



Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands

“Maintain What We Have”

VISION:

“To be Montana’s leader in connecting people to nature and healthy lifestyles.”

MISSION:

“To provide accessible, safe, and quality parks, facilities, open spaces, and recreational opportunities for all.”



PARKS, RECREATION, and PUBLIC SAFETY

- When parks are allowed to deteriorate, the **decaying infrastructure** and bad reputation of parks can turn them into magnets for crime.
- Parks that are designed for safety, heavily programmed on an ongoing basis and **well maintained** tend to attract residents whose presence serves as a crime deterrent.
- Parks do a good job of deterring crime. Design and **maintenance are critical** if parks are to reduce, rather than attract, crime.



* <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/07/can-parks-help-cities-fight-crime>



MAINTAIN WHAT WE HAVE

Presentation Outline

- Previous/Current Areas of Focus
- Scope of Work
- Impact of Putting Maintenance 2nd
- Shift to Maintenance 1st Mindset
- Answer Questions







2017 COMP PLAN

- Identified deficiencies in both amenities and maintenance
 - “lack of staff creates hardships when managing turf, trees, and landscaping”
 - “Best practice ratio of staff per park acres maintained is 1:20 acres. Staffing levels are deficient by at least 5.5 FTE’s to meet staffing requirements.”
 - “The number of direct reports managed by one supervisor is much greater than best practice.”
 - “Additional Funding Needed to Meet Best Practice \$2,797,759”
- The Department concentrated on amenities since 2017
- Attempted to address maintenance concerns through the annual budget process

City of Billings
Parks, Recreation and Public Lands
Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan
September 2017





PARK AMMENITIES

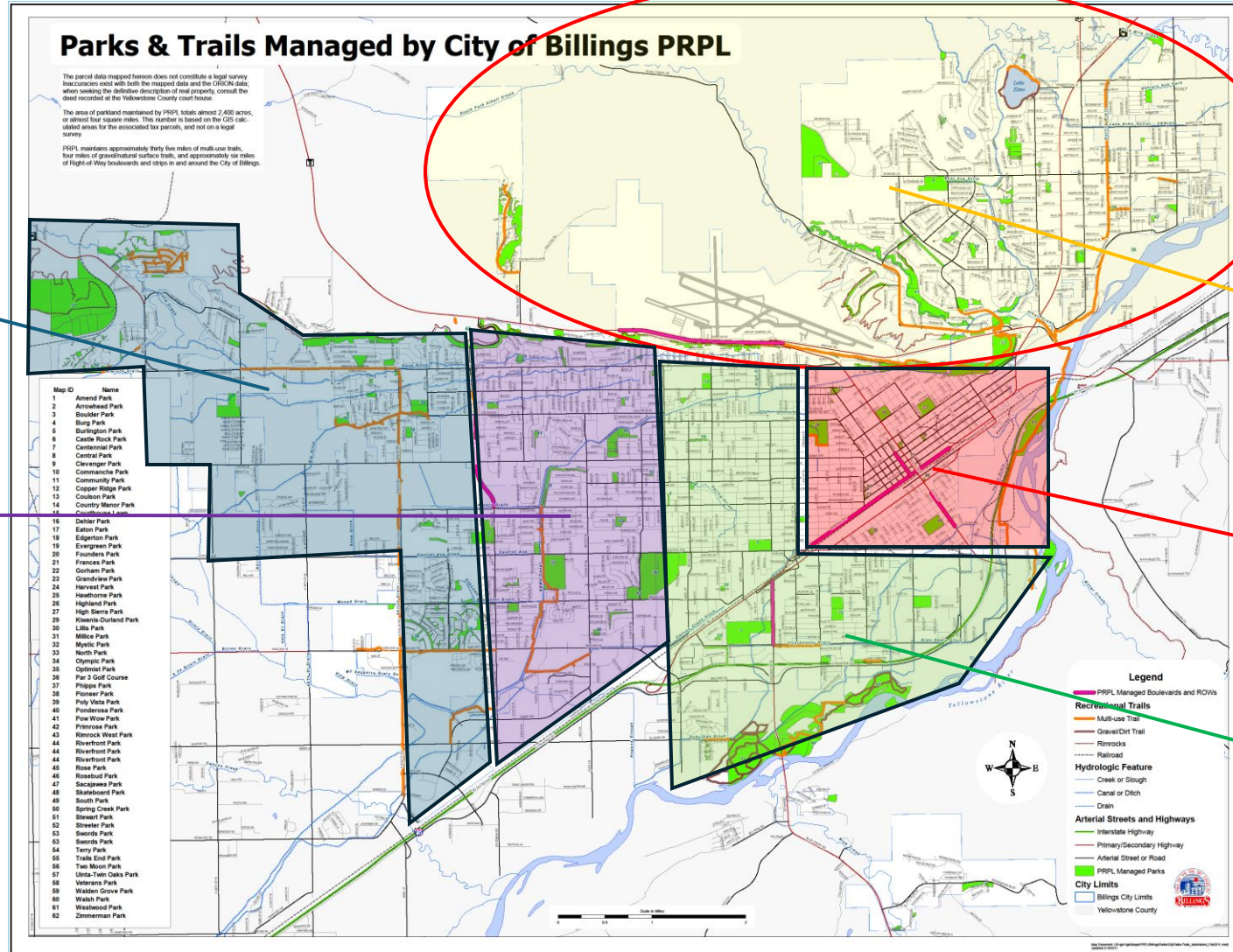
- Parks (98)
 - 161 Park use permits for FY24
 - 644 hours of staff time for preparation
- Shelters (24)
 - 287 rentals in FY24
 - 287 hours of staff time for preparation
- Neighborhood Centers (5)
 - 288 rentals in FY24
 - 576 hours of staff time for preparation
- Sound Stage (1)
 - 32 rentals in FY24
 - 320 hours of staff time for setup/breakdown
- Playgrounds (41)
- Tennis/Pickleball Courts (34)
- Basketball Courts (22)
- Splash Pads / Wading Pools (7)
- Pools (2)
- Restrooms (23)
- Baseball Fields (37)





CURRENT STAFF

No new
Maintenance Staff
added since 2013



4 Full Time
Employees
19 Parks

3 Full Time
Employees
21 Parks

City Wide
• Supervisor
• Arborist
• Mechanic

2 Full Time
Employees
18 Parks

3 Full Time
Employees
20 Parks

3 Full Time
Employees
20 Parks



INCREASED MAINTENANCE

Funding Shortfalls

- Best Practice Maintenance Funding
 - 2017 Comp Plan Recommended and additional \$2,797,759 / annually to PRPL's budget



- Billings Population Growth
 - 1982 – 70K
 - 2017 – 109K
 - 2023 – 121K
- Projects funded/completed after 2017 but no maintenance funds allocated
 - **Playgrounds** - Castle Rock / Annafeld / Copper Ridge / Iron Wood
 - **Parks**-Centennial / Poly Vista
 - **Trails**- Swords Rimrock/ Riverfront / Skyline / Rose Park
 - Yellowstone Kelly Site
 - Numerous Art Installations
 - **Restrooms**- High Sierra / Norm's Island (2) / Centennial / Poly Vista



HARD SURFACE TRAILS (~40 Miles)





SIDEWALKS





PARKING LOTS (29)





FENCES





BASEBALL FIELDS (37)





COURTS (22 Basketball, 37 Tennis/Pickleball, 3 Sand Volleyball)





STRUCTURES



TURF ~1,200 acres





TURF MAINTENANCE

Task	What We Do	Best Practice
Fertilization	-3lbs Nitrogen / 1000 sqft -All Parks 1 application / 2 years	-6lbs Nitrogen / 1000 sqft -All Parks 1 application / year
Pesticide	-Every park every 2-3 years -Spot treatment	Every Park each year
Aeration	200 acres	1000 acres
Ground Squirrel	none	As necessary



IRRIGATION (~100)





Challenges





Strategy for Increased Maintenance

Goal is to **“Maintain What We Have”**

- Insufficient Parks Staffing
 - 2017 Comp Plan Recommended and additional 5.5 Full Time Employee’s
 - Currently 16 Full Time Park Maintenance Staff
 - Recommend adding the following positions
 - **3 Additional Equipment Operators**
 - Weekend Equipment Operator
 - Pesticide/Fertilizer Applicator
 - Trash Collector
 - **One Additional Forestry Equipment Operator**
 - **One Additional Park Supervisor**





PARKS, RECREATION, and PUBLIC SAFETY

- Currently PRPL has one assigned Police Officer – Tuesday – Friday, 6am-4pm
- Request Second PRPL Dedicated Police Officer

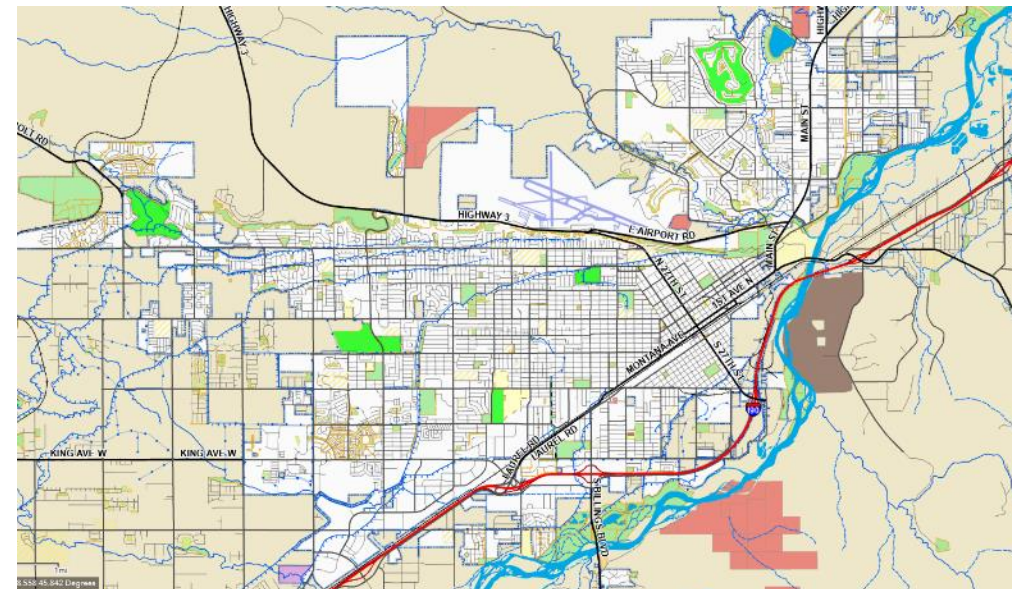




NEW STAFF

Park Supervisor

- 1 Parks Supervisor manages park maintenance and operations of:
 - 171 park areas
 - 2,580 acres of Park Land, w/in 43.5 sq miles
 - Supervises
 - 16 Full Time Staff
 - 40 Seasonal Staff



Forestry Equipment Operator

- 1 arborist
 - ~10k trees w/in PRPL
 - Goal is to prune small trees every 3 years / large trees every 7 years
 - Requires arborist to prune 2000 trees / year
 - CM Tree Service with 4 teams prunes/removes 1800 trees/year

NEW STAFF

Weekend Equipment Operator

- PRPL coordinates with over 80 organizations throughout the community to facilitate events in our Parks, Including
 - Billings Symphony in the Park
 - Big Sky State Games
 - Heart & Sole Run
 - and many more
- These large events occur primarily on the weekend and require the support of our 1 FTE

- In addition to supporting these events, he is also responsible for responding to any other maintenance issues that arise within the city parks
 - Clean Parks / Empty Trash
 - Inspect Playgrounds for Safety issues
 - Open / Clean Restrooms
 - Monitor Irrigation Systems
 - Conduct Line Locates for tent/inflatable setups
 - Clean Rentals After Use
 - Set Up and Remove Sound Stage
 - Guide and Direct 2 Seasonals





NEW STAFF

Weekday Equipment Operators(2)

- Trash Truck Driver
 - Parks Division collect ~400 trash cans / week. Many are emptied multiple times a week
 - When seasonals not available current full-time staff required to remove trash, taking time away from other park maintenance tasks



- Full Time Pesticide/Fertilizer Applicator
 - Can apply pesticide 9 months a year
 - Results is saved labor – Currently ~8k hours a year dedicated to trimming. Dedicated pesticide application would significantly reduce trimming time, allowing staff to complete other necessary tasks.





PROPOSED CIP FY26 (Parks Operation Fund)

Project	Cost
Irrigation Automation (Spring Creek/Evergreen)	\$500k
Irrigation Replacement (Millice)	\$300k
Mountview Spreading Garden	\$125k
Mountview Veteran Barrier	\$150k
Resurface Trail (Riverfront)	\$400k
Fence Replacement (Rose Pool)	\$200k
Sidewalk Repairs(Various)	\$100k
Building Repairs (South & East Shop)	\$300k
Trail Repairs (Various)	\$100k
Playground Replacement (Stewart)	\$400k
Total	\$2.575M



PATH FORWARD FY26

Maintain What We Have

- Goal is to Balance Improved Maintenance with New Projects
 - Hire 5 New Park Staff - \$420k
 - Hire Additional Police Officer - \$100k
 - 12 new seasonal positions - \$230k
 - Maintenance Funds
 - \$100k for Turf Care
 - \$50k for Fence Repair
 - \$50k Building Repair
 - \$330k New Employee Equipment (one time cost)

Total \$1.28M

❖ **Second year \$330K would roll into Maintenance Funds or CIP Projects.**

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Fence Replacement (Rose Pool)	\$200k
Sidewalk Repairs(Various)	\$100k
Building Repairs (South & East Shop)	\$300k
Trail Repairs (Various)	\$100k
Playground Replacement (Stewart)	\$400k
Buckthorn Removal	\$100k
Matching Grant Funds	\$100k
Total	\$1.2M



PATH FORWARD

We invite you to join us for a tour of the parks to see firsthand some of the issues.



THANK YOU

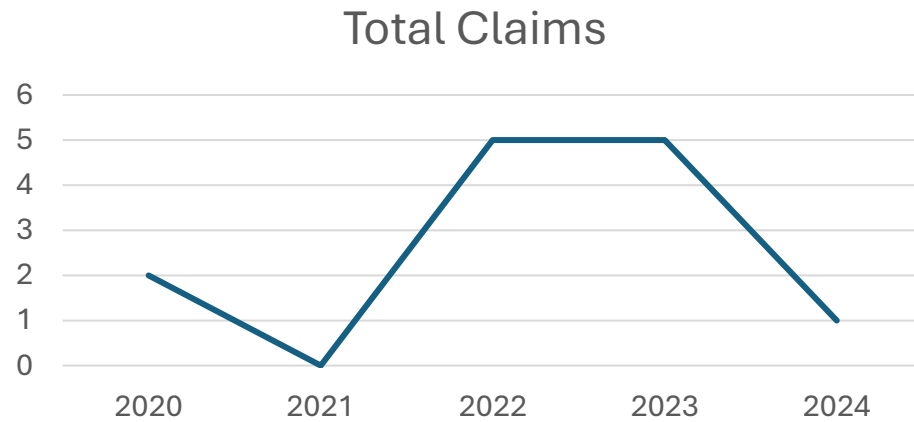


QUESTIONS?





LIABILITY



South Park Needs 2,730 Square Feet of Sidewalk to be Replaced

Concrete Repair - \$20.00/Square Foot

Total Cost ~\$54,600



IRRIGATION REPAIR COST

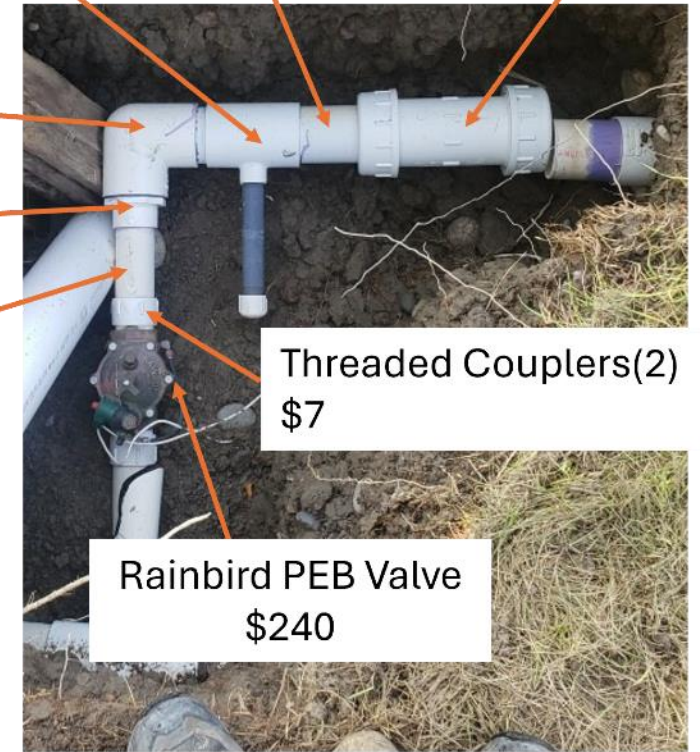
6" Mechanical Coupler x 2 \$700
6" Pipe \$25



Labor (12 hours) \$420
Vac Trailer \$300
Total Cost \$1445

90 Elbow \$3
Reducer Bushing \$3
2" Pipe \$10

3" to 1" T \$15
3" Pipe \$10
3" Slip Fix \$30



Labor (10 hours) \$350
Vac Trailer \$300
Total Cost \$968

Rainbird PEB Valve \$240

Threaded Couplers(2) \$7

Resealing North Park Basketball and
Tennis Court
~\$78k

Resealing South Park Basketball
Court
~\$52,600



North Park Dog Park (New)

- 1,067 Linear Feet
- \$23,000

North Park Baseball Field

- 930 Linear Feet
- Approx. \$20,046 to replace

Central Park Little League Field

- 780 Linear Feet
- Approx. \$16,800 to replace



PARKING LOTS

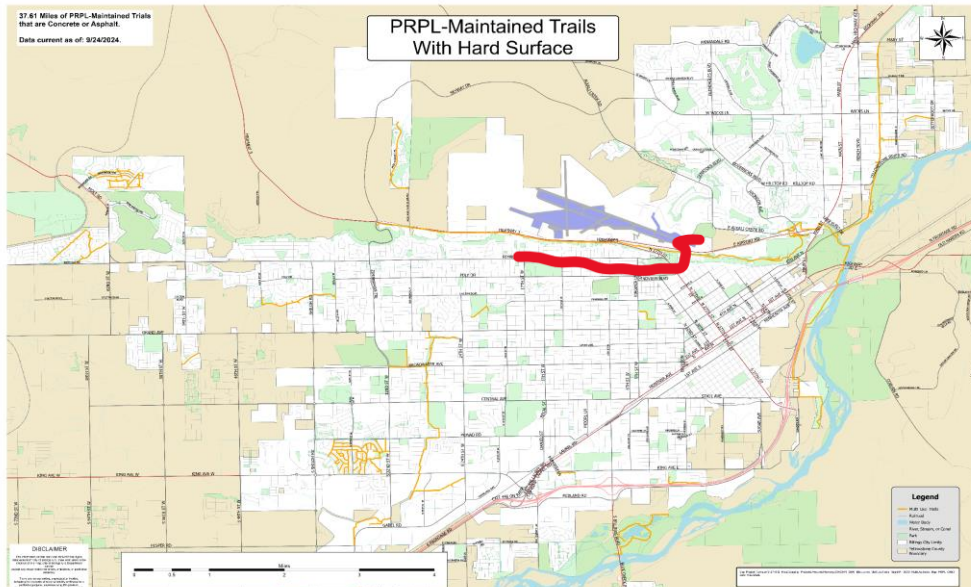
- Sealing Parking Lots Costs ~\$0.44/Square Foot
- Parking lot sealing lasts approximately 5 years then they need to be resealed.
- Central Park Parking Lots Resealing ~ \$13,500
- Amend Park Parking Lots Resealing ~\$102,000
- Stewart Park Large Lot Resealing ~\$39,500



HARD SURFACE TRAILS

PRPL Maintains ~40 Miles of Trails in Addition to the Sidewalks in and Around the City Parks

- Asphalt Sealant - \$8,500 / Mile (last 2-4 years)
 - Black Otter Trail (Aronson to 27th ~3.3 mile) \$28k.
 - Sealant applied every 2 to 4 years
- Asphalt Installation/Repairs - \$13.00/Square Foot
- Concrete Repair - \$20.00/Square Foot



Weekday Equipment Operators(3)

- Operates a variety of equipment
- Construct, maintain, and operate park structures and facilities
- Maintain playgrounds, play equipment, and fall protection
- Apply controlled herbicides and fertilizer
- Maintain, install, and repair complex irrigation systems
- Perform landscape maintenance
- Operate, maintain, and repair spray grounds
- Train and Direct Seasonal Employees





COMPLETED PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT

- North Park Playground
- Highland Playground
- Comanche Park Playground
- Arrowhead Park Playground
- Primrose Park Playground
- Optimist Park Playground
- Castle Rock Playground

* Since 2017





IRRIGATION UPGRADES

- New Irrigation Systems Installed
 - North Park
 - Veterans Park
 - Ponderosa Park
 - Poly Vista
 - Gorham Park
 - Grandview Park
- Pump Station Upgrades
 - Amend Park
 - Stewart Park
 - Mountview Cemetery
 - Castle Rock Park
 - Lillis Park
 - Pioneer Park (2)
 - Rose Park
 - Riverfront Park

*Since 2017





UPGRADES SINCE 2017

- Tennis Courts / Central / Castle Rock / Pioneer
- Castle Rock / Annafeld / Copper Ridge / Iron Wood Playgrounds
- Centennial / Poly Vista / Swords Rimrock Parks
- Riverfront / Skyline / Rose Park Trails
- Yellowstone Kelly Site
- Numerous Art Installations
- High Sierra / Norm's Island (2) Restrooms





ALTERNATE FUNDING SOURCES

- Transportation Alternatives Program (Stagecoach Trail) \$4.7M
- USDA – Forest Service Tree Grant \$1M
- LWCF \$550k
 - Rose Park Playground
 - Central Park Tennis Court
- Community Development Block Grants \$1M
 - North Park Restroom, Shade Structure, Exercise Equipment
 - Pioneer Park – Trail Replacement, Restroom Improvements
 - Comanche Park Playground
- CPTED \$180k
 - North Park Lighting
 - Comanche Park Lighting and Park Improvements
- DOE Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant \$165k
 - Irrigation Pump Station Upgrades at Central, South, Optimist, and Comanche Parks
- WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project Grant \$100k
 - Millice Park Irrigation System

Total – \$7.7M



EFFICIENCIES

- Increased Efficiency in Order to Keep Up With Demand
 - VFD Pumps –Reduce Electrical Consumption and Wear
 - In-house Labor to Save on Project Cost
 - Generate Our Own Mulch
 - Shared Resources w/ Other Depts
 - Recycled Vehicles
 - I.Q. Irrigation Controller
 - Fertilization and Weed Control
 - Volunteer Labor
 - Partnerships
 - Improved Project Management
 - Park Maintenance Analysis/Scoring system

* Since 2017





DETERIORATING FACILITIES

Aging Facilities That are Past Their Useful Life Lead to Increased Maintenance Cost and Safety Issues

