

September 10, 2012

Lynn Zanto, Administrator  
Rail Transit and Planning  
Montana Department of Transportation  
P. O. Box 201001

Dear Ms. Zanto;

The Billings Mayor and City Council are pleased to respond to your letter dated August 3, 2012 requesting comments on MAP-21 program implications. We understand that MDT is in the process of reviewing these implications and determining how new federal programs will be allocated.

The City of Billings and Yellowstone County have made many community improvements through Transportation Enhancements including Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Community Transportation Enhancement Programs (CTEP), Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Scenic Byways. SRTS funds have provided curb-extensions at several school locations, sidewalks, and city-wide evaluation of engineering needs for elementary school bike and walk safety, and multiple encouragement programs including the current citywide SRTS program. CTEP and RTP have funded many trail corridors throughout the City and Yellowstone County including the Kiwanis Trail, Jim Dutcher Trail, BBWA Canal Trail, Big Ditch Corridor, Gabel Road Corridor, and Swords Park/Airport Road Corridor. These projects have been invaluable additions to the community as more road users turn to walking and biking for transportation.

The City of Billings encourages MDT to ensure community access to all funding opportunities for Transportation Alternatives (TA) so that our local communities can make the key transportation improvements that are so badly needed. Montana's cities and towns recognize the importance of having safe and healthy transportation systems and are working to develop vibrant cities and towns with more transportation choices for healthy living including transit, walk and bike infrastructure.

The City urges MDT to make project funding awards in a timely manner and distribute those funds in a geographically equitable manner, with attention to population. The long-term planning of our cities and towns is dependent on a steady stream of funding to complete their long-term visions. When cities and towns develop alternative transportation, their citizens can make the safe change from motorized to non-motorized transportation, saving wear and tear on our roadways, improving health and reducing vehicular congestion while reducing costs to taxpayers for infrastructure development and improvements.

It is our understanding the STIP, HSIP and CMAQ funds are also eligible to fund the TA program. We encourage MDOT to use these sources to develop more non-motorized transportation.

With more collaboration, public-private partnerships, and communication between entities, we can save taxpayer dollars, improve services and provide transportation choices for all users, all ages and all abilities.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Hanel, Mayor  
City of Billings