

Dear Governor Elect Steve Bullock,

We are excited about the future of Montana and we know you will do your best to meet the needs of our State. As you may remember, we contacted you right after the election with our concerns for selecting a director of the Montana Department of Transportation who is supportive, as well as understanding, of the role of non-motorized transportation.

Our newly formed Bike Walk Montana organization, along with many other groups across the State, want you to be aware of the positive impacts that bicycling and walking have had on our local communities. State and federal investments in bicycling and walking have resulted in valuable, cost-effective quality of life improvements. With these infrastructure improvements, children can walk or bicycle to school safely. Businesses can save money on health costs when their employees lead healthier lifestyles by pursuing active transportation for their daily commute. People have a choice in how they move in their community.

Some examples from the State that we mentioned to you before include:

- A trail wide network around Lewistown using the old railroad corridor that also provides direct access to the schools for a safe route to bike and walk;
- 36 miles of trails and 18 miles of bicycle lanes in Billings to provide safer corridors for non-motorized travel, plus SRTS funding for an assessment of all elementary schools and for encouragement and education to get more students to bike and walk to school;
- Trails, bicycle lanes and pedestrian bridges in Missoula to provide active transportation for citizens and their large university population;
- Bicycle lanes and a bicycle camp in the small town of Twin Bridges for their cycling visitors and locals
- A five-mile paved path through the town of Shelby providing residents a safe place to walk and bicycle;
- A 44 mile River's Edge Trail in Great Falls which has received national notoriety and is key to providing a multimodal transportation system in the city.

We now have the opportunity to continue this work with your support as you bring forth your changes and new administration to serve Montana. With the new federal transportation law (MAP-21) in place, we ask that the State fully fund, staff and implement the new Transportation Alternatives program as local demand for bicycling and walking is overwhelming. Specifically, we ask the state to:

- **Fully Fund:** Do not transfer any funds away from Transportation Alternatives or opt-out of the Recreational Trails program

- **Fully Staff:** Preserve or increase staff support for Transportation Alternatives by retaining the state Safe Routes to School coordinator and bicycle and pedestrian coordinator
- **Fully Implement:** Promptly award Transportation Alternatives grants with the participation of relevant stakeholders. Utilize all MAP-21 funding programs – including HSIP, CMAQ, and STP – to include bicycling and walking in all transportation projects.

In addition, we urge that Montana fully spend remaining funds available under SAFETEA-LU (the previous Federal Transportation Plan) for the Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School, and Recreational Trails programs.

We appreciate your leadership as you take on the governorship of the State of Montana and would like to have the opportunity to meet personally with you. The federal government has given the State more flexibility in administering the transportation dollars. We understand that safety dollars (HSIP) have increased to each state. What better way to use safety funds than by providing infrastructure to create a safer environment for those who are most vulnerable on the roads; bicyclists and pedestrians. We ask that you support and fund bicycling and walking projects statewide, so that these programs can continue to support all of our transportation needs. Our success will send a powerful message to Congress that we need to expand bicycling and walking programs in the next federal transportation bill.

Please let us know your commitment to the State for Transportation Alternatives funds and for expanded support for bicycling and walking.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge you to support local access to funds for a safe transportation network for **all** residents and **all** users.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Hanel, Mayor
City of Billings