

National Endowment For The Arts  
Our Town Grant  
400 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20506-0001

City of Billings: Letter of Endorsement

Dear Our Town Grant Review Committee,

Greetings from the Magic City! Billings Montana, the Magic City, named because it seemingly grew overnight into the largest goods and services distribution center in Montana, is enthusiastically applying for Our Town grant funds to complete a One Big Sky Cultural District Plan. This plan will include the identification of our unique cultural and historical assets, develop a shared vision, develop community goals and objectives, and identify recommendations for implementation specific to our wonderful community.

As Mayor, I truly believe in Billings: “The Magic City: A Diverse, Welcoming Community Where People Prosper and Business Succeeds.” As the largest community within a 500-mile radius, and with a population of 110,000 residents, Billings has emerged as a regional economic, healthcare, and education hub that provides a high quality of life and excellent public services and amenities. This hub is so dynamic in fact that the Hammes Company, a project management firm out of Madison, Wisconsin, and the City of Billings are collaborating on the creation of an economic development plan to advance the strategic redevelopment of the Billings downtown core (known as the One Big Sky District). As a community, we want to ensure that in our efforts to economically boost our downtown, don’t negatively impact our cultural and historic resources. To truly succeed economically, we must identify, protect, and enhance our opportunities for cultural and historic resources as an integral part of this and any future development plan. These resources are essential in creating a sense of place and pride.

The City of Billings eagerly supports this grant opportunity and will serve as the fiscal agent and administrator. The City is well versed in grant administration and federal guidelines, including future audit of funds and grant reporting. In addition to grant administration, the City will be directly involved with all aspects of the development of the One Big Sky Cultural District Plan. City staff are well trained professionals who will oversee this project vision from beginning to well beyond grant completion.

I want to thank the National Endowment for the Arts for this opportunity to apply for Our Town funds for the development of a One Big Sky Cultural District Plan and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

William A. Cole, Mayor  
City of Billings  
“The Magic City”

