

****ATTENTION****

The City Council meeting will be held in a hybrid format that may include both in-person AND virtual attendance via Zoom. Unless they have cause to appear virtually, Councilmembers will attend the meeting in person in Council Chambers, fifth floor of City Hall, 316 N. 26th Street. In order to honor the Right of Participation and the Right to Know in Article II, Sections 8 and 9, of the Montana Constitution, the City of Billings and City Council are making every effort to meet the requirements of the open meeting laws.

Citizens are invited to:

- . Review the Agenda Packet on the City's website at: www.billingsmt.gov and click on "Your Government," "City Council," and "Agendas & Minutes".
- . View the meeting:
 - . On Community 7 TV - Channel 7 or Channel 507 -- Spectrum Cable. *(On evenings when there is a conflict with School District No. 2 Board meetings, the City Council meeting will be broadcast on Channel 8 - Spectrum Cable.)* Channel 7 or Channel 978 - TDS Fiber.
 - . Online at www.comm7tv.com and click on the "Watch Live" icon. Community 7 also has links to their Facebook page and YouTube channel.
 - . On the City's website at www.billingsmt.gov and click on "Watch Meetings Online" on the homepage.
 - . In-Person.

Citizens may submit public comment via the following methods:

- . Mail: City Clerk, P.O. Box 1178, Billings, MT 59103
- . Email: Council@billingsmt.gov.
 - . Emails received after 3:00 PM on the day of the meeting, may be posted on the Council's webpage the following day for public viewing.
- . Attend the meeting in person

Please contact Denise Bohlman, City Clerk, at bohlmand@billingsmt.gov, or at 406.657.8210, with any questions.



VISION STATEMENT:
"The Magic City: A diverse,
welcoming community
where people prosper and
business succeeds."

WORK SESSION AGENDA

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
316 N. 26th St., 5th Floor

JUNE 16, 2025

5:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION - LITIGATION UPDATE (4:30 PM - 5:30 PM)

- Anderson Towing
- Brown Builders/Magnus Land Development
- Estate of Marie Golden
- JLG Architects
- Caleen Reum
- John Skauge
- Thomas Slevira

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ALL ITEMS. This is the time to comment on any matter (Agenda or Non-Agenda) falling within the scope of the Billings City Council. There will also be time in conjunction with each agenda item for public comment relating to that item. You may only speak once for each item during the meeting.

Please note, the City Council cannot take action on any item of significant interest to the public that does not appear on the agenda. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes during each public comment period or as set by the Mayor. **Speaker sign-in required.** Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

-Public Comment

2. FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

-Public Comment

3. NorthWestern Energy Rate Increase.

-Public Comment

HIGHLIGHT UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS OF COUNCIL INTEREST:

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-AGENDA ITEMS". Speaker Sign-in required. *(Restricted to ONLY items not on this printed agenda. Comments are limited to 3 minutes or as set by the Mayor. Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)*

ADJOURN:

Note:

- This meeting is an "informal" meeting of the City Council. The content of the Agenda is subject to change at the meeting.
- In the event there is a Closed Executive Session, the sole purpose is to discuss litigation strategy. The other parties to the case(s) discussed are not public bodies or associations as described in Section 2-3-203(1) and (2), MCA. The meeting is closed, as allowed by Section 2-3-203(4) (a), MCA, "to discuss a strategy to be followed with respect to litigation when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigating position" of the City of Billings.

City Council Work Session

Date: 06/16/2025
Title: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee - Annual Presentation
Presented by: Elyse Monat
Department: Planning & Community Services
Presentation: Yes
Legal Review: Not Applicable
Project Number: N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council receive the annual presentation from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

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

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is providing its annual report to the City Council at this meeting. BPAC is composed of seven volunteer members, three appointed by the County, three appointed by the City, and one appointed by the Planning Board. Two County-appointed seats are currently unfilled at the time of writing this memo. The purpose of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is to advise the City Council, Mayor, County Commissioners, Planning Board, and all departments and boards of the City and County with regard to non-motorized transportation matters. The presentation will cover what BPAC does, an analysis of crash data involving people biking and walking, and more.

STAKEHOLDERS

Residents of the City of Billings and Yellowstone County are all stakeholders in making the transportation system for the greater urban area safe for all users. The BPAC is a volunteer citizen advisory committee that hears from the public, provides recommendations, and participates in safety programs, projects and studies related to multi-modal transportation in Yellowstone County.

ALTERNATIVES

This item is a presentation only. No action is needed on the item.

FISCAL EFFECTS

There are no fiscal effects. This item is an informational presentation only.

City Council Work Session

Date: 06/16/2025
Title: FY26 Unified Planning Work Program
Presented by: Lora Mattox
Department: Planning & Community Services
Presentation: Yes
Legal Review: Not Applicable
Project Number: N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is not requesting a recommendation on the draft FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) at this meeting. This meeting is intended to discuss potential transportation planning projects that the MPO can assist with in this upcoming work program year and provide direction to MPO staff on the Council's priorities.

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

The Billings MPO (MPO) is attending this work session to discuss the FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with the City Council to engage in discussion on transportation planning projects that could benefit future transportation-related capital projects or address areas of transportation system concerns of the Council.

FY26 UPWP Development Timeline

- Notified of FY26 Funding -- April
- Planning Division Operation Financial Development -- April/May
- Coordination with City PW/County PW/Transit for initial project development -- May/June
- Outreach to City Council and County Commissioners -- June
- Review and adoption schedule -- June/July
- The MPO must submit PCC approved UPWP to MDT by August 1st.

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 2026, running from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, and corresponds directly with the Planning Division's annual work plan.

This year the total PL allocation is \$1,395,824, which the Planning Division proposes providing local matching funds for at certain required percentages per element. The Planning Division matches these funds through the County-wide Planning mil levy and fees generated through city and county planning applications and processes. In addition to funding transportation-related planning projects, the Federal PL funding supports the salaries and activities of the Planning Division that are attached to the activities of the MPO and transportation planning. After calculating Planning staffing, there is approximately \$561,324 in Federal PL funding for transportation plans or studies. Out of this funding, the MPO has identified several transportation planning related activities that are directly tied to the operation of the MPO or related to identified transportation projects identified in the Council approved CIP. Below is a description of the MPO proposed projects:

- Element 300 Under Transportation System Data -- 100% PL
- Support the City of Billings Transportation Corridor Analysis Study by providing Travel Demand Modeling Support as needed. The total cost budgeted for this is \$50,000. Proposed by the MPO.
- An update to the 2017 Household Travel Survey. This information assists in the development and upkeep of the Billings Travel Demand Model in preparation for the 2028 Long Range Transportation Plan Update. The information, which includes motorized and non-motorized users, also informs the impacts to the transportation system and how the City anticipates transportation improvements, as well as informs the MET Transit system and its services. The total cost budgeted for this is \$150,000. Proposed by the MPO.

Element 302 Under Planning Studies -- 60% PL/40% Local

- Feasibility and Planning Study -- Alkali Creek Trail Connection. This project is proposed by the MPO to complete preliminary planning and design so that when program or grant funding becomes available, the initial design and cost information may be applied. The Parks Department is supportive of this project as it completes

a short final connection in the main trail system and keeps users safely on the trail corridor. This project is identified in the FY26-30 CIP and the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan. The total budgeted cost for this project is \$20,000.

- Feasibility and Planning Study -- Downtown to Billings Heights Trail Connection. This project is proposed by the MPO to complete preliminary planning and design so that when program or grant funding becomes available, the initial design and cost information may be applied. The Parks Department is supportive of this project as it completes a connection from the Downtown core to the main trail system and Coulson Park. This project is identified in the FY26-30 CIP and the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan. The total budgeted cost for this project is \$20,000.

The projects proposed by the MPO total \$240,000. Of that funding, \$200,000 is 100% funded by Federal PL. The remaining \$40,000 associated with the non-motorized connections is funded with \$24,000 PL and \$16,000 local funding. The approximate remaining PL funding total \$321,324 and can be allocated towards other projects identified through discussion and collaboration with the City Council and Board of County Commissioners. If funding is not allocated in this work program year, it will be carried over and available in future years.

Summary of Council Member Meeting on the Billings UPWP Development

On June 11th, MPO staff met with several members of the Billings City Council at the Legislative and Local Affairs Committee to discuss the development of future projects for inclusion in the Billings MPO Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The meeting provided an opportunity to share information about the UPWP process, gather initial input from Council members, and identify key transportation priorities and areas of concern within the community.

Discussions focused on identifying planning studies or initiatives that align with Council goals, the approved CIP, long-range transportation goals, improving system safety and connectivity. Council members expressed interest in a range of project types, including corridor studies and efforts to enhance multimodal access.

The feedback received during this meeting will help inform the draft FY26 UPWP and ensure that it reflects both community needs and Council priorities. MPO staff will continue working with the Council, County representatives, and other partners as the UPWP is finalized.

During the discussion, staff discussed the need to further study several Safe Routes to School Projects (SRTS) identified in the adopted SRTS Studies. Six options were included (in order of priority): St. Francis Catholic School/Poly Drive Elementary, Medicine Crow Middle School, Lewis & Clark Middle School, Poly Drive (included with St. Francis), Castle Rock Middle School, and Billings Central Catholic School. After discussion of these projects, the Council members present suggested recommending two. Based on the prioritization of the projects, staff went with the first and second priority that include St. Francis and Medicine Crow. However, the St. Francis project would impact Poly Elementary as well. The cost of these studies are estimated at \$30,000 for St. Francis/Poly and \$50,000 for Medicine Crow.

The other project suggested by staff included Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). The ITS application of advanced technologies--such as sensors, communications, data analytics, and automation--to improve the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of transportation networks. This type of study is significant due to the evaluation of existing intersections, corridors, existing technology and other factors. The estimated cost of a study of this magnitude could cost a minimum of \$150,000.

The final project suggested by staff is an evaluation of the King Avenue East corridor from South Billings Boulevard to Laurel Road. There is very little on-street parking along this route and during soccer and other events, vehicles are parked off the roadway in the grass or across King Avenue East with very little pedestrian access. With the construction of the recreation center MPO staff could initially evaluate the situation and collect data on use, etc. This may be a project that needs additional review after the completion of the recreation center and how that affects parking further west during outdoor activities. The cost of this study is estimated at \$50,000.

Council member Neese brought up a potential feasibility study for significant trail connection that would not only benefit SRTS but provide an off-street connection between neighborhoods. This connection is the city-owned parkland between Aronson Avenue and then moving through DNRC land and continuing up to Annadale. We are calling this connection the Aronson to Annadale Trail Connection. This trail connection is identified in the approved 2017 Billings Bike and Trail Master Plan. The estimate of the study is \$40,000.

The total costs of these proposed projects is: \$330,000. Although there is not enough PL funding for all of the projects listed, it would be very difficult for staff to manage all of these projects in one year.

On June 12th, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met to review the draft UPWP and discuss these projects. After review and discussion of each of these projects, TAC is recommending that the City Council consider the inclusion of the recommended MPO projects that include the modeling support of the City's Transportation Corridor Analysis, the update to the Household Travel Survey, the Alkali Creek Trail Study, and the Downtown to Heights Trail Connection. In addition, TAC recommends that City Council prioritize and recommends picking these projects for the FY26 UPWP: The SRTS Feasibility Studies and the Aronson to Annadale Trail Connection project. TAC recommends that the ITS and King Avenue East Studies be considered in FY27 UPWP. TAC is recommending that the ITS project be moved to FY27 due to the cost of this project and the staff commitment needed. The King Avenue East project is recommended to FY27 to wait until the new recreation center is constructed to have accurate data for evaluation of traffic impacts on that area.

All SRTS and Trail project locations are shown as a separate attachment.

STAKEHOLDERS

The development of the UPWP involves numerous discussion sessions, including meetings with City and County Public Work staff, work sessions, and regular business meetings of the City Council and the Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners. Here are the discussion meetings held to date:

- MPO staff discussed the initial development of the UPWP with the Technical Advisory Committee on May 8 and encouraged City and County Public Works to review potential transportation planning studies or projects that could be beneficial in advancing future capital projects.
- On May 21, MPO staff met with the County Public Works staff. Discussion included a discussion about the types of projects the MPO can assist with. One area of interest is conducting intersection studies at predetermined locations. The MPO also suggested that after the Billings Bypass is completed, an update to the Lockwood Transportation Study could be completed. No specific projects were identified at this meeting.
- MPO staff attended the June 4th Board of County Commissioners meeting to discuss the meeting with County Public Works, discuss proposed MPO projects and continue a dialogue with the Commissioners. At this time, the County is not proposing any additional transportation-related plans or studies.
- On June 11th, MPO staff along with City Public Works and MET Transit met with the Legislative and Local Affairs Committee members of the City Council. This opportunity provided a discussion with council representatives on proposed projects and dialogue on council goals.
- Other scheduled meetings include this City Council Work session on June 16.

If needed, additional work sessions will be scheduled to continue discussions.

ALTERNATIVES

Discussion only.

FISCAL EFFECTS

Approval of the 2026 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 2026 UPWP is as follows:

- \$274,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (City of Billings)
 - \$170,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (Yellowstone County)
 - \$668,000 Yellowstone County Planning Levy
 - \$1,395,824 Federal Planning (PL)
- Allocation Total - Local and Federal Program Funding (UPWP): \$2,507,824

SUMMARY

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is presenting the FY26 UPWP to the City Council to discuss transportation planning priorities that support future capital projects and address transportation system concerns. The UPWP programs federal funds from the FHWA and FTA (via MDT) for transportation and transit planning, aligning with the Planning Division's annual work plan.

UPWP Project Locations Map

Attachments

Proposed Project Location Maps

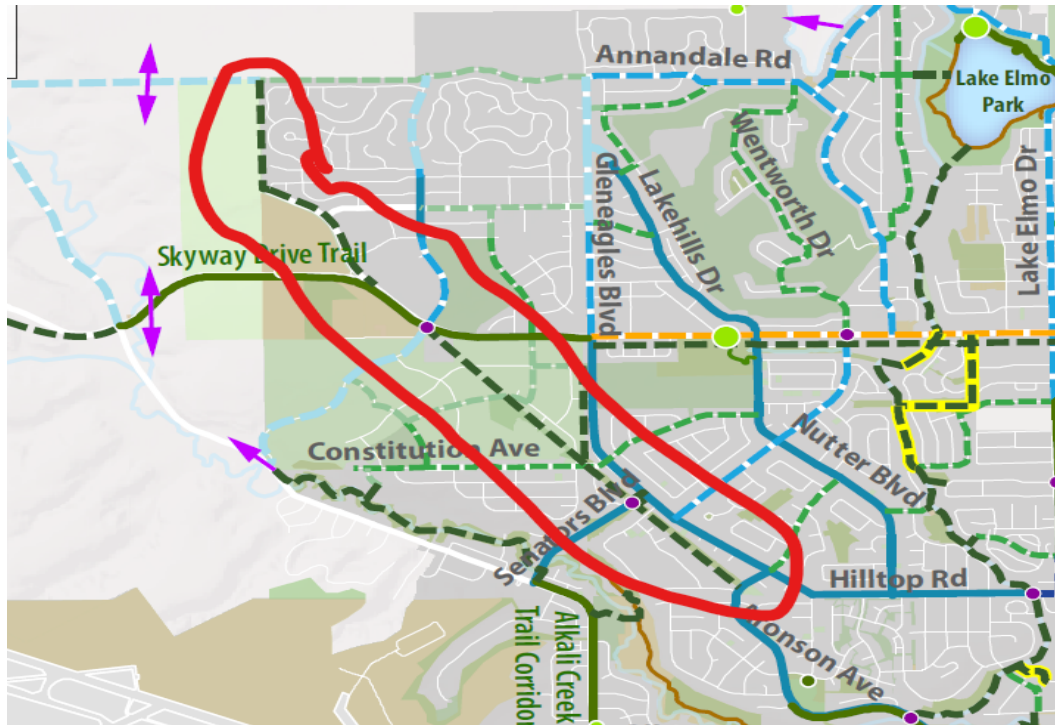
Feasibility and Planning Study – Alkali Creek Trail Connection



Feasibility and Planning Study – Downtown Connector (Downtown to Billings Heights)

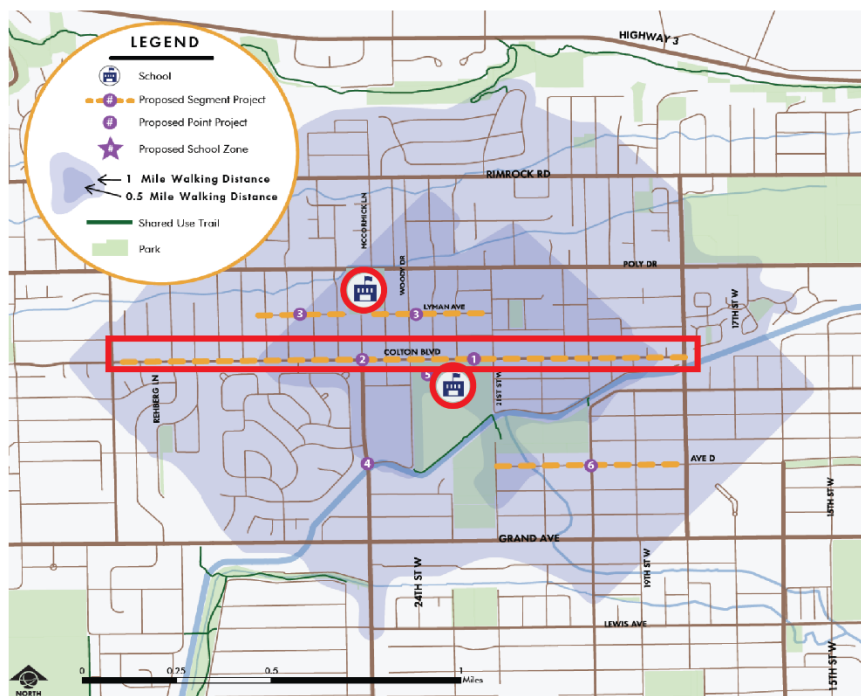


Feasibility and Planning Study – Aronson to Annadale



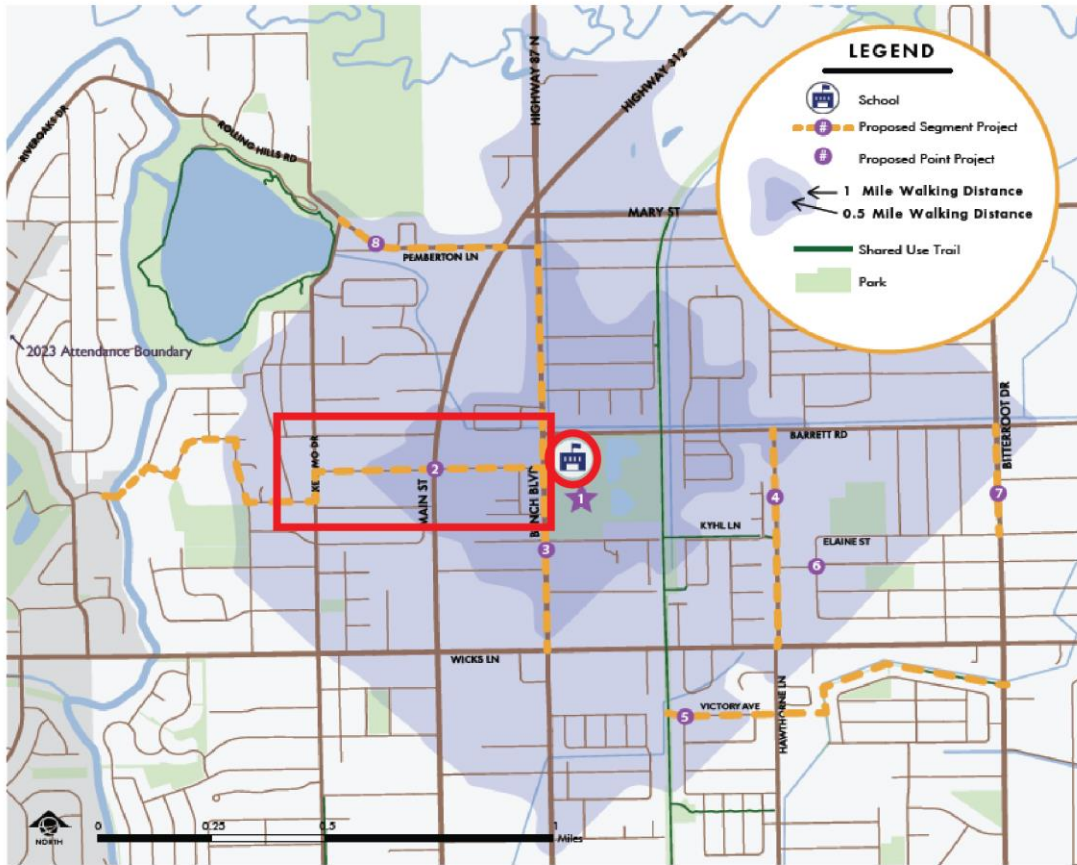
Analysis and Public Outreach – St. Francis Catholic School/Poly Drive Elementary

Proposed Projects Map at St. Francis Catholic School and one at Poly Drive Elementary

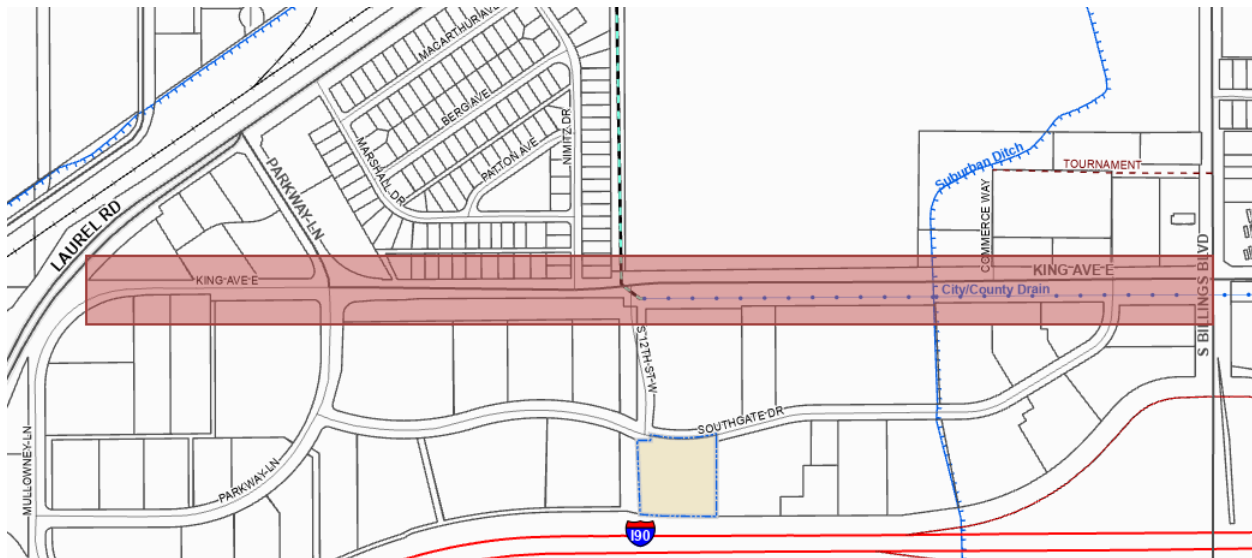


Analysis and Public Outreach – Medicine Crow Middle School

Proposed Projects Map at Medicine Crow Middle School



Corridor Study – King Avenue East – S. Billings to Laurel Road



City Council Work Session

Date: 06/16/2025
Title: Northwestern Energy Rates
Presented by: Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Department: City Hall Administration
Presentation: No
Legal Review: No
Project Number: N/A

RECOMMENDATION

This will be a discussion about the Northwestern Energy rates increases.

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

NorthWestern Energy has implemented an electric rate increase for Montana customers. The PSC hearings on NWE's full rate request are ongoing and expected to conclude later this month.

ALTERNATIVES

City Council action is not required, but direction to staff may be provided.

FISCAL EFFECTS

The initial projections are that the City of Billings Departments could experience up to \$1,000,000 in additional electrical fee increases.
