

## **Narrative – Planning and Demonstration Grants –**

### **Supplemental to Comprehensive Safety Action Plan in Progress**

Teton County, Idaho is requesting \$300,000 in Safe Streets and Road for All (SS4A) planning grant funds. These funds will be used to supplement the on-going development of the comprehensive safety action plan for Teton County. As planning activities commenced, after receiving SS4A planning grant funds in 2023, the planning committee task force identified a need for additional information about wildlife crossings and vehicle (motorized & non-motorized) interactions with wildlife.

#### **Selection Criteria #1: Safety Impact**

Teton County is a rural county, encompassing 451 square miles and with a resident population of 12,544 (2020 Census). There are 3 incorporated communities: Driggs (pop. 2,139), Victor (pop. 2,236) and Teton (pop. 311). The county is part of the greater Yellowstone region near Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, Jackson Wyoming, and several destination ski areas. Due to a growing reputation as a mountain resort combined with the national real estate boom, Teton County was the second fastest growing rural county in the US between 2000 and 2009. This resulted in significant economic growth in the real estate and construction industries (including construction of vacation/second homes) and industries supporting tourism. This has included growth in non-motorized travelers, specifically bicyclists; growth that is outpacing planning/construction of related infrastructure. In addition to the impact created by the rapid increase in residents and tourism, the county has experienced a steady growth in commuter traffic. Many Teton County residents commute to Jackson, WY for employment, resulting in additional transportation infrastructure stressors and related safety concerns.

Between 2017 and 2021, Teton County recorded 432 vehicle crashes resulting in 14 serious injuries and 6 fatalities, creating an estimated total average annual fatality rate of 47.8 per 100,000 population (based on DOT-FARS data). Extreme winter weather conditions creating icy roads and decreased visibility due to blowing snow are a large contributing factor. Wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVCs) are also a significant regional concern, resulting in 3 fatalities in 2022. These numbers reflect a regional increase in overall fatalities and serious injuries. Based on continued growth in population and tourist influx, the County believes this is the optimal time to complete the Plan as it will provide information needed to assess current roadway safety concerns, predict impact to safety based on anticipated growth and use of the transportation system, engage county residents in a meaningful and robust way to seek their input, and support planning, construction, and policy activities that will allow for reduction or elimination of roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

#### **Selection Criteria #2: Equity**

According to the USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer, Teton County does not have any census tracts in which there are persons designated as underserved. The ETC does indicate, however, that the County has an estimated 76 percent of the population experiencing transportation insecurity based heavily on transportation access (85%) followed by transportation cost burden (35%) and traffic safety (21%). Additionally, while Teton County does not encompass designated underserved census tracts, neighboring Fremont County is considered an area of persistent poverty. Given commuter patterns, this may have an impact on transportation infrastructure within Teton County.

As previously indicated, Teton County is a rural county. According to Executive Order (E.O.) 13985, signed 1/21/2021, rural, is considered underserved. Equity is defined as “the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as ...persons who live in rural areas...”

As part of the process for the Plan, Teton County will include robust public engagement to provide multiple means/venues by which all community members can contribute. Project activities will meet selection criteria and administration goals of equity by ensuring equitable investment in the safety needs of all community members, preventing roadway fatalities and injuries in all places, including rural communities.

**Selection Criteria #3: Additional Safety Context:**

Teton County is requesting supplemental safety planning funds to identify and develop a comprehensive plan to address problematic wildlife crossings, which will supplement county-wide, publicly available Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, currently in progress, that will meet SS4A self-certification criteria, open doors for implementation funding moving forward, and: 1) Lead to a significant reduction or elimination of roadway fatalities and serious injuries involving various road users; 2) Employ low-cost, high-impact strategies that can improve safety over a wider geographical area; and 3) Involve engagement with a variety of public and private stakeholders. The supplemental funding will allow the stakeholders to obtain more comprehensive information about wildlife crossings than is currently available and develop better strategies to prevent collisions. This supplemental funding is critical to develop and overall safety plan which includes:

1. Development/solidifying of leadership and an official public commitment to an eventual goal of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries to include goals and timelines with target dates.
2. Review of membership and recruitment to the committee with oversight of Plan development, implementation, and monitoring.
3. Safety analysis of existing conditions and historical trends that provide the baseline crash data, systematic and specific safety needs, and identification of higher-risk locations.
4. Robust public engagement and incorporation of information/input into the Plan.
5. Consideration of equity in analysis and in development of proposed projects and strategies.
6. Assessment of current policies, standards and plans to identify opportunities for improvement/revision.
7. Identification of comprehensive projects and strategies based on data, best practices and stakeholder input and equity considerations.
8. Identification of methods for measuring progress, including outcome data and ongoing transparency with community members and partners.

A comprehensive scope of work including individual activities to be conducted is attached.

**Additional Considerations: Budget Costs**

Teton County believes the budget reflects reasonable costs to perform the activities as outlined above and in the attached scope of work. Costs include development/implementation of a robust and diverse public engagement plan to include consideration of equitable input and outreach to difficult-to-engage populations. The County is committed to the 20 percent required match, which will be available at the time of the award. Should costs exceed the proposed budget estimate, the County is prepared to pay for any overruns/additional costs.