

Billings Technical Advisory Committee
APPROVED Meeting Minutes—January 14, 2020

1. Call the meeting to order: Scott Walker called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. in the Miller Building sixth floor conference room, 2825 3rd Avenue North, Billings, Montana.

Members Present:

Scott Walker, Transportation Planning Coordinator; Debi Meling, City Engineer; PW Engineering; Erin Claunch, City Traffic Engineer, PW Engineering; Mike Black, YC Public Works Dept.; Rusty Logan, Transit Manager, MET; Zach Kirkemo, MDT, Katie Potts, MDT Planning

Conference Call: Katie Potts, MDT Planning

2. Public Comment: Scott Walker opened the public comment portion of the meeting and asked if there was anyone wishing to make a comment at this time. There was no public comment.

3. Minutes of July 18, 2019. (The August-December 2019 meetings were canceled due to lack of agenda items).

Motion

Debi Meling made a motion and it was seconded by Mike Black to approve the minutes of July 18, 2019 as submitted. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

4. Old Business: There is no Old Business.

5. New Business:

5a. Discussion. Motion/Recommendation Functional Class Change to Mallowney Lane.

Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator, Erin Claunch, City Traffic Engineer, presenting.

Scott Walker opened this agenda item and stated Mallowney Lane is currently classified as a collector. The piece of roadway between Mallowney Lane and the interchange functions more like an arterial section. Erin Claunch explained that this section fits the definition of an arterial roadway with the development of Annafeld Subdivision and the east-west connection this section. Katie Potts asked if the change will take place at King Avenue West south to Elysian Road; and if Elysian Road has had a change in function. Erin Claunch responded that Elysian Road does not have the "cross town feel" of an arterial and is functioning as a collector. Katie Potts noted that Elysian Road is within the grid system for an arterial. Scott Walker said a determination could be made on this in the next few years. The request for a change in functional classification is for Monad Road. Debi Meling asked if the "dashed" roadways on the map would be updated. Scott Walker said the map could be updated to designate a "dashed-proposed" roadway to "existing roadway".

Motion.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend a functional class change to Muldowney Lane to be changed from a collector roadway classification to be designated as an arterial roadway. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

5b. Presentation. Motion/Recommendation. Wayfinding Signage Plan. Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner.

Lora Mattox opened this agenda item with a presentation and gave an overview of the staff report below.

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT

The Planning Division is presenting to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) the Wayfinding Signage Plan with the intent to have the TAC make a recommendation to the three local governing bodies: City-County Planning Board, City Council and the Board of County Commissioners with the intent to forward a positive recommendation to the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC).

BACKGROUND

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) through a competitive process hired Alta Planning + Design to develop a wayfinding signage plan and prepare detailed designs for selected types of wayfinding signage.

The wayfinding program should provide consistent and attractive information to assist the non-motorized traveling public to navigate efficiently to key destinations within the area. To achieve this, the plan should:

1. Connect Places – Facilitate travel between destinations and provide guidance to new destinations.
2. Keep Information Simple – Present information simply, using clear fonts and simple designs, so that it can be understood quickly.
3. Maintain Motion – Be legible and visible for people moving so that they can read the signage without stopping.
4. Be Predictable – Standardize the placement and design of signs so that patterns are established and the signage system becomes predictable.
5. Promote Active Travel – Encourage increased rates of active transportation by helping people to realize they can use the bikeway and trail network to access the places they want to go by incorporating a time/distance application, approach or recommendations to the signage design.

The wayfinding program should include, but not be limited to:

- General information for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Arts and culture destinations

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- Transit facilities
- Memorial and historical venues and landmarks
- Entertainment venues
- Visitor information and amenities
- Popular destinations
- Significant municipal buildings or properties

Alta Planning + Design, Inc. was the successful consultant selected to complete the plan. The development of the plan was managed by a project steering committee comprised of representatives from Planning, Engineering, Parks, MET Transit, Downtown Billings Alliance, Billings TrailNet, Chamber of Commerce, and Healthy by Design Coalition, Bike/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and the Montana Department of Transportation. The project steering committee held several deep dive meetings to discuss design, routes, destinations and safety related to wayfinding. The benefits of a good wayfinding sign program is:

- Orients and guides locals and visitors from place to place with minimal stress
- Identifies best routes to destinations
- Creates a recognizable brand and identity for the jurisdiction and/or active transportation network
- Overcomes barriers to entry, such as negative perceptions of connectivity, safety, the time it takes to travel by bicycle, and overall convenience
- Improves safety by increasing the visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists and heightening the awareness of motor vehicle drivers
- Normalizes walking and bicycling as legitimate modes of transportation

Recommendation

The Planning Division recommends that TAC forward a recommendation of approval of the Wayfinding Signage Plan to the three local governing bodies: Planning Board, City Council and County Commissioners with the intent to forward a positive recommendation to the PCC.

Discussion

Scott Walker called for questions and discussion. He suggested the street name sign include a bicycle icon to designate routes with bike lanes. Debi Meling asked about Master Planning for future routes. Lora Mattox said as a part of the study, Alta Planning + Design agreed to provide 200 locations for consideration of proposed future routes. Debi Meling said the signage would provide an inviting feel to our system. Scott Walker stated it would be a huge benefit to those that are new to the community. Erin Claunch said this would benefit the bike boulevard system. Mike Black asked about a maintenance component. Debi Meling suggested updating Public Works Director Dave Mumford as this document moved forward. Lora Mattox explained that the signs would be placed as the infrastructure is constructed.

Motion

Rusty Logan made a motion and Erin Claunch seconded the motion to forward a recommendation of approval of the Wayfinding Signage Plan as presented by staff. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

6. Other Business

A. MET Transit Update Rusty Logan, MET Transit Manager spoke about operational changes at MET Transit including hiring two new supervisors in February. MET was awarded a competitive grant to invest in further bus purchases and technology and they have started the procurement process. They will move forward with purchase of eight new buses and hope to have them delivered by June or July. The MET Community Survey is live through the end of January. They have purchased "Remix" transit planning software to significantly improve the timeframe of planning and will have interactive websites in the future.

B. Downtown Parade Routes Debi Meling said she presented the proposed changes to the Downtown Parade Routes to the City Council Monday night. The change will move the parade staging area from the east side of downtown to the west side along North 32nd Street. Parades will then travel east on Second Avenue North, turn north at Skypoint, and then turn west onto Third Avenue North. Floats will disband at Division Street and North 33rd Street. Designated parade routes were written into city code in 1988 and so adjusting them requires approval from the city council, which voted unanimously to make the change. If it has approved it will go into effect after 30 days, which would be February 28, 2020. The first event impacted will be the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 14, 2020.

C. Council member MPO Training Scott Walker said staff is planning a training session for City Council members in February on the MPO.

D. Systems Development Report Debi Meling said Public Works will submit a Systems Development report to the State and it should go to the Transportation Commission for consideration in April.

E. Two-Way Street Conversions Scott Walker commented on the proposal for North 30th Street and said predictability is part of the current safety issues. Montana Avenue is under discussion as pedestrians heavily use it. Debi Meling asked Zachary Kirkemo regarding a safety study. Rusty Logan commented the MET survey responses indicate interest in some sort of "Park and Ride" system, and they are considering using a bus for a downtown commuter. Discussion followed on potential routes including the 5th Avenue Corridor and the EBURD. Rusty Logan suggested this may be an opportunity for a BUILD grant application and Scott Walker said there are several funding options.

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ADJOURNMENT: 11:25 AM

APPROVED BY A MOTION APRIL 30, 2020

