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DRAFT

# **Chapter 1 – The Planning Process**

### 3. The Planning Process

Community planning is a continuous process. Community values change, conditions change, and policies change requiring a community plan to be re-evaluated periodically. Montana law recommends re-examining a growth policy every five years and determining, based on a list of conditions “what will lead to a revision of the growth policy.”<sup>1</sup> This policy, as the policy it replaces, recommends that the growth policy be revised when the following occurs:

1. Change
2. Change
3. Change

Since the 2008 City/County Growth Policy was adopted a lot has changed in Billings as the following comparison of metrics between 2010 and 2014 demonstrates:

**CHART XX. COMPARISON OF GROWTH METRICS 2010 AND 2014**

	2010	2014
<b>Population</b>	<b>104,170</b>	<b>106,979</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>37.1</b>
<b>Housing Units</b>	<b>46,317</b>	<b>46,674</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$46,433</b>	<b>\$49,265</b>
<b>City Area</b>	<b>41.9 sq. mi</b>	<b>42.9 sq. mi</b>
<b>Street Miles</b>	<b>532.7</b>	<b>565.7</b>

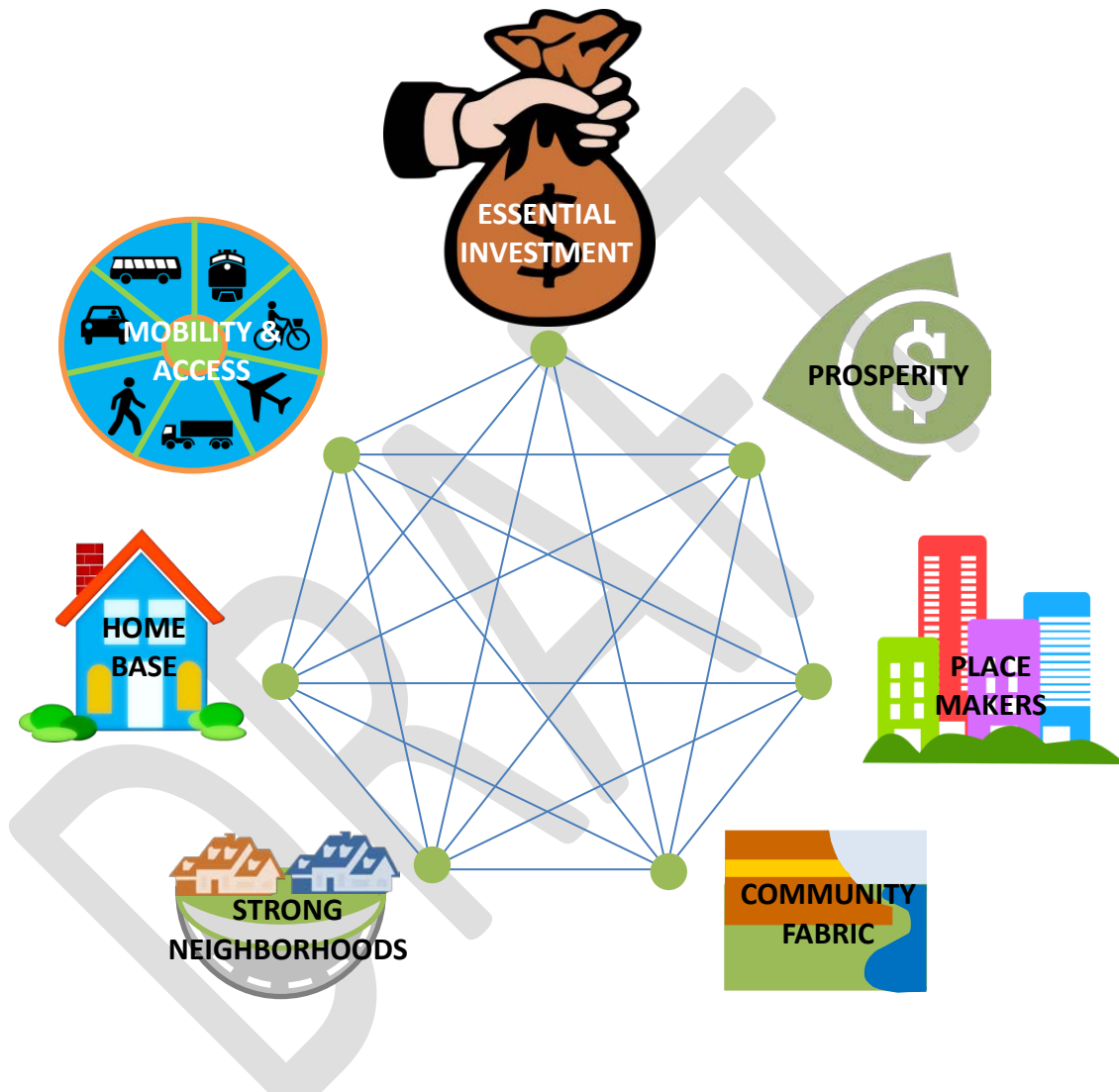
Updating the 2008 City of Billings/Yellowstone County Growth Policy was identified as a priority in the 2014 City Council Strategic Plan. The City Council recognized at that time that a policy was needed to achieve its goal of “comprehensive, cost-effective, and orderly growth.” Staff was directed to “prepare a comprehensive growth policy focused on existing service gaps in the City growth areas.” To achieve this directive, two questions needed to be answered:

<sup>1</sup> 76-1-601 (3)(f)(ii), MCA



As the comments were examined, certain core values began to emerge that fell together into seven categories. The aggregated values expressed clear community goals that shared many common associations. For instance the value of outdoor spaces under the Community Fabric goal is also an essential value in Strong Neighborhoods and Place Makers.

**FIGURE XX. COMMUNITY GOALS AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIP**



The public comments were also the basis for three other important elements of this Policy: objectives, toolboxes and performance measurements. Goal objectives are targeted outcomes that provide definition to what the goal can achieve or how the goal can be achieved. Toolboxes suggest ways, means, and methodologies to accomplish the goal, and performance measurements are recommended metrics for determining if the goal is being achieved.

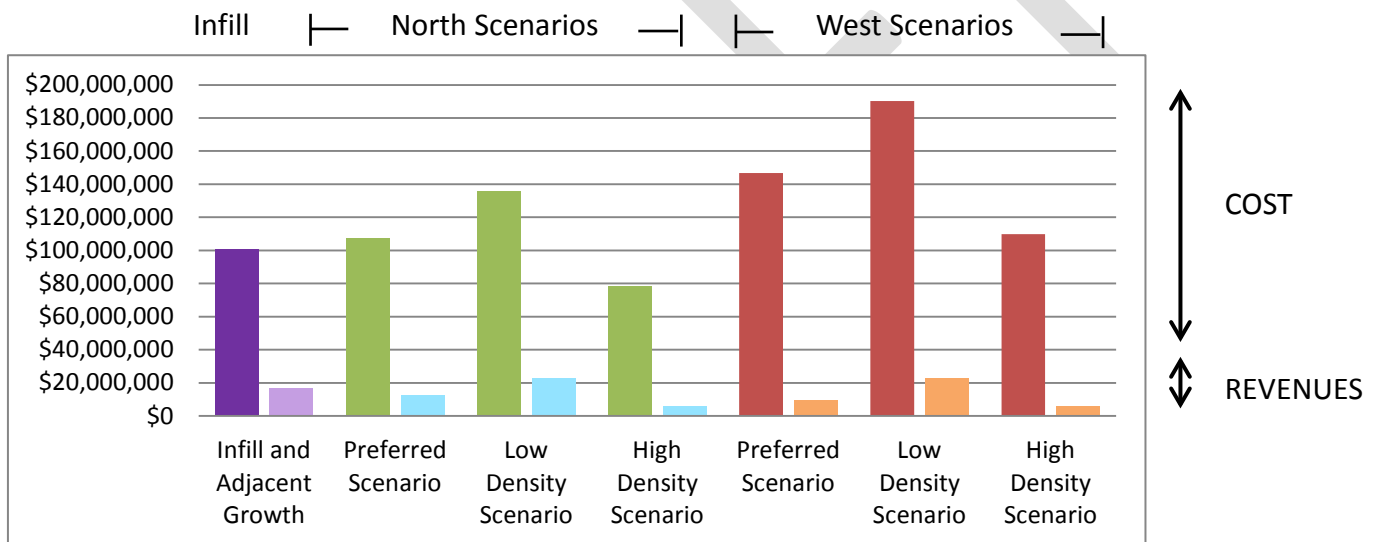
Referring back to the Council’s Strategic Plan goal of “comprehensive, cost-effective, orderly growth”, the planning process also evaluated seven different growth scenarios to estimate the relative cost and revenue of various growth patterns in three separate growth areas: North (around the proposed Inner

Belt Loop), West (west of Shiloh Road) and Infill (existing parcels within the City limits and adjacent properties). The scenarios were developed to accommodate approximately 50,000 more residents.<sup>2</sup> The costs to provide selected services and facilities the public preferred were calculated for high, low, and mixed residential density scenarios in the North and West growth areas. The residential density used for the infill scenario was based on existing zoning. The revenue estimates were developed by extrapolating the average tax and assessment revenue from existing residential housing developments of comparable densities.

The scenario planning results were looked at three ways:

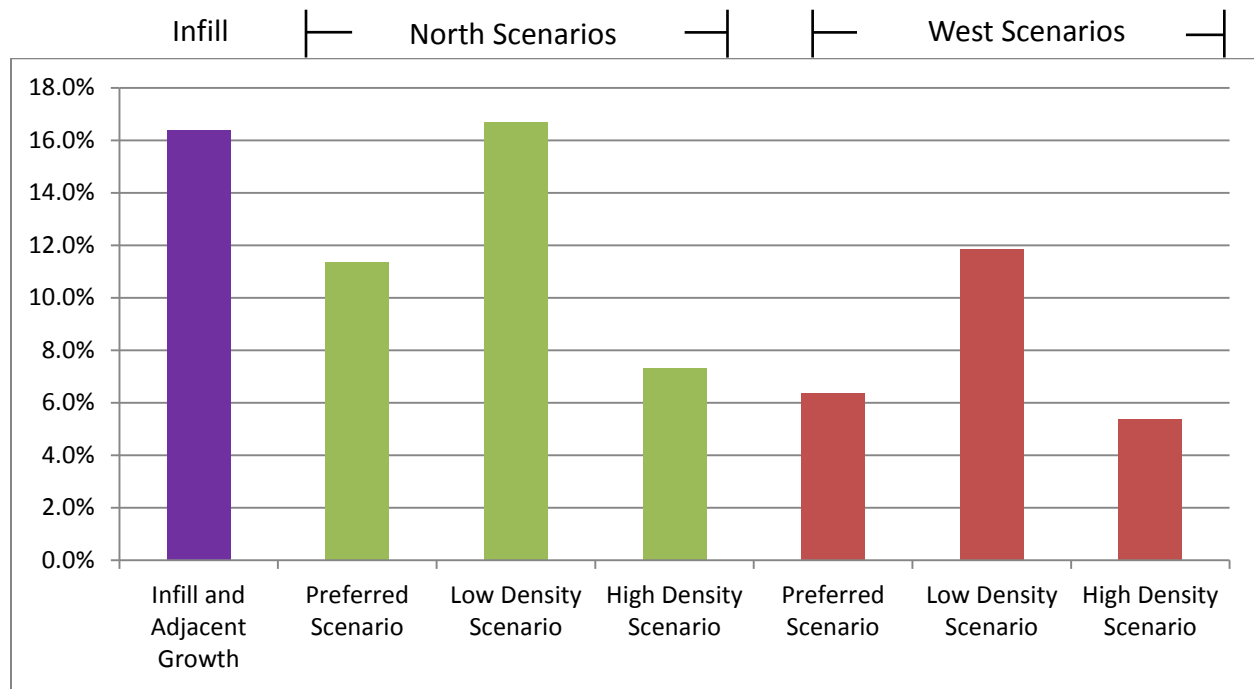
1. Total cost of selected services and facilities and total revenue from housing unit per scenario
2. Total cost of selected services and facilities/total anticipated annual revenue (Return on Investment)
3. Total anticipated annual revenue from residential development/acre

**CHART XX. SCENARIO COSTS AND REVENUES**



<sup>2</sup> Between 2010 and 2014, Billings grew from 104,170 to 106,979 using the 2010 Census population estimate and the more recent 2010-2014 American Community Survey estimate. This equates to a 0.7 percent annual growth rate. At this rate, Billings would add only 15,626 people in 20 years. At a more aggressive growth rate of 2.0 percent, Billings would add 50,000 people in 20 years. Two percent annual growth rate was used as an extreme case so as not to underestimate the impacts of growth.

**CHART XX. RETURN ON INVESTMENT**



The scenario planning data and the values expressed by the public support a general consensus that development of infill parcels and properties adjoining the existing City limits is preferred. Also substantiated by public comment and the scenario planning data, is that a mix of residential densities is also preferred. There are clear revenue advantages to the low density scenarios in terms of return on investments and total revenue per acre, mostly because the revenue generated by higher valued houses on larger lots is greater than any other scenario. However, the infill scenario returns the highest total revenue per acre largely because of the concentrated value on smaller lots and provides a mix of housing. The Policy demonstrates that the Infill and Adjacent Parcels growth pattern is most cost effective. It should be noted that maintenance and replacement costs were not factored into the scenario planning. It stands to reason that infill development will require replacement and repair of existing infrastructure sooner than newer development in the north and west scenarios. This repair and replacement of existing infrastructure will be necessary regardless of the growth area as the majority of the City population still live in areas served by existing infrastructure and rely on this infrastructure.

The primary purpose of the planning process is to formulate a *Growth Policy* for the selected time horizon, or 20 years. In the end, the *Policy* is derived from the comments, goals, objectives and data. The *Growth Policy* stands as a framework to evaluate future public and private development and investment. The *Policy* is further supported by a *Growth Policy Statement* (vision) and suggested *Growth Guidelines* that can be referred to when making decisions for land use applications and infrastructure projects.

## **Chapter 2 – Growth Policy Statement and Guidelines**

## Chapter 4. City of Billings Growth Policy Statement and Guidelines

The Growth Policy Statement and Guidelines provide elected officials and other decision-makers an understanding of the public’s vision for future growth and development, and recommendations on how to achieve that vision within the City of Billings in the next 20 years. As stated in state statute, *“a growth policy is not a regulatory document and does not confer any authority to regulate that is not otherwise specifically authorized by law or regulations adopted pursuant to the law,”* MCA 76-1-605(2) (a). It does, however, provide guidance when developing future regulations, policies, and projects. Most specifically, subdivision and zoning regulations are required to *“be made in accordance with the growth policy,”* MCA 76-1-605(1) (c) and MCA 76-2-304(1) (a). State law also provides for the governing bodies *“to be guided by and give consideration”* to the growth policy on other matters including public infrastructure, utilities, and structures, MCA 76-1-605(1).

The Growth Policy Statement may be considered a vision of where and how the City will grow in the next 20 years. The Growth Guidelines describe more specifically what people value and desire as outcomes or objectives and these are categorized under seven headings that define general goals.

### City of Billings Growth Policy Statement

**In the next 20 years, Billings will manage its growth by encouraging development within and adjacent to the existing City limits, but preference will be given to areas where City infrastructure exists or can be extended within a fiscally constrained budget and with consideration given to increased tax revenue from development. The City will prosper with strong neighborhoods with their own unique character that are clean, safe, and provide a choice of housing and transportation options.**

### Growth Guidelines

#### Essential Investments (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

- The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans
- Public transit and commercial air service are critical to ensure access to and around the City
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Natural landscapes are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment
- Landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors

- Public safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors
- Infill development and development near existing City infrastructure is most cost effective
- Accessible, friendly and cost-effective government are important public values
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Infrastructure and service investments in areas of the City that stabilize or improve property values are desirable
- It is important to factor in maintenance costs when programming public spaces and infrastructure
- Integrated, long range water planning for acquisition and treatment options is vital
- Regulatory compliant water and wastewater treatment plants that provide sufficient capacity will help sustain community growth
- A supportive school system that inspires, motivates, and prepares students for meaningful employment is important for ensuring a high quality, competitive community

#### Place Making (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)

- A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable
- Enhancement and maintenance of public spaces and buildings through City stewardship is integral to a vibrant community
- Park master plans and transportation plans are important to facilitate the preservation and improved public access to the Yellowstone River and the Rims
- Public and private partnerships are valuable for creating enhanced entryways into Billings
- The preservation of prime agricultural farmland through public programs and/or public/private partnerships will help sustain agriculture and locally grown food
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Natural landscapes are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment and beautify neighborhoods
- Encouraging the installation of art in public spaces enhances the places and showcases the talents and diversity of the community

#### Community Fabric (attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings)

- Developed landscape areas in commercial areas encourage more pedestrian activity and vibrant commercial activity
- Attractive streetscapes provide a pleasant and calming travel experience in urban and suburban neighborhoods
- Outdoor public spaces provide casual and relaxing gathering areas for people
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings

- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities, and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Natural landscapes and parks are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment
- Landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors

### **Strong Neighborhoods (livable, safe, sociable and resilient neighborhoods)**

- Zoning regulations that allow a mixture of housing types support diverse neighborhoods
- Walkable neighborhoods that permit convenient destinations such as neighborhood services, open space, parks, schools and public gathering spaces foster health, good will and social interaction
- Safe and livable neighborhoods can be achieved through subdivision design that focuses on complete streets, pedestrian-scale street lights, street trees and walkable access to public spaces
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Zoning and subdivision regulations that utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies result in safer neighborhoods
- Implementation of the Infill Policy is important to encourage development of underutilized properties
- Public safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents and businesses

### **Home Base (healthy, safe and diverse housing options)**

- A mix of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population is important
- Implementation of the Infill Policy is important to encourage development of underutilized properties
- The Housing Needs Assessment is an important tool to ensure Billings recognizes and meets the demands of future development
- Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy and safe
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- Public safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents
- Homes that are safe and sound support a healthy community
- Accessory Dwellings provide an important type of affordable housing options
- Energy efficient housing can reduce energy consumption

### Mobility and Access (transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all)

- Connecting people to places with transportation choices is vital to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses and visitors
- Safe and accessible transportation systems benefit everyone's quality of life
- Transit routes to popular destinations and extended route hours are much desired
- Development oriented to transit routes will provide more transportation choices and is preferred
- "Safe Routes to Schools" promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- On-street bike facilities promote predictability for all users
- Expanded air service ensures that Billings remains a competitive and an accessible destination
- Technology can reduce congestion and facilitate emergency vehicle travel at railroad crossings

### Prosperity (promoting equal opportunity and economic advancement)

- Equitable City taxes and assessments are important to Billings' taxpayers
- A diversity of available jobs can ensure a strong Billings' economy
- Successful businesses that balance living wages with economic growth benefit the community
- Community investments that attract and retain a strong, skilled and diverse workforce also attracts businesses
- Retaining and supporting existing businesses helps sustain a healthy economy
- Continued workforce training benefits the community and helps attract and retain businesses

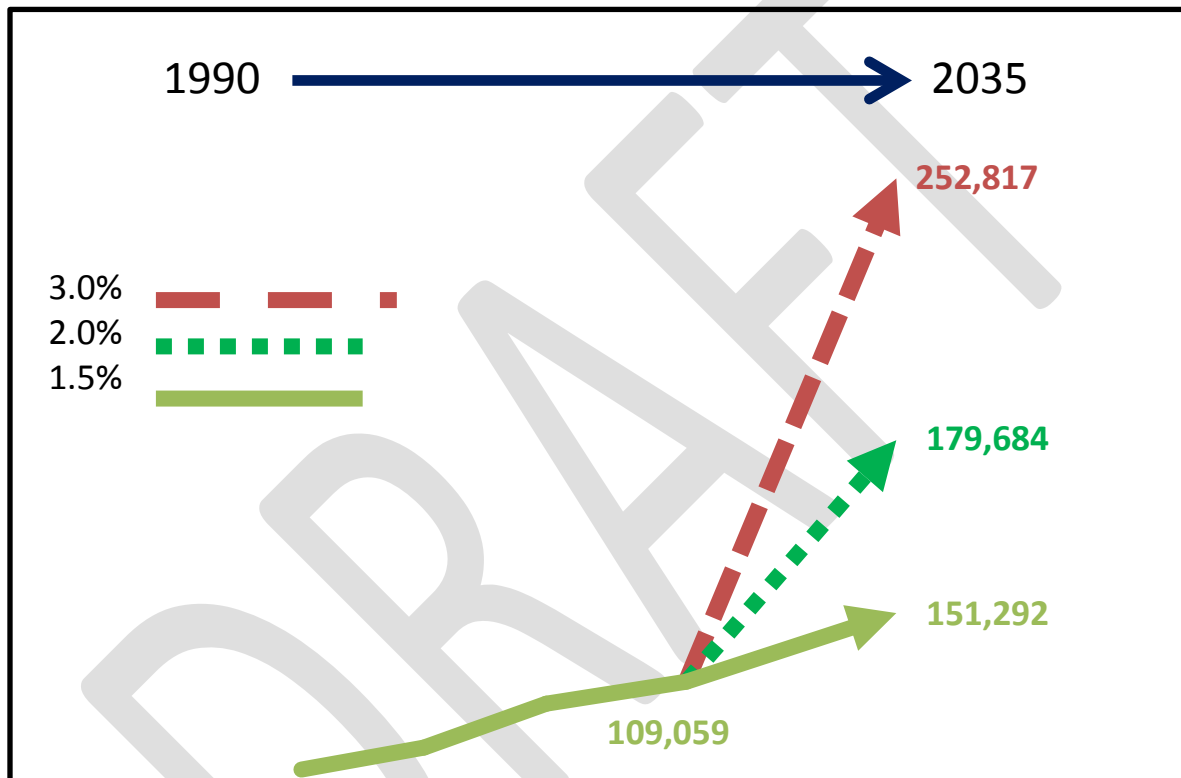
**CHAPTER 3 – Billings – Then, Now, and  
Beyond...**

## 5. Billings – Then, Now, and Beyond

### Demographics

Early in the public comment phase of the planning process, the public was shown a graph with 3 potential growth rates (Figure 1): One was based on past trends; two were examples of what a slight increase in the growth rate could mean in terms of population increase. None was meant as a projection.

**FIGURE XX. POPULATION INCREASE BASED ON SAMPLE GROWTH RATES**



The best population data comes from the Decennial Census compiled by the US Census Bureau. Population data for Billings from the last thirteen decades is shown in Table xx. The 2015 estimate is also provided by the Bureau of Census, from the Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2015 Population Estimates. The average annual growth rate since 1990 is 1.5%.

**TABLE XX. CITY OF BILLINGS POPULATION CHANGE OVER THIRTEEN DECADES**

Decade	City of Billings	Avg. Annual Growth Rate
1890	836	
1900	3,221	28.5%
1910	10,031	21.1%
1920	15,100	5.1%
1930	16,380	0.8%
1940	23,261	4.2%
1950	31,834	3.7%
1960	52,851	6.6%
1970	61,581	1.7%
1980	66,798	0.8%
1990	81,151	2.1%
2000	89,847	1.1%
2010	104,170	1.6%
2015	110,263	1.2%

The population of Billings is getting increasing older, with the majority of population between the ages of 25 and 65, as shown in Table xx. The average age increased from 2000 to 2010 by almost a year. Since 1980, it has increased nearly 8 years.

**TABLE XX. POPULATION AGE BY DECADE, 1980 – 2010**

Age	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	Total Population	Percent of Total	Total Population	Percent of Total	Total Population	Percent of Total	Total Population	Percent of Total
Under 5	4,907	7.35%	6,021	7.42%	5,882	6.55%	7,293	7.00%
5 to 9	4,673	7.00%	5,804	7.15%	5,985	6.66%	6,457	6.20%
10 to 14	4,635	6.94%	5,848	7.21%	6,063	6.75%	6,070	5.83%
15 to 19	6,032	9.03%	5,501	9.78%	6,290	7.00%	6,325	6.07%
20 to 24	7,377	11.04%	5,345	6.59%	6,483	7.22%	7,654	7.35%
25 to 34	11,801	17.67%	14,096	17.37%	11,869	13.21%	15,318	14.70%
35 to 44	7,071	10.59%	12,433	15.32%	13,882	15.45%	12,025	11.54%
45 to 54	6,664	9.98%	8,145	10.04%	12,284	13.67%	14,799	14.21%
55 to 64	6,401	9.58%	6,973	8.59%	7,770	8.65%	12,623	12.12%
65 to 74	4,424	6.62%	6,319	7.79%	6,464	7.19%	7,508	7.21%
75+	2,813	4.21%	4,666	5.75%	6,875	7.65%	8,098	7.77%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,798</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>81,151</b>	<b>71.55%</b>	<b>89,847</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>104,170</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>29.3</b>		<b>33.7</b>		<b>36.8</b>		<b>37.5</b>	

### Population Projections

Historic trends are often used to make predictions on future growth rates, but how far back should you go? Considering the last four decades, a reasonable estimate would be 1.5 percent per year. At this

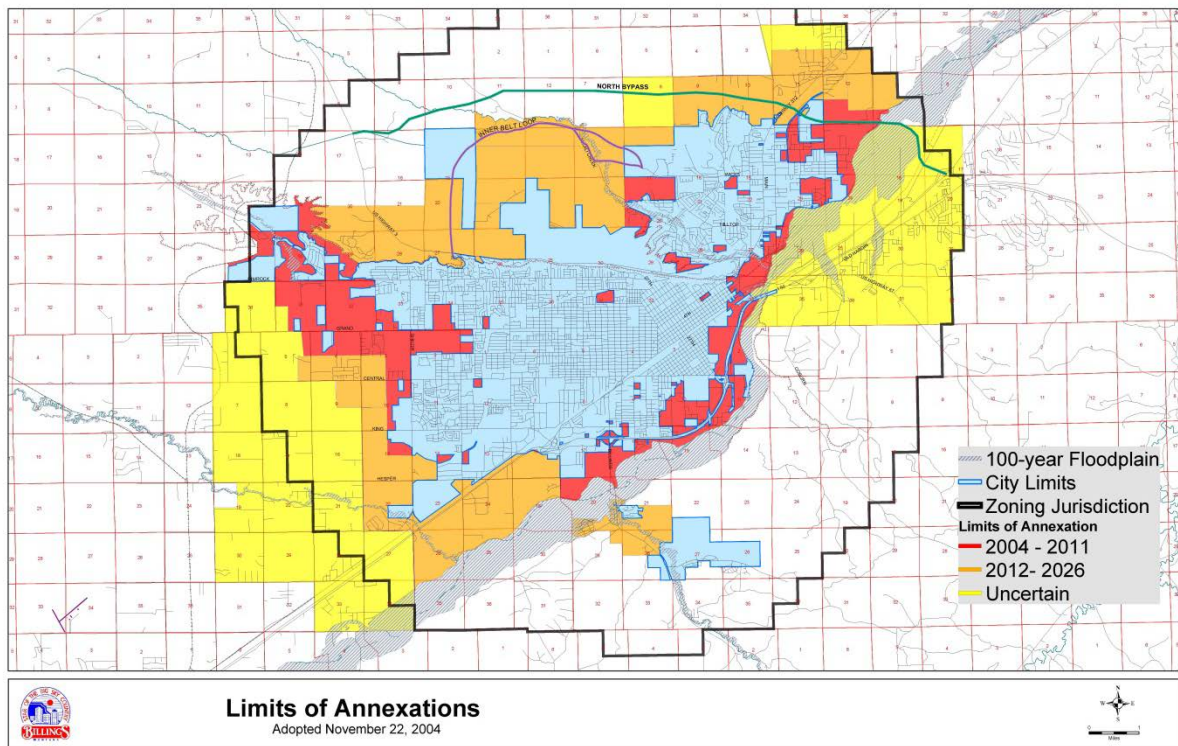
rate, Billings would add approximately 42,233 people by 2035. However, trends are not necessarily destiny. Many events will happen that will likely change the predictions: another Bakken oil play, another recession, recruitment of a major employer, loss of a major employer. Population projections based on trends should be used with caution, but given the stability of our economy, the quality of our schools, and the continuing improvement to our quality of life, a 1.5 percent annual increase is not unreasonable prediction.

## Land Use

### Current Planning

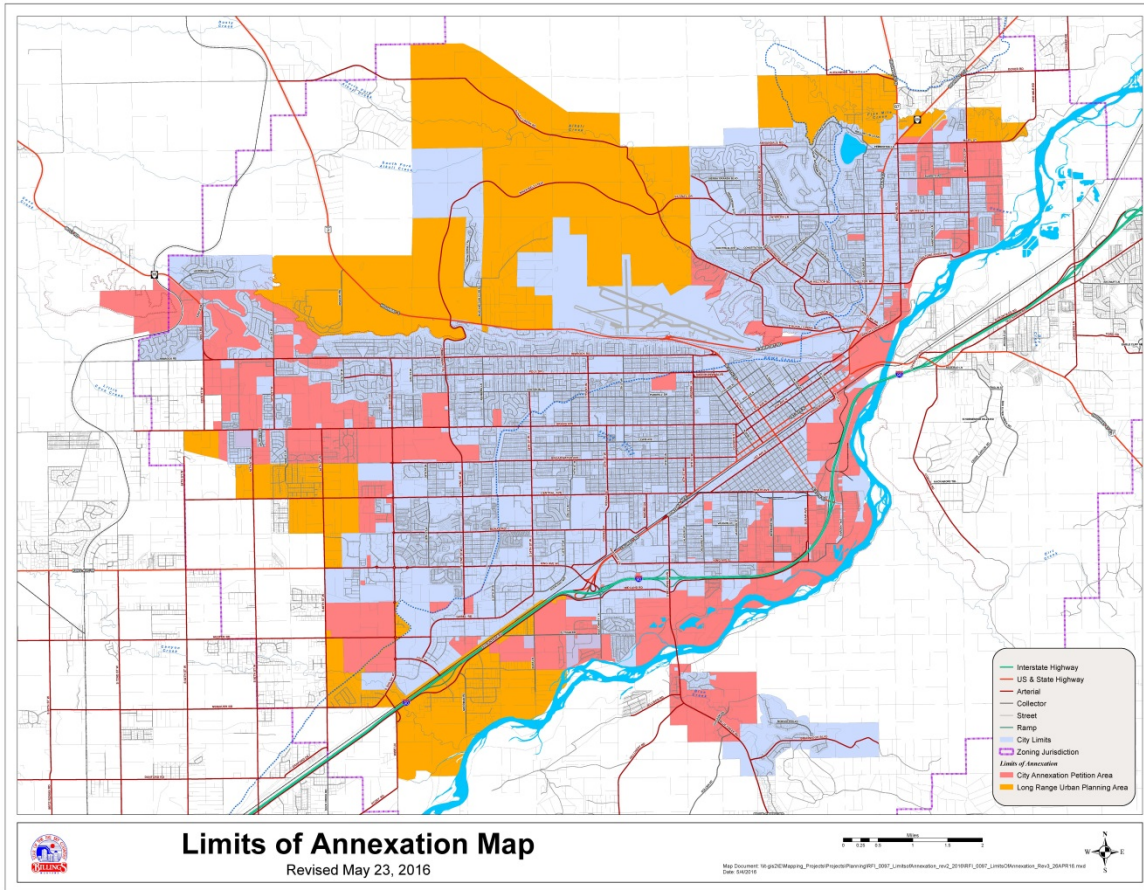
The City of Billings has added 1.0 square miles since 2014 and is currently at 42.9 square miles. It is still the largest city in Montana. Roughly one-third of the city is zoned for commercial use, 12 percent for industrial use, and the remainder as residential. As property is annexed, it is zoned according to the City zoning designation closest to what it was zoned in the County. Most of annexations have been residential. However, property owners that intend to develop soon after annexation rezone their property to suit at the same time as annexation. The City's Annexation Policy has done much to manage

#### **MAP XX. LIMITS OF ANNEXATION, 2004**



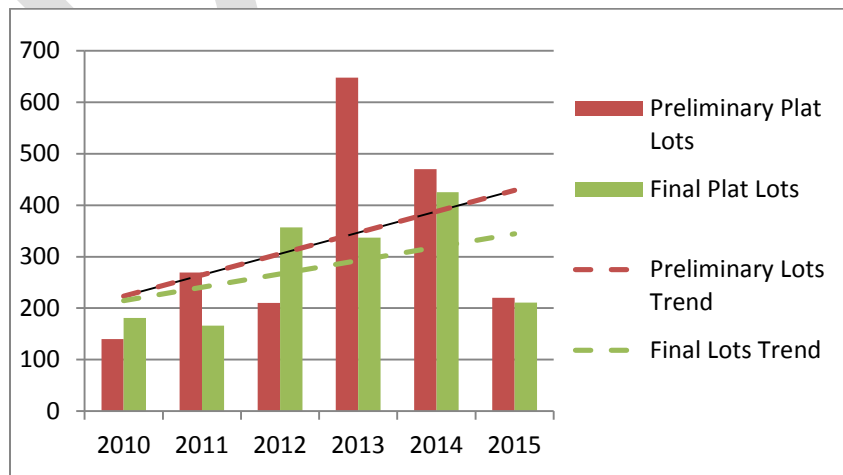
the expansion of the City since its adoption in 2004. The maps below show the change in city limits and limits of annexation from 2004 to 2016.

**MAP XX. LIMITS OF ANNEXATION, 2016**



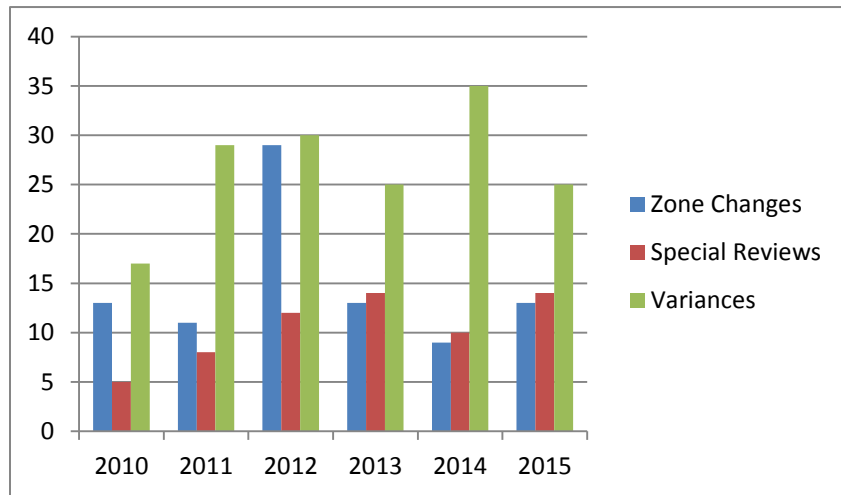
Commensurate with growth are changes in zoning, Special Reviews, Variances and subdivision activity. The number of lots created through subdivision steadily increased since 2010, but fell off sharply in 2015 as the chart below shows. A total of 1,677 lots were created since 2010.

**CHART XX. LOTS CREATED BY SUBDIVISION 2010 – 2015**



With the exception of 2012, when there were 29 zone changes, the zoning activity remained fairly consistent. Chart xx shows the number of Zone Changes, Special Reviews, and Variances processed in the City between 2010 and 2015.

**CHART XX. CITY ZONING ACTIVITY 2010 – 2015**



## Housing

In 2010, Billings had an estimated 46,317 housing units. The number of units has increased significantly since then. The City Building Division issued permits for almost 3,000 new units, including 2,006 single family units and 258 duplex units. Building permits were also issued for 465 multi-family structures containing at least 3 units apiece but many of them were 4 to 10 unit structures so the estimate of total units built is probably low.

The greater Billings area housing market continues to be strong in 2016 but is showing signs of adjustment. Pending sales in March, 2016 were 447 compared to pending sales in 2015 which were 396. In 2006, before the recession, pending sales were 320. Other signs of a strong market include closed sales, up 7 percent, inventory 20 percent and interest rates down -2 percent.<sup>3</sup> There are, however, some negative aspects of the market that need to be recognized.

Activity in the Bakken Oil Field in North Dakota and Montana has slowed considerably due to a significant decrease in oil prices. In April 2015, the drilling rig count in North Dakota was 88. In 2016 the rig count dropped to 27 and no rigs were drilling in Montana in 2016. The regional coal industry has also been negatively affected recently. Montana coal production is down by one third from 2015<sup>4</sup> and Arch Coal has declared bankruptcy and laid off workers, and Colstrip coal-fired generators are being threatened by out-of-state clean energy interests.<sup>5</sup> The effect on the local real estate market does not

<sup>3</sup> Howard Sumner, Howard Sumner Real Estate, Market Update at a Glance, March 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Billings Gazette, Montana Coal Production Down a Third, June 9, 2016

<sup>5</sup> Billings Gazette, Washington Plans for Colstrip's Closure, but Stops Short of Ordering It, Mar 9, 2016

appear to be significant at this time but may result in fewer families and individuals associated with the oil and coal industries moving to Billings and purchasing homes.

A problem identified in the 2012 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, concerns social equity and possible discriminatory housing practices.<sup>6</sup> The study reported Billings as having a dual housing market; one for Whites and Asians and one for American Indians, Hispanics and African Americans. The concentration of minorities in some neighborhoods which coincides with areas of low income is characteristic of discrimination which *distorts* a free housing market. A free housing market may be distorted by practices such as racial steering, mortgage lending discrimination, discriminatory advertising, discriminatory rental policies, mortgage and insurance redlining or discriminatory appraisals.

Another problem facing the Billings' housing market is affordability for our most vulnerable populations:<sup>7</sup>

- Small family households (two to four members) with incomes from zero to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Households with members aged at least 75 years with incomes from 30% to 80% AMI.

*The following text is excerpted from the FY2015 – 2019 Consolidated Plan:*

“The greatest housing need in Billings is the development and renovation of affordable housing for both owners and renters with incomes from zero to 80% AMI. Local housing options are limited due to cost burden, low vacancy rates and increased competition for available units.

According to the American Community Survey data, population growth appears to be keeping pace with the number of available housing units in Billings, However, more recent data point to a higher number of people experiencing homelessness and a considerably tight rental market with a vacancy rate of less than two percent. The largest qualifying income category for Community Development programs is the 50% to 80% category at 7,330 households. Excluding total households and households with incomes over 80%, the next largest cohort includes households with incomes between 50% and 80% AMEI (6,315). Small family households are the largest cohorts in all income categories (4,633) followed by those aged at least 75 years (3,387).

Most in demand are smaller affordable rental units, as the Housing Authority of Billings has identified over 1,200 households on the waiting list for rental units with one bedroom. The development of smaller rental units would meet the needs of the Millennials, who prefer to rent small units. It would

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<sup>6</sup> Billings, Montana, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, 2012, Planning/Communications, River Forest, Illinois, April 2013. Commissioned by the City of Billings Community Development Division

<sup>7</sup> FY2015 – 2019 City of Billings Five Year Consolidated Plan, Community Development Division, April 27, 2015. For reference, the 2015 HOME income limits for a two person household at 80% AMI is \$41,100 and for a four person household the limit is \$51,350.

also support the needs of elderly, who may prefer to rent or purchase maintenance-assisted condominiums.”

## Transportation

According to the 2015 statistics maintained by the City Public Works Department, Billings has 544.4 miles of streets and 124.2 miles of alleys. This is a 3.5 percent increase in total street and alley miles since 2008. In Billings, streets are classified by their function in the overall context of the highway transportation system. The functional classification system is established by the following hierarchy:

**Freeways** – serve high speed, long distance travel movements and provide limited access to adjacent lands. Interstate 90 is the only freeway designated route in Billings.

**Principal Arterials** – intended to serve higher volumes of traffic, particularly through-traffic at higher speeds. Examples of this classification include Shiloh Road, 24<sup>th</sup> Street West, N 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Main Street, Rimrock Road, Zimmerman Trail, Grand Avenue and King Avenue West, just to name a few major arterials. Minor arterials include King Avenue East, State Street, North 30<sup>th</sup>, Aronson and Poly Drives.

**Collectors** – represent the intermediate class and collect traffic from the local street system and link travel to the arterial roadway system. Examples of collectors include Lake Elmo Drive, Parkhill Drive, Calhoun Boulevard, 19<sup>th</sup> Street West and 29<sup>th</sup> Street West.

**Local Roads and Streets** – these roadways carry locally generated traffic at relatively low speeds. Local streets provide connectivity through neighborhoods and are generally designed to discourage cut-through traffic.

A map showing the classification of the Billings street network is available on the City’s website: <http://ci.billings.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/26253>. A full description of the functional classifications and the City street network is provided in the 2014 Billings Urban Area, Long Range Transportation Plan.<sup>8</sup>

The City approves a Capital Improvement Plan each year for capital projects in excess of \$25,000 that are planned for a six fiscal year time frame. The plan identifies the project, years in which the expenditures will be made, the cost of the project per year, and the funding source(s). The last five CIPs list the following projects and the primary funding sources for road improvements and reconstruction. The table below shows the amounts in each funding source that were listed in the year the CIP was approved by City Council.

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<sup>8</sup> 2014 Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan, prepared for City of Billings/Yellowstone County Metropolitan Planning Area by Kittelson & Associates, Inc. and DOWL HKM, Inc., August 2014.

**CHART XX. FUNDING SOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS LISTED IN THE CIP.**

Funding Source	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016
Storm Drain Bonds	\$0	\$9,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$10,253,750	\$0
Safe Routes to School	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Community Development Block Grants	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sidewalk Bonds	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
Gas Tax	\$570,436	\$3,650,000	\$3,375,000	\$3,537,000	\$2,867,000
Storm Drain	(\$2,290,000)	\$2,202,500	\$817,250	\$2,802,500	\$1,325,000
Public Works Bond Utility Repair	0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$0
Street Maintenance Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Improvement Bonds	\$1,200,000	\$1,000,000	\$800,000	\$1,000,000	\$800,000
Street Lights	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$0
Developer Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$59,800	\$0
State & Federal	\$0	\$0	\$7,400,000	\$0	\$0
Tax Increment Financing	\$0	\$330,000	\$2,300,000	\$2,200,000	\$3,300,000
Community Transportation Enhancement Program (federal)	\$170,564	\$0	\$415,000	\$0	\$0
BSEDA	\$0	\$0	\$120,000	\$0	\$0
Arterial Fees	\$400,000	\$2,250,000	\$4,500,000	\$3,050,200	\$0
Unfunded		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,120,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$9,692,500</b>	<b>\$23,937,250</b>	<b>\$23,103,250</b>	<b>\$12,812,000</b>

Billings enjoys more than 37 miles of paved, off-street multi-use trails. The trail network includes trails through parks, such as Swords Park trail; trails within road rights-of-way, such as Zimmerman Trail and Shiloh Road, and trails within other City right-of-way, such as the Kiwanis trail. These trails function both for commuters and recreationist. Eleven miles of soft surface trails through Riverfront, Two Moon, and Phipps Parks and around Lake Elmo provide recreational opportunities to pedestrians and bicyclist alike. There are also over 17 miles of on-street bicycle facilities such as bike lanes and sharrows around the City that are used primarily by commuters.

Trail usage has steadily increased over the last 5 years. Based on annual trail counts, the number of users has almost doubled from 2008 to 2012. The City is now maintaining annual trail counts at fixed and random locations to document trail usage. The City produces a number of planning documents that report on the state of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are updated periodically:

**CHART XX – BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING DOCUMENTS UPDATE SCHEDULES**

Planning Document	Last Update	Scheduled Update
Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan	2011	2016
Complete Streets Progress Report	2013	2016
Long Range Transportation Plan	2014	2018

In 2011, the City Council adopted the first Complete Streets Policy. Contributors to the first Complete Streets Policy included member of the Healthy by Design Built Environment Workgroup; BikeNet (now TrailNet), Downtown Billings Alliance, Montana Department of Transportation, MET Transit, City Engineering Division, City/County Planning Division and Big Sky Economic Development Authority. The 2011 Policy was repealed and a new policy was adopted by City Council on May 23, 2016. The 2016 Complete Streets Policy “intends to promote and encourage the development of a multi modal transportation system that will provide access to all users where practicable.” The policy provides definitions and outlines implementation procedures that provide a framework for planning and designing the City’s transportation network.

MET Transit, the City’s public transit provider, currently operates with 17 routes and has two primary transfer centers. MET operates 41 fleet vehicles all containing wheelchair lifts or ramps and two-slot bicycle racks. In 2016, MET intends to modify its current routes by eliminating some routes (2, 4, 6, and 8) and changing other routes and hours of service. The changes will add or enhance service to the new two middle schools as well as increase evening service to the Heights.

## **Public Utilities**

## **Schools**

## **Natural Resources**

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## **Chapter 5 – Community Goals**

# Goal



## **ESSENTIAL INVESTMENTS – prioritize public and private investment in areas, policies, programs and projects that achieve the community vision as described in the Growth Policy Statement:**

“In the next 20 years, Billings will manage its growth by encouraging development within and adjacent to the existing city limits, but preference will be given to areas where city infrastructure exists or can be extended within a fiscally constrained budget and with consideration given to increased tax revenue from development. The city will prosper with strong neighborhoods with their own unique character that are clean, safe, and provide a choice of housing and transportation options.”

*Essential Investments are where and how the public and private sectors should spend their time and resources. These policies, programs or projects are considered extremely important to achieve the community vision. For budgeting public funds, the objectives should be considered priorities. These objectives may also guide private investments in our community.*

# Objectives

<b>Locations for investments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Infill and contiguous County properties</li><li>▪ Downtown</li><li>▪ Urban Renewal Districts</li><li>▪ Interstate Interchanges</li><li>▪ Major Arterials</li><li>▪ Inner Belt Loop</li><li>▪ West End</li></ul>	<b>Regulation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Animal control</li><li>▪ Traffic control</li><li>▪ Architectural control</li><li>▪ Growth management</li><li>▪ Water conservation</li><li>▪ Energy conservation</li><li>▪ Preservation of sensitive natural environments</li></ul>
<b>Public Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Public safety</li><li>▪ Schools</li><li>▪ Planning</li><li>▪ Parks and Recreation</li><li>▪ Snow removal</li><li>▪ Street maintenance</li><li>▪ Trail maintenance</li></ul>	<b>Businesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Neighborhood commercial and public services</li><li>▪ Improved air service</li><li>▪ Recycling programs</li><li>▪ Local businesses</li><li>▪ Local foods</li></ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Integrated water systems</li></ul>	<b>Amenities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Dog Parks</li><li>▪ Recreation Center/Sports Facility</li></ul>

- Waste water treatment
- Communications
- Street lights

- Branch Libraries
- Convention Center
- Museums

## Toolbox



- ❖ Priority based budgeting
- ❖ Fees and assessments
- ❖ Municipal and tax increment finance bonds
- ❖ Grants
- ❖ Mill levies
- ❖ Local option tax
- ❖ City Charter amendments
- ❖ Public/private partnerships
- ❖ Special districts
- ❖ Regulatory changes

## Performance Indicators

- Annual tax increment growth in Urban Renewal Districts
- Annual change in the area added to the City
- Number of neighborhood and park master plans prepared annually
- Miles of streets and trails maintained annually
- Quality of waste water discharge at the treatment plant measured annually
- Annual number of vehicle crashes
- Annual change in the average dwelling units per acre within the City limits
- Acres of land zoned for neighborhood commercial services measured annually
- Number of annual business licenses (Business Determination Tax) issued and renewed
- Number of dog parks developed annually

PHOTO

# Goal



**PLACE MAKERS** – Enhance existing public places, create new ones, preserve natural and historic places, and maintain our agricultural landscape to define the community for its residents and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives or visits.

*The Billings area should continue to make places that we all enjoy by preserving and improving public space as well as the natural and historic landscape to bring the community together where people are comfortable and share activities. These places are ones that you go back to, share with visitors and recall when someone asks you to describe your community.*

# Objectives

## Enhanced public spaces

- Parks
- Public property
- Interstate interchanges
- Street corridors

## Public Services

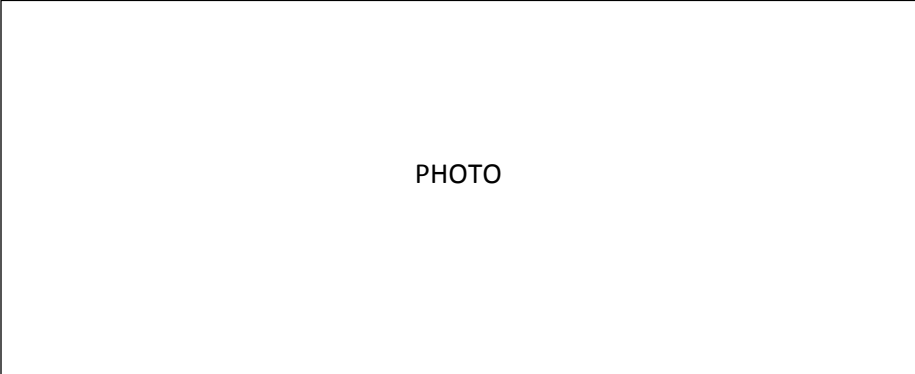
- Recreation center/sports facility
- Branch libraries

## Protection and Preservation

- Historic preservation controls
- Integrated landscape and storm water controls
- Preservation of viewsheds
- Preservation of natural areas
- Preservation of historic places

## Amenities

- Yellowstone River access
- Rimrock views and access
- Preserved agricultural lands
- Museums



# Toolbox



- ❖ Landscaping regulations
- ❖ Site development regulations
- ❖ Zoning regulations
- ❖ Subdivision regulations
- ❖ Agricultural land acquisition program
- ❖ Farm to table program to supply local food
- ❖ Public/private partnerships to develop community facilities
- ❖ City-wide Public Arts Committee program
- ❖ Develop City-owned spaces downtown
- ❖ Local/State coordination for community entryway right-of-way improvements
- ❖ Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan updates
- ❖ City-Wide Parks Master Plan
- ❖ Rims to Valley Bike/Ped Feasibility Study implementation
- ❖ Highway 3 Corridor Study implementation
- ❖ Prepare and implement park master plans
- ❖ Funding Sources
  - County-Wide Library Levy
  - Transportation Planning Program
  - County-Wide Planning Levy
  - City-wide and Downtown Park District
  - Business Improvement District
  - Tax Increment Finance District

# Performance Indicators

- Number of acres of agricultural land preserved every 5 years
- Number of street trees planted in the public right of way annually
- Number of park master plans adopted and implemented (funded) every 5 years
- Number of public art installations added city-wide annually
- Miles of trails added annually
- Gallons of storm water retained annually using landscaping (use project design calculations)
- Number of community events held in public spaces community-wide annually
- Access, trail, historic place improvements along Highway 3 built every 5 years
- Two branch libraries opened
- Recreation Center opened
- Annual number of visitors to City parks

# Goal



**COMMUNITY FABRIC** - is what makes the City of Billings unique, attractive, a desirable place to live and aesthetically pleasing to residents and visitors.

Community fabric can make Billings a draw to others looking for a place to call home.

*A Strong community promotes the City's appeal to residents, businesses and visitors. Elements of community fabric include access to outdoor activities, enjoyment of urban greenspace and participation in a rich cultural heritage.*

# Objectives

## Attractive entryways

- Require trees and landscaping
- City Beautification
- New zoning code
- Design standards

## Neighborhood parks

- Require developers to build parks
- Variety of parks
- Small neighborhood parks
- More natural areas

## Green space in commercial areas

- More places to enjoy trees
- More Green Space in commercial development
- Green space and landscaping in Downtown
- New zoning code
- More attractive freeway frontage

## Vibrant Downtown

- Pocket parks downtown
- Shopping and Dining Choices
- Green Buildings
- Fun centers / Science centers
- Museums
- Walking mall in downtown

## Outdoor public spaces

- Downtown Square
- Dog parks
- Community Gardens
- River Access

## Recreation/cultural opportunities

- Marathon loop
- Bike Trails
- Make use of river frontage
- Paths between neighborhoods
- Walkable paths through the city

## Preserve Our History

- Protect Rims
- Protect River
- Historic buildings

# Toolbox



- ❖ Landscape/Zoning regulations
- ❖ Infill policy implementation
- ❖ Updated Engineering Site Development code
- ❖ Connectivity of streets and pedestrian facilities
- ❖ Integrated storm water management
- ❖ Cultural Partner Funding
- ❖ City forestry program
- ❖ Prepare city wide park program
- ❖ Local Historic Districts
- ❖ Grassroots community groups

# Performance Indicators

- Park acreage increase
- Reduced Urban Heat Islands
- More walkable public and commercial areas
- Commercial, cultural and recreational options in the downtown core
- More miles of trails
- Walkable conveniences near residential development
- Aesthetically pleasing streetscapes
- Increased outdoor green spaces downtown

PHOTO

# Goal



**STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS** – Create and enhance strong neighborhoods that are clean and safe with streets and public places that provide convenient access for our most vulnerable citizens – our children and grandparents. A strong neighborhood is a place where we will be comfortable no matter our age, income or heritage and provides gathering spaces to encourage everyday interaction between residents.

*Billings is a city of neighborhoods. A neighborhood can be as small as 1 block of houses between 2 intersections or as large as a 400 homes in a distinctive subdivision. How our neighborhoods are designed and built sets a course for its livability, safety, sociability and resilience.*

# Objectives

**Safe, accessible and comfortable places for people to walk and gather**

- Neighborhood green space, play spaces and parks
- Neighborhood events
- Street trees
- Complete sidewalks
- Street and pedestrian lighting
- Neighborhood Watch programs

**Access to everyday conveniences within walking distance**

- Complete neighborhoods
- Small neighborhood businesses for services

**Housing choices for all ages and families**

- Mixed housing types

**Interconnected network of sidewalks and trails that are safe at all times**

- Complete sidewalks
- Billings Bikeway and Trail Master Plan
- Pedestrian lighting

**Connect Neighborhoods**

- Public transit
- Billings Bikeway and Trail Master Plan
- Sidewalks and trails

**Attractive and safe neighborhood streets**

- Low-speed design
- On-street parking
- Street trees

# Toolbox



- ❖ Complete Streets Policy
- ❖ Zoning regulations
- ❖ Site design standards
- ❖ Subdivision regulations
- ❖ Landscape regulations
- ❖ General Obligation Bonds
- ❖ Neighborhood Grant Program
- ❖ Special Improvement Districts (city-wide)
- ❖ Neighborhood Task Forces
- ❖ Grassroot organizations

# Performance Indicators

- Crime rate
- Carbon emissions monitoring
- Community Health Impact Assessment
- Conflicts/crashes between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians
- Happiness quotient 😊
- Vehicle crashes
- Housing + Transportation Index™
- WalkScore™

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# Goal

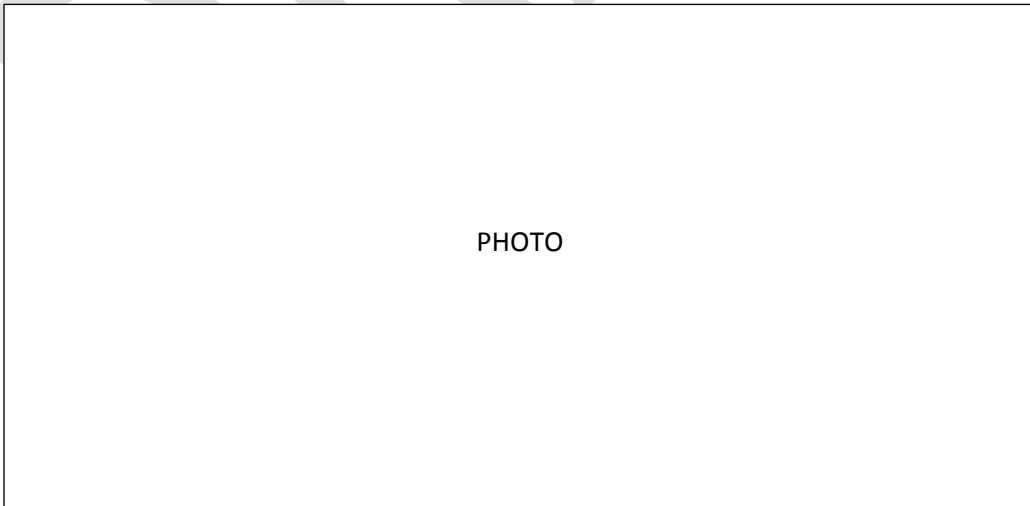
**HOME BASE – Enable a home environment for all residents that is healthy, safe and affordable, and offers a choice of housing options.**



*Residents of Billings prefer a choice of housing that is healthy, safe, and affordable. The resident’s age and household diversity create needs that are no longer served by only the traditional single family home. For many residents, lifestyle dictates the type of housing preferred. Busy households without children or households with aging residents may opt for smaller, more compact homes, even apartments. Larger households with children might prefer single family homes on small to large lots. Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy and safe.*

# Objectives

- Housing Options
- Affordability
- Safety
- Convenience
- Healthy
- Energy Efficient



# Toolbox



- ❖ Housing Needs Assessment
- ❖ Subdivision regulations
- ❖ Accessory Dwelling Units
- ❖ Affordable housing incentives/requirements
- ❖ Infill Policy
- ❖ Public/private partnerships
- ❖ Urban fringe subdivision standards
- ❖ Neighborhood Planner/Coordinator
- ❖ Housing rehabilitation program
- ❖ First Time Home Buyer program
- ❖ Land Bank
- ❖ Foreclosure and acquisition program
- ❖ Affordable housing project

# Performance Indicators

- Number of new residential building permits by Neighborhood Task Force area
- Housing + Transportation Index <sup>TM</sup>
- Crime rate
- Number of Nuisance Code violations by Neighborhood Task Force area

PHOTO

## MOBILITY AND ACCESS - The transportation system is designed to be safer and more efficient for all users.

# Goal



*A transportation network allows people to make transportation mode choices that work best for them and helps reduce traffic congestion, protect air quality and promote public health. Mobility and access means projects, policies and programs that ensure transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to residents.*

# Objectives

### Connectivity

- People to places
- North, South, East and West
- Vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians
- Neighborhoods and Subdivisions
- Essential services
- Bus routes
- Transportation options
- Public safety
- Safe Routes to School

### Accessible

- Essential services
- Public transportation
- Disabled residents
- Safety

### Safety

- Predictability of all users
- Bike Lanes
- Separated multi-use facilities
- Boulevard sidewalks
- Safe Routes to School
- Speed control/traffic calming

### Transit and Air

- More routes
- Extended hours
- Technology (mobile apps for bus tracking)
- Airport shuttle
- Routes with destination hubs (commercial, medical, recreational)
- Economically stable
- Smaller/energy efficient fleet
- Expand air service

### Rail and Freight

- Pedestrian/Bicycle bridge
- Safe railroad crossings (both vehicle and pedestrian)
- Re-establish passenger rail in Billings (southern route)
- Traffic flow

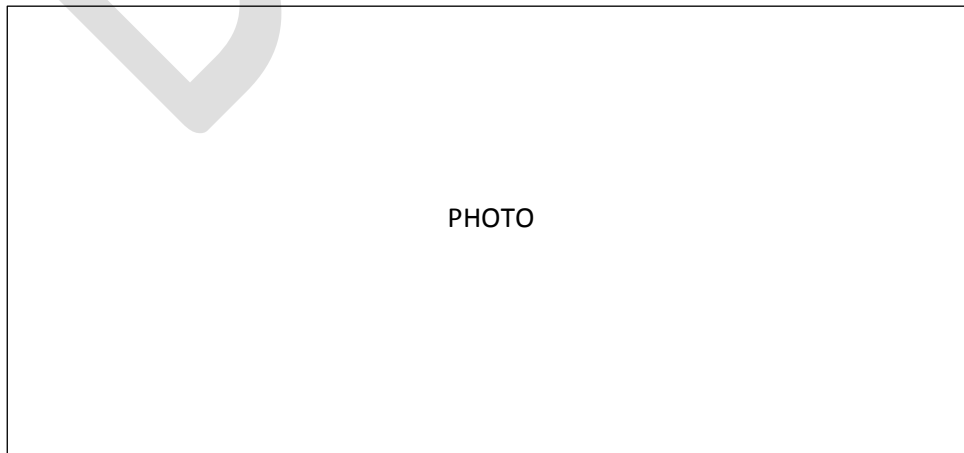
# Toolbox



- ❖ Complete Streets Policy
- ❖ Complete Streets Progress Report
- ❖ Long Range Transportation Plan
- ❖ Transportation Planning Studies
- ❖ Billings Bikeway and Trail Master Plan
- ❖ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies
- ❖ Federal, State and Local Grants
- ❖ Permanent local non-motorized funding
- ❖ Targeted traffic enforcement
- ❖ Data
- ❖ Zoning Regulations
- ❖ Subdivision Regulations
- ❖ Site development requirements
- ❖ Inter-agency cooperation (planning/projects)
- ❖ Private/public partnerships
- ❖ Connected Node Ratio
- ❖ MET mill levy

# Performance Indicators

- Crash rates
- Ridership/modal splits
- Travel times
- Community health indicators
- ISO rating
- Air quality
- WalkScore™
- Housing + Transportation Index™
- Livability index



# Goal



## PROSPERITY – enable “a diverse, welcoming community where people prosper and business succeeds.”

VISION STATEMENT, CITY OF BILLINGS FY 2015-2019 CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

*As Billings grows, its population becomes more diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, and culture. Every individual has the right to enjoy a quality of life that is free from discrimination and provides equal opportunity for social and economic advancement. As the Vision Statement in the Council’s Strategic Plan states, Billings strives to welcome this diversity and create a community that encourages individual and commercial success. Government’s role is to ensure charges, fees, taxes and assessments are equitable and reasonably related to the services it provides. Both the public and private sector can contribute to the prosperity of the City by attracting and retaining businesses that pay living wages.*

# Objectives

### City Taxes and Assessments

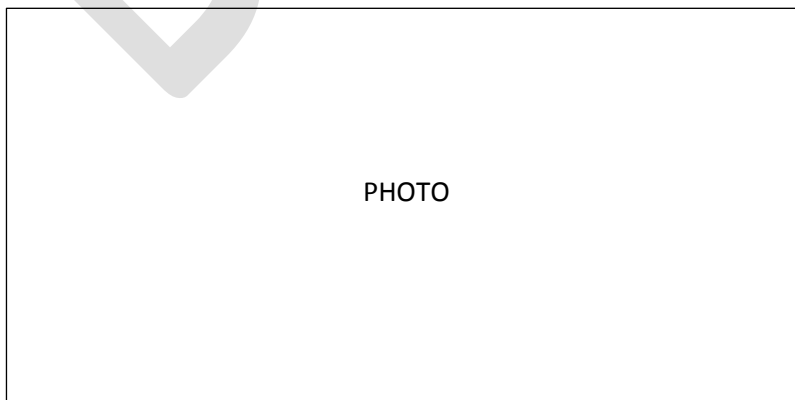
- Affordable
- Equitable

### Job Creation

- Professional jobs
- Competent workforce
- Living wages
- Business development

### Tax and Assessment Reform

- Local Taxing Authority
- Equalization (revenue neutral)



# Toolbox



- ❖ Impact Fees
- ❖ Tax Incentives
- ❖ Workforce training and recruitment
- ❖ Resort Tax
- ❖ Local Option Tax
- ❖ Tiered assessments (based on location)

## Performance Indicators

- Annual net job growth
- Annual change in average wages with and without benefits
- Annual change in median home prices
- Annual change in median household income
- Annual amount of tax revenue received from local authority tax

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## **APPENDICES**