



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 25, 2023 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am
1st Floor Conference Room of 2825 3rd Ave. N

APPROVED BY A MOTION ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

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

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

Others present: Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner

Public Comment Period:

- a. **Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas –**
Some BPAC members rode the neighborhood bikeway and had a couple of requests. The first was to put signage in Rose Park directing people to the new trail behind St. Francis Catholic School. Second, they felt the sign directing people leaving Rose Park and telling them to turn onto Ave. D is misplaced and seems to direct them to turn down the alley.

BPAC members also noted that the concrete squares in Trails West Park have not been fixed yet. Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, will send an email to Mike Pigg, the Parks and Rec Director, to ask these questions.

Margy Bonner, BPAC member, said that she went to the Cottonwood Park Master Plan meeting and the High Ditch Trail extension in Cottonwood Park was not in the draft plan. Elyse will also include this question in her email to Mike Pigg.

Margy also asked if it was the law for cars to stop for the flashing lights (RRFBs) on the neighborhood bikeway. Margy would like to research this question and see if it is not illegal, why it isn't. She will come back with a report. If there is no law in Billings she would like to see if there could be something that could be done to make it a law. Elyse suggested starting with the Public Works Department. She also noted RRFBs are regulated by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices that the federal government puts out to standardize traffic control across the country.

Kristi Drake, BPAC member, also mentioned she met a woman on the trail who uses a wheelchair and said the pedestrian flashing beacons enough that she has to put her toes in the traffic lane to push the button. Kristi said they were on Central Ave. near Stewart Park. Kristi Drake, BPAC member, suggested having someone who uses a wheelchair ride along with Public Works to show them where the issues were. Elyse asked for the

woman's contact information and said she would get in touch with her to see which locations she was having trouble with.

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

Elyse received a comment that the push button on Central near Stewart Park was too far up and too far back for a resident who uses a wheelchair to reach. Public works was going to work on adjusting this button.

Elyse received a complaint about a hedge on Miles Ave. between Mervin and 16th St. W. She sent the complaint to Code Enforcement so that they can send a notice to the property owner to trim the hedge.

There was a question about a barricade on 56th St. W just south of Rimrock. Elyse talked with Public Works, and this has been an ongoing issue. Originally, it was constructed for a legitimate reason and now Public Works is not sure why the barrier is still there. They will send someone out to look at it.

There was a question about road surfacing about road surfacing in the Ironwood neighborhood. The complaint said that the road surface was bad and that it was hard to cross the road on bikes, so Elyse also sent that complaint to Public Works.

Elyse checked on Anna O'Donnell's (BPAC member) question about an uneven surface at 62nd and Grand. She learned it was a County road project and the issue has since been resolved.

Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of June 27, 2023: Kristi moved to accept the minutes. Joan Schey, BPAC member, seconded. All voted in favor.

Old Business:

Sidewalk funding research

BPAC discussed at the last meeting that they wanted one of the members to call some cities and see how they fund their sidewalks. Joan offered to help call some cities to see how other cities fund sidewalks. Both how the sidewalk projects are funded and finding the contractors has been an issue in Billings.

Review and mapping of PD crash data

Kristi tabulated crash data. Out of 44 incidents, 12 out of 44 were hit and runs (27%), 3 distracted drivers, 19 (43%) were turn and hits. Kristi suggested maybe no right on red signs could be put up in these areas.

Jason Wood, BPAC member, looked up the state law and noted "When a vehicle is stopped at a marked crosswalk or at an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, the operator of a vehicle may make a right-hand turn if the pedestrian is in the opposite half of the roadway and is not in danger." (Montana Code Annotated 2021)

BPAC members mapped the crashes. Kristi suggested looking at the crashes mapped through October 2023 and bringing the information to City Council.

New Business:

Update on 56th St. under the bridge

Elyse talked to the engineer at MDT in charge of this project and he thinks it will be done around mid-October.

Other Business:

Anna noted that the accessible ramps are in at 3rd St. W and is hoping the crosswalk will be in soon.

The group discussed that the bollards up at Zimmerman Center are so close together they don't think it would be possible to get double stroller through.

Kristi noted that the Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) celebration is happening tomorrow from noon to 4 pm. She will go to the podium will go and let them know about BPAC.

Margy moved that Kristi represent BPAC at the LIFTT meeting. Jason seconded. All voted in favor.

Should BPAC have a one pager? The group suggested making time during next meeting to put something on the agenda so BPCA can give Elyse direction on this one pager.

The Billings Area Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was on the City Council agenda and Council approved the contract. Elyse offered that a BPAC member could join the advisory committee for this plan.

Montana Ave. up for design in a couple of years – Elyse will talk with Sarah Plath on the updates for this project. Kristi feels there should be bike lanes on Montana as it has lots of shops and businesses that people like to visit. There is a public meeting about the street projects, including Montana Ave. on August 1.

Margy asked about the status of the current Safe Routes to School Plan. Elyse said the consultant is in the middle of drafting suggested projects for the plan. The City also applied for a Safe Streets for All grant. Elyse will send list for Safe Streets for All grant projects which includes mostly safe routes to school projects.

Status of the Riverfront trail – the construction company has had trouble getting construction equipment on the trail due to the soil being very wet and soft, so they are trying to figure out how to get the trail constructed. The Torgerson property has had land loss due to flooding on the river, so the City is trying to figure out how to proceed with this trail. The developer is required to build a trail along the frontage road so there will be a connection there.

The KOA has changed ownership. Kristi, the Mayor, and John Brewer from the Chamber have been trying to meet with the KOA to talk about a trail easement. They have a meeting set up to talk about the meeting. The Billings campground may also be a barrier. BPAC members discussed that other cities have a land trust.

Margy requested permission to talk with the City about crosswalk laws and enforcement. She may also want to talk to other communities. Kristi moved to allow Margy to research laws about crosswalk violations on behalf of BPAC. Joan seconded. All voted in favor.

Elyse suggested that BPAC take a recess and not meet in August. BPAC members discussed this would be beneficial with summer trips and school starting up again. Margy moved to not meet in August. Anna seconded. All voted in favor.

Ales for Tails is September 8.

Future agenda items:

Side walk funding

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