



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 26, 2024 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am
1st Floor Conference Room of 2825 3rd Ave. N

APPROVED BY A MOTION ON APRIL 23, 2024

- Call to order:** Nikki Zimmer, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.
- Members present:** Kristi Drake, City; Dave Coppock, Planning Board; Anna O'Donnell, City; Jason Wood, County; Joan Schey, County; Stephanie Donovan, City
- Others present:** Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner; members of the public as listed on the sign in sheet.

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 –**
Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, received an email from Jim Thomas DeJogh that read:

“Many thanks to the Committee for your contribution to the wonderful trail infrastructure that we enjoy in Billings. As a resident of the Billings Heights for forty years, I have witnessed the attention that trail planners have given the Heights and I appreciate and regularly utilize the implementation.

This brings me to the topic of the Stagecoach Trail. I would like to bring to your attention a lesser-known safety hazard that the Stagecoach Trail will eliminate. Currently below the new Skyline trail is the old rim edge mountain bike and hiking trail that has been enjoyed for years. The rim edge trail ends going west at Zimmerman Trail Road because travel up to the intersection of Zimmerman Trail Road and Highway 3 is quite impassible. Much of the time the biker or hiker desires to continue to Zimmerman Park which requires a hike-a-bike over the guard rail along Zimmerman Trail Road and the navigating of vehicular traffic propelled by gravity with all parties hindered by limited visibility due to the curves. Throw in the minimal buffer between vehicles and the guard rail, excessive road debris and you have the proverbial recipe for disaster. The Stagecoach trail will eliminate this hazardous situation by allowing the rim edge trail users to utilize the Stagecoach trail and proceed to the tunnel at the roundabout. This same safety benefit will be realized by those mountain bikers and hikers going from Zimmerman Park east on the rim edge trail.

Thanks again to the Committee for hugging the Heights with trails and hopefully allowing us to safely visit our valley neighbors in 2025.”

Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of February 27, 2024: Anna O’Donnell, BPAC member, moved to accept the minutes. Joan Schey, BPAC member, seconded. All voted in favor.

Old Business:

a. Debrief of annual presentation to governing bodies

Anna reported that the presentation to the Planning Board went well. Dave Coppock, BPAC member, mentioned that they were particularly interested in the crash data. Dave said they also discussed sidewalks in Lockwood because the sidewalks are 6 feet wide and allow cyclists.

Dave reported that the presentation to the Council went as expected. Kristi Drake, BPAC member, said that Councilmembers encouraged the committee to follow up on its recommendations with the reminder that things take time. Dave said that one question arose during his presentation was about the statistical validity of only having 120 participants for the survey. For future presentations, Dave recommends that it is made clear that the survey is more of a scoping exercise to gather comments rather than an election.

Kristi requested that BPAC discuss “creating a media campaign involving social media and PSAs on TV and radio to educated driver and pedestrians” at a future meeting. Kristi also requested adding “changing infrastructure at marked sidewalks in selected high-traffic areas” to the agenda. Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, informed the committee that they have secured a \$75,000 Safe Streets for All grant for a marketing campaign spanning three years. This is where the campaign that BPAC suggested will come in as there is not staff capacity to run two campaigns at once. BPAC requested to have a representative help on the campaign.

Nikki Zimmer, BPAC Chair, said that County Commissioners had no questions during the BPAC presentation to them.

Kristi brought up that she has been asked why BPAC is not reviewing plans like the west-end plan and subdivisions and asked the committee if there is any reason why they are not. Elyse proposed incorporating a designated time on the agenda for her to provide updates about her work as she reviews subdivisions for compliance with the Bikeway and Trails Master Plan. Furthermore, Elyse said that she could arrange additional presentations from consultants for the committee if the consultant’s budget allows.

BPAC members asked about the outcome on the Bell Ave. development they advocated for. Elyse will check on the final status of that development.

b. Review and mapping of PD crashes

The group reviewed and mapped crashes from January and February 2024.

Elyse suggested that future mapping of crashes be done on a digital map. The committee concurred. Next month Elyse will bring the new digital map.

c. Tree grant

BPAC reviewed areas of town where the tree grant is applicable and made suggestions about where trees should be planted. Kristi suggested plating trees on the trail behind

Ponderosa School off of King Ave E. Nikii suggested Colson Park, near where the power plant used to be. Anna suggested the Jim Dutcher trail. Nikki suggested the area near the water treatment plant. Nikki suggested near the Terry neighborhood. Dave suggested near Hallowell, Jackson, and Washington street. Kristi suggested on S 25th St. and the trail near King Ave north of Sam's club

The committee requested that Elyse bring a map that shows the overlay of biking/walking routes over the tree grant area.

New Business:

Dave brought forth the issue of the lack of crosswalk on Rimrock, particularly between 13th and Virginia. Anna said there used to be a crosswalk at Beth and Rimrock that was taken out when the city repaved the streets. To address this, Stephanie Donovan, BPAC member, proposed to first study the current Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans and then make additional recommendations to fill in what's missing.

Elyse will bring the SRTS plans and the map for Rimrock to the next meeting. Jason, BPAC member, will send out directions on how to approach this and provide a deadline.

Other Business: none

Future agenda items: none

Kristi moved to adjourn; Dave seconded. All voted in favor.