

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2023

DRAFT TO BE APPROVED BY MOTION

NOTICE

Public comments will be taken only during the Public Comment periods as indicated on the agenda. Comments may be sent to Planning Staff via email before 10:00 AM on the meeting date. All e-mails received prior to this time will be read into the record for the public hearing.

Member Participants: Chairman John Ostlund, Board of County Commissioners; Mayor Bill Cole; Mark Morse, County Commissioner; Dennis Cook, Yellowstone County Planning Board President; Kurtis Schneiber, MDT.

Staff Participants: Brenda Berns, Planning Clerk
Virtual: Lora Mattox, Transportation Coordinator.

Call to Order: 12:03 PM.

Chairman Ostlund called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Public Comment/Communication from the Audience

- a. Comments on items not on the agenda and requests to add items to future agendas.
- b. Comments on items on the Non-public and Public Agenda Items

There were no comments from the audience regarding agenda or future agenda items.

4. Motion. Minutes of August 29, 2023

A motion was made by Mayor Cole, seconded by Planning Board President Cook to approve the minutes of August 29, 2023. The motion was carried with a unanimous voice vote.

4. Old Business: There is no Old Business.

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5. New Business

5a. Motion. Approval MPO Boundary Map Amendment. Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator presenting.

Recommendation

The staff is seeking approval from the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) for the Billings MPO Boundary Map Amendment and authorization for the Mayor of the City of Billings and the Chairperson of Yellowstone County Commissioners to sign the official map. The map amendment has already been endorsed by the Board of County Commission and the Billings City Council, all of whom are recommending PCC's approval of the amendment. The Yellowstone County Planning Board was scheduled to take action on the boundary amendment on November 14th. However, the board did not have a quorum and could not act.

Background

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is tasked with coordinating transportation planning within the Billings metropolitan area. Its responsibilities encompass long-term transportation planning, allocation of funding, and ensuring that transportation projects align with regional goals and objectives. The MPO's planning boundary defines the specific geographic area over which it exercises planning authority.

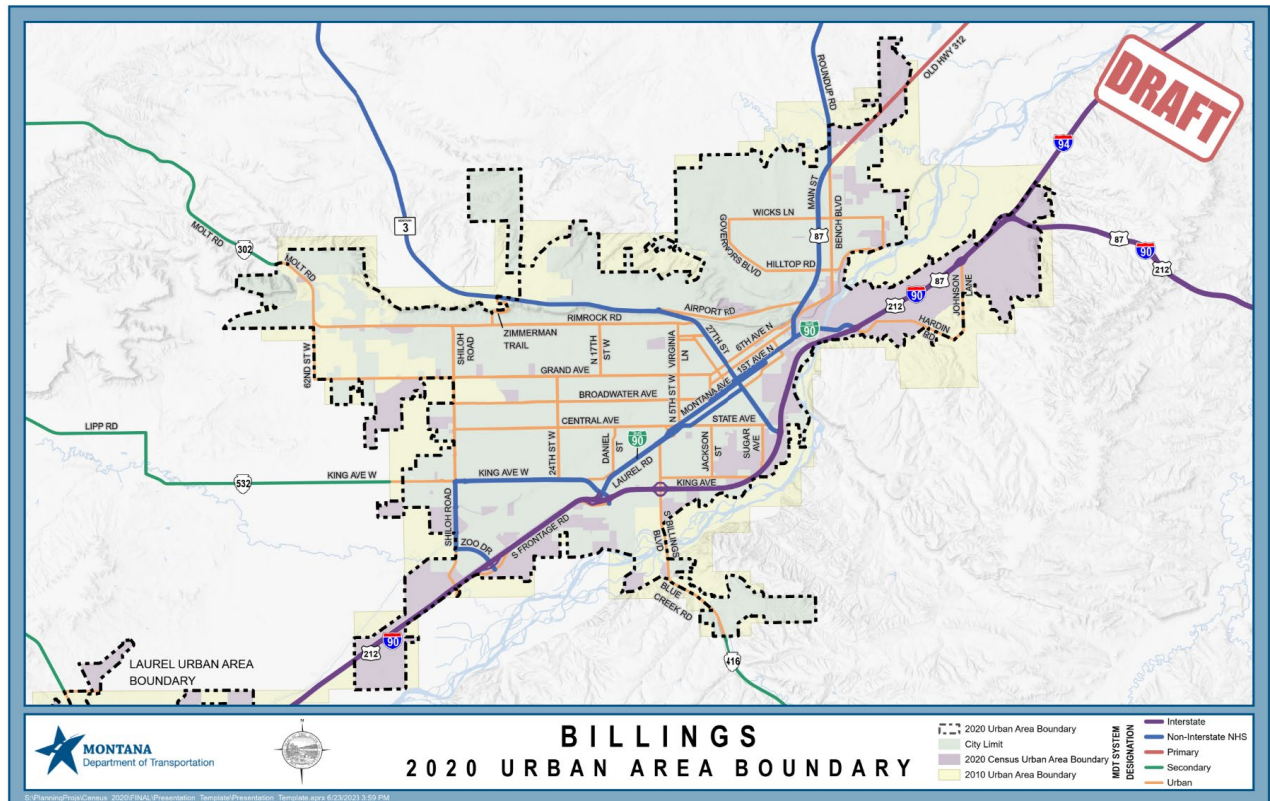
In response to the recently released 2020 Census data, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) mandates that the MPO, in collaboration with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and local government agencies, adjust the planning boundary accordingly. These adjustments are based on the 2020 Census urban area boundaries, which are determined by housing density. The population within these adjusted urban areas determines their respective share of urban program funds. Final approval of the proposed boundaries is granted by the FHWA.

To define the MPO boundary, certain criteria were employed:

- Reasonable Distance: Areas within the urban boundary must be reachable within a 0.5-mile drive.
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- Large Traffic Generator: This category includes industrial, commercial, or retail areas that do not encompass residential zones. Large traffic generators must primarily serve the urban area's population and have a significant impact, such as major hospitals, for example.
- Minimizing Impacts to the Highway Systems: The overarching goal is to avoid any adverse effects on the state highway system.

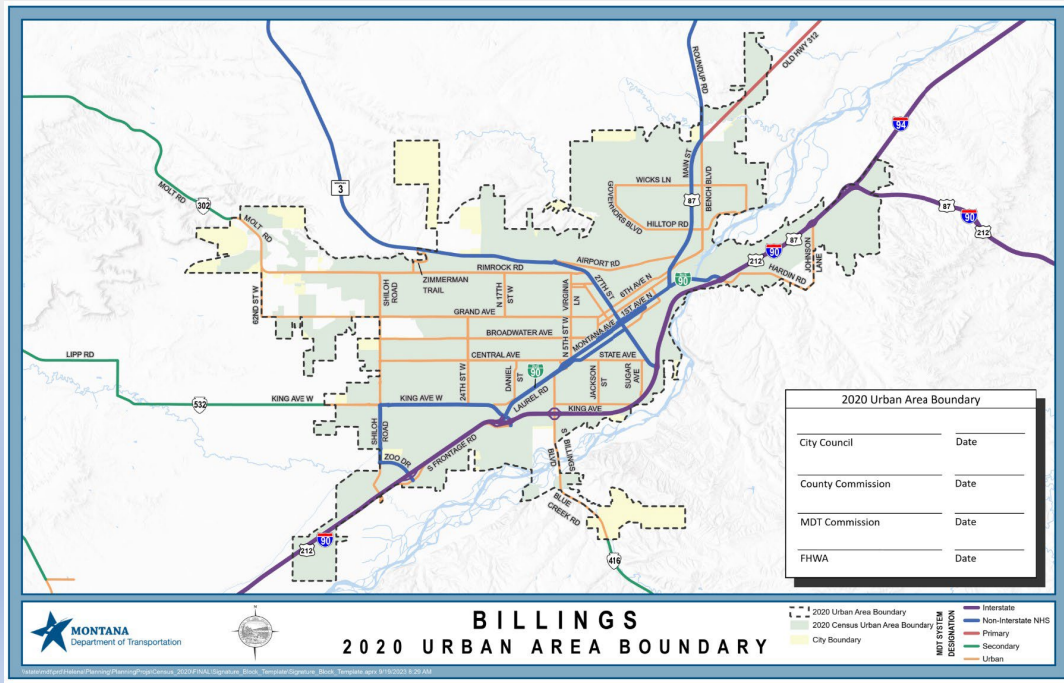
Additionally, when adjusting the urban boundaries, it is essential to consider the most recent city limit boundary, create a single contiguous area, adhere to political boundaries, census blocks, or physical features/intersections.

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The first attached map illustrates the 2010 Urban Boundary, City Limits, 2020 Census Urban Area Boundary, and the proposed 2020 Urban Area Boundary. After discussions involving MDT Helena, MDT Billings District, City and County Public Works, and the Billings MPO, all proposed changes were accepted, with the exception of a section of King Avenue West. MDT Helena recommended converting a portion of this route from an Urban to a Secondary route. However, MDT Billings District and staff opposed this change due to the area's complex and rapidly changing land use. Ultimately, MDT Helena reviewed and concurred with the local recommendation.

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The second map illustrates the ultimate proposed version, and MDT Helena is seeking a review and endorsement of this map from the municipal and county authorities. On October 18, 2023, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) conducted a review of the map amendment. TAC is now suggesting that the local governing authorities grant approval for the map amendment to the PCC, which would then enable the Mayor to officially sign the map.

Fiscal Effects

The approval of the MPO Boundary will not result in any financial implications for either the City or County. Instead, it will guarantee the uninterrupted flow of Federal PL funding to support ongoing Transportation Planning Programs within the MPO.

Summary

Following the conclusion of the ten-year census conducted by the US Census Bureau, the MPO Boundary undergoes a review and adjustment process based on the Census Bureau’s Urban Area definition and recommendations provided by the Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation. This revision is necessary to ensure the continued allocation of Federal PL funding.

Discussion

Chairman Ostlund asked the Board if there were any questions or discussion. There was none.

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Motion

Motion by Planning Board President Cook, seconded by Mayor Cole to approve the MPO Boundary Map Amendment as presented by Staff. The motion was carried with a unanimous voice vote.

6. Other Business There is no Other Business.

7. Future Agenda Item

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP); Safe Routes to School Phase II

ADJOURNMENT: 12:06pm

Meeting minutes to be approved by a motion at the next meeting.

Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk