

CITY/COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

TUESDAY, April 22, 2025 at 6:00pm

	Position	01/14/2025	01/28/2025	02/11/2025	02/25/2025	03/11/2025	03/26/2025	04/08/2025	04/22/2025	05/13/2025	05/28/2025	06/10/2025	06/24/2027	07/08/2025	07/22/2025	08/12/2025	08/26/2025	09/09/2025	09/23/2025	10/14/2025	10/28/2025	11/12/2025	11/26/2025	12/09/2025	12/23/2025
Jim Ronquillo	Billings Ward I	1	A	1	1	A	1	1	1																
Roger Gravggaard President	Billings Ward II	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
Dennie Stephenson	Billings Ward III	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
John Staley Vice President	Billings Ward IV	V	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
David Nordel	Billings Ward V	A	V	V	A	V	A	1	V																
Troy Boucher	YC District 1	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A																
Dennis Cook	YC District 2	A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
Vacant	YC District 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant	YC District 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woody Woods	YC District 5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	A																
Alexis Bonogofsky	YC District 6	1	1	V	1	V	1	1	1																
Morgan Tuss	YC District 7	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A																
Vacant	YC Cons. District	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scott Reiter	Ex-Officio SD2	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A																

Please note: "A" stands for excused absence, "1" stands for present, "V" stands for Zoom participation, "C" stands for Canceled

Call the Meeting to Order: President Gravgaard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Introduction of Planning Board Members and Planning Department Staff

President Gravgaard called for introductions of the members of the Planning Board and staff.

Attending Staff: Wyeth Friday, Planning & Community Services Director; Anna Vickers, Planning Division Manager; Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator; Brenda Berns, Planning Clerk

1. Others in Attendance: Mac Fogelsong, Engineering Department Manager

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion

Motion made by Board member Stephenson, seconded by Board member Bonogofsky to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes: April 8, 2025 Delayed

4. Public Comment: As required (3 minutes maximum per person). Any member of the public might be heard on any subject that is not on the agenda. The Planning Board will not take any action on these items at this time but could choose to add an item to the next meeting agenda for discussion. There were no comments from the public.

5. Disclosure of Outside (Ex-Parte) Communication – There was none.

6. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest – There was none.

7. Old Business – There was none.

a. Public Hearing and Recommendation. FY25 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Amendment 1- Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator

Lora Mattox gave an overview of the background for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

The UPWP is a key transportation planning document for the Billings metropolitan area. Developed by the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in coordination with local, state, and federal agencies. The purpose is to outline transportation planning activities and identify planning tasks, funding sources, and study schedules.

Focus areas include roadways, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and overall transportation system improvements with adherence to federal transportation planning requirements.

The UPWP is amended periodically to reflect changes in project scope, funding allocations, and scheduling, ensuring alignment with evolving priorities.

The FY25 amendment includes updates detailed in Elements 302 and 700, focusing on both project scope and financial adjustments. One key change involves shifting the original plan to issue an RFP for a bike and scooter share program toward a new focus—redirecting resources to conduct an economic analysis of the City's Complete Streets initiatives. This shift follows the MPO's established transportation planning process, which includes public participation and review opportunities. The purpose of the economic analysis is to support data-driven transportation planning, guide investment decisions, and inform policy development, with the goal of creating a more efficient, sustainable, and economically sound transportation network.

Questions

Board member Ronquillo raised a question about the use of electric bikes on sidewalks after observing one in use. Staff acknowledged that electric bikes are an emerging issue and noted that the city currently has no specific regulations in place. Since they are not classified as motorized vehicles, their use is generally unrestricted, which raises concerns—particularly on public lands. Speed may factor into future considerations. While no enforcement or regulatory action has been taken yet, it is recognized as an issue that will need to be addressed.

President Gravgaard opened the public hearing. There were no members of the public, the public hearing was closed.

Motion

Motion made by Board member Staley, seconded by Board member Stephenson to recommend approval of 2024-2028 TIP Amendment. Motion passes unanimously.

New Business:

a Presentation and Board Discussion. Curb Cut Ordinance Amendments – Mac Fogelsong, City Engineer

Mr. Fogelsong reported that the team is reviewing proposed amendments to the city's curb cut ordinance and site development standards. The goal is to align the codes with recent regulatory changes. He noted they are also addressing inconsistencies between traffic study requirements and subdivision regulations.

Mr. Fogelsong stated there were inconsistencies between traffic studies for sites and subdivisions, particularly regarding curb cuts on residential streets, which were previously inflexible. The requirement for site surfacing (paving) was eliminated with Re-Code but has since been reintroduced for site development. Subdivision regulations now serve as the reference point for traffic studies, private street development, and improving flexibility in residential access.

The City retains the authority to limit access along collector and arterial roads. Parking over sidewalks remains prohibited where driveways are shorter than 20 feet.

Administrative relief has been added to address various issues. To ensure consistency between subdivision and site development, traffic accessibility studies now follow the same three-tier structure outlined in the subdivision regulations, with a refresh required for studies older than 10 years. A change was made to clarify that site-specific traffic studies are no longer responsible for pre-existing traffic conditions. There was productive discussion around the frequency and spacing of curb cuts, and a previous zoning conflict regarding curb cut width has been resolved. Concerns related to private streets, such as the costs associated with sidewalks and streetlights, were also addressed.

Questions

The board had a broad discussion on sidewalks, safety, and private streets. Questions were raised about whether sidewalk dimensions are specified, with clarification that standard sizes are already established through subdivision regulations based on street and subdivision type. There was interest in potentially adding restrictions related to sidewalks and streetlights. Concerns about pedestrian safety in neighborhoods without sidewalks were shared, emphasizing the broader implications beyond individual cases. The topic of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) was introduced and supported. Clarification was also provided that proposed changes would not apply retroactively. The conversation turned to the definition of private streets, highlighting the importance of distinguishing them from driveways and parking lots, with maintenance responsibilities typically falling to homeowners or homeowner associations.

The board engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on the requirements for private streets, weighing whether to simply reference street width or to mandate additional elements such as sidewalks and streetlights. Concerns were raised about consistency and the challenge of maintaining other standards when exceptions are allowed. There was strong sentiment that private streets should match public streets in width, especially for safety and emergency access.

Some members emphasized the need for sidewalks and lighting, citing safety, crime prevention, and long-term neighborhood livability. Personal experiences and examples were shared, including the positive impact of lighting on crime reduction and pedestrian safety. While there was general agreement on the value of sidewalks and streetlights, questions were raised about the costs and who would bear them—developers, homeowners, or through assistance programs.

There was also discussion about enforcement and consistency. Some members noted that developers often find ways around sidewalk requirements, and there was a desire for more uniform application of standards between city and county developments.

The group emphasized the importance of ensuring that materials and designs for private streets adhere to subdivision regulations, with homeowners' associations typically responsible for maintenance. Ultimately, the conversation reflected a shared goal of improving safety and consistency across both public and private developments, while recognizing the practical and financial challenges involved.

Mr. Fogelsong stated the issue will be presented before City Council on May 27, 2025

9. Other Business.

Wyeth Friday, the Planning & Community Services Director expressed appreciation to board member Alexis Bonogofsky for suggesting the inclusion of the Planning Board jurisdiction map. He noted that staff are currently working with the county GIS department to update the map and post it on the website. He also mentioned that Monica Plecker, Yellowstone County Public Works Director, will be attending a future meeting to discuss county parks.

Questions

The board held a general discussion covering legislative updates, bike trail planning, and parkland dedication.

Staff noted that several legislative items are being tracked, including changes to residential parking requirements, such as the removal of mandates for assisted living facilities and daycares. Other proposed legislation involves building heights, agricultural lot development without subdivision review, and new parking standards for accessory dwelling units. These items are currently in the interim phase and will be finalized later. The board also discussed the status of bike trail planning. While a 2017 plan remains in place, an updated version proposed for 2025 was not adopted due to concerns raised about long-term maintenance costs. The city is continuing to work on standardizing development and transportation planning efforts.

Concerns were raised about parkland dedication, with some members noting that developers often choose cash in lieu of providing actual park space. Staff explained that although there are no anticipated changes at the state level, local policies require review of usable park space, and when parkland is dedicated, a funding mechanism such as a parkland district must be established for maintenance. The discussion highlighted the importance of balancing development with community amenities like trails, parks, and infrastructure.

a. (Standing Item) Long Range Strategic Issues and an overview of future City and County issues and projects.

10. Future Agenda Items

ADJOURNMENT: 7:54 PM

Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk