



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2025 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am
Beartooth Conference Room, 5th Floor, 316 N 26th St.

Call to order: Dave Coppock, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:33 am.

Members present: Jason Wood, County; Stephanie Donovan, City; Anna O'Donnell, City, Kristy Halderman, City.

Others present: Elyse Monat, Transportation Planner; Mike Hayes, Multi-Modal Planner; Robby Gress, Transportation Planning Intern; Sgt. Winden. Members of the public as shown on the sign-in sheet.

Introductions: BPAC members introduce themselves to Sgt. Winden and members of the public.

Public Comment Period:

- a. Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas – Jenna Solomon – Prevention Program Coordinator, Janell Bermes, Prevention Health Specialist**
- b. Online comments and comments received by the Active Transportation Planner – Comment from trail – striping and educate signs being implemented**

Motion: Approval of the meeting minutes of June 24, 2025: Anna O'Donnell, BPAC member, motioned to approve the minutes. Jason Wood, BPAC member, seconded. All voted in favor.

New Business:

- a. Presentation from Sgt. Winden**

Dave Coppock, BPAC chair, explained that the crash report submitted to BPAC includes the location, date, time and comments on the incident. Anna mentioned the crashes are plotted on a map that is used to mark vehicle collisions with cyclists and pedestrians.

Dave asked how vehicle collisions are addressed by police and crash teams after they occur. Anna added it would be helpful to find out which vehicle would be at fault and who was cited at the time of the incident. Sgt. Winden explained that vehicle 1 as displayed in the crash report is always the vehicle at fault.

Crash reports are reported to the state if it involves a motor vehicle and public streets. For example, there was a fatal cyclist incident at Lake Elmo where the cyclist hit a pole on State land. That incident was not reported as a crash.

Anna asked how to determine the at fault vehicles when there is no mention of vehicle 1. Sgt. Winden explained this information could be added to the reports BPAC receives.

Dave asked what the process of analyzing and addressing a collision would be like for the PD and team. Sgt. Winden noted vehicles that are in accidents with cyclists and pedestrians are addressed very similarly to vehicle-vehicle collisions. Sgt. Winden added the PD doesn't usually get involved with collisions that lack a motor vehicle unless they are fatal or serious.

Anna asked how E-bikes are classified in terms of motorized vehicles. Sgt. Winden explained E-bikes that can pedal would be classified as a bicycle.

Anna noted it would be helpful to include bicycle and pedestrian crash data in PD posts on social media for public information. Sgt. Winden noted that the data is included in the postings but stated it would be easy to note separately as well.

Patrol officers respond to basic crashes. Sgt. Winden explained that vehicle collisions that end in fatality are treated as homicide investigations. Sgt. Winden explained that most cars as new as 2012 with Bluetooth systems have a built-in black box known as EDRs that record information such as seatbelt wearing, headlights on/off, and collision sensors along with speed at time of collision. He added blood is drawn from all parties after collisions to determine alcohol and drug use. The black boxes can report speed of the vehicle, speed at point of impact, if the driver was turning steering wheel, etc. However, the black box doesn't necessarily activate when a car hits a pedestrian or cyclist so sometimes the police have to use old school techniques.

Sgt. Winden explained that after crashes occur, crash teams appear on the scene and do a full analysis of the situation to determine who is at fault.

Sgt. Winden mentioned a vehicles EDRs ability to record a collision is reduced to nearly 10 percent if the vehicle collides with a bicycle or pedestrian (collision is less likely to be detected).

Dave mentioned during data collection, that he noticed vehicles turning right and looking left for oncoming traffic accounts for many of the collisions with pedestrians. Sgt. Winden added he was the first bicycle patrol for 5 years in Billings. He noted he would stick to safe routes when commuting via bicycle.

Sgt. Winden mentioned drivers on the road today aren't only hitting cyclists and pedestrians frequently, but drivers are colliding with big trucks, other vehicle and motorcycle riders because they don't pay attention at all at the time of a crash. He noted PD documents at least 15-18 crashes in a day, which often result in disabled vehicles. He noted taking extra steps to protect yourself are necessary when riding a bicycle or motorcycle.

Sgt. Winden explained cyclists also often disobey traffic rules, cyclists have been noted wearing headphones and not paying attention often leading to a crash. He brought up a specific incident by the 6th Ave Bypass where this was the case and it ended in a fatality due to the biker not paying attention.

Dave mentioned incidents related to cyclists not paying attention are common in the crash data as well.

Sgt. Winden believes an increase in incidents could spike due to bike lane users going undetected by motorists who are turning right. He thinks this happens more with bike lanes. He doesn't have data to support this.

Sgt. Winden suggested having a clear description of who is at fault. Dave said it would be helpful if whether or not the crash happened in a school zone was listed in the report BPAC receives.

Community Service Officers investigate most of the crashes until it becomes clear that a crime was committed as part of the crash (i.e. driving under the influence).

Jason Wood noted the reason behind mapping accidents is to note locations that could implement improvements in safety for cyclists and pedestrians. He asked if there was any information in the PD forms that would be helpful if added to the spreadsheet.

Sgt. Winden explained a factor that could play into that is who is typically at fault.

Elyse Monat, Transportation Planner, mentioned she has been getting the crash data from Becky Shay.

Sgt. Winden brought up a cyclist who was hit on Grand Ave wearing dark clothing at nighttime by a driver who was suspected of driving under the influence. The accident ended in a fatality. Sgt. Winden noted this is an example of both parties in the wrong causing a collision.

Dave and Jason mentioned incidents that are difficult to avoid at intersections. Sgt. Winden added vehicle-vehicle averaged higher than vehicle-pedestrian/cyclist collisions.

Stephanie Donovan, BPAC member, asked if Billings averaged more accidents compared to neighboring cities. Sgt. Winden answered that averages are similar among neighboring cities.

Anna asked if the PD identifies hotspots and identifies the need to do something different. Sgt. Winden says it would take a lot to make this happen due to the threshold of incidents. He noted the Lake Elmo/Mainstreet intersection hosts a major hot spot for vehicle-vehicle collisions.

Dave mentioned that there were fewer ped/bike crashes on the West End. Sgt. Winden added there are plenty of safe routes and back trails accessible on the West End that could be the cause of that data.

Sgt. Winden asked if there was any consideration into heavy duty striping in the downtown area. Elyse answered there are plans to implement crossbikes at intersections which will draw attention to crossings.

Sgt. Winden noted roundabouts could be seen as problem areas for drivers paying attention to vehicles rather than pedestrians. Sgt. Winden thinks the safest place to cross is mid-block as roadway users can pay more attention to people operating crosswalks after they pass through an intersection.

Stephanie Donovan, BPAC member, mentioned crosswalk regulation could be hard to touch on due to federal rules.

BPAC members discussed the implementation of a crosswalk in front of the YMCA.

Elyse Monat, Transportation Planner, explained that state laws require drivers to yield to pedestrians using a crosswalk.

Sgt. Winden felt there were problems with implementing a crosswalk by the YMCA.

Sgt. Winden shared that the PD has a slick street policy where dispatch doesn't share reports to PD during icy events due to the high level of demand. Drivers involved in an accident are encouraged to exchange information, but the police will not come to the crash if it is not serious or fatal.

Sgt. Winden will ask Becky Shay to add a fault column to the report BPAC receives.

Sgt. Winden explained a challenge in traffic is motorist not hearing sirens or moving out of the way for first responders. He noted subsonic technology being used in firetrucks.

a. Cancelling August meeting

Jason moved to cancel the August BPAC meeting, Stephanie seconded, all voted in favor except Anna who was out of the room.

Old Business:

a. E-Bike trail etiquette/speed.

Mike Hayes, Multi-Modal Planner, showed the etiquette sign. BPAC members commented on the implementation of the signs on future trails and pathways.

Mike explained that e-bikes are considered regular bikes if they go 20 mph or less.

Jason explained pedal assisted vs. throttle. Class 1 e-bikes go to 20.4 mph; Class 3 is more of a commuter type bike. Throttle assisted bikes are not pedal assisted. Most e-bikes today have a digital display to show how quickly they are going.

BPAC rediscussed having information at bike shops. Mike and/or Rob will work on a sheet to share with the group. Staff will put together a graphic/flyer for September meeting for them to react to.

b. PD Crash mapping

Anna moved to table looking at the crashes until September, Jason seconded. All voted in favor.

b. Multi-Modal Planner Report

Mike noted the speed study on Prestwick Dr. displayed drivers speed is in line with engineering and speed regulations. Information has been sent to the complaint.

Anna asked about the concrete square on big ditch. Elyse noted that Parks was bundling it with several other concrete repair locations and looking for a contractor to fix it.

Mike mentioned Public Works is waiting on MDTs comments on the skyline trail relating to the signage.

Mike explained bridges near 19th St. W could possibly close at trail construction at Rose Park trail. Construction starts this Friday. There could be disruption to both bridges.

Other Business:

Elyse reviewed the status of Mike transitioning from traffic to active transportation planning. She said she expected that by the end of the year he would take over BPAC.

Future Agenda Items:

None

Meeting adjourned a little before 1 pm. Stephanie moved to adjourn; Anna seconded. All voted in favor.