



# BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE



City of Billings & Yellowstone County

## MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 31, 2017 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, Miller Building  
2825 3rd Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101

*Draft to be approved at next meeting.*

**Call to order:** Ed Gulick, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

**Members present:** Kristi Drake, City Council; Ed Gulick, Planning Board; Zach Hassler, County Board; Jane Van Dyk, City Council; Scott Walker, Transportation Planning Coordinator; Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner; Jeffrey Butts, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator

**Meeting Minutes:** Adoption of the December 6, 2016 meeting minutes did not receive a motion, to provide more time to hear the presentation on the City's CIP. Kristi mentioned "meet" needs to be changed to "meeting" at the end of the last paragraph on the first page about bike parking.

A motion for approval will be put forth at the next meeting.

**Welcome!** The Committee welcomed two new members: Zach Hassler, County, and Jane Van Dyk, City. The group went around and expressed their interest on the board. Zach sits on the Lockwood Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Prior to living in Lockwood, he lived in Billings and commuted to work via bicycle. He would like to see it easier to ride from Lockwood to downtown.

Jane recently retired after 23 years at Rocky Mountain College. She rides for recreational purposes and used to ride for commuting but found automobile traffic "terrifying". She would like to see great access to trails in the community and has recently began to ride her bicycle, again.

Ed informed the group that he will be starting his fourth year on the board, rides his bicycle mostly for commuting and represents Yellowstone County Board of Planning. Kristi is serving her fifth year, as a City representative, and conveyed that walking and bicycling are her preferred form of

transportation – though not always possible. Amber represents the Billings Association of Realtors.

**Public comment** There was no public comment. Members present signed a sign-in sheet.

**MOTION** Kristi motioned and Jane seconded moving item 5.A. “Presentation/ Discussion. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Review and Input” to the top of the agenda for the convenience of Deputy Director of Public Works, Vern Heisler. The motion unanimously approved.

**Capital Improvement Plan:**  
**Review and Input** Deputy Director of Public Works, Vern Heisler, had a presentation loaded and gave the group an overview. Everything that is a capital improvement and costs more than \$25,000 is required to go into the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). The City also has an ERP (Equipment Replacement Plan) and TRP (Technology Replacement Plan) for buying new vehicles or computers. The CIP is a draft document, dynamic and an opportunity to identify concerns and receive public input. It can be found on the City’s website near the bottom of the landing page.

The documents show approved and amended amounts. This is a fluid document and some of the projects may move from one year to another in future CIPs, which are updated annually. Anything in the 2017 Public Works CIP will not change because the fiscal year has already started.

The CIP is a combination of large documents that include roads, sewer, parks, facilities, parking, planning and others. These projects often have multiple funding sources, each with a specific regulation attached. It is not possible to take money from roads and put into parks or visa-versa. The original process started in November and the City is working hard at gathering community input. These efforts include the following:

- Adjacent Neighborhood Committee presentation
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee presentation
- Healthy PLACEs workgroup presentation
- Public meeting at Billings Public Library on February 8 from 11:30am – 1:00pm
- City Council on March 6 & March 27

The public meeting is going to be held during the day this year because past experience has shown that people generally do come out, unless it’s a highly discussed project – such as the Inner Belt Loop. The hope is the day meeting

will provide greater attendance because recent Community Conversations showed higher number of participants at day than evening meetings.

While the project looks like a finished document, it is a draft. When the project goes to City Council, they can amend it, accept it or start over. Once CIP is approved, it will go into the City's budget. Some of the larger road projects in the document include Grant Ave, Midland Road, Central Ave, 32<sup>nd</sup> St W and 24<sup>th</sup> St W.

Intersection changes are in the current draft for 62<sup>nd</sup> & King, 24<sup>t</sup> & King and Central & King Ave. The pavement preservation program and signal upgrades are about \$3 million. Most of these projects have been vetted and slowly go through the process of construction. However, there may be opportunity for changes at the intersection of Monad at 19<sup>th</sup> St W and 20<sup>th</sup> St. West.

The *preliminary conceptual* idea would channelize traffic from the two separate signals at this intersection by changing configurations and perhaps utilizing parkland in the southeast corner of Sacagawea Park for roadway in order to install a round-a-bout. This would remove two signals and potentially reduce delays.

Vern opened the floor for discussion.

Ed has a question about the term "3-lanes/peds" for Mallowney Lane. It was clarified that this conceptual and details of the project will be brought back to Council at 30 percent design review. At the "10,000 foot view", the project will reconfigure the street design and sidewalks. During the Council meeting, lane widths and bike lanes could be discussed – in addition to the specifics of the design.

Jane stated that she saw the term "Arterial" many times and did not understand its meaning. Vern explained that properties are assessed a fee to contribute to the busier, arterial streets, such as Grand Ave and 24<sup>th</sup> St W because everybody uses these streets. "Arterial fees" are assessed to a property owners.

Kristi took the opportunity to discuss the bike lane extending from Poly Drive, to N 30<sup>th</sup> St and into downtown. The entire area is complete, except Grandview, and ends at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave N into angled parking. She would like to see

a bike lane all the way down to Montana Ave. She showed photos of no parked cars, during peak hours of multiple days. She suggested changing the parking configuration to allow for a bike lane. Vern accepted her packet of information she had brought to the meeting.

Vern informed the group that the types of changes Kristi mentioned could happen during project design and overlays.

Ed asked about the process of going from a plan into the CIP. Vern and Lora Mattox both explained that if a project is located within the public right-of-way (ROW), then it will go in the Public Works. Projects within the Public Works CIP are fiscally constrained with attached funding. Each source has specific purpose and must remain used for its intended reason.

Planning Division is able to add projects that are not funded because of the nature of grants. Putting projects in the CIP – even if not funded – provide official direction from the elected officials. Then, if a grant becomes available, the project has already been approved by City Council / County Commission / Planning Board and the Policy Coordinating Committee.

An example of this is with 6<sup>th</sup> Ave N. The project is in the CIP as a temporary bikeway along this street with Billings TrailNet as the funding partner. This was added due to existing discussions with the BTN Trails Committee, past planning documentation, a potential community engagement opportunity and a placeholder for opportunities to address connectivity between the Heights and Downtown. The Planning version is for temporary barriers, not permanent.

There is an overlay project coming up on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave N, through the paver program. It will happen next year or the year after. This could be an opportunity for further engagement at BPAC. Vern stated concern over any removal of an automobile lane because of current and project automobile traffic from the Heights to Downtown. Members of the Committee mentioned they would like to see more details as this project moves through the gears because it has been one of the most discussed topics from the public.

Members of the Committee asked questions about the listed project on 32<sup>nd</sup> St W. The Deputy Director of Public Works explained that it will be a complete reconstruction and it has been pushed out another year. A lot of the expense of the project include the potential acquisition of land to flair out

the sides and level out the drop from the BBWA canal to the area below. There is currently no place for people to walk and visibility is a major issues.

The Committee discussed the Monad project. The City would like to add this into the CIP, for the first time. It would impact many people and Public Works is soliciting feedback from BPAC – and the public – before bringing a CIP with this item to the City Council. The Committee provided the following feedback:

- Good route to downtown “fairly bike friendly”
- It would make sense to incorporate bike lanes into this project and extend them on Monad to 24<sup>th</sup> and, likely, 15<sup>th</sup> St W on both sides of this project
- Questions about funding source, informed it is “arterial fees”
- Discussion about timeline: 2020 or 2021
  - Design process would be time to integrate project specifics
  - BPAC would like to provide additional input on this project in the future

On topic of projects completed by Public Works, Ed thanked Vern for the City’s work with the Billings Clinic on angled parking on 9 Ave N because it provides a more walkable feeling through traffic calming.

**Bike Parking:**

**Update**

Kristi informed the Committee on information about the BPAC Bike Parking subcommittee, which includes Kristi and Ed. It also includes representatives the Parking Division, Facilities Services, Engineering, Business Improvement District and Billings TrailNet.

Jeffrey was given the direction to draft a grand plan of the total bike staples downtown. He presented a draft of the Central Business District Bike Staple Master Plan. It includes a total of 205 new bike staples, in addition to the current eight within the boundary of the referenced plan area.

BPAC has seen bike parking, in the Central Business District ROW, as a priority because businesses have requested bike parking for public areas. Right now, they call the Spoke Shop. Their racks only have narrow slots for bicycle tires and bikes can fall all over, plus it’s difficult to use a U-lock. People also park to trees, poles, benches or anything they can find. This may be against City Code, as is advertising within the ROW except on MET bus benches.

BPAC is working towards the development and implementation of a standard bike staple, as shown in the [2014 ROW Bike Parking Guidelines](#). They are powdered coated blue and one is located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North in front of the Miller Building at 2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N.

At the meeting, it was discussed that the City should apply for a \$5,000 [People for Bikes Grant](#) with \$1,000 matching from five entities: Billings TrailNet, Business Improvement District, Public Works, Parking Division and Facilities Services.

Public Works denied the request to provide \$1,000 in match. The Committee was unsure of why and discussed potentially bringing the item to the Traffic Control Board as an agenda item. They help oversee Public Works and can make decisions when action is required. However, there meeting is at the same time as BPAC.

There was discussion about a joint meeting or further collaboration between boards. Due to the timeline of the grant and wanting to keeping the grant competitive with a 50/50, the Committee directed Jeffrey to talk with Parks and Recreation about the providing the match. These would likely go directly to Parks, not within the ROW, but help increase economies of scale and provide parks with around 20 bike staples for City Parks.

*Note: Jeffrey followed-up with a phone call. Parks and Recreation is open to supplying the \$1,000 match.*

Zach mentioned how he likes the idea of bike parking, but the master plan seems extremely ambitious. It would seem like a good idea to start smaller with the installation. Ed explained these are potential places for bike staples. It is a long-term visionary document of where they may go, but will likely be installed by the BID in batches of 15 to 20 staples.

The BID has agreed to install the bike staples. There will be a request process established, but the first batch(es) will be based on businesses that already have requested racks, replacement of non-compliant racks, equity (such as the Rescue Mission) and Jeffrey suggested adding public places such as the Court House or City Hall to this list.

Jane asked about what happens if somebody hits a bike rack with their car or it is destroyed. Kristi explained discussions about encroachment (business-

owned) versus a different approach where these will be City owned. The Committee decided these should be completely owned and operated by the City so the business does not want to take the bike rack with them if they change locations and so there is clarity that if it's a blue bike staple, it belongs to the City. While the details still need to be worked through, if one of these is destroyed it will come from a stock of city staples.

Bike staples will be City owned, not business owned.

Jane also asked about a bike corral. Ed explained that these are generally located in the street and can be either permanent or temporary. In Bozeman, he explained, these are installed during the summer season in a parking stall for one car in order to make space for about 12 bicycles. They do not need to take the place of an automobile parking stall, but are generally located in the street. Local discussions have included utilizing the area where cars cannot or should not be put, such as a hatched out areas in the street.

There was discussion about Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) routes, such as Montana Ave, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N and N 27<sup>th</sup>. Jeffrey explained they have already worked with MDT for three encroachments on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N. This involved photos, site visits and finally a written agreement signed by an MDT representative and the City Administrator.

Jeffrey informed the group that he had submitted a letter of interest to the People for Bikes. They will inform the group on February 24 of the status of the grant. If it is something they would potentially fund, the full application is due April 7, 2017. Kristi reported the next steps to be a bicycle parking meeting in mid-February.

**Annual Meeting:**  
**Setting a Date**

In order to get the ball moving on the annual report to Planning Board, City Council and County Commissioners the committee discussed dates for having the annual meeting. BPAC should know the status of the bike parking grant application by April 7. The schedule should align with the application. Jeffrey will come back to the committee with potential dates.

Ed stated, while there is a lot to discuss, one way to look at this type of presentation is “things you ought to know as it relates to walking and bicycling in your community.” Funding seems to be at the top of the issues.

Ed and Kristi will work together on drafting. The Committee would like to have all of the presentations conducted in April, starting at Planning Board.

This will be a large piece on the next agenda item.

**Ed's Image:**  
**Funding Estimates**

Ed explained to the new members and recapped that he created a quick sketch of local funding for walking and bicycling in Billings to demonstrate two facts: 1. Federal funding is declining and more reliance on local funding, such as the arterial fee and 2. Price estimates of these projects.

This can help inform a larger discussion about the need for funding and amounts needed before delving into funding options, such as bonds or gas tax. It helps give a sense of what is needed and communicates it visually.

Jeffrey provided the price estimates from the Long Range Transportation or other studies for the projects listed on the document. There was discussion about bike lanes and tiered connectors. Ed suggested this was conceptual, but helped state that some areas may be a higher priority and more money or vica-versa. These were put on there for options. Bicycle Boulevard prices range greatly, depending on the treatments applied.

Discussions also included questions about maintenance. Ed said he added this portion to the document because the discussion about the more we add, the more we need to maintain has come up and this helps address the concern.

Jeffrey provided the Committee with a copy of the document. Ed will take the next steps and would like Jeffrey to find out the amount of CTEP from 2010 until current.

**Officer Election:**  
**Chair and Vice-chair**

Kristi nominated Ed for the position of Chair. The motion received a second. Ed stated that he will accept the nomination, but noted he will not be able to chair the committee after this year because of additional commitments. His appointment passed unanimously. Jane nominated and Zach seconded a motion for Kristi to be Vice-chair. The motion passed.

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, February 28, 2017.

**Adjourn:**

Ed adjourned the meeting at 1:00 pm.