of the model code projects and the entities involved. Code Studio out of Austin Texas is the design firm the consortium contracted with to complete the model code project. There are four intended goals in the scope of work:

1. Understanding the model code, and existing codes in Driggs, Victor and Teton County, ID
2. Understanding Teton Valley vision, analysis and charrettes
3. Teton Valley code drafting for Driggs, Victor and Teton County; work with communities and open houses
4. Model code drafting, model code handbook, integration with the Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development

The model code project and Teton Valley code work is currently a work in progress and will not be complete until near the end of the grant period. Code Studio completed design charrettes in Driggs and Victor and last November presented the draft findings. They are currently working on a form-based code, which is focused on the form of buildings rather than land uses.

The intent was to start with the cities and work out to the rural area. Code Studio estimates they will have the downtown portions of the code adoption ready by mid-July and the area of impact (a step out from downtown portions) portion adoption ready in September. They will have the rural portion of the Teton County code drafted in September and will present at an open house. There will be a strategy call with the advisory committee in October, full committee review in November, and the final code package in November.

There will be a Workshop on May 28-29 for the Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development (GY-Framework). The credit workshop will take the lessons learned from the code work in Teton Valley ID and Teton County WY/Town of Jackson to begin updating the credit requirements for local governments to certify under the Framework.

*It seems that the form-based code is moving along smoothly in cities; has the county accepted it?* Form-based code is easy in urban areas. The county is excited about the possibilities and the P&Z is looking at ways to integrate it with their goals. The county may end up with a hybrid model, transitioning out to traditional codes in the very rural area, with the influence of a form-based code.

*Is there a vision of how this model code can be applied to Fremont ID, Madison ID, and Teton WY?* The vision is that another community would be able to pull out what's applicable to them from the model code package, once completed. The goal is to have adoption-ready ordinances and to have an overall model code that can be adopted in part or in whole as it aligns with comprehensive plans and community goals. Some pieces of it will be more applicable than others to different communities. The package will have an explanation of

the experiences of Driggs and Victor and Teton County ID going through the adoption process and their lessons learned.

*There are a lot of communities looking at multi-use buildings in an effort to increase density in cities, and they wind up with condos or apartments on the top floor of a 3-story building. Does this code interface with housing costs? Not everyone can afford a high-end condo. How does a form-based code address that?* One of the reasons we may not have a finished code package until November is because of the other studies going on in the grant, such as the housing assessment and indicators study, which will be incorporated into the codes and into the package as we tie everything together. All the separate projects are really tied together. The zoning portion will really show how they are all tied together.

*How does form-based code provide flexibility to create practical affordable housing?* There is flexibility in not being limited to a single family home. Someone can build a building, and have more flexibility with what's in that building. It's not just focused on the look of buildings, but rather on the character of the community. It's also built off of existing coding and zoning that has already been established.

## **Housing Needs Assessment – Shawn Hill**

Shawn Hill with Frontier Forward represented the team contracted to conduct the housing needs assessment (HNA). He provided an overview of what a housing needs assessment entails: understanding the various income ranges in a community and what people in those various categories can afford in terms of housing; what the market is currently providing and currently lacking; identifying needs, preferences, and barriers; factoring in other aspects such as commuting costs; and issuing recommendations.

Another key component of the housing assessment is to finalize the regional analysis of impediments (RAI). The team is taking the barriers identified in the draft RAI and making recommendations about how communities can overcome those barriers. Any entity that is the recipient of HUD monies is required to comply with the 1973 fair housing act, which mandates each community to determine what barriers exist for fair housing choice, particularly with protected classes such as race, ethnicity, household type, age, religion, disability, national origin, or familial status.

The team outlined a 7-step process to complete the housing assessment:

1. Project kickoff
2. Outreach to consortium partners
3. Secondary data collection
4. Primary data collection (sources: household survey, key informant interviews)
5. Draft release of RAI and HNA
6. Presentation of survey results and draft report
7. Report finalization

Frontier Forward has teamed up with the Brendle Group, who is the contractor working on the sustainability indicators, to incorporate quality of life questions into the household survey. Frontier Forward intends to target 400 English-speaking and 40 Spanish-speaking respondents in each county

*If the goal is to get a representative look of communities, it's bothersome that you are only targeting 10% Latino response when the real percentage is higher. Surely that will skew the results, and it won't truly be representative, especially in lower incomes.* The number of Spanish survey responses being 10% of English survey responses is not a reflection of the actual ethnic makeup of communities. Both surveys go through a very sophisticated weighting process, where responses are cross-tabbed with other responses, then reviewed against existing

secondary data, particularly census data, to create representative samples. It's a method to getting a representative sample through survey response. The team is confident that the minimum number will give a statistically valid sample, but they will certainly input additional responses and those numbers are just a minimum.

*How will the surveys be distributed?* It will be distributed online through employers and chambers of commerce, and to businesses through employers.

*How will it be statistically valid if you are distributing it through employers?* The analysis will weight the survey data by looking at income, household size, number of adult females, and other various weighting methods to get statistically valid samples.

*How do you reach the unemployed?* We will reach the unemployed through other distribution methods that will supplement the employer-based method. We will be providing paper surveys in libraries, senior centers, and town halls. An attendee recommended including medical clinics, department of labor and job centers in paper survey distribution.

*Can you target the disabled?* The team is confident they will be able to reach the disabled through these distribution methods. The HUD grant requires specific outreach to underserved populations, elderly, disabled, and minorities. They will also rely on secondary data to supplement primary data.

*How will people be able to find the online version of the survey?* The web address will be distributed and available on the WGYC website. They are anticipating they may fall short of targeted numbers, especially in South Fremont County. The team has a contingency if they aren't getting the number of responses needed. One of the methods of a second sweep would be door hangings or another type of paper survey distribution.

*Can you provide examples of the types of recommendations that may come forth?* Shawn Hill gave an anecdotal example: they have been doing outreach in Madison County, and there is a concern by social service providers for the Hispanic community that a decreasing number of mobile home units will result in decreased housing opportunities for that population. If the data bears that out, a possible recommendation is that the data is telling us that we have x income type that prefers y type of housing at z price point. We know that mobile homes exist because they provide that type at that certain price point. It would not be surprising if a recommendation comes out to provide more of that housing type, not necessarily mobile homes, but housing that is affordable to low-income families. Then it's up to the city or county to decide how/if to implement those recommendations.

*How will this project anticipate future needs, particularly in the long run?* The study is designed to create a snapshot of current needs. Communities would have to do additional studies every few years to determine future needs.

*Is there room in the survey questions to address the issue of people living in partially completed neighborhoods? Or provide data on anything they want to change about their neighborhoods?* There is not an easy way to get feedback on neighborhoods. By merging the housing needs assessment with the quality of life survey, we could potentially identify gaps.

*Will there be data addressing the displacement effect, for instance from seeing people moving to Teton Valley from Jackson because they can't find housing in Jackson?* That will be easily gleaned from the data, particularly in the question of "where do you live/where do you prefer to live/where do you work?"

## Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development – Heather Higinbotham and Jan Brown

Jan Brown with Fremont County (past Executive Director of the Yellowstone Business Partnership) gave the history of development in the Greater Yellowstone region and how/why the Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development was created, and the pilot program at the height of the great recession.

Heather Higinbotham gave an overview of how YBP shifted to work with planners, developers, elected officials, and other interested stakeholders to design draft local government requirements for the GY-Framework, to help local governments enable good things and stop requiring bad things. She shared the history of being invited by Fremont County to partner in the HUD grant application and how the GY-Framework was incorporated into the grant proposal as a guiding document for regional sustainable development, and the model code process. Heather Higinbotham presented a certification plaque to Mountainside Village, in Victor Idaho, and owner/developer Larry Thal gave remarks.

## Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development Certification - Award and Recognition to Mountainside Village in Victor, Idaho

Heather Higinbotham presented an award to Larry Thal, Owner of Mountainside Village for attaining certification under the Greater Yellowstone Framework for Sustainable Development.

The text of Larry's acceptance presentation is available on the Sustainable Yellowstone website at

<http://sustainableyellowstone.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Larry-Thal-Acceptance-Speech.pdf>



## Sustainability Indicators Working Lunch – Dave Wortman

Dave Wortman with the Brendle Group gave a brief presentation preparing the attendees for the working lunch session. The goals of the session are to help identify what factors the region could adopt to measure if we are sustainable as a community or a region, and how we can measure those factors. The project is to develop a set of regional indicators for sustainability and livability. The Brendle Group started the project at the consortium summit last May, where they came up with initial ideas for what should be measured. Developing regional measures of quality of life and sustainability will be a two-year project. They have been researching what are currently being measured, asking what should be measured, and selecting indicators to track over time. The indicators are meant to be tools in a toolbox to measure outcomes of policies, etc.

The Brendle Group has over 120 ideas collected from stakeholders, plans, agencies, and monitoring reports. During the working lunch, they are asking the group to help prioritize the ideas that have already

been collected, and to filter ideas—are they: relevant to the real trends and issues, easy to understand, reliable/measurable, tied to action, and timely?

There are two types of indicators: performance (tied to specific issues like land use, housing, or transportation) and system (vital signs for the region, 2-3 key indicators). The draft indicators are organized based on the GY-Framework and HUD livability principles.

## **Regional Plan for Sustainable Development – Jan Brown**

Jan Brown presented a big picture summary of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD), which is one of the major final deliverables in the grant. She gave an overview of the region, and how all communities around Yellowstone and Grand Teton identify with YNP as part of their “region”.

She explained the Micropolitan Statistical Areas of Rexburg (Madison, Fremont counties) and Jackson (Teton WY, Teton ID), and how the four counties came together to form the consortium because of these micropolitan areas. Before this grant, it is unlikely that anyone would have identified this particular area as a region.

Jan shared the proposed outline for the RPSD (see handout on consortium website for more detail):

- It is intended to serve as a comprehensive resource plan and sustainability strategy for the regions south and west of YNP.
- It will provide well-researched regional guidance to local, state and federal agencies operating in the four consortium counties.
- It will outline how all consortium partners can take voluntary, measurable steps towards sustainability.

Five unifying goals for consortium area:

- Preserve our agricultural heritage
- Sustain our small towns
- Enhance our city centers
- Steward our wildlife, public lands and special sites
- Support four-season recreation.

*Who is responsible for public input, and consolidating that input?* Wendy Lowe. The consortium is currently working on how to engage the public with this new RPSD outline.

*Madison County is going through this process right now with Envision Madison. It will be a problem to turn around to the public in 5 or 8 months and ask for public input again; it will be confusing. It would be nice to tie it all together. We hope there will be enough information to take what’s been done so far and include the work from Envision Madison in the final RPSD. We want to make sure not to duplicate efforts.*

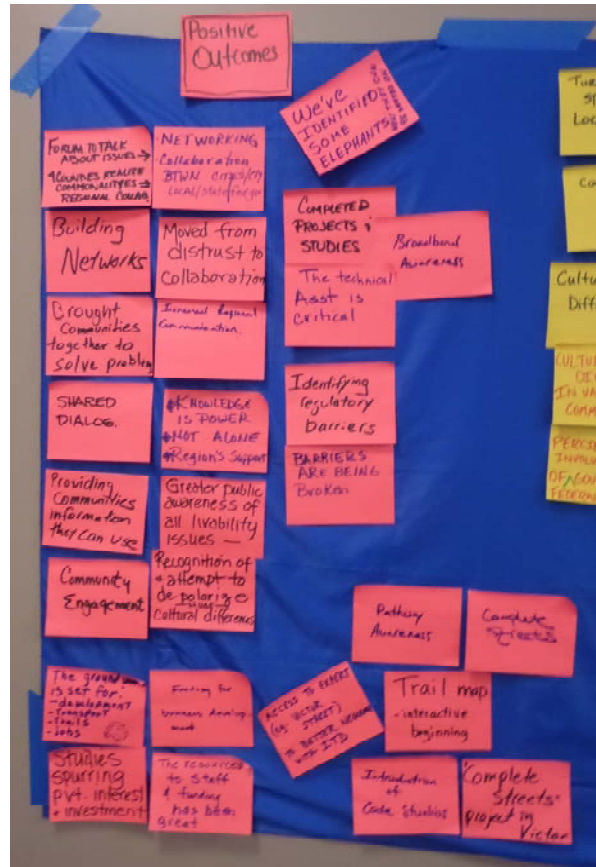
## **World Café**

Next participants participated in revolving small group discussions around four questions. Each group recorded their responses to the questions on 6” by 8” sticky notes. The sticky notes were posted on a wall and organized by participants. A transcription of the notes and a picture of the results for the four questions is presented below. Suggested categories for the input were created after the fact and may not completely capture the intentions of participants.

1. In your experience, what have been the positive outcomes in our region that may be attributed to the HUD grant?

**Regional collaboration:**

- Forum to talk about issues which can lead to four counties realize commonalities which can lead to regional collaboration
- Building networks
- Brought communicates together to solve problems
- Shared dialogue
- Providing communities information they can use
- Community engagement
- Networking and collaboration between cities and counties and local, state, and federal government
- Moved from distrust to collaboration
- Increased regional communication
- Knowledge is power; not alone; and region's support
- Greater public awareness of all livability issues
- Recognition of and attempt to de-polarize huge cultural differences



**Other results:**

- The groundwork is set for development, transportation, trails, jobs, and recycling
- Studies spurring private interest and investment
- Funding for business development
- The resources to staff and funding has been great
- We've identified some elephants and now they can be worked on
- Identifying regulatory barriers
- Barriers are being broken
- Access to experts (e.g., Victor Streets) to better negotiate with ITD

**Completed projects:**

- Completed projects and studies
- The technical assistance has been critical
- Broadband awareness
- Pathway awareness
- Complete streets
- Trail map - interactive beginning
- Introduction of Code Studios

- Complete streets project in Victor

2. What barriers do you think the Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium has faced over the last two years?

**Turnover in Consortium staff:**

- Shifting focus as result of partners coming and going
- Change cast of characters
- Continuity of participants
- Extent of commitment by consortium partners, high turnover
- Turnover of staff and leadership in local government

**Communication and coordination issues:**

- Coordination/administration of grant - large scale and diverse players
- Confusion and misinformation
- Distrust in the Consortium
- Communication
- Public understanding of the grant
- Communication issues related to the grant

**Cultural issues:**

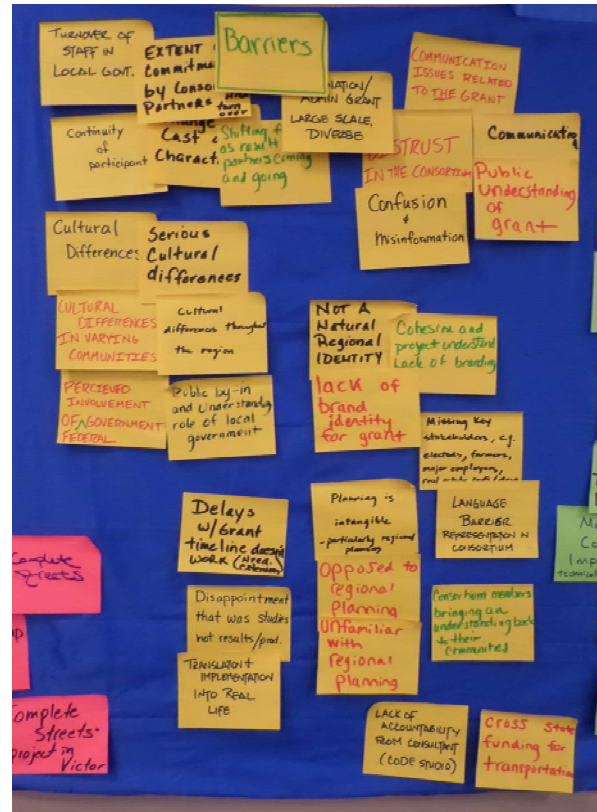
- Public buy-in and understanding of the role of local government
- Perceived involvement of federal government
- Cultural differences throughout the region
- Serious cultural differences
- Cultural differences in varying communities
- Cultural differences

**Other issues:**

- Delays in grant timeline doesn't work (need an extension)
- Translation and implementation into real life
- Disappointment that was about studies, not about results or projects
- Not a natural regional identify
- Consortium members bringing an understanding back to their communities
- Lack of accountability from consultant (Code Studios)
- Cross state funding for transportation

**Some stakeholders are missing:**

- Language barrier and lack of representation within the consortium



- Missing key stakeholders, including elected, farmers, major employers, real estate professionals and developers

**Need for branding:**

- Lack of brand identity for the grant
- Cohesion and project understanding, lack of branding

**Public familiarity with regional planning:**

- Unfamiliar with regional planning
- Opposed to regional planning
- Planning is intangible, particularly regional planning

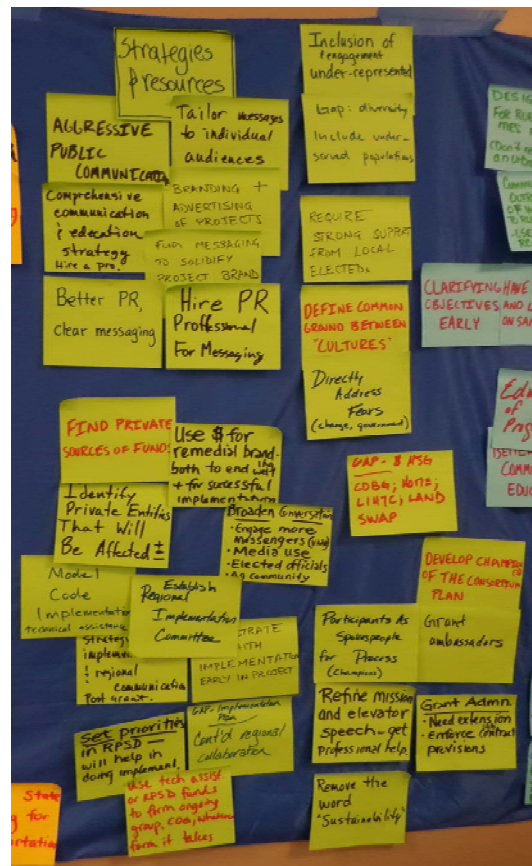
**3. What strategies and resources might help us address barriers and information address gaps to finish and begin implementing our plan?**

**Broaden base of support:**

- Find private sources of funds
- Identify private entities that will be affected positively or negatively
- Use \$ for remedial branding to end well and for successful implementation
- Broaden the conversation: engage more, employ messengers (like VARD), media use, elected officials, agricultural community

**Consider implementation:**

- Establish a regional implementation committee
- Model code implementation technical assistance
- Strategy for implementation and regional communication post grant
- Demonstrate good faith implementation early in the process
- Gap - implementation plan - continued regional collaboration
- Use technical assistance funds to form ongoing group/Council of Governments to implement
- Set priorities in the RPSD - that will help during implementation



**Improve public relations for the project:**

- Tailor messages to individual audiences
- Hire public relations professional for messaging
- Fund messaging to solidify project brand
- Better public relations, clear messaging
- Comprehensive communication and education strategy – hire a professional
- Branding and advertising of projects

- Aggressive public communication

**Outreach to under-represented:**

- Gap: diversity. Include underserved populations
- Inclusion of and engagement of under-represented folks

**To address adversity/opposition:**

- Directly address fears – of change and of government
- Define common ground between the “cultures”
- Require strong local support for local elected officials
- Recruit participants as spokespeople for the process (act as champions)
- Refine mission and elevator speech – get professional help
- Remove the word “sustainability”
- Develop grant ambassadors
- Develop champions of the consortium’s plan

**Improve grant administration:**

- Need an extension
- Enforce contract provisions

**Others:**

- Gap – Section 8 Housing; Community Development Block Grant; Low Income Housing Tax Credit, Land swap

**4. What suggestions do you have for HUD, DOT, and EPA as the Partnership for Sustainable Communities continues its work to strengthen communities – particularly in rural areas?**

**Design programs for rural areas:**

- Agencies can support/foster discovery of rural sustainability principles (through research, pilot projects, etc.) instead of adapting urban concepts to rural contexts
- Communicate/outreach information of what’s available to rural communities – use remaining local Resource Conservation and Development Councils to do this
- Design projects for rural communities from start (don’t retrofit urban programs)
- Earmark funds for rural areas



**Modify the approach to work in rural areas:**

- Have federal and local governments on the same page
- Clarify objectives early
- Provide education of the programs and grants
- Better community education
- Capacity building, technical assistance, best practices
- Provide implementation funding, training, assistance, and ongoing support
- Support nodes of and momentum and use as examples

**Provide support:**

- Success stories/case studies from 2010 grantees re: implementation
- Identify under-informed segments of the population
- Administration (grant) administrators knowledge of the area, remove administrative bottlenecks
- Apply different data criteria in grants
- Simplify grant application – stick to what’s relevant and remove redundancy
- More timely response on amendments, correspondence, transactions
- Adapt rules for specific areas (high cost of land)
- Agencies host close-out meetings to discuss improvements to the grant program
- Streamline time to get funds
- Education and training about existing programs
- Know more about what EPA has to offer

**After the RPSD is complete:**

- Review feedback from federal agencies specifying programs (\$ and technical assistance) for implementation
- Find an initial project that can be completed
- An adaptive approach to working with communities
- Professional public relations messaging and branding
- Rebrand the sustainable communities program
- Not mandate – incentivize coordination/funding across state lines