



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES

April 22, 2025, MEETING TIME: 11:30 am
Emergency Operations Center, 5th Floor, 316 N 26th St.

APPROVED BY A MOTION ON MAY 27, 2025

- Call to order:** Dave Coppock, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.
- Members present:** Dave Coppock, Planning Board; Jason Wood, County; Stephanie Donovan, City; Kristy Halderman, City.
- Others present:** Elyse Monat, Transportation Planner; Sarah Plath, Engineering Public Works; Claire Blomquist, Transportation Planning Intern; Leslie Cooke, Rimrock Neighborhoods Task Force

Public Comment Period:

a. Comments on items not on the agenda and requests to add items to future agendas

Leslie Cooke, Board Member with the Rimrock Neighborhood Task Force, states that because of members personal encounters she is looking to improve safety, and mentions being told to look to the transportation master plan. The Rimrock Task Force compiled a list of concerns with input from neighbors and concerned residents.

Dave Coppock, BPAC member, adds he would like to add this to the agenda to take concerns into account for the future. Kristy Halderman, City, asks if the list of concerns document can be sent to Elyse Monat, Transportation Planner, and Leslie said that the document is “living” or being edited continually, but she can send the current version. Sarah Plath, Public Works, states she, on behalf of the Engineering Division, is managing this task as part of transportation corridor work, and has received the list from Leslie.

Dave adds a comment from Highland area neighbors. Someone drove through a pedestrian gate on 7th Street, behind Highland School, and the neighbors asked if anyone was looking into it. Elyse states that Sarah Plath, Public Works, may be able to have an inspector investigate the issue, and Sarah said she will pass along the concern. Stephanie Donovan, City, comments this is a narrow area that could be improved anyway.

a. Online comments and comments received by the Active Transportation Planner

Someone wrote to Elyse and said drivers on 54th Street W near Field Stone Ave. stop for pedestrians at the intersections with some of the cross streets. There is not a marked crosswalk, and the commenter feels this is dangerous. She requested a marked crosswalk. Elyse mentioned this is an unmarked, but legal crosswalk per state law. There is a project in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to redo 54th St. W, but likely there would not be a crosswalk added before than as the funds for crosswalks are going to Safe Routes to School projects.

Motion: Approval of the meeting minutes of March 25, 2025: Kristy motioned to approve the minutes of March 25, 2025. Stephanie seconded. All voted in favor.

New Business

a. Update of 2-Way Restoration Project and Cycle Track Outreach

Sarah presented the two-way restoration project to BPAC. 2nd and 3rd Aves. N will be converted to 2-way traffic, as will several north/south streets. The project also includes signal work and bicycle facilities changing.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & GOALS

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Billings and Downtown Billings are working together to restore several one-way streets in the downtown core to their original two-way configuration.

This collective effort aims to:

- Provide roadway maintenance
- Optimize business access
- Improve walkability and multi-modal connectivity

PROJECT TEAM

LEGEND

- Two-Way Street Restoration and Chip Seal
- Chip Seal
- ⋯ Bicycle Facility Updates
- Traffic Signal Modifications
- New Traffic Signal
- Traffic Signal Removal
- Skypoint

Stay Informed! For more information and to sign up for project updates:

billings2way@dowl.com
 406-869-6349

Text 2WAY to 833-648-0322 to sign up for text alerts*

*Text alerts are not managed by the City of Billings or Downtown Billings and may have different privacy and security policies. For more information, see <https://simpletexting.com/privacy-policy/>. Message frequency may vary. Message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to cancel messages.

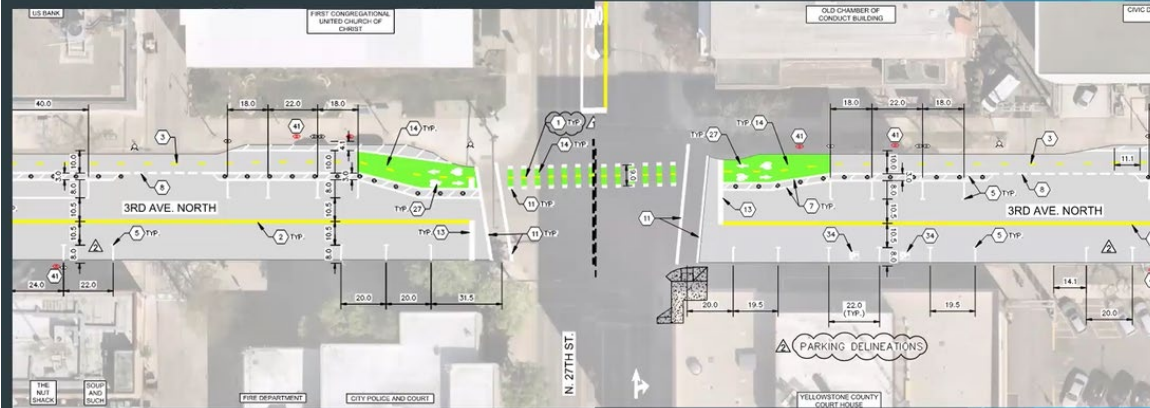
She showed renderings of 3rd Ave N improvements and N 31st St with parking and bike two-way cycle tracks. Sarah mentioned that there are important considerations when introducing counterflow bike lanes, and they discussed these closely with consultant designing the project. Many intersections on the cycle track will have green striping/paint for visual attention, especially for places like N 27th St. The 2-way facility with 3-foot buffer and flexible delineators will also have parallel parking.

Two-Way Cycle Track Details

West end of Cycle Track with Bike Box- Division Street
Green paint through intersections

- ▶ Intersection treatment
- ▶ 3-ft striped buffer with delineators for door protection
- ▶ Parallel parking on both sides of roadway

Two-Way Cycle Track Details



Additional Green Paint at N 27th Street Intersection

Signage will be provided for drivers to be more aware of bikes and help bikes to use the ped signals with reminders at signalized intersections on the cycle track.

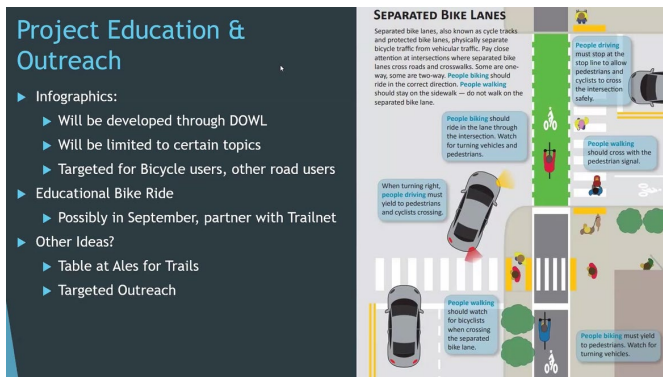
Sarah mentioned that right turns on red will be prohibited to prevent a turn and hit for signalized intersections along the two-way cycle track. The direction of travel offers a counterflow movement, so intersections will be of most importance to make people aware of all users of the road. Transitions off and on the cycle track have potential for conflict as well as driveway and alley crossings. With the cycle track between parking and sidewalk, pedestrians will cross the cycle track to get to the sidewalk, which will require awareness.

Work began in April with an improvement in electrical and ADA compliance. Pavement preservation will occur in July, and when signals are done, roads can be re-striped. Two-way traffic and the bike lane facilities should be usable by September.

Project Schedule

- ▶ Work began in April
- ▶ Electrical & signal improvement work: ongoing
- ▶ ADA improvements: ongoing
- ▶ Pavement preservation: July
- ▶ Signal completion, final striping, two-way traffic: -September
- ▶ Bicycle facilities: usable by -September 2025

A consultant, DOWL, will help create infographics to help educate the public. Sarah shows an example in the slide below. An educational bike ride or walk would provide explanation of features to go through what is available and new, and may be scheduled for September.



Discussion:

Elyse recommended that the Traffic Technician film a drone video to show the new facilities, like a cyclist riding.

Kristy said she likes the change and asks about previous negative feedback. Sarah mentioned there was limited feedback, besides comments on how much the facilities will be used which will be tracked with bike lane counters, as well as cost, which is minimal. Once angled parking is replaced with parallel parking, 3rd Ave N will see some parking loss. Turn lanes will be added at 2nd Ave N and 27th St.

Kristy asked if the consultants have offered any information about potential business growth thanks to these facilities, since there will be more foot traffic. Sarah mentioned the DBA would have more information or could lead an effort to quantify this. Funds for this project came from the downtown TIF district and city maintenance funds, and DBA wants to drive economic growth downtown with foot traffic.

Elyse asked if this project was presented to the City Council in November. Sarah mentioned the November meeting was mostly about parking. Council wanted to hear more about the parking and requested not to have back-in angled parking. With re-striping, 30th will get parallel parking to retain sharrows. N. 29th Street will be pull in angled parking.

Dave asks what BPAC would contribute. Sarah believes it would be good to get involved in teaching people and asks for thoughts on best way to get information out, like the educational bike ride. Stephanie remarks she appreciates the thought put in and asks if there is a way to add QR codes or add information along the track. Educating drivers with flyers in the parking garages might reach more people. With turn-and-hit crashes seemingly common, the signs at intersections are appreciated.

Kristy states it would be good to table at the farmers' market or Strawberry Fest to get ahead of the road change. Sarah said she plans to use some of the handouts/education sheets at these events. Dave mentions working with the women's run which will have many people downtown. Kristy asks about offering giveaways to promote education and get people involved for participating in a quiz. Stephanie brings up the idea to promote the changes along roads and along the cycle track. Kristy suggests a physical item to draw attention to the opening of bike lanes, like a school crossing in-street sign, or a fun cardboard cutout type attention grabber. Stephanie suggested having something at the intersections that would bring additional attention to the changes, like the flags on the new stop signs for the neighborhood bikeway.

Public Comment:

Having worked downtown, Leslie Cook states she sees the change as an improvement.

Old Business:

a. Presentation to the governing bodies.

No updates have been added, but there is a draft presentation. June 2nd is still the day to present to Council. BPAC will present to Planning Board on May 13. Kristy is looking for a way to get the crash data summarized.

Claire Blomquist, Transportation Planning Intern, presents crash data heat maps. Elyse clarifies there is a broad range of incident severities within the data, and with many people walking downtown, there are more occurrences possible in the first place.

Stephanie asks about mapping the severity, but it is clarified that the information is not readily available. Kristy adds it would be beneficial to bring up fatalities in the presentation. Dave mentions adding data that shows where there is no infrastructure, like a stop sign to prevent incidents.

BPAC discussed the map, like colors looking soft. Dave is curious to see the difference of data before and after a few years. Elyse mentions that the data is relative, so some of the most intense-looking spots are often 3 accidents. Kristy asks about suggesting changes that could be made to specific locations during the presentation, like adding a bright green crosswalk, or suggesting addition of infrastructure. Elyse clarifies while BPAC can mention hot spots, any suggested improvements would have to be vetted with engineering, though countermeasures can be talked about generally. Kristy also mentions that having crash totals from each year would help show why projects are important. Claire agrees to share the data the following week.

A BPAC member pointed out that many crashes are at intersections and Claire clarifies that police reports only past 2024 have been categorized with latitude and longitude, so some of the previous crash locations may not be as accurate.

Elyse asks which criteria will be added to the presentation from the map. Kristy states she would like to see various categories, like total incidents, time of day, and severity. Elyse mentions she will see if she can share information about the severity from crash reporting dashboard she has access to. Stephanie asks if BPAC would be able to work with the police to get more data, if they are willing to share information that has been collected over the years.

Kristy states she will resend the presentation, and asks when information could be shared, and Claire states intention to work with the data by the end of the following week.

During public comment, Lisa mentions having looked at crash data, and how Rimrock has changed from being calmer to becoming a commuter corridor, though it is residential. Jason and Dave mention it is a state highway with many subdivisions. Kristy asks if any questions can be added to police data collection, which Elyse comments are oftentimes confidential. Lisa adds that the RNTF has worked with Sargent Stovall, and Dave mentions it could be interesting to work with crime prevention in the future.

b. PD Crash Mapping

Crashes from March were discussed, as Dave read police reports for the group. Two turn and hit incidents are noted on the map. For the case of the report between Wicks and Mattson, Jason remarks that people do try to run across the road to go to McDonald's and Walmart, and affirms it was dark by the time of the incident at 9:42.

Public Comment: Lisa remarks it is a tragedy.

c. Transportation Planner Report

Elyse gives her report, mentioning the 2017 Billings Area Bikeways and Trails Master Plan being the standing plan, since the 2025 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update was not approved.

The 21st Street underpass improvement study began last week. Stephanie shares that she attended this feasibility study meeting. She asked the consultants how pedestrians were being taken into consideration. Elyse believes the project team is conducting pedestrian counts, but it gets minimal use prior to any improvements likely because it is uncomfortable without streetlights or other amenities. BPAC members add this is where larger trucks get stuck, and there is often someone camping in the underpass.

The transportation alternatives grant applications came in, one from Johnson Lane connector project, and a safe routes to school proposal, which will be reviewed shortly. There is enough funding to cover both applications.

A consultant has been chosen for safe routes to school education campaign and that project will begin shortly.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization is updating its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to help fund an economic analysis of complete streets.

Trail concrete squares at Rimrock Park West are being replaced. Anna O'Donnell had previously asked about them and Parks was already planning to repair them.

The Rose Park Trail bid was accepted by City Council and will be started in June to connect existing trails to Rose Park Elementary.

The city received a Recreational Trails Program grant, with full funding on phase 1 and partial funding from a Montana Trail Stewardship Grant program for phase 2 for the Southern Riverfront Park Trail. Billings Trail Net also received grants for wayfinding signage and Otter Trail maintenance.

The Planning Division is advertising a multimodal planning position is being advertised and can be shared with anyone interested.

The Commuter Challenge will begin in June.

Other Business: None

Future Agenda Items:

- a. Idea of Having Officer Stovall Attend to Discuss Crime Prevention.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm. Stephanie moved to adjourn; Kristy seconded. All voted in favor.