



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am

Virtual Conference Format

Live Coverage was available here: <https://www.facebook.com/Billings-Planning-Community-Services-Department-1738982159659260/> Recording is also available on same Facebook page link.

APPROVED BY A MOTION ON OCTOBER 25, 2020

Call to order: Ed Gulick, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:30 am

Members present: Anna O'Donnell, City; Scott Barber, City; Rose Cook, County; Kristi Drake, City

Others present: Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner; Tammy Deines, Planning Clerk

Public Comment Period:

- a. **Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas –**
None.
- b. **Online comments and comments received by the Active Transportation Planner –**
Scott Barber, BPAC member, commented that there should be a crosswalk at Crosswalk at Poly Dr. and 21st St. W. and one at 21st St. W. and Colton Blvd. Rimrock Rd. and 26th St. W. had a crosswalk that was removed. BPAC members commented that they would also like to see a crosswalk on Rimrock Rd. by MSUB, as there are no crosswalks on Rimrock Rd. from MSUB to 13th St. W. Ed Gulick, BPAC Chair, also mentioned the hard curb between the street and the trail on 38th St. W. south of Poly Dr.

Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of August 28, 2020: Anna O'Donnell, BPAC member, motioned to approve the minutes, Scott Barber, BPAC Member, seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

BUILD Grant: Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, thanked everyone who contributed to the BUILD grant efforts and helped with Billings' successful application. The US Department of Transportation awarded Billings \$11.6 million for the Inner Belt Loop and the Skyline Trail. Kristi Drake, BPAC member, asked when the parking lots would be designed. Elyse said she would help connect Kristi after the meeting to figure this out.

New Business:

Kids In Motion (KIM) presentation:

Kids In Motion (KIM) is an active transportation program that fixes up kids bikes for free. St. Vincent Healthcare is the presenting sponsor. The program is a collaboration between Billings Public Schools, the Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools, St. Vincent Healthcare, Billings Planning & Community Services, and Billings TrailNet. There are two parts to KIM-free bike repair clinics and education. The education portion is important to teach kids how to ride their bikes safely. Health Enhancement teachers teach the curriculum.

Ed asked about the history of KIM. The program began through the AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps members and local advocates found a trailer that was in bad repair and worked to fix it up and create a mobile bike repair shop to bring around to schools. The program started about 5-6 years ago.

Anna asked when the repair clinics are. Elyse said they normally happen on Thursdays. It is tough to get volunteers because kids' schedules conflict with schedules for working people. Elyse said they might try to have an event on Friday next semester to accommodate mechanics' schedules.

Rose asked how kids hear about repair events. Elyse said they give posters out to let kids know the event is happening, but turnout does sometimes depend on how enthusiastic the school is about promoting KIM. KIM also has a banner to hang in a prominent place in the school. Kids just show up at the event rather than signing up.

Anna asked where KIM is going this year and Elyse shared that they are going to Highland and McKinley Elementary schools. Anna offered to help promote the event at McKinley and Elyse said she would send Anna information.

Ed asked how many events there are per semester. Elyse said they held 4 per semester in the past and were planning to ramp it up to 5, but the schedule did not work out in fall 2019, and then all events were cancelled in spring 2020 due to COVID. This semester, KIM is only hosting 2 events due to the unknown challenges of COVID-19.

Ed asked what the program needs to be able to expand. Elyse said another grant will be needed to carry the program forward to fund the supplies and pay the mechanics a stipend. Elyse said she also needs mechanics that she can ask to take time out of their normal schedule to help fix bikes. She said having a head mechanic who KIM could pay to attend all events would be helpful, but difficult considering this job would be infrequent. Kristi said she has some mechanics with whom she can connect Elyse.

Kristi said that she would like to have people who bike come in and teach kids about trail locations and how to bike in traffic.

Ed stated that it would be good for kids to learn some basic bike repair skills. Elyse shared that was the idea behind the cycling camp partnership with Parks and Recreation with the goal of getting kids familiar with basic repairs.

Brainstorm BPAC's next project

Elyse shared ideas from a League of American Bicyclists document about how BPACs can be effective and what their role should be (document available here: https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/bpac_best_practices%28web%29.pdf). According to the League of American Bicyclists, "a BPAC should:

- act as a check for elected officials and agency staff
- Expect presentations and chances to give input to agency staff on major projects (e.g. bridges, street repaving, comprehensive plan)
- Provide constructive guidance on bicycle and pedestrian issues

- Ensure residents have an opportunity to give input and receive a response”

“A BPAC should avoid:

- Endorsing candidates or any political involvement (members can act as individuals, but cannot represent the BPAC)
- Narrowly focusing on members’ pet causes
- Losing sight of the big picture”

Ideas for BPAC’s next project included:

- Crosswalks-BPAC could bring awareness of the issue to City Council and help raise the priority level. Members shared particular areas of concern such as Shiloh, N. 27th St., Grand Ave., etc. Kristi suggested doing a crossing audit across town.
- Meeting once a quarter to bring concerns to City Council or Planning Board
- Active transportation policy for city employees
- Education for the bicycle boulevard
- Utility bill funding
- Street sweeping
- Snow removal in bike lanes-partner with Healthy By Design on their winter walkability initiative
- Proactive sidewalk maintenance
- Educate on sidewalk design – boulevard sidewalks
- Following up on one-way to two-way street conversions
- Looking for gaps in bikeways and trails, see what the date is for those projects to be done, and look for a way to help fill those funding gaps
- Turn alleyways into bikeways
- Street sweeping-maybe invite new Street and Traffic Superintendent to meetings to raise awareness. Derek Miller is the new Superintendent.

Elyse will come up with a plan to prioritize the different ideas. Part of this will also be dependent on what BPAC’s role would be, how much time it will take, and how much time Elyse will be able to contribute to background research and work.

Metra Park Master Plan

Elyse asked if the group was available at 11 am for the October meeting on 10/27 so that Metra staff can give the presentation about their master plan before their standing meeting. Enough people would be available that the group decided to start at 11 am for the October meeting.

Other Business:

Elyse sent out the survey links for 5th Ave. N. Corridor Feasibility Study and Bike and Scooter Share Feasibility Study.

The Bike Walk Montana Summit is coming up October 8 with Mark Fenton and Dan Burden. Kristi will send out information about this.

Future Agenda Items:

Metra Park presentation

Prioritize next project. Elyse will figure out online tool to use for this process

Connect with Street and Traffic, maybe during the November/December meeting

Meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.