



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES

February 25, 2025 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am
Beartooth Conference Room, 5th Floor, 316 N 26th St.

- Call to order:** Dave Coppock, BPAC Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:32 am.
- Members present:** Dave Coppock, Planning Board; Jason Wood, County; Stephanie Donovan, City; Anna O'Donnell, City, Kristy Halderman, City.
- Others present:** Elyse Monat, Transportation Planner; Lisa Olmstead, Consultant from DOWL; Megan McLean, Consultant from DOWL.

Public Comment Period:

- a. **Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas –**
Anna commented that she liked the striping on the Big Ditch Trail.
- b. **Online comments and comments received by the Active Transportation Planner –**
None

Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of January 28, 2024: Jason Wood, BPAC member, motioned to approve the minutes. Anna O'Donnell, BPAC member, seconded. All voted in favor.

New Business:

a. **Heights Neighborhood Plan**

Lisa Olmsted, consultant from DOWL, commented that the Heights Neighborhood Plan document is updated every 5 years and has a 20-year threshold. The purpose of the plan is for cohesive direction for the community relating to public safety and community feel, to ultimately be adopted by the city and county as a tool in decision making. Lisa commented that she and Megan work for the DOWL which has been hired by City/County Planning to complete this plan. Focus areas mentioned in the presentation Lisa shared are land use and development, community and public facilities, and transportation and connectivity. A map showed the Heights Neighborhood boundary. Dave Coppock, BPAC Vice Chair, clarified that the eastern dotted line on the map is the new bypass, which Lisa stated will be influential for the Heights.

Lisa mentioned a goal is to see what has changed since the 2006 plan with new population growth, like construction of Skyway Drive. Project Re:Code brought new zoning requirements. Transportation developments since 2006 included Skyway Drive, Bench Boulevard, the Billings Bypass and many other small things. Schools, parks and neighborhoods have been added since 2006, including Medicine Crow Middle School, High Sierra Dog Park, and more.

Part of the plan is to pull together many documents to create a connected plan. Current land use is largely residential and rural, and commercial development surrounds the main road as shown on a current land use map. Lisa mentioned that in previous plans she has worked on including the Bypass Study, the idea of commercial nodes and mixed-use areas like Shiloh Commons came up. Anna agreed with the benefit of having smaller businesses located in neighborhoods and mentioned comments on a popular Billings Facebook page that shared similar sentiments.

Kristy Halderman, BPAC member, asked about pushbacks to mixed-use development, and Lisa stated there are from the community. Dave mentioned that YRPA hoped to use Dover Park as a gateway to Billings. Stephanie Donovan, BPAC member, mentioned that the Heights is special because it has great views. Lisa said that Carolyn with YRPA mentioned that it is only two miles between Dover Park and Lake Elmo, but it is hard to travel those two miles. She envisions a connection between the two parks. BPAC mentioned Lake Elmo Road and Main Street as having a number of crashes involving people biking and walking, especially moving across six lanes. Lisa mentioned that Strava data shows people using the app rarely cross Main Street. Kristy asked about support for trail development and surveying, which has had growing support communicated.

Lisa mentioned that the idea is that non-motorized traffic from the 10-foot-wide mixed-use path on the Billings Bypass Bridge would use Mary Street.

Lisa asked for feedback from the BPAC members on the previous 2006 Heights Plan, specifically related to walking and biking. Areas she asked for feedback on from the 2006 plan included:

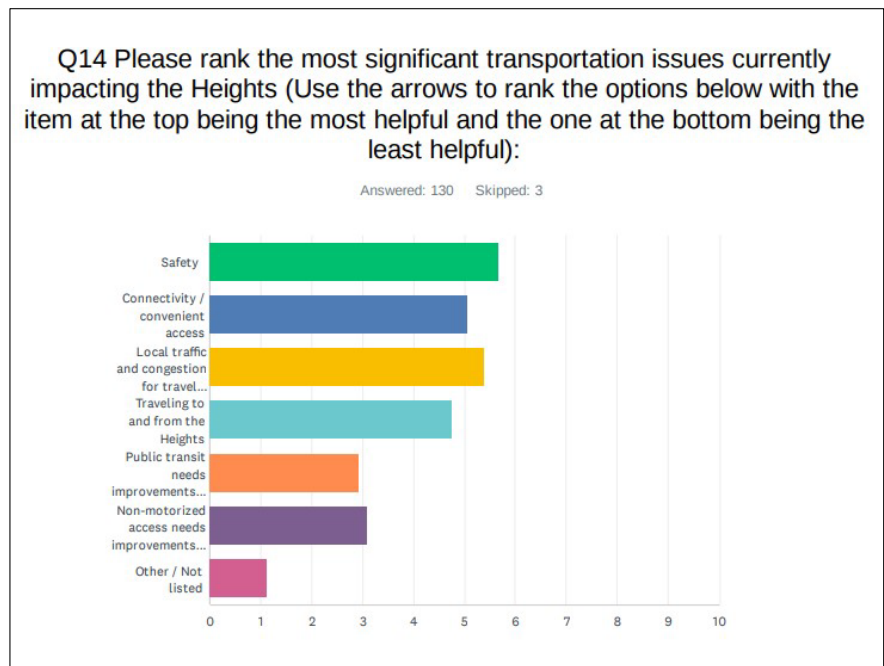
- Provide safe routes for pedestrians to travel between schools, parks, neighborhoods and other community facilities
 - Comments included:
 - Dave mentioned the addition of trails and the Medicine Crow School was successful.
 - Jason Wood, County, commented that this needed to stay top of mind as some connectivity is missing in areas developing to the north.
 - Elyse shared that several Safe Routes to School plans were developed after the 2006 Heights Plan and suggested that there should be a reference to those plans since this plan is not starting from scratch in this regard.
- Increase the amount and quality of non-motorized transportation facilities, including an action item to implement projects from the Heritage Trail Plan.

- Jason felt that there was not enough forethought being given to planning ahead for new shared use paths and felt this was being left to the developer.
- Elyse mentioned that the Subdivision Regulations had been recently updated, so facilities listed in the current active transportation plan (Bikeway and Trails Master Plan or draft Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan), must be implemented by the developer as part of the subdivision process. Elyse suggested referring to this as the current active transportation plan in case the name was updated in the future.
- Improve safety for motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities including updating the subdivision regulations to connect neighborhoods through trails and pedestrian walkways
 - Elyse mentioned that the new subdivision regulations such as cul-de-sacs must provide pedestrian connection (note: after looking at the subdivision regulations after the meeting, this applies to both City and County).

Lisa presented survey results from the public outreach part of the plan. See below for slides.

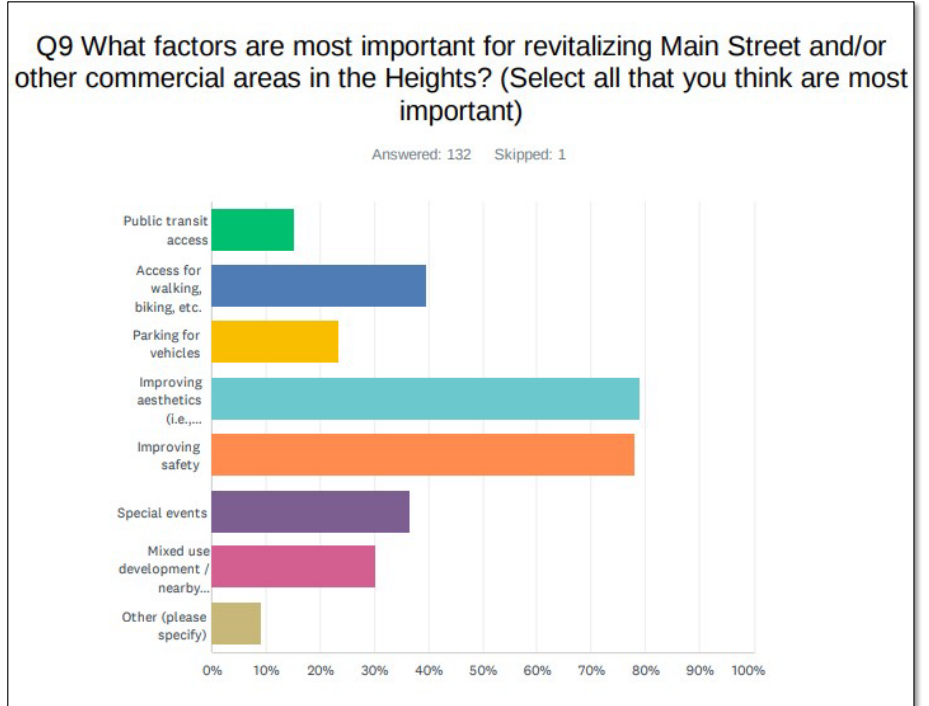
WHAT WE'RE HEARING

TRANSPORTATION



WHAT WE'RE HEARING

MAIN STREET



WHAT WE'RE HEARING

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Q19 COMMUNITY FACILITIES: Currently, the Heights is adequately served by:

	STRONGLY AGREE	MODERATELY AGREE	MODERATELY DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO OPINION / NA	TOTAL
Schools	28.24% 37	39.69% 52	13.74% 18	9.92% 13	8.40% 11	131
Youth services	0.78% 1	17.05% 22	34.88% 45	31.01% 40	16.28% 21	129
Senior services	7.75% 10	27.13% 35	31.78% 41	9.30% 12	24.03% 31	129
Billings Public Library	7.69% 10	18.46% 24	30.77% 40	25.38% 33	17.69% 23	130
Community centers / facilities and programs for all ages	0.76% 1	6.87% 9	38.93% 51	44.27% 58	9.16% 12	131
Parks / outdoor recreation	11.45% 15	45.04% 59	29.77% 39	11.45% 15	2.29% 3	131

WHAT WE'RE HEARING

PARKS & RECREATION

Q20 PARKS & RECREATION: Which facilities are most needed at parks in the Heights? (Select all that are important to you)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Passive green spaces	34.09%	45
Trails	42.42%	56
Athletic fields and courts	50.76%	67
Swimming pools	51.52%	68
Playground equipment	41.67%	55
Multi-purpose indoor facilities (i.e., events, meetings, etc)	62.12%	82
Picnic facilities	36.36%	48
Golf facilities	7.58%	10
Nature observation	25.76%	34
Equestrian facilities	5.30%	7
Outdoor gathering spaces (i.e., amphitheater)	57.58%	76
Community gardens	40.15%	53
Pet-friendly spaces	31.06%	41
Other (please specify)	12.12%	16
Total Respondents: 132		

Lisa mentioned BPAC members could find more information at billingsheightsplan.com or could reach her by emailing HeightsPlan@Dowl.com. Anna asked what the timeline was for the plan; Lisa stated it is dependent on the West End Plan which must be finalized before continuing, so that the land use categories match up.

b. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

BPAC members had some discussion about the roles of the BPAC Chair and Vice Chairs. Mainly the Chair and Vice Chair help to set the agenda and keep BPAC members organized so that everyone is advocating for the same thing.

Anna nominated Dave as Chair. Stephanie seconded. All voted as chair.

Anna nominated Jason as Vice Chair. Kristy seconded. All voted in favor.

Old Business:

a. Annual Presentation to the Governing Bodies;

Dave stated that the intent of the agenda item was to select dates, discuss content, and assign members to work on presentations. Anna shared she is unable to work on the presentation until May. At the previous meeting, March 25th was identified as a possible date for the Planning Board presentation, but members felt that it was coming up quickly and there was still a lot of work to do on the presentation. Elyse proposed April 8th as an alternative. Elyse mentioned that at the last meeting, Dave offered to help with Planning Board and City Council presentations, Kristy with City Council, and Jason with Commissioners.

Stephanie Donovan, City, asked about content for the presentation. Dave mentioned likely removing the survey section from the previous presentation. Elyse displayed the 2024 report. Jason suggested replacing the survey section with crash data. Elyse noted the crash data will be updated and shared with the public with a link on the City website. Anna proposed categorizing or using hotspots. Kristy asked how involved the City Council is with data and the response. She suggested assigning BPAC members to go to specific sites to take pictures. Stephanie noted this may be a better option for sharing with Engineering, rather than City Council. She suggested pulling higher level things like back in angled parking or something from the Heights neighborhood plan. Anna suggested including the top three crash areas. There is often a pushback from City Council, so Anna recommended a change in approach. Stephanie suggested pointing out quality of life and getting people to live in Billings is related to bikeways and trails. Anna suggested updating the trail and bikeway count numbers.

Elyse proposed having one BPAC member take responsibility for creating an outline and then reach out to other members to help populate it. Kristy offered to take this responsibility, starting with Google Slides which will be converted to PowerPoint. Kristy proposed having the draft done by the next meeting, with members reviewing between this meeting and the next. Dave brought up that the meeting will be after the March meeting. BPAC agreed on April 8th for the Planning Board meeting, and April 21st for the City Council Meeting, and Jason agreed to find a Tuesday to present to Commissioners. Elyse planned to confirm that April 21 will work with Council's schedule.

b. Crash Data Mapping

BPAC members decided to postpone crash mapping due to time constraints.

c. Transportation Planner Report

Skyline Trail Driveway and Street Crossings

Engineering is working hard on coming up with possible solutions and are further vetting some ideas and looking into cost.

Pedestrian Bicycle Master Plan

The adoption process is still in process. The Planning Board had voted February 25th, 2025, at 6 pm.

Rose Park Trail Project

The Rose Park Trail Project is out to bid, and bids will be opened on March 4th with construction planned this summer. Rose Park Elementary will have added connectivity between Rose Park Trails and the bridge over the ditch at 19th Ave. Anna mentioned Partners for Parks may be working on lights on this path.

Stagecoach Trail

Contract for design was approved February 24th, 2025 by City Council.

21st Street Underpass

Contract for design was approved February 24th, 2025, by City Council.

RFP for SRTS Education Campaign

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Education Campaign is currently available and will close March 20th. City of Billings Bids webpage is where someone would be able to sign up to help.

Billings Trail Net

A donation was given for initial trail design on February 24th, 2025, which the City Council accepted.

Southern Riverfront Park Trail

Two grants were submitted at the end of January 2025. Billings Trail Net submitted one grant to repair Black Otter Trail and one for Wayfinding Signage. It was clarified that the cracks for Black Otter Trail need repair.

Kiwanis/Jim Dutcher Trail Pipeline Work

Philips 66 will work on their pipeline, which will affect those along the trail. Because of damage, the trail will be replaced by Philips 66 which will take a year.

Complete Streets Progress Report

The working group got together yesterday and plan to reconvene in a month with updated data.

Downtown Two-way restoration project

Anna asked about the N 32nd Street project and the timing, which Elyse replied will likely be around summer.

Other Business:

a. Path on Shiloh

Anna mentioned her concern that a new development would have crossings of the Shiloh Trail. Elyse said she would look into this and share more information.

b. Signage

Kristy asked if the subdivision regulations require implementation of stop lights and proper traffic signage are included. Elyse mentioned Engineering reviews the developments and specify what is required.

Future Agenda Items:

None.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:03 pm. Anna moved to adjourn; Kristy seconded. All voted in favor.