



## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room of 2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N

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

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**Call to order:** Anna O'Donnell, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:34 am.

**Members present:** Kristi Drake, City; Dave Coppock (attended virtually), Planning Board; Margy Bonner, City; Dorothy Dupree, County.

**Others present:** Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner; Victoria Hill, Public Information Officer, Ellie Lanz, Prevention Health Specialist with RiverStone Health; Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner.

### Public Comment Period:

- a. **Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas –** BPAC would like to have MDT attend a meeting again to make sure that bike/ped facilities are being included from the beginning.

Kristi Drake, BPAC member, was riding down Rimrock Road in the bike lane east of Highwood Dr. She hit a rough patch of pavement and almost had an accident. She asked for that location to be looked at and repaired and for special attention to be paid to narrower bike lanes around town.

- b. **Online comments and comments received by the Active Transportation Planner –**

There was a complaint of weeds on the sidewalk on the north side of Grand from 58<sup>th</sup> St. W to Ben Steele Middle School. The property is in the County, so City Code Enforcement cannot require the property owner to clear the sidewalk and the County does not require sidewalks to be cleared.

There were also a couple of comments about construction signs in the way of the bike lanes on both Rimrock and Poly. Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, checked with the engineer managing the project and there is nowhere to move the construction sign on Rimrock as there is no parking lane or boulevard. The engineer did narrow up the feet of the sign so that more of the bike lane is clear. The construction sign on Poly will be moved into the parking lane.

Tentatively the bike lanes will be restriped on Poly by July 11.

**Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of March 22, 2022:** Kristi moved to approve the May 24, 2022 minutes as presented. Dorothy Dupree, BPAC member, seconded. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

## **New Business:**

### **City of Billings Public Engagement**

Victoria Hill, Public Information Officer (PIO), started as PIO at the beginning of March.

She has a number of public involvement efforts going on.

She is currently working to promote the citizen survey run by Polco. June 28 is the first day of the survey being open to the general public. Previously 2,800 surveys were mailed to residents. The survey closes July 12 for comments. The survey has questions related to the overall quality of the transportation system and asks about if residents have chosen to walk/bike instead of driving. Results from the survey come out mid-August. Victoria will send the link out and it is available on the City of Billings Facebook page.

Victoria has also been trying to do “Tell me a story!” segments. She is always looking for a way to share a human-interest story, especially from someone you don’t normally hear from. For example, she suggested approaching people who enjoy walking to create a little writeup about them. Victoria can step in and help or can provide advice in this process. Sometimes she posts these stories on the City website, sometimes she puts them on Facebook or Twitter.

Victoria has been trying to create frequent social media posts and tries to post at least once a day or every other day. She also tries to be responsive. Even if there is not a solution, responding back to the resident can help.

She also looks for opportunities to pitch a story. She said it helps to look for a connection for why should people care about the story. For example, you could use national events days to tell a story about why biking/walking/etc. is important. If an event hasn’t been on the news, it can help to reach out to news stations or Victoria to say there hasn’t been a story about the event. Victoria helped Elyse pitch a story to promote the Commuter Challenge and Kickoff Party where the tv hosts competed in a slow bike race.

Victoria also encouraged being the warm welcome to walk people through the process, talk them through what to consider, and for example, why they might consider using another mode of transportation

When putting together information for the public, Victoria suggests:

- Asking: “what am I missing”
- Using “you, your, and ours” so that community feels a connection to the story
- Asking: “What is the visual?”
- Try to think about the negative when pitching an idea – be willing to accept critique
- Leaning on Victoria for help

## **Old Business**

### **2022 BPAC work plan**

BPAC reviewed a draft of the work plan that Elyse put together based on the conversation from the last BPAC meeting. A copy of the draft work plan is attached to these minutes. BPAC members were not ready to vote on the draft as they wanted to think through more of how it would be implemented.

Elyse will add to the work plan that BPAC wants to submit a grant application for maintenance on either the trail north of Lewis park or on the Rimrock West trail.

She will also add that BPAC wants to attend meetings at MDT so that they can talk to more than one person there at once.

### **Brainstorm ideas for public outreach campaign**

BPAC wants to track how the comments from the campaign are addressed. Elyse suggested keeping track of the requests for larger projects and then bringing forward a couple of the most requested projects to the Engineering Division when the Capital Improvement Plan is being developed and request that those be included.

BPAC will discuss more at a future meeting on what the campaign will look like.

### **Letter to either City or County requesting local entity agree to maintenance for future trail at in front of Metra**

BPAC wants to write a letter to a local governing body to request that they assume maintenance for the future paths that MDT plans to build in front of the Metra and over the Lockwood bridge. The group decided they would reach out to the County first.

Margy Bonner, BPAC member, motioned to write a letter to the County to see if they will assume maintenance for the 1<sup>st</sup> to Expo trail and the trail over the Lockwood Bridge. Kristi seconded. Kristi will work with Elyse on writing the letter. The motion passed unanimously

### **Other Business:**

Walk Your Block – Ellie Lanz, representing Healthy By Design, talked about the Walk your Block initiative happening every Wednesday for a couple of weeks in a different ward each week. They are hoping they can get people out walking and have invited Councilmembers to the walks in their wards. The walks will run from July 13-end of August. They will be pushing out the information through HBD's Facebook page.

Anna O'Donnell, BPAC Chair, asked about having someone look at 3<sup>rd</sup> St. W and Ave. C/B. Lora said that Engineering is doing a traffic study of the area. Lora will check on the progress of the study and follow up with Anna.

### **Future agenda items:**

None

**Kristi moved to adjourn, Dave seconded, all voted in favor.**

# **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Work Plan 2022-2023**

DRAFT AS OF 6/28/2022

## Goals & Objectives:

- I. Advise the City and County in regards to non-motorized transportation issues. Ensure advice is rooted in community need by soliciting and compiling public comment trends.
- II. Maintain and improve relationships with governing bodies and entities such as Billings City Council, Yellowstone County Commissioners, and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT).

### **2022-2023 Projects**

- 1. Conduct a public outreach campaign to solicit more public input related to biking, walking, rolling, and accessibility.**

Time Frame: June 2022-June 2023  
Who: BPAC members, Active Transportation Planner  
Status: BPAC members have created a survey as a jumping off point to solicit input.

### **Annual Board Activities**

- 1. Foster better working relationship with MDT as it relates to bicycle and pedestrian issues.**

Time Frame: Ongoing  
Who: BPAC and Active Transportation Planner  
Status: BPAC will invite MDT to meetings twice per year, and additional times as needed, to keep an open flow of communication about upcoming projects.

- 2. Outreach to college and high school cross country/track runners to get feedback on areas of concern.**

Time Frame: Ongoing  
Who: Dave Coppock, BPAC member  
Status: Dave will reach out to teams in the fall 2022 to request they provide feedback.

- 3. Create an open flow of communication with the Billings City Council.**

Time Frame: Ongoing  
Who: BPAC members

Status: BPAC members will reach out to Councilmembers to invite them to meaningful BPAC meetings. BPAC members will also occasionally attend City Council meetings to provide updates during public comment periods.

**4. Promote public funding for non-motorized transportation.**

Time Frame: Ongoing  
Who: BPAC members, members of the public, staff members of multiple City departments.  
Status: There is an outside group working to find solutions for parks and trails funding. BPAC members are participating on this committee outside of BPAC meeting time. BPAC may discuss this matter during its meetings on an as needed basis.

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