



# **BILLINGS AREA BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Annual Report

# WHO WE ARE

- ▶ **Chair: Ed Gulick** (Planning Board)
- ▶ **Vice Chair: Kristi Drake** (City)
- ▶ **Rose Cook** (County)
- ▶ **Liana Susott** (County)
- ▶ **Jane Van Dyk** (City)
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_ (County)
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_ (City)

# MAIN TASK

- ▶ Identify barriers to safely walking or bicycling throughout Billings and portion of Yellowstone County in the MPO area
- ▶ Recommend solutions to City and County planning and public works staff and governing bodies based on public input and transportation industry standards.

# THE BIGGEST FACTOR IN WHETHER BICYCLING OCCURS IN A COMMUNITY:

Based on research, which of the following is true:

- A. Bicycling is most prevalent in communities that are flat.
- B. Bicycling is most prevalent in communities in warm climates without snow and ice
- C. Bicycling is most prevalent in communities that have invested in bicycle infrastructure, like bike lanes, protected bike lanes, multi-use trails, & bicycle boulevards.

There is little correlation between topography, climate, and bicycling rates.

There *IS* a high correlation with bicycling and infrastructure. Bitter cold Minneapolis, for instance, has the second-highest bicycle commuting rate in the country.

# WHY SHOULD A COMMUNITY INVEST IN BICYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE?

## 1) Health

- ▶ Physical activity – “Active Transportation”
- ▶ Low levels of physical activity have contributed to obesity—  
66% of adults are obese or overweight in Yellowstone County  
2016-2017 Yellowstone County Community Health Needs Assessment
- ▶ Cycling saved Iowa’s riders about \$87 million in health care costs  
2018 University of Northern Iowa study
- ▶ A \$10 million investment in bike infrastructure in New York City yielded \$230 million in health benefits (including to nonbikers, like cleaner air) Sorrel, 2016

## 2) Safety

- ▶ Billings residents won’t engage in Active Transportation if they don’t feel safe

# WHY SHOULD A COMMUNITY INVEST IN BICYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE?

## 3) Quality of Life

- ▶ Younger generations in particular attracted to places that foster a healthy lifestyle and connection to place
- ▶ Children – can they safely walk or ride to school and to after-school activities? Or do parents need to drive them?
- ▶ In Indianapolis, close proximity to bike paths added an average of 11% to value of a house
- ▶ Trails connect neighborhoods to Rims and river—unique assets

## 4) Economic Vitality

- ▶ Quality of life is key economic driver
- ▶ Encourage visitors to stay longer, recreate here



# MULTI-USE TRAIL USAGE IN BILLINGS



- Daily averages over a 3-year period
- Daily avg. 37-275
- Much higher usage than bike lanes
- Walking is the largest use (51% to 72%)
- Almost no trails in center of community
- Trails still largely disconnected from each other—not yet a network

# SUMMARY OF BIKING & WALKING ISSUES THAT BPAC SEES

1. There is broad support for trails and bikeways for recreation and active transportation from the general public, health community, and business community.
2. There are significant opportunities for world-class trails as well as better biking connections within the city and county.
3. Federal transportation funding dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure has decreased significantly in the past 5 years.
4. If our community wants to continue progress in trails and bikeways, it will need to either reprioritize some existing transportation funding and/or create new sources of funding.

# I. SURVEY OF BILLINGS RESIDENTS INDICATES VERY HIGH SUPPORT FOR TRAILS FOR RECREATION AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION.

## MOST IMPORTANT FACILITIES

BASED ON RESIDENTS' TOP FOUR CHOICES

From the Community Interest/Opinion Survey

WALKING & BIKING TRAILS

54%

SMALL PARKS

50%

LARGE PARKS 23%

SOURCE: 2016 City of Billings Community Interest and Opinion Survey (a statistically valid survey)

# I. THE LOCAL HEALTH AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY SUPPORTS WALKING AND BIKING.

- **The Healthy by Design Coalition is committed to making the healthy choice the easy choice.**
  - RiverStone Health
  - St.Vincent Healthcare
  - Billings Clinic

## **In support of its strategic priorities to:**

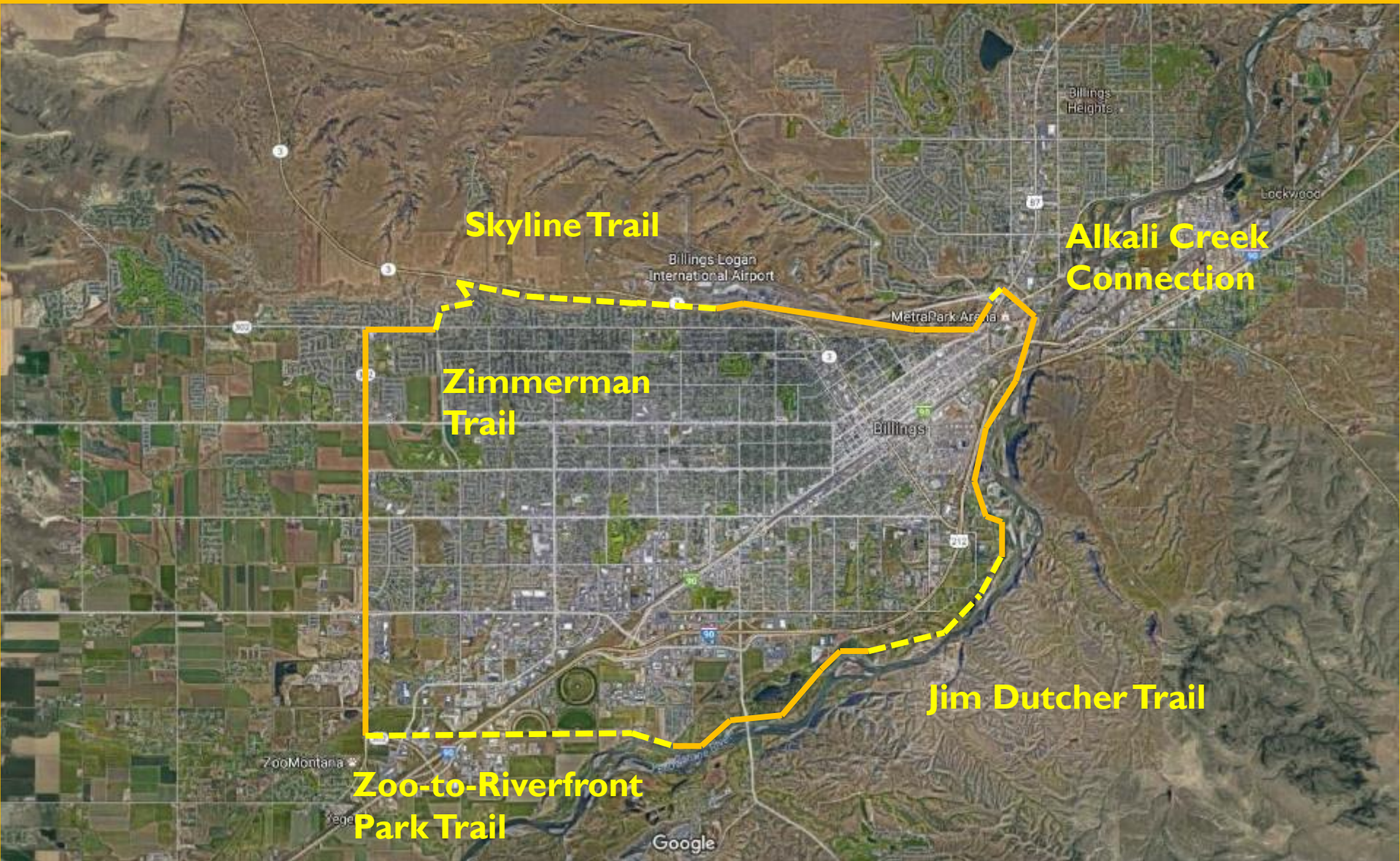
- Grow and Recruit Trained Talent
- Lead Visitor Growth



## **The Chamber has a Trail Initiative:**

1. Connect the Marathon Loop
2. Support the maintenance of existing trails.
3. Provide interpretative signage and amenities for the trail system

# 2. MARATHON LOOP

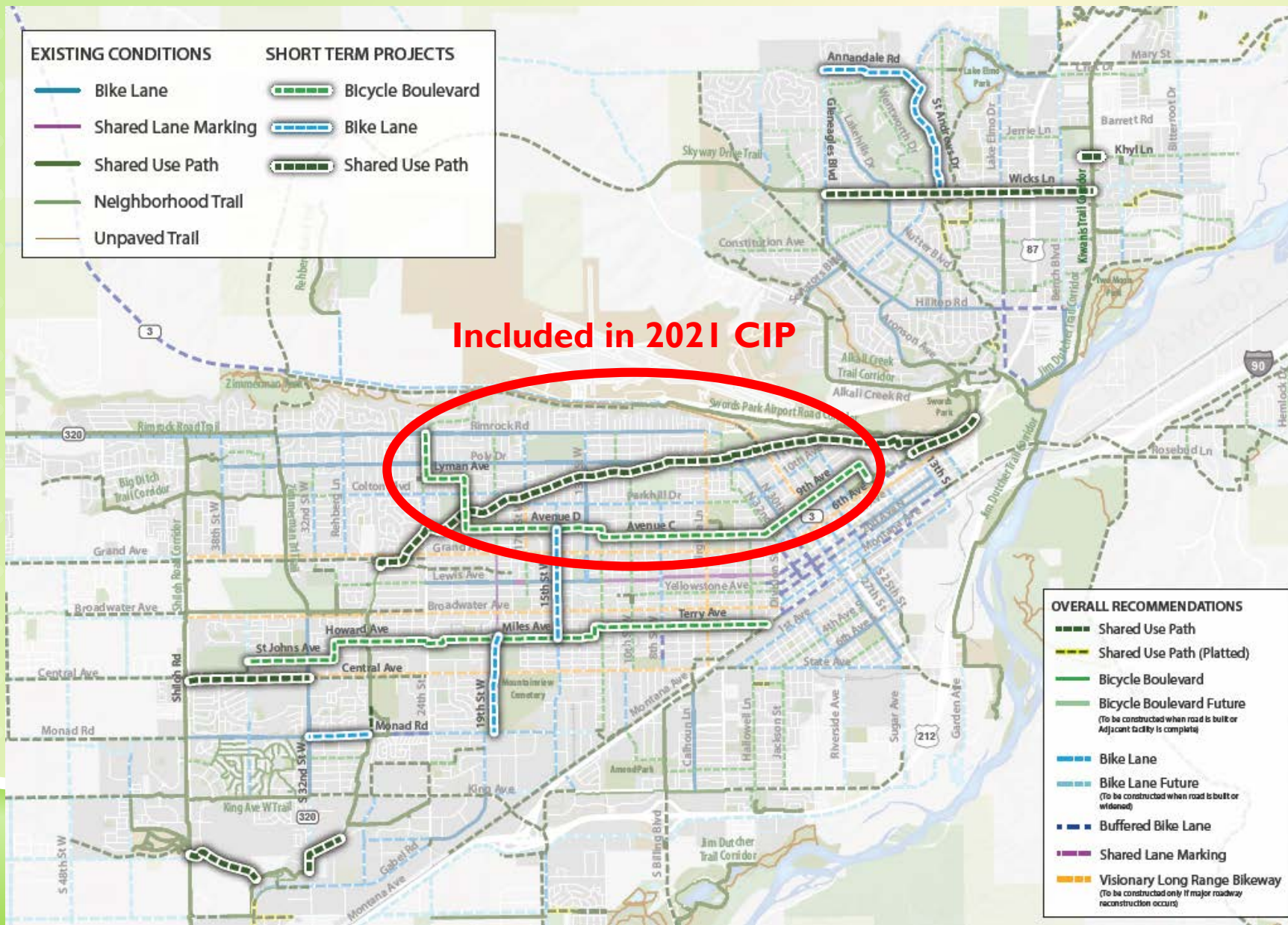


## 2. BICYCLE BOULEVARDS

- Leverage neighborhood streets that already have low speeds and volumes
- Wayfinding signage, pavement markings, intersection treatments that limit vehicular speeding
- Inexpensive to designate routes, then system can be incrementally improved
- Will have some on-going maintenance obligations
- One bike boulevard included in 2021 C.I.P.

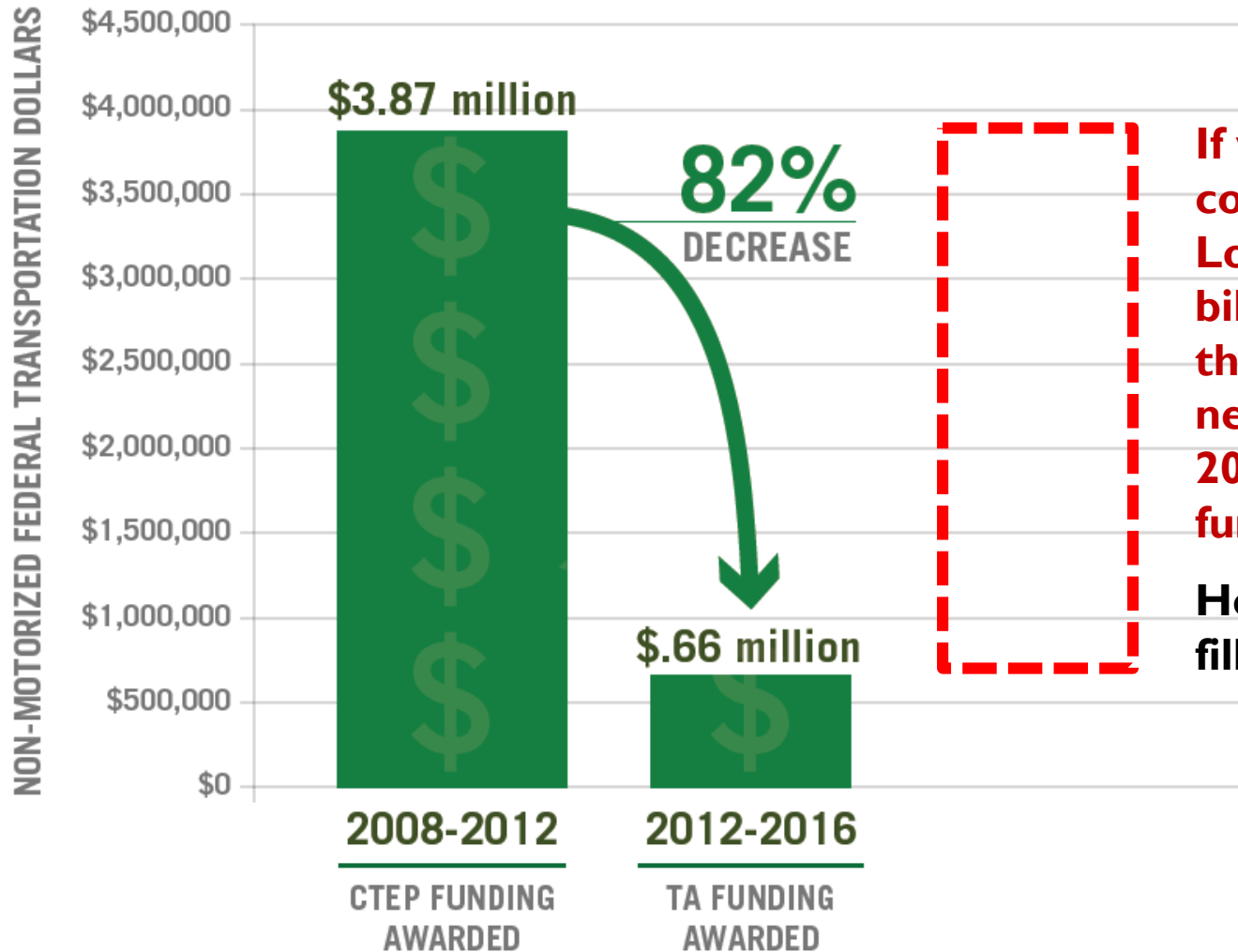


# 2. BICYCLE BOULEVARDS



### 3. FEDERAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING HAS DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY.

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR  
NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS



If we want to complete Marathon Loop and connecting bikeways and trails in the next 10 years, we need to maintain the 2008-2012 level of funding.

How are we going to fill gap in funding?

## 4. COMMUNITY NEEDS TO FIND NEW WAYS TO FUND TRAIL AND BIKEWAY INFRASTRUCTURE.

- Estimate that approximately \$1 million / year is needed to fill federal funding gap
- New trails cost approx. \$350,000 / mile to build
  - Typical residential street: \$3-4 million / mile\*
  - Typical arterial road: \$5 million / mile\*\*
- Additionally, funding is needed to maintain infrastructure already in place

\* Recent Poly Drive work was \$4M / mile, not including utilities

\*\* Recent Central Ave. work was \$5M / mile, not including utilities

## 4. COMMUNITY NEEDS TO FIND NEW WAYS TO FUND TRAIL AND BIKEWAY INFRASTRUCTURE.

### Opportunities to allocate existing transportation funding streams:

- **15% of CMAQ funding = \$225,000 / year**
  - CMAQ = Congestion Mitigation – Air Quality
  - Goal: reduce exhaust from auto congestion
  - Great Falls uses CMAQ for bus system; Missoula for trails and bikeways
  - Billings currently allocated 100% of CMAQ funds thru 2021 for expanding roadway infrastructure (Inner Belt Loop)
- **We recommend a more equitable distribution of CMAQ funds in future, including for bike and pedestrian infrastructure**

## 4. COMMUNITY NEEDS TO FIND NEW WAYS TO FUND TRAIL AND BIKEWAY INFRASTRUCTURE.

### Value of new funding streams:

- Dedicated local sources of funding = easier to get matching funds from federal and private grants and donations

# 2018-2019 BPAC ACTIVITIES

- ▶ **Dedicated local trails funding source:** facilitated discussions on potential local funding mechanisms
- ▶ Reviewed and approved bicycle boulevard proposal for 2021 CIP
- ▶ **Downtown Bike parking:** helped Planning Staff obtain State of Montana tourism grant for these:



Photo: Mel Barbour

Now being installed in downtown where businesses and institutions request them!

# 2018-2019 BPAC ACTIVITIES

- ▶ **Trail connection to Zimmerman Park:** trail segment to park includes underpass beneath Zimmerman Trail



**TRAILBLAZING**  
*Celebration*

**THE SKYLINE TRAIL**  
SWOODS PARK  
ZIMMERMAN PARK

**GROUNDBREAKING**

GET OUTSIDE AND EXPLORE OUR TRAILS!

LIVEMUSIC FEATURING **ARTERIAL DRIVE**

**SATURDAY JULY 13**

FAMILY FUN RUN  
FOOD TRUCKS  
RAFFLE (MUST BE PRESENT)  
E-BIKE DEMOS

**FREE ADMISSION TO ONE & ALL**

ZIMMERMAN PARK  
BILLINGS, MT

11AM TO 2PM



**QUESTIONS?**