



POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
AGENDA
CITY OF BILLINGS AND
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA



AUGUST 20, 2024 MEETING TIME: 12:00 p.m.
316 N 26 ST, ROOM 3101
(3RD FLOOR, STILLWATER BUILDING)
Billings, Montana 59101

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Citizens are invited to:

- Review the Agenda Packet on the City's website at: <https://ci.billings.mt.us/117/Agendas-Minutes>
- View the meeting live online at Facebook: <https://tinyurl.com/yckr478k>

Public comment will be taken only during the Public Comment periods as indicated on the agenda and during the Public Hearings, if any are scheduled, under the Regular agenda. Comments may be sent to Board via email before 10:00 AM on the meeting date. All emails received prior to this time will be read into the record for the public hearing. Comments may be submitted by:

- Mail: City/County Planning Division, PO Box 1178 Billings, MT 59103
 - Email: plnonline@billingsmt.gov
- NOTICE: All meetings and official activities of the MPO are held in buildings and locations that comply with accessibility standards according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A TTY number for the hearing impaired, 406-657-3079, is available upon request. Special arrangements for participation in the public hearings by individuals with hearing, speech, or vision impairment may be made upon request at least three days prior to the hearing. Please notify the Planning Division Office, at 406-247-8676.

****In the event a quorum of the Council is present, no City-related decisions will be made during this meeting or event.**

1. **Call to Order/Pledge to the American Flag: PCC Chairman**
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD** -- (A 3-minute maximum per person.) *Any member of the public may be heard at this time on any subject(s), including items that are not on the agenda. The Policy Coordinating Committee will not take any action on non-agenda items today but could choose to add an item to the next meeting's agenda for discussion. Public comment may also allowed later on some items (see below), but an individual may only comment once on the same item.*
3. **Approval of the minutes of: April 16, 2024 & August 7, 2024**
4. **Old Business**
5. **New Business**
 - a. 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Action. Submitted by Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator
6. **Other Business**
 - a. Metropolitan Planning Organization Process Review. Presentation. Submitted by Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator
7. **Future Agenda Items**
8. **Adjournment**

PCC Agenda

Meeting Date: 08/20/2024

Information

Subject

Approval of the minutes of: April 16, 2024 & August 7, 2024

Attachments

Minutes of April 16, 2024

Minutes of August 7, 2024

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024

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; Woody Woods, Yellowstone County Planning Board President; Kurtis Schneiber, MDT.

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

Virtual: Katie Potts, FWHA

Call to Order: 12:00 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 November 21, 2023

A motion was made by Bill Cole, seconded by Woody Woods to approve the minutes of November 21, 2023. The motion was carried with a unanimous voice vote.

4. Old Business: There is no Old Business.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024



5. New Business

5a. Motion. Safe Routes to School Plan, Phase II. Submitted by Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner.

Erin Claunch with Sanderson Stewart gave an overview of the purpose of the project.

- Address capacity and mobility needs, safety issues, and drainage issues within the project area.
- Infrastructure improvements include upgrades to
 - 1) Intersection and roadway capacity
 - 2) Storm drain system
 - 3) Roadway lighting
 - 4) Pavement
 - 5) Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (shared use path, sidewalks, crossings)

The Safe Routes to School program was founded on the simple idea that together, the City of Billings, Billings MPO, Billings-area School Districts, Yellowstone County, MDT, and parents can make our streets safe enough for students to walk and bike to school. Some of the goals and objectives are:

- Evaluate current conditions
- Identify barriers or issues
- Develop list of prioritized project schools

Discussion

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

Motion

Motion by Bill Cole, seconded by Woody Woods to approve the Safe Routes to School Plan Phase II, as submitted by staff. The motion was carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Discussion

Bill Cole mentioned that when the SRTS plan was presented to the City Council, there was a suggestion to postpone it until a more thorough transportation plan for the downtown area could be carried out. This was to prevent any potential clashes between present and future projects. Thankfully, the City Council opted to proceed with the SRTS plan.

5b. FY2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program – Administrative Modification. Action. Submitted by Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator

Lora Mattox pointed out that the Administrative Modification made to the TIP program, which was approved last month, was aimed at incorporating a new funding source: Carbon Reduction Funds. This modification will open up funding to do ADA upgrades.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024

Motion

Bill Cole made a motion, seconded by Woody Woods to adopt and approve the TIP Administrative Modification as presented by staff.

5c. Project Update Presentation. Lockwood Interchange. Presented by Nick Pavia, HDR

Mr. Pavia provided an update on the Lockwood Interchange project in Billings, highlighting its goal of widening Interstate 90 to three lanes in each direction between the Lockwood and Johnson Lane Interchanges. The interchange's reconstruction aims to enhance traffic operations and ensure safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. Following thorough analysis, a Diverging Diamond design was chosen, with US Hwy 87 slated to cross over and motorists guided to the left side of the road. Additionally, Mr. Pavia discussed potential alternatives to bolster safety at the Coburn Road access point, alongside proposals for beautification and landscaping enhancements.

Discussion

Woody Woods raised concerns about traffic issues, particularly regarding the left turn lane. He pointed out that there seems to be insufficient signage for merging and continuing towards the Hardin area. While there isn't a current solution, MDT is actively working to resolve the issue.

Mayor Cole mentioned that plans for the Coburn intersection include either a roundabout or a traffic signal. However, he expressed concerns that while a roundabout might benefit vehicles, it might not be ideal for pedestrians. Mr. Pavia added that MDT is actively addressing the matter but has yet to finalize a decision.

Mayor Cole also discussed landscaping concerns, noting the city's historical difficulty in maintaining landscaping around roundabouts. Mr. Pavia mentioned they are exploring options such as steel artwork that would withstand the elements for an extended period.

5d. Project Update Presentation. 1st Avenue North & Exposition Drive. Presented by Shaun Sampson, MDT.

Mr. Sampson outlined the project's objectives, which encompass addressing capacity, mobility, safety, and drainage concerns. The infrastructure enhancements will involve upgrades to several key areas: • Intersection and roadway capacity • Storm drain system • Pavement • Shared use path with sidewalks and crossings

The targeted enhancements involve altering the westbound approach, incorporating a fourth northbound through lane to Bench Blvd., adjusting the northbound right-turn lane, and installing crossings, a shared-use path, and detached sidewalks. Mr. Sampson mentioned that they are in the process of completing the final designs for the roadway and traffic, while also actively engaging with members of the community.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2024



Discussion

Bill Cole discussed the absence of a sidewalk or pedestrian path along the south side of 1st Ave N. Mr. Sampson explained that it's not practical to incorporate a sidewalk on the south side due to its predominantly industrial nature, resulting in minimal foot traffic. However, provisions will be made to facilitate pedestrian movement and ensure full access to businesses situated along the road.

ADJOURNMENT: 12:49pm

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

Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF August 7, 2024

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; Woody Woods, Yellowstone County Planning Board President; Kurtis Schneiber, MDT.

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

Call to Order: 12:00 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.** Delayed Approval of Minutes of April 16, 2024

5. **Old Business:** There is no Old Business.

6. New Business

5a. Presentation. Action FY2024-2028 TIP Amendment: Add Right-of-Way/Indirect Cost Phases for the MDT Zoo Drive Project. Submitted by Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator.

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF August 7, 2024

Lora thanked the Board for attending this special meeting and noted that while reviewing the TIP and programming for the Zoo Drive Improvements, it was discovered that two project phases—Indirect Costs and Right-of-Way purchasing—were missing from the TIP. To keep the project on track for MDT, a special request was made and agreed upon.

Lora stated the 2 highlighted items are the additions to the TIP.

Zoo Drive Additional Phase Addition

National Highway (NH)*

Funding shown in thousands of dollars

Project	Description	Phase	Funding						Funding Source			Total Project Costs	
			Pre-2024	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Local	State	Federal		
Sponsor													
MDT PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE - NH	Maintenance - Striping, Durable Pavement Marking, Pavement Pres.	All		1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0					5,000.0
MDT		Total		1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0					5,000.0
Heights Main St.	Striping and Durable Pavement Mar	OT		140.7									140.7
UPN	RP 1-90/US-87												0.0
MDT	SP 0 to 4.7		0.0	140.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	140.7
ZFH ST.	Striping and Durable Pavement Mar	OT		142.2									142.2
UPN	MF-3												0.0
MDT	BP 0 to 3.3		0.0	142.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	142.2
Zoo Drive Interchange	Striping and Durable Pavement Mar	OT		55.5									55.5
UPN	Zoo Drive												0.0
MDT	SP 0 to 0.9		0.0	55.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.5
King Ave West	Striping and Durable Pavement Mar	OT		22.5									22.5
UPN	King Ave West												0.0
MDT	BP 2.5 to 3.1		0.0	22.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.5
Old Laurel Road	Striping and Durable Pavement Mar	OT		16.6									16.6
UPN	RP 1-90												0.0
MDT	BP 0 to 0.7		0.0	16.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.6
Billings Bypass	New construction	FE	8,074.0	1,300.0									9,374.0
UPN	4199-000	RW	3,573.0	6,550.0									10,123.0
MDT		IC											0.0
Total			11,647.0	7,850.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	19,497.0
Billings Bypass - Yellowstone River Bridge	New construction of bridge over the Yellowstone River	IC	416.2	-1,621.0									-416.2
UPN	4199-003		18,261.7	-1,621.0									16,640.6
MDT													0.0
Total			18,677.9	-1,621.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17,056.8
Billings Bypass - Five Mile Rd to US 87	Construction of connection from Five Mile to US 87	IC		500.0									500.0
UPN	4199-004			14,342.4									14,342.4
MDT													0.0
Total			0.0	14,842.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14,842.4
Billings Bypass - RR O'pass	New construction of RR O'pass	FE	764.4	469.2									1,233.6
UPN	4199-005	CN	16,929.6	520.0									17,449.6
MDT													0.0
Total			17,694.0	989.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18,683.2
Billings Bypass - Johnson Ln. Intch - RR O'pass	New construction of connection from Interchange to bridge	IC		1,000.0									1,000.0
UPN	4199-006	CN		8,252.8									8,252.8
MDT													0.0
Total			0.0	9,252.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9,252.8
Billings Bypass - Johnson Lane Intch	Reconstruction of existing Interchange	IC	-4,121.1										-4,121.1
UPN	4199-007	CN		3,800.0									3,800.0
MDT	RP 455.5												0.0
Total			-4,121.1	0.0	3,800.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7,221.1
Billings Bypass - (RR O'pass to Yellowstone R)	New construction of roadway connection from existing Interchange to the bridge over the railroad	CN		7,226.3									7,226.3
UPN	4199-008												0.0
MDT	Intersection Improvements												0.0
Total			7,226.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7,226.3
Exposition Dr. & 1st Ave. N Bypass	Intersection Improvements	FE	1,537.3										1,537.3
UPN	7908	CN		9,096.4									9,096.4
MDT	BP 35 to 1.35												0.0
Total			1,537.3	9,096.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10,633.7
Underpass Ave. Improvements	Inter section Improvements	CN	10,763.2	2,690.1									13,453.3
UPN	0009		10,763.2	2,690.1									13,453.3
MDT	BP 51 to 72												0.0
Total			10,763.2	2,690.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13,453.3
Airport Rd. & Main St. - Bypass	Inter section Improvements	OT		295.6									295.6
UPN	8718	RP		2,229.8									2,525.4
MDT		BE			350.7								350.7
		IC			61.2								61.2
		CN			153.1								153.1
Total			2,254.4	350.7	0.0	214.3	8,122.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11,213.3
1st Ave. N - N 9th to RR King	Reconstruction of roadway Major Rehab	FE	2,984.3										2,984.3
UPN	9022	RW											59.8
MDT		IC											59.8
		CN											12,438.3
Total			2,984.3	0.0	0.0	59.8	59.8	12,438.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15,542.2
Zoo Drive Improvements	Inter section Improvements	FE	499.7										499.7
UPN	9597	RW		170.8									170.8
MDT		IC		227.7									227.7
		CN			5,037.6								5,037.6
Total			499.7	398.5	5,037.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,935.9
1st Ave. N - RR King to Broadway	Reconstruction of roadway Major Rehab	FE	811.1										811.1
UPN	9680	RW											12.4
MDT		IC											255.6
		CN											8,238.2
Total			811.1	0.0	268.1	8,338.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9,427.3
1st Ave. N - Broadway to Division	Reconstruction of roadway Major Rehab	FE	840.7										840.7
UPN	9681	RW											12.6
MDT		IC											350.6
		CN											7,725.6
Total			840.7	0.0	363.2	7,725.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8,929.5
Montana Ave Crosswalks - BLDG	Subway Improvements ADA compliance	FE	120.2										120.2
UPN	9998	RW											25.6
MDT		IC											51.3
		CN											2,188.2
Total			120.2	0.0	0.0	76.9	2,188.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,385.3
NH TOTAL			79,976.2	21,287.8	34,409.7	17,414.9	11,370.9	13,438.3	0.0	23,873.9	154,023.9		177,897.8

BOC

added in phases
added in phases

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF August 7, 2024



Discussion

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

Motion

Woody Woods motioned to approve the amendment of the FY2024-2028 TIP as submitted, with Kurtis Schneiber seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

Other Business

Lora announced that the regular PCC meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2024, to finalize the UPWP. The agenda will feature an FHWA presentation to review findings and a discussion on the final action for the UPWP.

ADJOURNMENT: 12:15pm

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

Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk

Date: 08/20/2024
Title: 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
Presented by: Lora Mattox
Department: Planning & Community Services
Presentation: Yes

Information

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Policy Coordinating Committee approve the FY25 UPWP based on the recommendations of the Planning Board, City Council and Board of County Commissioners.

BACKGROUND (Consistency with Adopted Plans and Policies, if applicable)

The City-County Planning Division is presenting the 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) for approval. The UPWP is primarily for programming federal funds that Billings receives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for transportation planning and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for transit (MET) planning. These funds are passed through the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). All transportation planning activities are included in the UPWP to represent a comprehensive document for the urban transportation planning program. This UPWP proposes planning activities for Federal Fiscal Year 2025, running from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, and corresponds directly with the Planning Division's annual work plan.

Significant changes in this year's program include:

- Funding to maintain the Billings MPO Travel Demand Model, staff is anticipating that the ability to access the model in conjunction with the City of Billings Transportation System Study proposed will assist with review of proposed changes to road design and functionality;
- The review and modification of the 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan Project list and MPO Planning Boundary to comply with recent recommendations from FHWA;
- Update to the Mobile Trail Application;
- Completion of the transportation elements of the West End and Billings Heights Neighborhood Plans;
- The 21st Street Underpass Study (carry over from 2024);
- Bike Share RFP; And
- An update to the City of Billings Complete Streets Progress Report also in conjunction with the City of Billings Transportation System Study.

The Transit section is Chapter II of the UPWP. The document is consistent with past programs in both content and format.

STAKEHOLDERS

The local review of the UPWP each year involves public discussion sessions, work sessions, and regular business meetings of the City Council, Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners, and Yellowstone County Board of Planning (Planning Board). The Planning Board also conducts a legally advertised public hearing at one of its meetings to review the UPWP. The public can provide comments, ask questions at any of these meetings, as well as provide formal public testimony at the Planning Board.

ALTERNATIVES

PCC may:

- Approve the UPWP based on the recommendations of the City/County Planning Board, City Council, and Board of County Commissioners.
- Reject the program and not approve the UPWP based on the recommendations of the City/County Planning Board, City Council, and Board of County Commissioners. Rejection of the UPWP would conflict with the operations of the Billings MPO, lead to a significant reduction in funding for planning activities in Billings and Yellowstone County, and affect staff, resources, and future transportation planning processes and programs.

FISCAL EFFECTS

Approval of the 2025 UPWP allows the City to access federal funds for transportation planning in the community.

Federal and local funds are combined to provide most of the planning work done by the Planning Division for the City and the County. If the UPWP is not approved, there would be a significant loss of resources for community planning, and the community's ability to manage transportation planning projects and programs would be severely limited. The estimated breakdown of funding sources for the FY 2025 UPWP is as follows:

- \$274,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (City of Billings)
 - \$170,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (Yellowstone County)
 - \$642,650 Yellowstone County Planning Levy
 - \$1,121,534 Federal Planning (PL) Allocation
- Total Local and Federal Program Funding (UPWP): \$2,208,184

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the PCC approve the FY25 UPWP.

Approval of the UPWP grants access to federal funds for transportation planning, combining federal and local funds to support most planning work. Without approval, community planning resources would be significantly reduced, limiting the management of transportation projects.

Attachments

Draft 2025 UPWP

Billings Urban Area

Unified Planning Work Program

(UPWP)

Federal Fiscal Year

2025

Prepared By:

Billings/Yellowstone County Planning Division
2825 3rd Avenue North, 4th Floor
Billings, Montana 59101

In Cooperation With:

Montana Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration



UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

The Billings Urban Area planning process is organized and conducted in a cooperative, coordinated, and comprehensive manner. The Yellowstone County Board of Planning, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is charged with the responsibility of administering the planning process. Under federal regulations, an MPO must be established for urban areas with populations greater than 50,000 in order to receive federal funds for construction projects and transportation planning. This document, the Billings Urban Area Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and a companion document, the Prospectus, is the foundation upon which the planning process is based.

The UPWP is developed each year, and once adopted and approved by FHWA and FTA, is in effect from October 1 to September 30. The UPWP contains a task-by-task discussion of projects, which are to be undertaken during the program year. It also contains appropriate funding information, staffing information, and a schedule for each project. The UPWP undergoes a comprehensive review at the local, state, and federal levels each year.

This year, Federal Fiscal Year 2025, the format for work program activities conforms to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Ch 2 pt 4 of FTA Circular 8100.1D. The Montana Department of Transportation and the Yellowstone County Board of Planning have mutually agreed upon use of this format.

The UPWP is a detailed description of projects, which occur on a routine basis. Once adopted, the document is only amended if there is a change in the planning process. The UPWP also contains information pertaining to the organization of the planning process, agencies involved, and agreements between agencies involved in the process.

Cost overrun guidelines have been established by the Montana Department of Transportation and agreed to by the Yellowstone County Board of Planning. Those guidelines will determine the allowable overruns for any work program element. Overruns that surpass those outlined in the guidelines will require a UPWP amendment.

This document includes two chapters, Highway and Transit. Each chapter contains individual work elements. These work elements describe work the planning and transit staff will undertake in the program year as well as work accomplished in the past year. Also included is a breakdown of funding sources which include, Planning (PL) funds and Local (City & County) funds which are used to provide funding for non-PL eligible activities. Priorities this year include completing the Heights Neighborhood Plan, 21st Street Underpass Safety, Roadway, and Multi-Modal Improvement Study, the development of a Bike Share Request for Proposals, an update of the Complete Streets Progress Report, an update to the Trail App, a Long-Range Transportation Project List Audit and plan modification, and other projects.

IIJA/BIL requires an annual 2.5 percent of an MPO's PL allocation to be set aside for safe and accessible transportation options (SATO). To date, the MPO in FY24 is anticipating expending \$25,900. This included expenditures in the update to the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan, the West End and Billings Heights Neighborhood Plan. The FY 25 set-aside is estimated at \$20,492. The MPO will program expenditure of the remaining required set-aside in this year's projects. Note: PCC as a governing body has not formally adopted any policy outside the Federal Mandate for Alternative Modes. Any reference to Complete Streets in this document refers to the City of Billings only.

DATES OF LOCAL APPROVAL

TAC -7/18/24
PLANNING BOARD -8/13/24
COUNTY COMMISSION -8/6/24
CITY COUNCIL -8/12/24
PCC -8/20/24
MDT- FWHA -

CHAPTER I

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF PLANNING

SECTION I UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

100 PROGRAM SUPPORT & ADMINISTRATION

100 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

- To administer the area-wide planning process.
- To support the Board of Planning and other Boards, Commissions, and the City Council and County Commissioners in decision-making activities in the planning process.
- To engage in administrative and financial actions related to identified planning activities and to prioritize those activities.
- To enhance staff skills and maintain staff exposure to the "state-of-the-art" in planning practice and computer software.
- To maintain contact with, provide input to, and receive feedback from various local, state and federal agencies, committees and groups during the planning process.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

Conformance with federal, state, and local administrative and regulatory requirements, as well as maintenance of planning operations was achieved for FY24.

Members of the planning staff attended various professional meetings, workshops, and conferences at which planning, transportation, transit, bicycle/pedestrian and related topics were presented and discussed.

Specifically, the City-County Planning Division (Planning Division) and members of other local, state and federal departments and agencies actively participated in a diverse set of local meetings, including the Billings Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), Billings & Yellowstone County Zoning Commissions and Boards of Adjustment, Board of Planning, City Annexation Committee, City Development Process Review Committee, Community Development Board, Public Works (formerly the Traffic Control) Board, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Historic Preservation Board and others. Staff also participates in meetings with MDT and the other MPO's quarterly to discuss activities and issues. Billings MPO also meets with MDT to discuss project coordination and issues.

Planning staff received updates in computer software programs for the geographic information system and its application to mapping data layers such as streets, land use, address, ownerships and environmental data. This GIS information is vital to provide to consultants for local plan development. Staff regularly utilizes an application tracking and project management software system that integrates the existing City building permit, finance and land management software, as well as coordinated subdivision and development project reviews across City and County departments. This software allows for electronic submittal of building, sign, fence and exempt plats for local review. Staff also reviewed/updated the City Annexation Policy and Limits of Annexation Map and assisted in updates to the

City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Implementation of the City of Billings Complete Streets Policy is ongoing with the continued collection of data to be incorporated into the City of Billings Complete Streets Status Report that is updated and published every three years. Implementation of the Billings Community Transportation Safety Plan will continue with reporting to MDT as required.

Online permitting continues to have a positive impact on development.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

All administrative functions of the Planning Division will be performed under this work element. Program management activities will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Correspondence
2. Public Relations
3. Employee Guidance, Supervision, and Training
4. Program Organization and Management
5. Consultant Liaison Activities
6. Staff Meetings
7. Negotiations
8. Preparation of Contracts
9. Performance Monitoring
10. Office Equipment Acquisition
11. Budget Management and Administration

Federal regulations require that performance measures and goals be established to monitor the performance of the region's transportation system.

The MPO will work with federal, state and local agencies to improve current performance tracking methods. Performance measures will be tracked on the MPO website and regular reporting will be provided to the Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee, MPO committees and the general public depending on the availability of related data.

With the refilling of the Planner 1 positions, senior staff has had the ability to undertake a few neighborhood planning efforts this last year and will continue in this next year with the initiation of the update to the Growth Policy, and land use plan for the newly opened Skyway Drive area. These projects have been identified with local funding.

PL Eligible Activities

- As per the MPO's public participation plan and ongoing public outreach efforts, the planning staff will make available the documents and guidelines for transportation planning activities to the community, as well as keep abreast of federal and state requirements as they relate to the overall planning processes. These activities may include distribution of the Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan (soon to be the Billings Area Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan) to community organizations or individuals, distribution of the current Billings Area Tour Map for bicycle and pedestrian users and visitors, distribution and explanation of the latest Billings Urbanized Area Traffic Count Map and Bicycle Count Map, explanation and distribution of the MPO's public participation plan to groups involved or interested in transportation planning processes in the community, and explanation and information dissemination of the TA or other grant programs to possible project applicants in the community.
- Staff will monitor the PL & Memorandum of Agreement as necessary to meet the requirements of the IIIA or any new legislation they may be approved in the upcoming fiscal year.

- Quarterly progress and expenditure reports will be prepared and transmitted to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) in order to maintain federal funding support.
- The FY 2025 UPWP will be continually appraised and monitored in terms of content and budget allocations and will be revised when deemed necessary.
- The Fiscal Year 2026 UPWP will be developed under this work element.
- The Board of Planning, Board of County Commissioners and City Council will be kept informed of the activities of the staff and their progress in completing the approved UPWP.
- All planning staff will participate in recognized and approved training programs in order to improve staff skills and capabilities. Planning expertise will be maintained through enrollment in appropriate planning and transportation-related courses at area colleges, workshops, seminars, webinars and conferences.
- Staff will adapt software programs to effectively utilize traffic data and continue computer-training programs.
- The use of PL funds for out-of-state travel and/or registration fees for the above or other purposes will continue to be subject to prior approval of MDT.
- The MPO TA Program administration will be funded through this work element.
- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will be reviewed so staff may become familiar with changes affecting the metropolitan planning process.
- Transportation Planning Intern, to mainly assist in Active Transportation duties including provide information to the Public Works Board, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and others. Data collection as it pertains to Active Transportation
- Planning activities pertaining to Bicycle-Pedestrian in this work element will include:
 - Work field inspections, handle complaints and investigate problem areas of the Bike/Pedestrian system.
 - Presentations as needed.

Locally Funded Activities

- General administrative activities will include maintenance of files, library documents, daily correspondence and preparation of necessary periodic reports.
- Interagency committee participation is included in this work element.
- All staff members will continue to participate in and encourage increased cooperation between state and local agencies, departments and governing bodies.
- The Planning Division will serve both as a coordinator of and a participant in meetings and committees.
- Planning Division involvement will include participation with such agencies as the Housing Authority, Big Sky Economic Development (BSED), Air Pollution Control Board, RiverStone Health (City-County Health Department), Healthy by Design, legislative study committees, and other agencies.
- Staff will continue to implement long-term document storage through virtual servers and cloud storage platforms.

STAFFING

24.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

The Planning Division will be responsible for administering the area-wide planning process for the City and County.

PRODUCT

- An ongoing administrative program focused primarily on effective and expeditious implementation of this UPWP.

- The continual enhancement of the Planning Division staff skills and knowledge.
- Maintenance of a coordinated, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process that is endorsed and supported by the local community.
- The development of the FY26 UPWP.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$280,500	\$229,500	\$510,000
TOTAL	\$280,500	\$229,500	\$510,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	55	45	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$295,900	\$242,100	\$538,000**
TOTAL	\$280,500	\$229,500	\$510,000**

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

** Record Keeping via virtual servers and cloud storage, scanning - \$8,000, Transportation Planning Intern \$10,000.

OBJECTIVE

- To coordinate the dissemination of information and exchange of ideas between planning agencies and the interested public, decision-makers, and other departments, agencies, and organizations related to the Billings MPO.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

Members of the planning staff were involved in a wide range of service tasks. Planning services included presentations related to roadways and alternative transportation, responding to citizen inquiry and complaints regarding streets, subdivision layout, site distance, zoning request, conformance with the 2024 Transportation Plan and the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, City of Billings 2016 Growth Policy, the Lockwood Growth Policy and various neighborhood and community plans.

Staff presented transportation planning information to its organization and agency partners as needed for educational and decision-making purposes. Planning staff also shared information with the community and stakeholders throughout the development of several planning efforts.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- Staff is targeting webinars which educate staff and public on the transportation planning process and funding as related to the operation of the MPO.
- The Planner I position will also be working within this element. These positions will provide transportation and related planning information to the general public and interested organizations.
- Planning Division and Transportation Planning staff continually look at ways to disseminate and provide information on transportation activities, social media posts addressing transportation safety, and upcoming events.

Locally Funded Activities

- Staff will continue to develop and use website tools to enable citizens to access information on upcoming planning activities, board and commission meetings, and recent land use applications, as well as interact with various planning processes through email notification and online comment programs. Staff will look at implementing citizen access to the Questys System software for access to historical data related to transportation, zoning and other planning applications.
- Continue increasing community and agency awareness of the interrelationships between land use development and transportation needs through dissemination of information and drafting of planning documents that incorporate both elements together.

STAFFING

4 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

As Assigned.

PRODUCT

- A responsive and flexible planning process utilizing staff capable of providing short-term findings and recommendations, as well as ongoing customer service to the public on all levels of planning projects and regulations.
- Provide transportation related webinars to staff, local officials and general public to educate on current transportation issues.
- In addition to the transportation specific webinars, staff also provides general planning webinars that are advertised to all city staff, local officials and the general public. These webinars are scheduled routinely and can include up to 3 webinars a month. Participation anticipated at these webinars is 5-10 person per viewing. This number can fluctuate depending on the topic. Staff participation is approximately 3-5 per viewing contingent on scheduling.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - SERVICE

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$64,000
TOTAL	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$64,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	50	50	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$32,500	\$32,500	\$65,000
TOTAL	\$32,500	\$32,500	\$65,000

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

102 CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

OBJECTIVE

- To solicit information concerning community values and goals and to receive community input into the development of plans and projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

Numerous meetings with service clubs, civic groups, and professional organizations were attended by staff members to discuss all facets of local planning. The Planning Board used extensive public input to review and receive comments on a wide range of planning issues throughout the City and County. Meetings of neighborhood task force organizations and neighborhood advisory committees were also attended as requested to answer questions and review long-range planning issues, particularly related to transportation planning and projects, as well as code enforcement complaints. Projects specifically related to citizens and citizen boards included the update to the 2016 Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan and the final development of the Phase II Safe Routes to School Plan.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- Outreach to the public and all affected jurisdictions for ongoing transportation projects, including but not limited to several MDT planning and construction projects such as the North Billings Bypass, 1st Avenue North reconstruction, 6th Street Underpass project and several MPO projects. The MPO has several projects that will be completed and initiated this upcoming year including the completion of the update to the 2016 Bike/Ped plan as well as the new transportation planning studies identified in this UPWP.
- The staff will continue to support the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Committee is responsible for forwarding recommendations to the Planning Board and governing bodies on bicycle safety, bike lanes, pedestrian safety and access, and other matters. The group will be involved in the nomination and review of TA Program eligible projects, bicycle and pedestrian signing and safety projects, grant applications for non-motorized transportation projects, and community education and outreach on bicycle and pedestrian safety within the MPO.
- The MPO has several planning efforts this year and next, as part of its continuous efforts to engage the public in these transportation planning efforts, staff will be actively engaged with the City of Billings Public Information Officer (PIO) to push information and public participation opportunities to the community.
- TAC and PCC meetings will be held, and meeting information disseminated as necessary.
- Staff will continue to update and maintain the MPO's website to provide the most current up to date information to the community.
- Staff will utilize web-based GIS and web mapping software for assistance in transportation planning.
- Some of the specific projects that will involve community participation include the completion of the update to the Bike and Ped Plan, an update to the Complete Street Progress Report, a Bike/Scooter Share RFP, and other transportation planning elements identified in Work Element 302. These projects will include extensive public participation and solicitation.

Locally Funded Activities

- Meetings with various citizen groups will be coordinated and attended for the purpose of soliciting information and ideas on a broad range of planning issues within the Billings Urban Area and throughout Yellowstone County.

- Community participation using new tools and techniques will also be included in all planning studies proposed within this document.
- Staff will utilize web-based GIS and Web mapping software for assistance in land-use planning.

STAFFING

6.0 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- A comprehensive and coordinated solicitation and collection of public opinions in order to accurately reflect the preferences and priorities of the citizens within the Billings Urban Area.
- An enhanced integrated web-based public participation software that includes MPO and general planning projects and procedures and other pertinent information.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	50	50	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$51,000	\$51,000	\$102,000
TOTAL	\$51,000	\$51,000	\$102,000

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

200 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

200 Community Planning

OBJECTIVE

- To maintain records and make projections of population and dwelling unit data, land use information, employment data, and to maintain adequate financial records, files and reports.
- To provide current, accurate information pertaining to the quantity of residential, commercial, industrial, and public land in the MPO and across the County.
- To summarize and analyze development trends and to provide visual information to the City Council, County Commission, Planning Board and the public during the public input process for transportation and land-use decision making.
- To recommend implementation of the goals, policies, and strategies of the adopted 2016 City of Billings and Lockwood Growth Policies.
- Implementation of Long-Range Transportation Plan and Planning Studies.
- The current ten planning factors have been reviewed and incorporated in this UPWP. The factors are:
 - 1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
 - 2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
 - 3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
 - 4) Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.
 - 5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth, housing and economic development patterns.
 - 6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
 - 7) Promote efficient system management and operation.
 - 8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
 - 9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
 - 10) Enhance travel and tourism.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

Staff reviewed and analyzed the most current release of the 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data. Current ACS data is updated and placed in various databases as it has become available. Data gathered and updated included annual information related to population estimates for city and counties within the State of Montana. This annual information is used by the public and public agencies for planning purposes. The ACS is accessed for review and dissemination, and updated information released by the US Census Bureau in regard to commuting patterns. Other data gathered includes:

- Building Permits, Demolition Permits, Electrical Permits, Subdivision Applications, Zoning Applications, Special Reviews, Variances, temporary use permits, sign permits, zoning compliance permits and zoning clarification documents, annexation data, population trends, land use trends, school enrollment, employment data and general economic indicators.

The planning staff continues to review the most current ACS data and information from the 2020 Census data and estimates for population and demographic data. Census information is made available to various local agencies and organizations and to the general public. The data is used for developing reports, grant applications and planning documents such as Transportation and Land Use Plans and for projects like the Recreational Trails Program Grant and other grants as needed.

The City-County Planning Division, on behalf of the Billings MPO, is responsible for preparing a City of Billings Complete streets (excluding Yellowstone County) Progress Report every three years. This direction was outlined in the City of Billings Complete streets (excluding Yellowstone County) Policy: “The City will periodically collect, review and report performance data and benchmark measurements to demonstrate the effectiveness of the policy.” This effort was completed with the first-ever City of Billings Complete streets (excluding Yellowstone County) Benchmark Report prepared in 2013. The Report is updated on a 3-year cycle with the most current update occurring in 2020. This [Progress Report](#) includes comparison of various data sets related to motorized and non-motorized transportation.

Zoning data developed in element 204 for the entire City and County zoning jurisdictions was provided to neighborhood task force groups and others as requested.

Numerous other special purpose maps were prepared for meeting purposes including bicycle trail maps, annexation maps, estimated development density maps and tables for the Limits of Annexation Map area, and other project influence areas. Natural resources, 2020 Census, and jurisdictional boundary information was updated or developed. Traffic count station locations were geo-positioned and linked with the City-County traffic count matrix. The City also upgraded its internal mapping system with an ArcGIS product that makes access to the most current property data and aerial photography better and easier for staff when researching existing conditions of transportation corridors and adjacent property. The new system provides a robust City GIS base map for use in application reviews, transportation planning efforts, and general customer inquiries. Ongoing review and implementation of sub-area neighborhood and transportation plans, and other planning documents was carried out by staff.

While not a part of PL funds, the City of Billings was awarded a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant from the US DOT. The Active Transportation Planner anticipates dedicating a significant amount of time to managing this grant, including coordinating a public education campaign about Safe Routes to School and helping to provide management for the implementation of Safe Routes to School projects.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- The MPO is proposing adding an additional employee this year to the PL formula. In 2008, the recession forced the Planning Division to reorganize staffing and eliminated the Long Range/Neighborhood Planner position. Based on community and City Council goals, this position is needed to complete numerous neighborhood, subarea, and long range plans. The funding structure is set at a 30-70 split, with 30 percent of the budget provided by the PL and the remaining 70 percent covered by local funding. This collaborative funding approach ensures that the Neighborhood Planner is well-resourced to address local needs while aligning with broader planning objectives. The Neighborhood Planner will play a crucial role in the MPO’s transportation planning activities, including:
 - Community Engagement.
 - Data Collection and Analysis.
 - Assistance with the development of Transportation Plans.

- The web-based GIS software is compatible with available datasets and utilizes the existing data sets more effectively. The GIS software will be utilized to develop a series of maps, including existing and proposed pedestrian trail routes and projects in the community, maps to implement the Long-Range Transportation Plan, updates to a preferred growth area map in conjunction with the City’s Limits of Annexation Map, mapping of focus areas for implementation of the City’s Infill Development Policy, and others. This ability of the GIS program allows for anticipating and planning for the transportation network in areas of annexation and infill. This will assist in the implementation of our LRTP and project planning for future plans and studies.
- The planning staff, under the direction of the Board of Planning, will continue to work on long-range planning projects according to the priorities established by both the City of Billings and Yellowstone County. In particular, the continuing implementation of the 2024 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, and the update to the 2017 Bikeway and Trails Master Plan.

Work related to Bicycle-Pedestrian activities in this work element will include:

- Work with staff to ensure a bike/pedestrian friendly community.
- Review of proposed subdivisions for non-motorized transportation connectivity.

Locally Funded Activities

- Senior staff will be undertaking development of a variety of long-range land use plans this upcoming year that all will include significant public involvement and engagement including as mentioned earlier.
- The Planner I’s will continue to undertake the review of:
 - Zoning applications. The development and adoption of Project Re:Code now ties land uses and land patterns to the road and street network.
 - Site development plans to address clear vision and controlled and shared access points.
 - Site development plans address newly implemented build to zones which prevent traffic flow in front of buildings.
 - Site orientations that allow for internal traffic and other services, for example, drive through locations.
- Staff also will continue to work with the Big Sky Economic Development (BSED) to implement the Master Plan for the East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD), the Hospitality Corridor Planning Study, the Exposition Gateway Concept Plan and the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) Master Plan. The plans include detailed analysis of the transportation and land use connections in the area and promote sustainable development projects.
- Staff plans to work with the City, County, BSED, and neighborhood groups to identify planning needs in various parts of the urbanized area.
- Continued maintenance and update of socio-economic and land use data for both transportation and comprehensive planning activities will continue in 2025, with 2020 Decennial Census data and the 2022 American Community Survey data.
- Various GIS databases and layers will continue to be developed and centrally maintained, including information on neighborhoods, community assets, route planning, trail systems and transportation plans.
- The new web-based system tracking and managing projects will include application information on zoning and subdivision applications.
- Neighborhood planning activities will be initiated to identify local issues and strategies to assist neighborhood groups and organizations with neighborhood sustainability, equity, and safety.

STAFFING

29 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- Various reports, files, and projections of socio-economic data necessary for current transportation and comprehensive planning activities, as well as support of City/County economic development activities.
- An ongoing GIS database/mapping system for the City of Billings and Yellowstone County.
- Ongoing updates to the preferred growth areas mapping and analysis for the City, implementation of the City Infill Development Policy, SBURD Master Plan, the 2024 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, 2018 Public Participation Plan, the Downtown Area Traffic Circulation and Safety Study, Wayfinding Sign Plan, and the Heritage Trail Tour Map and App.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - COMMUNITY PLANNING

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$105,000	\$245,000	\$350,000
TOTAL	\$105,000	\$245,000	\$350,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE			
AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	30	70	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$104,400	\$243,600	\$348,000
TOTAL	\$104,400	\$243,600	\$348,000

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

OBJECTIVE

- To oversee, interpret and enforce current City and County zoning regulations.
- To effectively administer the regulations and provide efficient service to the elected officials and the public.
- To maintain current zoning and land use information for all zoned property within the jurisdiction of the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization to use in long-range transportation planning studies, traffic analysis, and transportation projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

Staff continues to see robust applications for zone changes, special reviews, variances, and planned developments. Reports and recommendations were prepared on each case to the various boards, commissions, and governing bodies. Digital photos are now incorporated into all zoning reports and Microsoft Power Point presentations are given to all boards and commissions. Staff is in the process of ongoing scanning of historic zoning files in preparation of future citizen access through a new archiving system software. All applications for building permits were also reviewed for compliance with City and County zoning regulations. Special zoning studies and ordinance updates were prepared as requested by the governing bodies. These included making a series of zoning code amendments to bring the regulations into compliance with changes in State Law and changes driven by community interests.

Staff coordinated with the County GIS Department to ensure that all zone changes within the Billings MPO area were reflected on GIS online and printed maps to ensure land use information was current.

A significant amount of time was also spent assisting the public with general zoning questions. The status of all active zoning applications is now posted on the City/County Planning websites.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025**PL Eligible Activities**

- Zoning, Special Review, and Variance applications will be reviewed for land use compatibility, traffic, access, and overall site design.
- Staff will continue to maintain its zoning maps and land use information so that it is applicable to long-range transportation planning efforts in the Billings MPO. This information is regularly applied to a variety of MPO functions, including corridor analysis efforts like those involved in the Billings Bypass project, specific road projects, TA program applications and non-motorized grant applications.
- Staff will continue implementing the Zoning Code. Staff continues to review and trouble-shooting inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the code with the intent to make any needed amendments within the next 2-years. As stated earlier, the Zoning Code places a higher emphasis on the transportation system, including road classification; safety and connectivity is vital to how the adjacent land uses for residential and commercial development are built. The road system emphasizes location and setting of any structures.
- The Planner I's allow senior staff to take a more active role in long range planning. It is anticipated that the Planner I's will undertake the review of:
 - Zoning applications. Project Re:Code now ties land uses and land patterns to the road and street network.
 - Site development plans to address clear vision and controlled and shared access points.

- Site development plans to address newly implemented build to zones which prevent traffic flow in front of buildings.
- Site orientations that allow for internal traffic and other services, for example, drive through locations.

Locally Funded Activities

- Carrying out the day-to-day activities required to effectively administer the zoning regulations as well as ensure that land use information is current and available for all long-range transportation planning efforts, including Transportation Plan updates, specific road projects, corridor studies and the North Bypass project.
- Activity in 2025 will include ordinance updates as required by State law or requested by the public or governing bodies.
- All zone change applications will be reviewed for compliance with local plans.
- Staff will continue the update to Zoning Code based on fulfilling policy goals set by the local governing body including Growth Policy, Neighborhood Plans, and by increasing safe and accessible transportation planning options Streets and Infill Policies.

STAFFING

13.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- Effective zoning regulations and administration for the City of Billings and Yellowstone County. Effective enforcement of the zoning regulations for Yellowstone County.
- Online submittal capability for certain zoning permits, i.e., sign and fence will increase efficiency and convenience for applicants.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - ZONING ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$42,400	\$169,600	\$212,000
TOTAL	\$42,400	\$169,600	\$212,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	20	80	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$42,000	\$168,000	\$210,000
TOTAL	\$42,400	\$168,000	\$210,000

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

OBJECTIVE

- To maintain the current City and County subdivision regulations and ensure that they are updated when changes in State law occur.
- To effectively administer the regulations and provide efficient service to developers, engineers and surveyors, elected officials, and the community.
- To ensure that development is occurring with minimal negative impacts to the community and that subdivisions are designed to be safe and long lasting in the community.
- To evaluate traffic accessibility studies, general circulation data, and ensure conformity with the Functional Classification Map and associated elements of the Long-Range Transportation Plan when a subdivision application is submitted.
- To collect, manage, and apply subdivision development information for long-range transportation planning activities for the MPO – including but not limited to updates to the transportation plan and maintenance of inputs for traffic modeling.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

The Board of Planning and the planning staff reviewed all preliminary major and minor plat applications. Numerous conceptual and pre-application meetings were coordinated and attended by staff. All final plats were reviewed and processed. Also, a significant amount of time was spent assisting the public with general subdivision questions. Updates to the City and County Subdivision Regulations due to legislative changes were drafted and approved.

Staff collected and compiled information on the details of each new subdivision, such as the of numbers of lots and land area slated for development. This information is integral to any transportation plan updates or long-range transportation planning efforts undertaken by the MPO in the community to determine population growth and location of residents and commercial services that affect the transportation system. This involved monthly subdivision activity reporting and periodic reviews of new development locations. This is also considered in relation to the TA program and when the MPO pursues grants for non-motorized transportation projects in the community.

The MPO continues to implement and enforce the Suburban Subdivision Regulations that require property currently outside the city limits but within the County Zoning Jurisdiction that may be annexed in the future to develop at city standards for infrastructure such as sidewalk, storm water management and future utility access. This procedure has been a positive to residential development on the city fringe areas and contributes to the development of safe and accessible transportation options.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- Staff will review all subdivisions for compliance with the Billings Area Long Range Transportation Plan, and for conformity with the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, Lockwood Transportation Plan, Blue Creek Transportation Plan, and other neighborhood and community transportation plans as applicable.
- Staff also will continue to collect information on the details of each new subdivision as an integral data source for long-range transportation planning efforts undertaken by the MPO. The MPO expects to use this data in

2025 for a variety of projects, including the implementation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Bike/Ped Plan and continued analysis for the North Bypass.

- In the last couple years with the addition of the new Planner I to the UPWP, the Division has additional assistance in reviewing subdivision applications for compliance with the various transportation and planning documents overseeing land use within the MPO and Planning jurisdictional area.

Locally Funded Activities

- All subdivision applications will be reviewed for compliance with local and state subdivision law.
- Staff will continue to carry out the day-to-day activities required to effectively administer the subdivision regulations, and to keep the regulations current.
- Continued implementation of the Suburban Subdivision Regulations within the County Zoning Jurisdiction area.

STAFFING

15 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- An effective subdivision review process regarding local and state law, the Growth Policy, and the Billings Area Transportation Plan.
- Accurately identified and reviewed the street segments proposed in the new subdivision to ensure their alignment with the designated road functional classifications as outlined in the 2023 Transportation Plan Functional Classification Map. This involved a thorough analysis to verify that each street segment meets the specific criteria and standards set forth in the plan, ensuring consistency with the broader transportation network and supporting the intended flow of traffic. The review process included cross-referencing proposed street layouts with the functional classification map, assessing potential impacts on traffic patterns, and confirming that the street segments will contribute to an efficient and well-coordinated transportation system within the subdivision and its connection to existing infrastructure.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - SUBDIVISION ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$64,500	\$150,500	\$215,000
TOTAL	\$64,500	\$150,500	\$215,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	30	70	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$63,900	\$149,100	\$213,000
TOTAL	\$63,900	\$149,100	\$213,000

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

300 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

300 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DATA

OBJECTIVE

- To develop and maintain current transportation system data files and records.
- To provide transportation planning and data information to City and County staff, elected officials, developers, engineering firms, and the general public.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

The traffic, trail and bike lane count programs for FY 2024 was completed. Travel times/delay/speed studies were completed, calculations computed, and level-of-service values determined. This data was used for various planning and engineering projects throughout the year. In addition, the public commonly requests this data for land use planning.

Staff participated in the update of the City of Billings Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Crash information was compiled and analyzed. Crash data is also used in many of the planning studies undertaken by the MPO. The staff also continued to utilize the trail scanners that were purchased and found new and better ways to both use the scanners in more trail locations in the community and display the data for various applications. A couple of years ago, the MPO also took over collection and distribution of the data from the Lockwood sidewalk counters purchased through the Lockwood Pedestrian Safety District.

The transportation data was also utilized for completion of the Billings Bypass Corridor Study, Safe Routes to School Plan Update, the 2023 LRTP Update and the Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP).

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- The traffic count program for the Billings Urban Area as well as the Yellowstone County influence area will be conducted and the appropriate data recorded during FY2025. All traffic count data will be submitted to the MDT by February 1, 2025.
- Staff will update, where appropriate, the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- Continue with the contract position with City Engineering to continue traffic and trail counts.
- Staff will collect and maintain bike/pedestrian information through the trail census and use of the trail-bike/pedestrian scanners. The information from the bike/pedestrian counts links directly to the development of the LRTP and the MPO's non-motorized planning studies. These counts also contribute to other planning projects such as the City of Billings Complete Streets Progress Report. This activity is in conjunction with MPO region wide planning.
- The traffic count data archive will be maintained and accessible for other agencies and the public.
- Data will also be used during proposed FY25 Planning Studies.
- The Bicycle-Pedestrian activities will continue. Duties will include but not limited to:
 - Maintain Bike/pedestrian data bases in conjunction with MPO region wide planning purposes.
 - Maintain data base for easement acquisition.
 - Transportation Planning Intern will assist in the above-mentioned duties for the Active Transportation Planner.

STAFFING

13.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning
11.0 Staff Months - City Engineering (Contract Position)

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning/MDT

PRODUCT

- Documentation as necessary, support of transportation grant programs, transportation system modeling, updated Traffic Count Program, and research and integration of traffic information into planning projects and development review activities.
- Current traffic count data. Traffic counts are vital for any long-range planning efforts and during development of commercial and residential projects. Traffic counts also directly relate to the development of projects in the LRTP and ultimately for programming in the TIP.
- Current bike/pedestrian counts. MPO uses these counts for the development of the non-motorized network. This information is used for the development of the Bikeway and Trails Master Plan (being updated as the Billings Area Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan) as well as for applications for various grants.
- To comply with Federal Guidelines for reporting Performance Measures under the BUILD Grant, the MPO will contract to develop the following performance measure components: Crash rates by type and severity, average daily traffic, and bike and pedestrian count/trips. This information is required at various time frames including a baseline, year 1, year 2, and final report in year 3.
- The City of Billings is developing a Transportation Master Plan to evaluate the existing road network and various transportation elements. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) proposes using PL funding for travel demand modeling to analyze proposed roadway improvements or scenario planning. This modeling will help assess how the proposed roadways would function and their overall impact on the transportation network. The MPO has previously contracted with Kittelson & Associates for modeling assistance with transportation planning projects as needed.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DATA

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000**
TOTAL	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000**

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$190,000	\$0	\$190,000**
TOTAL	\$190,000	\$0	\$190,000**

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%. **This Includes - \$12,500 for Traffic Counters, \$500 for a Traffic Tech tablet, \$75,000 for Maintenance of the Billings MPO Travel Demand Model.

301 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

OBJECTIVE

- Implement the Goals and Objectives in the Billings Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Develop (where necessary) and maintain data for the urban area in order to effectively monitor and evaluate the validity of the Transportation Plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

Staff implemented the 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan. Elements in the Plan include Goals and Objectives, a Transit section, an analysis of the railroad interface with the community, and a review of current projects listed in the Plan.

Staff has actively been participating in the update to the Billings West End Plan. This plan, completed in 2013, created a land use plan for a rapidly growing area. With the grant funds, plus PL funds for a transportation element, this plan can be updated to look at today's current land use and the community desire for this continuing growing area of the MPO. In addition to the West Billings Plan, the Planning Division is also updating the Heights Neighborhood Plan that also contains a separate PL funded transportation element. Also, with the changes in the land use section of the Montana Code during this last Legislative session, the Billings City Council allocated funding to update the 2016 Billings Growth Policy. Finally, with the construction of Skyway Drive (Inner Belt Loop), the Division will be undertaking a joint project with the City of Billings Public Works Department on a land use plan that will identify infrastructure/utility needs and desired land use development.

Staff will continue to move forward to finalize the update to the 2017 Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan. This will include working with MDT, City and County Public Works and other organizations with the continued development of the non-motorized transportation system.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- During the FHWA/MDT audit of the Billings MPO, FHWA provided constructive recommendations on the project list in the 2023 LRTP, highlighting several inaccuracies and noting that the list was confusing to review. The MPO proposes using PL funds to audit and redesign the project list to ensure accurate funding sources and listings. Additionally, the MPO needs to update its urban planning boundary to comply with the 2020 Census review of the urbanized area. These updates will be incorporated into a modification of the 2023 LRTP to address these needs.
- Update the Trail Mobile Application. The trail mobile application was created in 2019 to make it easier for residents and visitors to utilize the bikeway and trail system with an easy to use mobile app. 5 years later, the app needs to be updated to ensure compatibility with newer mobile devices and to update some of the user interface.
- Continue and complete the update to the Billings Heights Neighborhood Plan. The plan has a significant MPO lead transportation element this will include accident and volume data as well as neighborhood mobility, safety and equity in the transportation system. In addition to this neighborhood plan, Planning staff will be leading an effort to complete a City Council funded land use plan for the area of the Inner Belt Loop. This connection has been constructed through a Federal BUILD grant. This land use plan will build off the 2020 Inner Belt Loop Corridor Study completed by the MPO.
- Projects will continue to be reviewed for future implementation in the City's CIP and the MPO's TIP.

STAFFING

13 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- Implementation of transportation projects identified in the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, the Transportation Improvements Program, Transportation Plan and the Capital Improvements Program.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$400,000	\$0	\$400,000**
TOTAL	\$400,000	\$0	\$400,000**

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$150,000	\$0	\$150,000**
TOTAL	\$150,000	\$0	\$150,000**

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

**Approximately \$50,000 for LRTP Project Audit/Plan Modification, \$20,000 Update to the Mobile Trail Application, \$37,500 to complete the Heights Neighborhood Plan.

OBJECTIVE

- To update and develop site-specific plans and transportation studies where appropriate.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

- Completed and adopted Phase II of the Safe Routes to School Plan. This study includes Billings Middle, County Urban Elementary, and Private Schools interested in participating in the development of a Safe Routes to School Plan.
- The continuation of the update to the 2017 Bikeway and Trails Master Plan.
- Hired a transportation intern to assist with transportation planning project. This intern has been continuously assisting the staff in public outreach, GIS tasks, social media posts on transportation safety, and other items.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- Develop a Bike and Scooter Share RFP. In 2020, the MPO completed a Bike and Scooter Share Feasibility Study Plan. At that time, the plan recommended implementing a City run bike and scooter share program. The industry has since changed, and several companies have approached the Billings community about running a shared mobility program in Billings. To get the most out of a potential partnership, the MPO will assist in developing an RFP to solicit a company (or possibly more) to operate in Billings. Using an RFP will help the community help to keep the shared system organized and improve integration into the rest of the transportation system.

The Bike/Scooter Share RFP will be completed mainly in-house with a small consultant contract. The MPO anticipates beginning to draft the bike/scooter share RFP in the 2nd quarter of FY2025. Given the small amount for the consultant contract, the MPO can negotiate directly with the consultant in Q2. The consultant will be brought on board to help review the RFP and provide suggestions of best practices of what has worked in other cities. During Q2, the MPO will also discuss possible bike/scooter share with the Billings City Council. During the 3rd quarter, the MPO will finish drafting the RFP. During the 4th quarter, the MPO will release the RFP for consideration by possible providers.

- 21st Street Underpass Study, this study was slated to be completed in the 2024 UPWP, but due to circumstances, this study has been moved and budget enhanced to this UPWP. The purpose of the study is to review the current facility and identify strategies and improvements for safety, multi-modal, and roadway improvements. This underpass is currently only one of two access points to circumvent the railroad during train use. Improvements to this vital connection are key to public safety and would allow use for all users, motorized and non-motorized. This project will require significant input and cooperation with Montana Rail-Link and BNSF Railroad. The MPO is proposing to draft and release the RFP for this project in the 1st quarter of FY2025 and select the consultant.

We anticipate that in the 2nd quarter of FY2025, we will work with consultant and steering committee to develop the desired elements of the study. Finally, the 3rd quarter of FY2025 would include issuing the draft for public comment, finalize the study, incorporate comments received and begin the local transportation planning review process with final action and approval by the Policy Coordinating Committee.

- The MPO will undertake the update of the Complete Streets Progress Report. This report is updated every three years, and tracks progress of the City of Billings’ Complete Streets policy. The progress report tracks performance measures and shares information about different efforts happening in the community.

The Complete Streets progress report will be completed mainly in-house with a small consultant contract. The consultant will likely conduct an economic analysis of the complete streets policy. The MPO anticipates convening the stakeholder group for the Complete Streets Progress report in the 1st quarter of FY2025. Given the small amount for the consultant contract, the MPO can negotiate directly with the consultant in Q1. During the 2nd quarter, the MPO, along with stakeholders, will draft the plan. During Q3, the MPO anticipates wrapping up the report and presenting it to City Council.

- The Transportation Planning Intern is scheduled to assist in a variety of transportation activities including Safe Routes to School activities, Kids in Motion activities, Commuter Challenge, and other transportation activities identified by MPO staff.

Locally Funded Activities

- Staff will be involved in the coordination through completion of all planning studies undertaken. This includes contract negotiations, coordination of citizen advisory groups, public meetings, overseeing contract deliverables and project wrap-up.

STAFFING

8.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- Completed Urban Area-wide transportation studies for the 21st Street Underpass, update the Complete Streets Progress Report and develop a RFP for a Bike Share Project.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – PLANNING STUDIES

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$216,000	\$144,000	\$360,000**
TOTAL	\$216,000	\$144,000	\$360,000**

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	60	40	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$120,000	\$80,000	\$200,000**
TOTAL	\$120,000	\$80,000	\$200,000**

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

** 21st Street Underpass \$150,000; Bike Share RFP \$20,000; Complete Streets Progress Report Update \$20,000; Transportation Planning Intern \$10,000.

500 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

500 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE

- To maintain a viable five-year program of transportation improvements for the Billings Urban Area.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

The MPO completed four TIP amendments in FY24. These updates included updating projects, project costs and project timing. The last amendment was approved on April 28, 2024. Since that last amendment, the MPO developed a new TIP for 2024-2028.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be evaluated and updated as needed. A certification statement will be included, as appropriate, to conform to the planning regulations. Based on the Transportation Plan, projects will be evaluated and ranked in accordance with the Priority Ranking Procedures, and in accordance with consistency/conformity procedures. Necessary data will be gathered from primary and secondary sources by the planning staff based upon the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Billings Public Works Department, establishing areas of data responsibility. Conformity determinations will be prepared as necessary to ensure conformity with the Clean Air Act.

STAFFING

2.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- A current transportation improvement program which reflects conformity with FHWA, the Clean Air Act, and local priorities.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000
TOTAL	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000
TOTAL	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

600 SPECIAL PROJECTS

600 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

OBJECTIVE

- Maintain current records of monitored air pollution levels and obtain other environmental data as necessary within the Metropolitan Planning Area.
- Review proposed development and transportation system improvements with respect to environmental considerations within the MPO influence area.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

The MPO was notified that in July of 2021 the Billings Urban Area was removed from the Air Quality's "Not Classified" list. The MPO is now designated as an Attainment Area and will move the update of the LRTP from 4-years to 5-years.

The MPO collaborated with MDT on the development MDT Statewide Carbon Reduction Strategy Plan.

Air quality monitoring information was obtained from the County Air Pollution Control Board. Air quality mapping for the State Air Quality Bureau was revised. The Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program was implemented. Staff continues to monitor carbon monoxide (CO) information in the Urbanized Area.

The Socio-Economic and Environmental (SEE) effects guidelines were used to review proposed developments and transportation system improvements.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- Continue to collaborate with MDT on the Carbon Reduction Plan.
- The planning staff will continue to utilize the SEE effects guidelines to evaluate all major development proposals in terms of transportation systems. This would include the CMAQ program.
- Work will continue to maintain the Billings air quality designation.
- Staff will continue to review the MOVES Program and others like it and their relationship to the MPO.

STAFFING

2.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

Current environmental data as well as a comprehensive planning and transportation planning process that will substantially addresses the socio-economic and environmental consequences associated with growth and development.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$36,000	\$0	\$36,000
TOTAL	\$36,000	\$0	\$36,000

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$36,000	\$0	\$36,000
TOTAL	\$36,000	\$0	\$36,000

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

700 OTHER ACTIVITIES

700 UN-PROGRAMMED FUNDS

OBJECTIVE

- To provide for the accounting of available un-programmed funds in the current UPWP.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

N/A

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

PL Eligible Activities

- This work element will be utilized for accounting purposes only. No specific work activity will be charged to this work element.

STAFFING

N/A

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

N/A

PRODUCT

N/A

FUNDING SCHEDULE - CONTINGENCY

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$9,390	\$4,400	\$13,790
TOTAL	\$9,390	\$4,400	\$13,790

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	100	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL*	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$5,834	\$120,350	\$126,184
TOTAL	\$5,834	\$120,350	\$126,184

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

SECTION II -- FUNDING

TABLE I FUNDING SUMMARY FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2025

WORK ELEMENT	FUNDING SOURCES FY 2025		
	PL*	LOCAL	EST. COST
100 Administration	\$295,900	\$242,100	\$538,000
101 Service	\$32,500	\$32,500	\$65,000
102 Citizen Involvement	\$51,000	\$51,000	\$102,000
200 Community Planning	\$104,400	\$243,600	\$348,000
204 Zoning	\$42,000	\$168,000	\$210,000
205 Subdivision	\$63,900	\$149,100	\$213,000
300 Transportation System	\$190,000	\$0	\$190,000
301 Transportation Plan	\$150,000	\$0	\$150,000
302 Planning Studies	\$120,000	\$80,000	\$200,000
500 T.I.P.	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
600 Environmental	\$36,000	\$0	\$36,000
700 Un-Programmed Funds	\$5,834	\$120,350	\$126,184
TOTAL	\$1,121,534	\$1,086,650	\$2,208,184

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

TABLE II FUNDING COMPARISONS

WORK ELEMENT	FY 2025 ESTIMATED COST	FY 2024 ESTIMATED COST
100 Administration	\$538,000	\$510,000.00
101 Service	\$65,000	\$64,000.00
102 Citizen Involvement	\$102,000	\$100,000.00
200 Community Planning	\$348,000	\$350,000.00
204 Zoning	\$210,000	\$212,000.00
205 Subdivision	\$213,000	\$215,000.00
300 Transportation System	\$190,000	\$175,000.00
301 Transportation Plan	\$150,000	\$400,000.00
302 Planning Studies	\$200,000	\$360,000.00
500 T.I.P.	\$30,000	\$37,000.00
600 Environmental	\$36,000	\$36,000.00
700 Un-Programmed Funds	\$126,184	\$13,790.00
TOTAL	\$2,208,184	\$2,472,790.00

**TABLE III
FUNDING PERCENTAGES FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2025**

WORK ELEMENT	RECIPIENT	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
100 Administration	MPO	55	45	100
101 Service	MPO	50	50	100
102 Citizen Inv.	MPO	50	50	100
200 Community Planning	MPO	30	70	100
204 Zoning Administration	MPO	20	80	100
205 Subdivision Admin.	MPO	30	70	100
300 Trans. System Data	MPO	100		100
301 Transportation Plan	MPO	100		100
302 Planning Studies	MPO	60	40	100
500 T.I.P.	MPO	100		100
600 Environmental	MPO	100		100
700 Un-Programmed Funds	MPO	100		100

**TABLE IV
STAFF MONTHS BY WORK ELEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2025**

Work Element	Director-Friday	MPO Coord.-Mattox-Planner II	Planner I-Husman	Planning Manager-Vickers	Planner II (Trans)-Vac	Clerk-Berns	Planner II-Green	Planner I-Johnson	Planner I-Kelly	Zoning Coord.Planner II-Cromwell	Planner I (Trans)-Monat	Planner II (LRP)-Vac	Total M.M.
100	7	1.5	2.5	5.5	0.5	1.5	0.5	0.5	2	1	1.5	0.5	24.5
101	0.5	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	1	0	0.5	4
102	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	0	0	0	2	6
200	1.5	0	5	2	1	2	1	5	3	1	2.5	5	29
204	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	2	3	6	0	0.5	13.5
205	0	0	0.5	1	0	0.5	7.5	0	3	2	0	0.5	15
300	0	2.5	0.5	0.5	5	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	13.5
301	0.5	4	0	0.5	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	13
302	0.5	1	0	0.5	1	1	0	2.5	0	0	2	0	8.5
500	0.5	1	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5
600	0	1	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5
Total	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	132

*This table indicates approximately how many man months individual staff members work in each work element.

WORK ELEMENT	CITY TRAF. TECHNICIAN
300	11
TOTAL	11

TABLE V
ELIGIBLE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS
PLANNING ACTIVITY BY WORK ELEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2025

WORK ELEMENT	FY 2025 ELIGIBLE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS PLANNING ACTIVITY ESTIMATED COST	FY 2024 ELIGIBLE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS PLANNING ACTIVITY ESTIMATED COST
301 Transportation Plan	\$10,000	\$11,100
302 Planning Studies	\$10,492	\$25,900
TOTAL	\$20,492	\$37,000

The 2.5% PL Funding set-aside for Alternative Modes Planning activities have a match ratio of 86.58% Federal Share/13.42% State Share and are eligible for 100% Federal Share in FFY2024 and FFY2025.

SECTION III

INDIRECT COST PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Management and Budget Circular 2 CFR Part 200 is used as governing criteria for establishing the allowed costs.

IDENTIFICATION OF COSTS

The costs are delineated below by type:

DIRECT	INDIRECT	BENEFITS
Salaries & Wages	Maintenance	FICA
Legal Notices	Reproduction	PERS
Travel	Supplies	Workmen's Compensation
Printing	Postage	Accident Insurance
Training	Subscriptions	Health Insurance
Consultants	Telephone	Sick Leave
Equipment	Utilities	Vacation
Mileage	Rent	Holidays
Moving/Interview	Audit	Maternity
	Messenger	Military
		Life Insurance
		Dental Insurance

ALLOCATION OF COSTS

Direct costs will be charged to the work program line item to which they apply.

An indirect cost rate of **9%** of the City and County's direct salaries and wages is proposed. The **9%** rate will be applied to the direct wages and salaries of each line item within the work program to cover all indirect expenses.

Benefits will be calculated at a rate of **55%** of the City and County's direct salaries and wages charged to each line item.

FUNDING SOURCES

The degree of participation by each funding agency is based on the prorations which have been determined for each line item. Each agency will be billed their share of the total charges made against each line item according to the approved prorations.

Funding sources and amounts contained in the UPWP are as follows:

Planning Dept. Fees (City of Billings)	\$274,000
Planning Dept. Fees (Yellowstone Co.)	\$170,000
Yellowstone County (Mill)	\$642,650
PL*	\$1,121,534
TOTAL	\$2,208,184

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

SUMMARY

The indirect cost rate is a predetermined fixed rate which is not subject to adjustment. The base period used in determining the rate is the period from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. The calculated rate is applicable to the grant period, which is October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025.

CHAPTER II

CITY OF BILLINGS TRANSIT DIVISION

SECTION I UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM ELEMENTS

44.21.00 PROGRAM SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION

44.21.01 ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

- To provide program support, general administration, and grant administration
- To provide training in support of transit planning activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2024

Conformance with federal, state, and local administrative and regulatory requirements for maintenance of transit planning and development, as well as execution of developed plans.

Staff remained informed of Federal and State requirements concerning all federal funding sources including, but not limited to, sections 5303, 5307, 5310, and 5339. Staff managed and revised grants in response to additional allocations from state and federal sources.

Staff prepared and submitted quarterly progress and expenditure reports to MDT to maintain federal and state funding support.

Staff attended training opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills, including the Spring Montana Transit Association conference focused on transit safety planning and procurement compliance, American Public Transportation Mobility Conference with emphasis on changing mobility trends and zero emission vehicle strategies, FTA Financial Management Oversight and Procurement Training, and other education opportunities and webinars on various safety and federal requirements.

Staff maintained and updated the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan with upcoming and in-process capital projects, as well as fleet and facility metrics to ensure accurate capital and asset planning.

Updated the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan for MET Transit for the required annual review; this included additional training program development for operator and dispatch staff including a newly acquired Bus Operator Training Simulator awarded with FY22 5339c competitive funding.

Staff managed FTA Section 5303 grant activities and prepared the transit aspect of Unified Planning Work Program.

Staff prepared the DBE Program semi-annual reports and completed webinar training on updated DBE Program Plan updates from the Federal level, to ensure continued attempts to meet DBE Program goals while planning capital purchases.

Staff participated in the two-day MPO Review with FHWA, FTA, and MDT staff members, discussing and evaluating current MPO and Transit policies and procedures.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2025

All administrative functions necessary in support of transit planning and development will be performed under this work element. Activities will include:

- Continue to assess data-keeping and gathering practices with focus on further technology utilization and process improvement in response to findings in the FTA Triennial Review completed in FY2023.
- Update the 2012 DBE Program Plan based on newly required Federal updates.
- Quarterly progress and expenditure reports will be prepared and transmitted to the Montana Department of Transportation, Urban Planning Division to maintain funding requirements.
- The FY2025 UPWP will be monitored and revised as necessary.
- The FY2026 UPWP for transit activities will also be developed within this element.
- Staff will execute grant administrative functions; staff will continue research and development regarding the utilization of FTA funding, including furthering innovative funding practices and partnerships.
- Maintenance of coordination agreements with 5310 providers and, as the lead agency, updates to the Billings Area Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan.
- Research feasibility and make recommendations for capital grants in the 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities programs and other funding opportunities utilizing the TAM plan as well as the City Equipment Replacement plan.
- Extensive division policy development including procedures, regulations, codes, and practices to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local requirements as they relate to the transit planning process.
- Participate with the TAC, Transportation Coordination Plan Committee, citizen advisory boards and other committees throughout the community as needed.
- Staff will continue updating and maintaining the FTA mandated Transit Asset Management Plan.
- Staff will continue to update and implement the required Public Transit Agency Safety Plan, including annual updates, as well as further research and development of best practices.
- Assist in development of improved transit integrations in the local area Emergency plan, including regular participation in committee meetings

STAFFING

- 115.00 Transit Manager Staff Hours
- 240.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours
- 30.00 Administrative Support Staff Hours
- 80.00 Transit Operations Coordinator
- 60.00 Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours
- 10.00 Aviation/Transit Director Staff Hours

535.00 Total Staff Hours

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

PRODUCT

- Updated DBE Program Plan
- An ongoing administrative program to carry out the transit elements identified within this UPWP.
- Administrative oversight and execution of transit planning and development functions including federally required plans.
- Enhancement of transit division skills and knowledge.
- Proper maintenance and administration of grant related activities.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$6,953	\$27,814	\$34,767
TOTAL	\$6,953	\$27,814	\$34,767

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$ 9,538	\$38,152	\$47,690
TOTAL	\$ 9,538	\$38,152	\$47,690

44.24.00 SHORT RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

44.24.01 FUTURE SERVICE ANALYSIS AND ENHANCEMENTS

OBJECTIVE

To facilitate considerations of means to ensure citizens will have acceptable and improved public transportation alternatives in the future.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2024

Members of the transit division updated projections of future revenues and expenses and directed annual budget and financial resources analysis, including multi-year forecasts.

Staff arranged for and ensured execution of on-going data gathering and analysis efforts to monitor current system effectiveness and efficiency. This assisted in identification of operating and capital needs required to ensure a reliable and effective system into the future.

Staff successfully implemented fixed-route service overhaul and extended service hours developed through the previously completed Transit Development Plan on October 02, 2024, including over 450 designated bus stops.

Staff implemented a new automated vehicle location system (AVL) with automatic passenger counters (APCs) and received FTA certification for passenger counting data to be used for NTD reporting as well as approval of the associated Benchmarking Plan.

Staff continued assessment of alternative service models for the transit system in anticipation of changing ridership demands.

Staff tracked and compiled on-going ridership metrics by route and mode to support planning practices, and updated cost of service rates with new routes and budget figures.

Staff provided information and comments related to transit at meetings geared toward development, annexation, and traffic projects. Staff also received and responded to system inquiries, concerns, complaints, and suggestions.

Staff continued evaluating approximately 450 designated bus stop locations for placement, bus stop amenities, and ADA requirements based on the newly completed Bus Stop Master Plan.

Transit members attended and participated in a diverse range of transit-related and general community meetings including the Billings Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), City of Billings Transportation Team meetings, Healthy By Design Coalition meetings, City of Billings Annexation Committees, Bike and Pedestrian and West End Plan Steering Committees, Yellowstone County Health Improvement Planning

Meeting, Aging Friendly Community meetings, Safe Routes to Schools, Local Emergency Planning Committee, and various project specific coordinating committees for transportation related projects. As the lead agency on the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Committee, staff also provided guidance and updates to the plan.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2025

Functions necessary in support of future transit planning and development will be performed under this work element, including continuation of activities undertaken in FY2024. These activities necessitate the ongoing cloud-based software costs and run-cutting module, for route development and planning, which is split between this element and current service enhancements. Activities are as follows:

- Continue investigating feasibility of expanding service beyond existing city limits and engage county stakeholders in discussion regarding potential for service to outlying areas.
- In support of potential to expand service, staff intends to complete a Transit Governance and Sustainability Study to evaluate current funding levels, potential changes to Governance in support of expanded funding and transit opportunities, and model sustainability for each option; this activity will be completed using an outside consulting group and has been carried forward from 2024.
- Assess feasibility of adding additional transfer locations, specifically in growing areas of the City including the Heights and near the West End Reservoir locations.
- Assess feasibility of a rapid transit line to directly connect Heights, Downtown, and West End to decrease passenger travel time.
- Continue to analyze and evaluate current City and other area government practices for right of way requirements regarding future bus stop locations.
- Assessing ongoing and future capital and operating requirements based upon projected demand and growth. Continue to assess financial and infrastructure requirements of transitioning eligible fleet vehicles to electric or alternative fuel sources. Assess feasibility of adding additional green technology to facility locations.
- Continue research on feasibility of, and make recommendations for, additional technology conveniences for passengers including amenities at transfer centers.
- Continuation of planning efforts regarding public and stakeholder involvement and input opportunities, including recruiting involvement from key partners.
- Facilitation of public meetings to support system improvements as well as specialized services for seniors and disabled.
- Perform additional analysis of fare structure including comparisons to similar systems and populations to ensure equitable and sustainable fare generation.
- Analyze, develop, and recommend opportunities for MPO and Transit collaboration on projects eligible for multiple funding sources, including flex funding, to support integration of transit and overall surface transportation structure.

STAFFING

- 150.00 Transit Manager Staff Hours
- 170.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours
- 20.00 Administrative Support Staff Hours
- 60.00 Transit Operations Coordinator
- 85.00 Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours
- 10.00 Aviation/Transit Director Staff Hours

- 495.00 Total Staff Hours**

PRODUCT

- Identification of and plans for efficient and effective transit service into the future.
- Financial and capital analyses for future transit enhancements.
- Identification and assistance in implementation of future system modifications.

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

FUNDING SCHEDULE – FUTURE SERVICE EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$47,863	\$191,452	\$239,315
TOTAL	\$47,863	\$191,452	\$239,315

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$43,400	\$173,599	\$216,999
TOTAL	\$43,400	\$173,599	\$216,999

**The 2025 amounts figure above includes \$150,000 total for programmed studies, \$20,500 for planning software, and \$46,499 budgeted for staff hours.

44.24.02 CURRENT SERVICE ENHANCEMENT

OBJECTIVE

To improve service, ridership, and effectiveness of the existing transit system.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2024

Staff continued implementation of expanded marketing programs, including outreach to various community groups, education institutions, and public events.

Continued to develop the internal advertising program, including procurement of spare bench inventory and additional amenity opportunities to support transit operations, as well as opportunities for capital support.

Continued to leverage data gained from the electronic fare system to make recommendations to admin regarding metric tracking and budget structure.

Staff implemented an updated AVL system that integrates with Google Maps and provides a substantial improvement in ability to report ridership and NTD data and analytics. As now required by FTA, MET has a published GTFS feed.

Updated agency website to increase ease of use as well as improve overall communication to the public. Continued to develop and implement an improved social media presence for public engagement, including campaigns about the new AVL system, designated bus stops, hiring events, and new route system.

Received approval and certification for third-party CDL testing site at MET Transit to expedite the hiring and testing process.

Staff reviewed ridership data in analysis of system functioning and passenger miles travelled metrics; members also provided monthly ridership analysis (including ADA lift use and bike rack use), assessed ridership trends, and prepared other information on system functioning as requested.

Staff prepared National Transit Database reports for monthly submission of ridership, safety, and operational data, as well as annual reporting requirements.

Staff members regularly participated in group meetings and committee meetings (both in person and virtual) to solicit partner and public feedback on current system usage, demands, successes and shortfalls.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2025

Functions necessary in support of planning and development of enhancements to the current systems will be performed under this work element, including continuation of activities undertaken in FY2024. These activities necessitate the ongoing cloud-based software costs and run cutting module, for route development and planning, which is split between this element and future service enhancements. Activities are as follows:

- Continue to develop and implement criteria for stop amenities and other required items and make changes to stop amenities as needed; make recommendations on funding priorities to support bus stops with high usage and infrastructure needs.
- Continue development and implementation of education and outreach strategies to guide market research, promote public awareness, and engagement to increase ridership.
- Develop and implement further education and outreach programs to increase partnerships and other forms of participation.
- Investigate, analyze, and recommend methods for bringing existing technology solutions into a single portal to streamline customer engagement with and use of the transit system; make recommendations on implementation of an integrated app with existing technology providers.
- Develop modified fixed-route service including routes and schedules in the Downtown core due to the City’s planned conversion of 1-way streets to 2-way streets.
- Procurement and implementation of further technology enhancements to the existing technology solutions system to gather data, improve efficiency, provide further customer conveniences, and enhance safety.
- Collect and analyze ridership data from automatic passenger counters hardware and software.
- Develop FY2025 APC Benchmarking Plan update, due to mandatory sampling year.
- Continue to sample manual ridership on all bus routes to ensure data reporting is correct and consistent.
- Develop further marketing strategies including opportunities for increased revenue generation through amenity expansion and innovative concession programs. Include analysis of potential concession for retail space and other revenue generators at the Downtown Transfer Center.
- Assessment of current personnel usage for areas of improvement in utilization of resources and effectiveness; evaluate effectiveness of current staffing levels.
- Maintain monthly ridership figures and summary figures for effective decision-making and complete related National Transit Database reports.
- Solicit and record public reaction to any modified routes, schedules, education efforts, and technology enhancements.
- Assessment of current budgetary impact of recommended improvements.

STAFFING

200.00	Transit Manager Staff Hours
350.00	Transit Planner Staff Hours
32.62	Administrative Support Staff Hours
100.00	Transit Operations Coordinator
100.00	Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours
20.00	Aviation/Transit Director Staff Hours

802.62 Total Staff Hours

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

PRODUCT

- FY2025 APC Benchmarking Plan Update.
- Information relating to potential enhancements to existing service and system.
- Recommendations for immediate improvements.
- Modified routing for fixed-route services in Downtown core due to street conversion.
- Information and recommendations on passenger education and outreach.
- Analysis of current system functions.
- Budget alternatives.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – CURRENT SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$13,843	\$55,370	\$69,213
TOTAL	\$13,843	\$55,370	\$69,213

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$18,817	\$75,268	\$94,085
TOTAL	\$18,817	\$75,268	\$94,085

44.25.00 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

01 T.I.P

OBJECTIVE

To maintain a viable five-year program of transit improvements for the Billings Urbanized Area.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2024

Developed Transit specific data for a TIP/STIP update for the new five-year document, including programming for selected capital programs. Updated projects were also added to the Division’s Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM), Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP).

Monitored projects for inclusion in the TIP and STIP. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) process was also addressed and monitored.

Attended and participated in MPO meetings.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2025

Functions necessary in support of transit related project inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program will be performed under this work element. Activities are as follows:

- Division members will develop and compile information on operating and capital projects for which MET Transit plans to utilize grant assistance for inclusion in the TIP; this includes utilizing and updating the Division’s TAM, CIP, ERP, and other plans as required.
- All applicable projects will be provided to the MPO for inclusion in the program.
- Staff will monitor inclusion in the TIP and STIP to ensure ability to obtain federal Sections 5307, 5310 & 5339 and other applicable grants are not affected.

STAFFING

- 35.00 Transit Manager Staff Hours
- 24.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours
- 4.00 Administrative Support Staff Hours
- 5.00 Aviation/Transit Director Staff Hours

68.00 Total Staff Hours

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit will provide transit-related information to the City/County Planning Department for the MPO's inclusion in the TIP document.

PRODUCT

- Monitoring of plans including Transit Asset Management, the Capital Improvement Program, and components of the Equipment Replacement Plan for related projects.
- Annual inclusion of projects in TIP as necessary per FTA regulations.
- Amendments to TIP as necessary to include new projects.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – T.I.P.

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$1,298	\$5,191	\$6,489
TOTAL	\$1,298	\$5,191	\$6,489

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$1,526	\$6,103	\$7,629
TOTAL	\$1,526	\$6,103	\$7,629

44.26.12 Coordination of Non-Emergency Human Service Transportation

<p>01 COORDINATION OF NON-EMERGENCY HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION</p>

OBJECTIVE

To ensure optimal use of City of Billings funds in meeting the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in both demand response and fixed route transportation in accordance with Federal Regulations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2024

Staff continued to investigate methods to improve paratransit efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Continued evaluating dispatch and customer service practices for potential modification in regard to dispatching software implementation, as well as other technology implementations.

Members also continued to assess the financial and operational functioning of paratransit services, including contractual agreements with area agencies including the Adult Resource Alliance and the State of Montana Developmental Disabilities Bureau. MET did not renew the State of Montana DD contract for FY2025, as subscription services were causing inconsistencies with federal requirements.

Staff monitored procedures and policies involving ADA accessible fixed-route service and other accessibility features/requirements and updated with relevant findings.

Assessed and updated paratransit vehicle specifications to support future vehicle purchases; continued implementation and further procurement development of smaller ADA equipped vehicles to enhance paratransit service efficiencies.

Staff familiarized passengers with fixed route system use as appropriate via MET’s travel training program.

Staff continued to coordinate transportation services among 5310 transit providers, social service agencies and the public to provide an overall strategy to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible within available resources. This also included outreach and engagement to improve and advance the coordination plan as well as to improve community relations.

Increased participation with community groups, including Big Sky Senior Services and Adult Resource Alliance to support Aging-Friendly community initiatives and assessment of available transportation options.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2025

Functions necessary in support of planning and development of transit related Americans with Disabilities projects, procedures, outreach, and other related activities will be performed under this work element. Activities are as follows:

- Research and submit initial Section 5310 Program Management Plan for grant funding to MDT and FTA for approval.
- Continue developing and refining improvements to current travel training options to the public using available technology and updated delivery methods; improve education and outreach surrounding these services.
- Staff will continue to evaluate each bus stop for ADA compliance and suggest improvements based on priority of needs and funding availability, as outlined in the Bus Stop Master Plan.
- Staff will continue to provide outreach and education for professionals, organizations, and other identified entities in the community, including participating on advisory groups in order to maintain positive relationships with individuals with disabilities and senior communities.
- Staff will continue to facilitate and encourage involvement in regular Billings Area Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan meetings with human service providers, social service agencies, transportation providers, and the public to coordinate efforts associated with transit capital and service planning.
- Continue to facilitate effective service provision and usage of lift-equipped fixed-route vehicles; assess and recommend capital and operational projects with the intent of supporting existing service, increased demand, and adding potential enhancements.
- Continue identification of means to address transit and paratransit needs, assessing both short- and long-term paratransit needs, the organizational and financial capabilities of addressing those needs.
- Continue community outreach to the public and organizations in support of improving access to transportation for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations; continue participation on community committee meetings while exploring avenues for further outreach and engagement.
- Analyze and recommend improvements to current scheduling practices including more advanced use of available technologies to expand availability of services to seniors and low-income groups.
- Continue to assess, evaluate, and recommend improvements to the Paratransit Eligibility process to respond to increased demand for services to ensure all requirements regarding capacity and service are executed efficiently and equitably.

STAFFING

- 110.00 Transit Manager Staff Hours
- 125.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours
- 20.00 Administrative Support Staff Hours
- 120.00 Transit Operations Coordinator
- 80.00 Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours
- 10.00 Aviation/Transit Director Staff Hours

465.00 Total Staff Hours

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

PRODUCT

- Section 5310 Program Management Plan
- Continued consensus with and support of City of Billings compliance with ADA regulations related to transit.
- Continued community consensus and support of City of Billings methods for addressing of specialized needs, including lift-equipped vehicles and other options for individuals with disabilities and seniors.
- Recommendations and proposals for enhancements to existing system and programs in support of ADA compliance and regulations aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness.
- Public involvement and feedback regarding potential system enhancements in support of transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – ADA SERVICE (COORDINATION OF NON-EMERGENCY HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION)

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2024 (ADA SERVICE)

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$7,298	\$29,193	\$36,491
TOTAL	\$7,298	\$29,193	\$36,491

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$8,572	\$34,289	\$42,861
TOTAL	\$8,572	\$34,289	\$42,861

SECTION II FUNDING SUMMARY

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2025

WORK ELEMENT	FUNDING SOURCES FY 2025			STAFF HOURS
	LOCAL	FTA	EST.COST	
44.21.01 Administration				
Staff Hours	\$9,538	\$38,152	\$47,690	535.00
44.24.01 Future Service				
Staff Hours	\$9,300	\$37,199	\$46,499	495.00
Studies	\$30,000	\$120,000	\$150,000	
Planning Software	\$4,100	\$16,400	\$20,500	
44.24.02 Current Service				
Staff Hours	\$14,717	\$58,868	\$73,585	802.62
Planning Software	\$4,100	\$16,400	\$20,500	
44.25.01 T.I.P.				
Staff Hours	\$1,526	\$6,103	\$7,629	68.00
44.26.12 Coordination of Non- Emergency Human Service Transportation				
Staff Hours	\$8,572	\$34,289	\$42,861	465.00
TOTAL	\$81,853	\$327,411	\$409,264	2,365.62

ALLOCATION OF COSTS

Expenditures identified include direct costs, benefits at the rate of 61% of direct salary or wages, and indirect costs at the rate of 9% of direct salary or wages.

Federal Transit Administration Section 5303 funding is available at an 80% reimbursement rate, meaning the local to FTA funding ratio for all categories is 20% local, 80% federal.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA	American Disability Act
ACS	American Community Survey
ARP	American Rescue Plan
AVL	Automated Vehicle Locator
BSED	Big Sky Economic Development
BUILD	Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development
CAC	Citizen Advisory Committee
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CDL	Commercial Drivers License
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation Air Quality
CTSP	Community Transportation Safety Plan
EBURD	East Billings Urban Renewal District
ERP	Equipment Replacement Plan
FAST Act	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographic Information System
GTFS	General Transit Feed Specification
HPMS	Highway Performance Monitoring System
IJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
L RTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NTD	National Transit Database
PCC	Policy Coordinating Committee
PEP	Private Enterprise Participation
PL	Planning Funds
PTASP	Public Transit Agency Safety Plan
RAISE	Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity
SBBURD	South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District
TA	Transportation Alternative Program
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TAM	Transit Asset Management
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zones
TDP	Transit Development Plan
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
YCBP	Yellowstone County Board of Planning

Date: 08/20/2024
Title: Metropolitan Planning Organization Process Review Report and Findings
Presented by: Lora Mattox
Department: Planning & Community Services
Presentation: Yes

Information

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) receive an overview presentation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Process Review. This review was administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). No formal action is required.

BACKGROUND (Consistency with Adopted Plans and Policies, if applicable)

The MPO review process is completed every 5 years. The purpose of the review is to determine if the planning processes and practices substantially comply with the governing laws, regulations, and guidance of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Priority recommendations are identified to ensure necessary improvements are completed. Other recommendations identify opportunities for improvement. Commendable practices are highlighted to illustrate the strengths of the MPO planning process. The review was conducted May 29-30, 2024 by the FHWA, FTA, and MDT in cooperation with the Billings MPO and MET staff.

Results of the process review are incorporated into the formal transportation planning finding. A planning finding (23 CFR 450.328(a) and 450.218(b)) is a formal action taken by the FHWA and FTA to ensure that Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs) and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) are consistent with statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes, regulations and guidance.

The result of the review is a finding that the Billings metropolitan planning process substantially complies with the regulations under Subpart C -- Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming -- 23 CFR § 450 and related FHWA/FTA guidance. The Billings MPO transportation planning process incorporates numerous commendable practices.

STAKEHOLDERS

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

FISCAL EFFECTS

N/A

SUMMARY

The result of the review is a finding that the Billings metropolitan planning process substantially complies with the regulations under Subpart C -- Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming -- 23 CFR § 450 and related FHWA/FTA guidance.

Attachments

FHWA Review Document



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Highway
Administration
Federal Transit
Administration

Metropolitan Planning Organization Process Review

Yellowstone City-County Planning Board

Metropolitan Planning Organization

July 23, 2024
Summary Report



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Executive Summary

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) complete a transportation planning process review for each of the metropolitan planning organizations in Montana every five years. This review focused on the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The purpose of the review is to determine if the planning processes and practices substantially comply with the governing laws, regulations, and guidance. Priority recommendations are identified to ensure necessary improvements are completed. Other recommendations identify opportunities for improvements. Commendable practices are highlighted to illustrate strengths of the MPO planning process.

Results of the process review are incorporated into the formal transportation planning finding. A planning finding (23 CFR 450.328(a) and 450.218(b)) is a formal action taken by the FHWA and FTA to ensure that Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs) and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) are consistent with statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes, regulations and guidance.

The result of the review is a finding that the Billings metropolitan planning process substantially complies with the regulations under Subpart C – Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming – 23 CFR § 450 and related FHWA/FTA guidance.

The Billings MPO transportation planning process incorporates numerous commendable practices. Commendable practices identified through the review include:

- The planning agreements for the operation of the Billings MPO are reviewed and updated regularly; the Planning (PL) agreement was updated in 2013; the performance-based planning agreement in 2018; the memorandum of agreement in 2018.
- The Public Participation Plan was most recently updated in 2018 and is in compliance with 23 CFR 450.316.
- The public involvement process for transportation planning decisions has four avenues for public participation. The policy coordinating committee (PCC) is the final avenue. Before the PCC takes action, the City council, the County commission, and the planning board all hear a proposed action and call for public comment. This involvement is above and beyond what is required in regulations.
- The MPO supports non-motorized transportation within the planning area, with a focus on non-motorized connectivity and connections to transit service.



- The MPO maintains strong working relationships with many stakeholder groups that represent underserved populations in Billings, including the unhoused population.
- Partnership between the MPO and MET Transit foster a coordinated planning process.

The priority recommendations are:

1. An update to the financial plan and projects lists (committed and recommended projects) of the 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to comply with fiscal constraint requirements.
2. Ensure the next update to the LRTP meets regulations related to performance measures, performance targets, and system performance reports (23 CFR 450.324 (f)(3)(4)).
3. During the next TIP update, enhance the narrative of the TIP to be more descriptive of the investment priorities to achieve performance targets.
4. Review and adjust the metropolitan planning boundary, as necessary, to encompass the entire existing urbanized area, as defined by the census, and areas expected to become urbanized in the next twenty years. This recommendation is to be completed by the end of FY2025.
5. Due to staff turnover at the MPO, the need to document processes is more prevalent than ever. With each task that is completed, whether an update to the TIP, the development of the unified planning work program (UPWP) or writing a request for proposal (RFP) for a planning study, processes should be documented.



Background

A planning finding (23 CFR 450.328(a) and 450.218(b)) is a formal action taken by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to ensure that Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIPs) and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) are consistent with Statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes, regulations and guidance.

The Montana division office approves the STIP annually through joint action with the FTA Region 8 office. To determine that the metropolitan planning process are satisfactorily being implemented, FHWA, MDT, and FTA complete a process review of each of the MPO's planning processes every five years. The result of the process review is incorporated into the planning finding.

In order to determine if the metropolitan transportation planning processes and products substantially meet the requirements, a series of interview areas and questions were selected. The areas selected were based upon knowledge of the Billings MPO transportation planning products.

The pertinent work products – LRTP, TIP, and UPWP – were reviewed and referenced to formulate responses and recommendations relative to each of the questions. The FHWA/FTA/MDT review team met the Billings MPO planning staff on-site during two, half day sessions, May 29-30, 2024. The result of on-site discussions have been considered in the observations and recommendations presented in this report.



Purpose and Objective

The Yellowstone City-County Planning Board is the designated MPO for the Billings urbanized area. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is the responsible State agency and Billings MET Transit is the responsible public transportation operator. Current membership of the Billings MPO consists of elected officials from the political jurisdictions in Yellowstone County. The study area includes all of urbanized area of Yellowstone County with the City of Billings as the largest population center.

The purpose of the process review is to determine if the products and processes for the Billings MPO substantially meet the requirements of Title 23 and Title 49 related to metropolitan transportation planning. The results of the review will be incorporated into the annual transportation planning finding when the next STIP is approved.

The review also incorporated these objectives:

1. Highlight and describe commendable practices;
2. Determine what, if any, priority actions are needed;
3. Describe opportunities to improve the transportation planning process and products;

Team Members

Federal Highway Administration

Katie Potts, Montana Division

Federal Transit Administration

Emma Belmont, Region 8 Office (attended remote)

Montana Department of Transportation

Mitch Buthod
Kenn Winegar
Samantha Wood

Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization Representatives

City/County Planning Division

Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator

Metropolitan (MET) Transit

Rusty Logan
Sarah Graham



Observations and Recommendations

Observation #1: The LRTP was updated in 2023 and approved by the PCC on July 18, 2023.

Upon examination of the full project listings (committed and recommended), there is a low level of confidence the plan meets fiscal constraint requirements. Projects are listed more than once, with inconsistent cost estimates; cost estimates are incompatible for the scope of the project; portions of projects are listed with one funding source, rather than the entire project; ineligible funding sources identified to deliver projects.

Specific examples of this include:

- Project ID R_56 21st Street Underpass, project scope to increase the clearance from 8.5 feet to 14 feet, with cost estimates ranging from \$11,850 to \$5,000,000.
- Project ID R_34 major reconstruction with a cost estimate of \$25,000.
- Project ID R_33 and R_34 are listed in both the committed and recommended project lists with the same scope of work, but different cost estimates.
- Project ID I_36 reconstruction of an interchange funded with urban pavement preservation dollars.
- Project ID R_88 includes only a portion of the full project, funded with Montana Air Quality Improvement (MACI) funds, a subset of Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding.

Recommendation: **As a priority**, the fiscal year (FY) 2025 UPWP will allocate funding and staff time to assess and revise the committed, recommended, and illustrative project tables, as well as the financial plan, completed by the end of FY2025.

Compliance Issue (if any): The project listings and financial plan are not in compliance with 23 CFR 450.324

Resolution (if any):

Observation #2: The LRTP was updated in 2023 and approved by the PCC on July 18, 2023.

Upon examination of the narrative for performance measures, performance targets, and system performance report, the long range plan is not in compliance with 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) – (4)(i).



The LRTP includes an adequate description of federal performance measures, and a statement indicating the MPO is supporting the State targets. Appendix A and B, System Performance Report, are not directly tied to performance measures and targets included in 23 CFR 490, with the exception of Safety. These appendices are linked toward the plan's local goals and objectives, not national goals, performance measures, and targets.

The LRTP does not include MET Transit's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan's (PTASP) performance measures and targets as required in 49 CFR 673.

Recommendation: **As a priority**, ensure the next update of the LRTP is in compliance with the requirements of 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) – (4)(i).

Compliance Issue (if any): System Performance Report is not in compliance with 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) – (4)(i) or 49 CFR 673.

Resolution (if any):

Observation #3: The LRTP was updated in 2023 and approved by the PCC on July 18, 2023.

Due to timing of the release of 2020 census data, a new metropolitan planning boundary was not established for the 2023 LRTP update. The existing metropolitan planning boundary does not include the entirety of the urbanized boundary.

Recommendation: **As a priority**, review and adjust the metropolitan planning boundary, as necessary, to encompass the entire existing urbanized area, as defined by the census, and areas expected to become urbanized in the next twenty years. This recommendation is to be completed by the end of FY2025.

Compliance Issue (if any): Potential compliance issues with the entire 23 CFR 450 program if the planning boundary is excluding portions of the urban area.

Resolution (if any):

Observation #4: MDT District participation in the development of the LRTP is meeting the MPO needs, however, there is room for improvement when developing the recommended project lists. It is not clear if district staff understand their project priorities are required to be included in the plan in order for them to be nominated and funded with federal aid.



Recommendation: Prior to the next LRTP update, MDT planning and the MPO should engage with MDT District staff to provide information sharing on the importance of their participation.

Compliance Issue (if any): None

Resolution (if any):

Observation #5: The current Billings MPO public participation plan was approved by the PCC in 2018. The public involvement plan and the process to update the plan substantially complies with the governing provision, 23 CFR 450.316 interested parties, participation and consultation.

Recommendation: Consider updating the public participation plan to include methods for virtual participation, and other changes to public participation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Compliance Issue (if any): None

Resolution (if any):

Observation #6: The MPO is currently designated as the Yellowstone City-County Planning Board. Recent changes to state law will require redesignation of the MPO.

Recommendation: Continue outreach and coordination with peer MPOs, MDT, and FHWA to develop an optimal organizational structure during redesignation of the Billings Area MPO.

Compliance Issue (if any): None

Resolution (if any):

Observation #7: Recent staff turnover at the MPO has unveiled a lack of process documentation, or a list of reoccurring activities with accompanying update cycles required of the MPO. Standard operating procedures, process documentation, and/or desk manuals assist not only new staff but can also assist in the refinement of processes to carry out the MPO planning process.



Recommendation: **As a priority**, when each task is completed, whether an update to the TIP, the development of the UPWP or writing a RFP for a planning study, document the process used to complete.

Recommendation: Document the process for unobligated projects and incorporation of FTA funds through MET Transit.

Recommendation: Track required tasks and work product deadlines compared to tasks and work products the MPO desires to complete to assist in prioritizing PL funds.

Compliance Issue (if any):

Resolution (if any):

Observation #8: Staffing levels of the MPO are not adequate to keep pace with the needs of the MPO.

Current staff includes a transportation planning manager, and a bike/ped coordinator; current vacancies include a general transportation planner and a modeler. MPO staff desire to complete more sub-area plans, corridor studies, and conduct in house modeling, including micro-simulations; additional staff are necessary to increase the MPO product output.

Recommendation: Continue recruitment efforts to develop and retain in house expertise to meet the needs of the MPO.

Compliance Issue (if any): None

Resolution (if any):

Observation #9: Regulations for the TIP, 23 CFR 450.326(d), require the MPO to tie the investment priorities of the TIP to achieving the performance targets identified in the LRTP. Currently the narrative in the TIP is tying funding sources, not necessarily investments, to the achievement of performance targets.

Recommendation: **As a priority**, during the next TIP update, enhance the narrative of the TIP to be more descriptive of the investment priorities to achieve performance targets.

Compliance Issue (if any):

Resolution (if any):



Observation #10: The MPO and MET Transit have placed an emphasis on fostering relationships with stakeholder group in the community, with a focus on the disadvantaged communities. These relationships are critical to their public involvement efforts during the planning process. Of note, the 2023 LRTP update included a meeting devoted to members of the homeless community to understand their needs and how transportation can serve them.

Recommendation: Continue these practices to maintain relationships with underserved members of the community and document engagement and public involvement that is occurring in the Public Engagement Plan.

Compliance Issue (if any):

Resolution (if any):

Observation # 11: The MPO website should be a repository for the general public, stakeholders, and interested parties to access materials recently developed by the MPO, including the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and local studies. Many of the documents listed are outdated, and it can be difficult to find the most recent version of each planning product. A few examples include:

- Current Transportation Improvement Program, under this heading is an outdated TIP.
- Quick Links in the upper right-hand column takes a visitor to the 2014 LRTP, while the 2023 plan is the most recent version. The 2023 LRTP is posted further down on the website.

Improvements are also necessary to navigate to PCC meetings schedules, agendas, and virtual links.

Recommendation: Review and improve access to the MPO products, materials, and Policy Board meetings on the MPO website. Establish a recurring schedule and process to review the website for missing or broken links, and to confirm the most recent planning products are shown.

Consider a standalone website for the MPO work products and materials.

Compliance Issue (if any):

Resolution (if any):



Conclusion

The result of the review is a finding that the Billings metropolitan planning process substantially complies with the regulations under Subpart C – Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming – 23 CFR § 450 and related FHWA/FTA guidance.

The Billings MPO transportation planning process incorporates numerous commendable practices. Commendable practices identified through the review include:

- The planning agreements for the operation of the Billings MPO are reviewed and updated regularly; the PL agreement was updated in 2013; the performance-based planning agreement in 2018; the memorandum of agreement in 2018.
- The Public Participation Plan was most recently updated in 2018 and is in compliance with 23 CFR 450.316.
- The public involvement process for transportation planning decisions has four avenues for public participation. The PCC is the final avenue. Before the PCC takes action, the City council, the County commission, and the planning board all hear a proposed action and call for public comment. This involvement is above and beyond what is required in regulations.
- The MPO supports non-motorized transportation within the planning area, with a focus on non-motorized connectivity and connections to transit service.
- The MPO maintains strong working relationships with many stakeholder groups that represent underserved populations in Billings, including the unhoused population.
- Partnership between the MPO and MET Transit foster a coordinated planning process.

Eleven observations and associated recommendations are described in the Observation and Recommendations section of this report. The priority recommendations are:

1. An update to the financial plan and projects lists (committed and recommended projects) of the 2023 LRTP to comply with fiscal constraint requirements.
2. Ensure the next update to the LRTP meets regulations related to performance measures, performance targets, and system performance reports (23 CFR 450.324 (f)(3)(4)).
3. During the next TIP update, enhance the narrative of the TIP to be more descriptive of the investment priorities to achieve performance targets.
4. Review and adjust the metropolitan planning boundary, as necessary, to encompass the entire existing urbanized area, as defined by the census, and areas expected to become urbanized in the next twenty years. This recommendation is to be completed by the end of FY2025.



5. Due to staff turnover at the MPO, the need to document processes is more prevalent than ever. With each task that is completed, whether an update to the TIP, the development of the UPWP or writing a RFP for a planning study, processes should be documented.