



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 27, 2023 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am

1st Floor Conference Room of 2825 3rd 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.

APPROVED BY A MOTION ON JULY 25, 2023

Call to order: Nikki Zimmer, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at about 11:30 am.

Members present: Dave Coppock, Planning Board; Jason Wood, County; Anna O'Donnell, City; Kristi Drake; City, Margy Bonner, City; Joan Schey, County.

Others present: Scott Walker, Transportation Planning Coordinator and Chris Hertz, Staff Engineer

Public Comment Period:

- a. **Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas –**
Anna wanted to find out when 56th under the bridge is going to be done.
- b. **Online comments and comments received by the Active Transportation Planner –**
Someone emailed Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, about loose gravel on Senators. The Street and Traffic Division said that it is on their schedule coming up to sweep the street.

Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of May 23, 2023: Dave Coppock, BPAC member, moved to accept the minutes. Jason Wood, BPAC member, seconded. All voted in favor.

New Business:

Downtown 2-way Street Restoration Project

Sarah Plath, a staff engineer with Public Works, presented information to BPAC about the downtown 2-way street restoration project. She is the project manager on the city end. Many of the streets downtown need pavement preservation treatments which gives the opportunity to restripe the streets in a different way. They have been working closely with the Downtown Billings Alliance on the project. There is a team of consultants completing project design. Right now, they are working on 30% design and construction is tentatively planned for next summer.

The consultant is also under contract to look at a road diet on Montana Ave.

The extents of the 2-way restoration project are N. 25th, N 26th, N 31st, and N 32nd Streets from Montana Ave. to 6th Ave N., the full lengths of N. 33rd, 34th, and 35th Streets, 2nd and 3rd Aves. From Division to N. 22 St. Broadway Ave. will also undergo pavement preservation but is already two way.

The goals of the project are to improve livability and stimulate economic growth. This will be accomplished by promoting safety through traffic calming, improving access to downtown, increasing walkability, and increasing multimodal connectivity. The ultimate goal is to support the vitality of downtown.

Working downtown requires a balancing act between sometimes competing interests like parking, bike improvements, traffic calming, traffic congestion, maintenance, and cost.

The scope of work will be from curb to curb, i.e., there will not be a lot of sidewalk reconstruction. Some intersection modifications will need to be made and new turn lanes may be added on N 27th St., N 32nd St., & 4th Ave. N.

Kristi Drake, BPAC member, asked if there could be a cycle track on N. 32nd St. Sarah said Public Works has been trying to prioritize where bike routes are and right now they are looking at N 3rd St. as a location for a 2-way cycle track. The intersection at N 32nd and Grand will likely change when 32nd becomes 2-way.

Public Works is looking at adding bike connectivity on 2nd and 3rd Aves. and on N 25th and N 31st Streets.

On 3rd Ave. N, PW is planning a two-way cycle track between Division and N. 22nd. The width will be between 8 and 10 feet and there will be a 3 ft. buffer. The cycle track will be parking protected with parallel parking on both sides of the road. The motorized traffic lanes will be 10.5 feet which will calm traffic. They are looking at some other potential treatments like the potential for a bike box at 3rd and Division and maybe green paint through the intersections.

Councilmember Gulick asked if there were plans to add contraflow lanes on Clark Ave. Sarah said that the contraflow lanes were not part of this project, but they are aware of the possibility and planning for it.

In front of Alberta Bair, the cycle track will get down to about 7.5 feet which is pretty narrow, but there will be treatments in place to make people biking aware that the conditions are changing.

2nd Ave. N will have buffered bike lanes from Division to N. 31st St and from N 25th St. to N 22nd St. There will be sharrows from N. 31st St to N. 25th in order to preserve parking. They thought about swapping the parking to allow for a protected bike lane, but then the gutter would be part of the width of the bike lane and they felt that the bike lane would be too narrow.

PW will be looking at what signage/education will be implemented as part of the project.

There will be a bike connection on N. 25th St. PW felt this was a good location because S. 25th Street has a bike lane, and it will tie into the future 25th St. bridge over the railroad tracks. There will be a buffered bike lane in most spots, but there is a pinch point near the MET Transfer station where there will be sharrows.

N 31st St has space for a 2 way cycle track. It will be a 10 ft. cycle track with a 3-foot buffer.

There was a question about how this cycle track will line up with the bike lane on N. 30th. Kristi suggested adding a bike lane on 6th for a block to connect to N. 30th. Sarah said they are looking at that intersection and would take a look.

On the other north-south streets, they are looking at parallel parking on one side, 11 ft. travel lanes, and angled parking on the other side of the street.

PW is still working through some things including:

- Potential sharrows on Broadway
- Cycle track
 - Create clear expectations for the streets, driveways, and alleys
 - Figure out how to transition people biking on and off the cycle track
 - Pedestrian crossings
 - Loading Zones
 - Protection – if delineators will be used in addition to a buffer and the parking protection

Green paint might be used in higher traffic volume intersections. Alleys and drive approaches would just have the dashed line.

Back in angled parking is suggested for this project, but City Council will likely provide direction.

Project outreach includes an open house, tentatively set for early August and more targeted downtown property owner outreach.

Etiquette Campaign

BPAC discussed the different etiquette issues-trails, dogs, right of way at driveways, etc. Kristi wants to determine what the rules are and how to give that information to the public. She thinks on the trail is the best way. She also suggested radio, newspaper, tv, etc. Anna suggested educating cyclists about etiquette.

From the BPAC survey, people complained about bicyclists not announcing themselves to pedestrians and about pedestrians with earbuds in who don't hear the warning. A message about slower traffic staying on the right would be helpful. Cyclists need to announce their presence. The second would be for pedestrians to be aware of their surroundings. Third thing would be any animals you have are under control. Speed is another issue, especially with e-bikes. Anna suggested the campaign target people who are new to biking.

Kristi suggested that the key points be vetted with the City.

BPAC suggested that there be a speed limit in trails. Jason suggested looking at rules in Florida.

BPAC suggested partnering with bike shops, the trail maps (printed and app), and other organizational websites, via signs, PSAs, etc. to get the word out.

Kristi will wordsmith the messages and then bring the language back to the next BPAC meeting. Jason Wood, BPAC member, will help.

Old Business:

Follow up on Public Survey Action Items

Kristi passed around the press release. BPAC members approved the press release.

Crash report from the PD

BPAC mapped out crash data from the PD on the printed map.

Other Business:

None

Future agenda items:

Etiquette campaign

Extending Heritage Trail

Joan motioned to adjourn; Jason seconded. All voted in favor.