



# YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF PLANNING

CITY OF BILLINGS AND  
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA



## AGENDA

JULY 8, 2025 MEETING TIME: 6:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers, 5th Floor  
316 N 26th St, Billings MT

### NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Citizens are invited to:

- . Review the Agenda Packet on the City's website at: <https://ci.billings.mt.us/117/Agendas-Minutes>
- . View the meeting live online at Facebook
- . Public comment will be taken only during the Public Comment periods as indicated on the agenda and during the Public Hearings, if any are scheduled, under the Regular agenda. Comments may be sent to the Board via email before 12:00 pm on the meeting date. All emails received prior to this time will be entered into the record for the public hearing. Comments may be submitted by:
  - . Mail: City/County Planning Division PO Box 1178, Billings MT 59103
  - . Email: [plnonline@billingsmt.gov](mailto:plnonline@billingsmt.gov)
- . NOTICE: All meetings and official activities of the MPO are held in buildings and locations that comply with accessibility standards according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A TTY number for the hearing impaired, 406-657-3079, is available upon request. Special arrangements for participation in the public hearings by individuals with hearing, speech, or vision impairment may be made upon request at least three days prior to the hearing. Please notify Brenda Berns, Planning Clerk at [bernsb@billingsmt.gov](mailto:bernsb@billingsmt.gov) or call 406-247-8610.

1. **CALL TO ORDER - Planning Board President:** Welcome and Introduction of Board Members and Staff.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA\*** - including any additions or deletions to agenda. The agenda for a regular meeting will be closed at 5:00 p.m. three (3) working days prior to the date of the meeting.
3. **DELAYED MEETING MINUTES:** June 24, 2025
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD** -- As required (3 minute maximum per person). *Any member of the public may 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's agenda for discussion.*
  - 4a) **Comments on items not on agenda and requests to add items to future agendas**
  - 4b) **Comments on items on the non-public hearing agenda items**
5. **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**
6. **DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION:**
7. **OLD BUSINESS** (Agenda items that were not discussed or not completed in a previous meeting or items requiring action).
  - a. Recommendation and Action. FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator

#### Attachments

FFY26 DRAFT UPWP

FY26 Project Locations

8. **NEW BUSINESS:** (Agenda items new to this meeting).

9. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

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

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**CITY/COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
City Council Chambers, 5th Floor  
316 N 26th St, Billings MT



### **Public Hearing Participation Guidelines**

All meetings and official activities of the MPO are held in buildings and locations that comply with accessibility standards according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A TTY number for the hearing impaired, 406-657-3079, is available upon request. Special arrangements for participation in the public hearings by individuals with hearing, speech, or vision impairment may be made upon request at least three days prior to the hearing. Please notify the Planning Division Office, at 406-247-8610.

The County Planning Board welcomes public input on matters brought before the Board. To ensure a fair and effective public comment process, we ask that you consider the following guidelines when presenting your comments: **Address the Planning Board directly. You must state your name and address before commenting.** This is an opportunity to explain how you will be affected by the decision and why that is an important consequence. Be informed of the process and the requirements of the Board. If you are commenting about a subdivision, please limit your comments to the review criteria.

**By state law, the Planning Board must consider only certain criteria when reviewing subdivisions (76-3-608(a), MCA). These criteria include: Effect on agriculture and agricultural water user facilities; Effect on local services; Effect on the natural environment; Effect on wildlife and wildlife habitat; Effect on public health and safety.**

**Provide specific information about why you are concerned about the pending application, how the decision will impact the review criteria listed above, and provide suggestions on how to minimize or eliminate the impact.**

**Respect the right of others to participate. Wait until the previous speaker has completed their comments before making your own comments. Do not talk over the person commenting or with other people in attendance.**

**The public hearing is not an opportunity to question or accuse the applicant or their agent. If you have questions of the Board, the applicant or the agent, ask questions directly to the Board during the public hearing portion of the meeting. The Board will respond or request the applicant or agent to respond after the public comment portion of the hearing is closed.**

**After the public comment portion of the hearing is closed, no further comments are allowed unless you are addressed directly by a Board member.**

**You should expect the Board to make a balanced recommendation in accordance with its statutory responsibilities. The Board's ability to make reasonable and thoughtful recommendations is dependent on a fair consideration of everyone's interests.**

*Thank you for participating.*

## Planning Board

**Date:** 07/08/2025  
**Title:** FY26 Unified Planning Work Program - Recommendation to Policy Coordinating Committee  
**Presented by:** Lora Mattox  
**Department:** Planning & Community Services  
**Presentation:** Yes

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### Information

#### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board (PB) forward a recommendation of approval of the FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC). The PCC is scheduled to take final action on the UPWP at its meeting on July 22, 2025.

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

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is presenting the draft 2026 UPWP for review and recommendation to the Planning Board and governing bodies. 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 which are required at a certain percentage per element (a total breakdown of funding is located in Table I Funding Summary on page 52 of the UPWP). Table 3 on page 53 outlines the percentage breakdown per element (note that some transportation planning elements are 100% PL funded). The Planning Division matches these funds through the County-wide Planning Mill Levy, and fees generated through city and county planning applications and processes. This year, with the allocation for staffing and transportation planning activities, the MPO is proposing to use up to \$1,143,600 in PL funding. The local match is \$758,400 (Planning). The unprogrammed PL funds will not be lost to the MPO; unprogrammed PL funds are carried over and re-allocated to the MPO in a two-year timeframe. This means in FY28, the MPO could receive an additional \$204,224 in PL funding.

Projects identified for this year's program include (detailed description of each project in the UPWP):

#### Under Element 300 -- Transportation System Data -- 100% PL

- **Replacement and upgrade of traffic and trail counters as needed.** The total cost budgeted for this is \$15,000. Proposed by the MPO.
- **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. This data is also applicable as the City conducts the Transportation Corridor Analysis and as MET Transit continues to evaluate its routes and system. The total budget for this is \$150,000. Proposed by the MPO.

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

- **Feasibility and Planning Study -- Alkali Creek Trail Connection.** This project is proposed by the MPO. This project is identified in the FY26-30 CIP and the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan. Trail alignment and planning level design work is needed for this project to be prepared for a future Transportation Alternatives Program grant or other funding opportunity. The Parks Department supports the completion of this final connection between the trail segments in this area to enable users to remain on a park trail through the area. The total budgeted cost for this project is \$20,000.
- **Feasibility and Planning Study -- Downtown to Billings Heights Non-Motorized Connection.** This project is proposed by the MPO. This project is identified in the FY26-30 CIP and the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan. Corridor analysis and planning level design work is needed for this project to be prepared for a future Transportation Alternatives Program grant or other funding opportunity. The Parks Department supports the completion of this connection to provide access from the Downtown to Coulson Park as further park improvements are being made to make Coulson more of a destination. The total budgeted cost for this project is \$20,000.

• **Feasibility and Planning Study -- Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road Trail Connection.** This project is proposed by the Billings City Council. This project is identified in the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan. Corridor analysis and planning level design work is needed for this project to be prepared for a future Transportation Alternatives Program grant or other funding opportunity. The Parks Department supports the completion of this connection to provide access from Aronson Avenue through several neighborhoods located in the Billings Heights up to Annandale Road, including an elementary, middle and high school. The total budgeted cost for this project is \$40,000.

• **Additional Evaluation and Public Outreach -- Safe Routes to School - St. Francis Catholic School/Poly Drive Elementary and Medicine Crow Middle School.** This project is proposed by the Billings City Council. These projects are identified in the Phase I and Phase II Safe Routes to School Studies completed by the MPO. Both of these projects were identified needing additional evaluation and public outreach to determine feasibility and local support. The total cost budgeted for this project is \$75,000.

• **Transportation Corridor Analysis Public Outreach --** The MPO is actively participating in Phase II of the Transportation Corridor Analysis project. Initiated by Engineering, this project will engage the community in shaping how the transportation network should function and its appearance. To meet this goal, Engineering launched a two-phase project. Phase I, led by Engineering involved extensive public outreach using a variety of engagement tools and opportunities. Phase II, led by the MPO, will build upon the first phase by validating its findings and incorporating additional engagement efforts, including visual preference surveys, open houses, corridor pop-up events, and stakeholder group meetings. The total cost budgeted for this project is \$80,000.

## STAKEHOLDERS

The local review of the UPWP involves public discussion sessions, work sessions, and regular business meetings of the City Council, Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners, and Yellowstone County Board of Planning (Planning Board). The Planning Board, the designated MPO, conducted a public hearing at the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. No public testimony was provided.

The public can provide comments or questions at any of these meetings, as well as formal public testimony at the Planning Board. Below is a list of outreach associated with the development of the FY26 UPWP:

- 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.
- City Public Works/Engineering suggested two corridor studies that support future CIP projects (discussed above).
- May 21, MPO staff met with the County Public Works staff. Discussion included a discussion on 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 4 Board of County Commissioners meeting to discuss the meeting with County Public Works, discuss proposed MPO projects and continue a dialogue with the Commissioners.
- 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.
- On June 12th, the Technical Advisory Committee met and reviewed proposed projects submitted by the MPO, City and County. Based on this information, the TAC recommended the projects identified in this memo for inclusion.
- MPO staff attended the June 16 City Council Work and provided information on the UPWP and proposed projects. The City Council supports the above projects set forth by the MPO.
- On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Planning Board received a presentation on the FY26 UPWP and conducted a public hearing to collect public comment. No public comment was received.

## ALTERNATIVES

The Planning Board may:

- Forward a recommendation of approval of the FY26 UPWP to the Policy Coordinating Committee which will allow the continuation of federal transportation planning funding to the MPO, or;
- Not forward a recommendation of approval of the FY26 UPWP to the Policy Coordinating Committee. Not forwarding a positive recommendation could jeopardize continued federal transportation planning funding to the MPO.

## FISCAL EFFECTS

Approval of the 2026 UPWP allows the MPO 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 County-Wide Planning Levy
- \$1,395,824 Federal Planning (PL) Allocation

Total Local and Federal Program Funding (UPWP): \$2,507,824

## **SUMMARY**

Staff recommends the Planning Board forward a recommendation of approval of the FY26 UPWP to the PCC. Approval of the UPWP grants access to federal funds for transportation planning, combining federal and local funds to support most planning work. Without approval, community planning resources would be significantly reduced, limiting the management of transportation projects.

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## **Attachments**

FFY26 DRAFT UPWP  
FY26 Project Locations



# **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

## **Federal Fiscal Year 2026**

**(October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026)**

**Prepared by:**

**Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**In cooperation with:**

**City of Billings, Montana**

**Yellowstone County, Montana**

**Yellowstone County Board of Planning**

**Montana Department of Transportation**

**Federal Highway Administration**

**Federal Transit Administration**

Approved by:

TAC: June 2, 2025

Yellowstone County: July 8, 2025

Yellowstone County Board of Planning: July 8, 2025

City of Billings: July 14, 2025

Policy Coordinating Committee: July 22, 2025

MDT:

FHWA/FTA:

This report was prepared with funding support from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, provided through the State Planning and Research Program (Section 505) or the Metropolitan Planning Program (Section 104(d)) under Title 23 of the U.S. Code. The work program follows the format outlined in Chapter 2, Part 4 of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 8100.1D. The content of this report does not necessarily represent the official views or policies of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

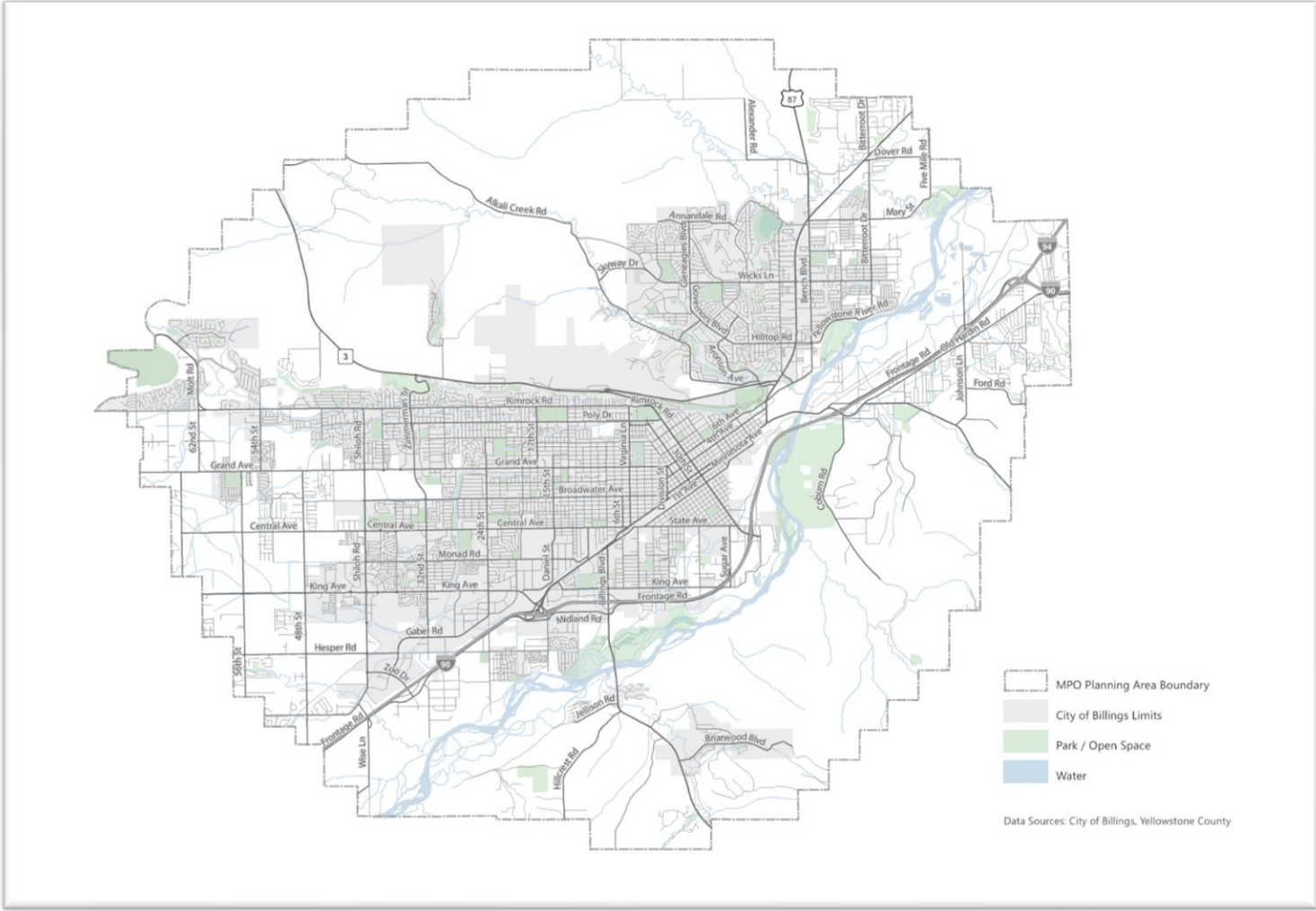
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# Billings MPO Boundary



**CHAPTER 1 – HIGHWAY**  
**SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

**ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS USED IN THE WORK PROGRAM**

ADA	American Disability Act
ACS	American Community Survey
ARP	American Rescue Plan
AVL	Automated Vehicle Locator
BSED	Big Sky Economic Development
BUILD	Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development
CAC	Citizen Advisory Committee
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CDL	Commercial Driver’s License
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation Air Quality
CTSP	Community Transportation Safety Plan
EBURD	East Billings Urban Renewal District
ERP	Equipment Replacement Plan
FAST Act	Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographic Information System
GTFS	General Transit Feed Specification
HPMS	Highway Performance Monitoring System
IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NTD	National Transit Database

PCC	Policy Coordinating Committee
PEP	Private Enterprise Participation
PL	Planning Funds
PTASP	Public Transit Agency Safety Plan
RAISE	Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity
SBBURD	South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District
TA	Transportation Alternative Program
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TAM	Transit Asset Management
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zones
TDP	Transit Development Plan
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
YCBP	Yellowstone County Board of Planning

## THE UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM AND ITS PURPOSE

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) outlines transportation planning activities for the Billings Metropolitan area during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY), which spans October 1 to September 30. The Yellowstone County Board of Planning acts as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is charged with the responsibility of administering the planning process. Each year, the Billings (MPO) prepares the UPWP for review and approval by local, state, and federal transportation authorities. The process begins with the Billings MPO Technical Advisory Committee, which conducts an initial review and provides a formal recommendation to the Yellowstone County Board of Planning, Billings City Council, and the Yellowstone Board of County Commissioners. These local agencies then submit their recommendations to the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), which gives final local approval before forwarding the UPWP to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for final authorization.

The UPWP includes work elements such as administration, public involvement, and long- and short-range planning. Each element outlines objectives, accomplishments from the previous fiscal year, and planned activities for the upcoming year. It also specifies the agency responsible, required resources, including staff hours, funding amounts, and sources, ensuring a comprehensive and transparent planning framework.

## FEDERAL GUIDANCE

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was passed by Congress on November 15, 2021, authorizing funding for Federal transportation programs for federal fiscal years 2022-2026. The IIJA effectively replaced the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and the prior infrastructure act Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) Act.

The IIJA retains FAST Act's ten planning factors. The MPO is required, per 23 USC 134(h)(1), to consider these factors when developing transportation plans, programs, and projects:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth, housing, and economic development patterns.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, people, and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
9. Improve resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.
10. Enhance travel and tourism.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) reinforces the performance-based planning and programming framework established by MAP-21 and the FAST Act. A key feature of these acts, continued under the IIJA, is the development of a performance- and outcome-based federal-aid program. The MPO will monitor performance measures and report progress to committees, agencies, and the public.

The performance measures address national goal areas, including safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement, environmental sustainability, and minimizing delays in project delivery. Instead of setting independent performance measure targets for the Billings Metropolitan Planning Area, the Yellowstone County Board of Planning and the City of Billings Aviation and Transit adopted the state performance targets established by MDT. This agreement, developed in coordination with Montana MPOs, was formalized through a Cooperative Performance-Based Planning Agreement on May 14, 2018.

## SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS (SATO)

IJA/BIL requires an annual 2.5 percent of an MPO's PL allocation to be set aside for safe and accessible transportation options (SATO). The FY 26 set-aside is projected at \$24,141. The MPO will program expenditures of the required set-aside in this year's projects. Those projects will be noted in the Work Program Elements. Note: PCC as a governing body has not formally adopted any policy outside the Federal Mandate for Alternative Modes. Any reference to Complete Streets in this document refers to the City of Billings only.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The development of the UPWP included multiple opportunities for public review and feedback, culminating in its adoption by the PCC. The MPO facilitated this process by hosting TAC UPWP meetings and posting the draft UPWP on its website for a two-week public review period. The PCC's adoption of the UPWP also took place in a public forum. Below are the outreach efforts and meetings where the public could provide input on the draft UPWP:

- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): June 12, 2025
- UPWP Posted on MPO Website: June 17, 2025
- Yellowstone County Planning Board: July 8, 2025
- Yellowstone County Commissioners: July 8, 2025
- Billings City Council: July 14, 2025

Final action on the FFY 2026 UPWP occurred during the PCC meeting on July 22, 2025.

Additionally, the MPO welcomed comments and addressed questions in person, by mail, email, and phone as needed following the posting of the draft UPWP. Revisions to the document were made based on feedback received from MDT and the public.

## SECTION 2 – WORK PROGRAM

### PROGRAM SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

#### 100 Program Administration

##### Objectives

The role involves administering the transportation planning process and providing support to the Board of Planning, the City Council, and County Commissioners, and other boards and commissions in their decision-making activities related to transportation initiatives.

Responsibilities include engaging in administrative and financial actions specific to transportation planning activities and effectively prioritizing those initiatives. Additionally, the position emphasizes enhancing staff skills and ensuring ongoing exposure to state-of-the-art practices and technologies in transportation planning, including relevant software. A key aspect of the role is maintaining contact with, providing input to, and receiving feedback from various local, state, and federal agencies, committees, and groups involved in transportation planning.

##### Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025

Conformance with federal, state, and local administrative and regulatory requirements, as well as maintenance of planning operations was achieved for FY25.

Members of the planning staff attended various professional meetings, workshops, and conferences at which planning, transportation, transit, bicycle/pedestrian and related topics were presented and discussed.

Specifically, the City-County Planning Division (Planning Division) and members of other local, state and federal departments and agencies actively participated in a diverse set of local meetings, including the Billings Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), Billings & Yellowstone County Zoning Commissions and Boards of Adjustment, Board of Planning, City Annexation Committee, City Development Process Review Committee, Community Development Board, Public Works (formerly the Traffic Control) Board, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Historic Preservation Board, and others. Staff also participated in meetings with MDT and the other MPOs quarterly to discuss activities and issues. The Billings MPO also meets with MDT to discuss project coordination and issues.

Planning staff worked with GIS staff who updated geographic data in geographic information systems (GIS) including layers such as streets, zoning, addresses, ownership, and environmental

data. This GIS information is vital to provide to consultants for local plan development. Staff regularly utilize an application tracking and project management software system that integrates the existing City building permits with finance and land management software. The software also helps staff provide coordinated subdivision and development project reviews across City and County departments. Additionally, it allows for electronic submittal of building, sign, fence and exempt plats for local review. Staff also reviewed/updated the City Annexation Policy and Limits of Annexation Map and assisted in updates to the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Implementation of the City of Billings Complete Streets Policy is ongoing with the continued collection of data to be incorporated into the City of Billings Complete Streets Status Report. Implementation of the Billings Community Transportation Safety Plan will continue with reporting to MDT as required.

### **Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

All administrative functions of the Planning Division will be performed under this work element. Program management activities will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Correspondence
- Public Relations
- Employee Guidance, Supervision, and Training
- Program Organization and Management
- Consultant Liaison Activities
- Staff Meetings
- Negotiations
- Preparation of Contracts
- Performance Monitoring
- Office Equipment Acquisition
- Budget Management and Administration

Federal regulations require that performance measures and goals be established to monitor the performance of the region's transportation system.

The MPO will work with federal, state and local agencies to improve current performance tracking methods. Performance measures will be tracked on the MPO website and regular reporting will be provided to the Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee, MPO committees, and the general public depending on the availability of related data.

With the refilling of the Planner 1 positions, senior staff has had the ability to undertake a few neighborhood planning efforts this last year and will continue in this next year with the

initiation of the update to the Growth Policy, and land use plan for the newly opened Skyway Drive area. These projects have been identified with local funding.

### **PL Eligible Activities**

The MPO plans to replace five staff computers in the upcoming fiscal year. This aligns with the city's strategic equipment replacement program, which outlines the scheduled replacement of computers and related equipment.

The MPO is proposing to have the current Transportation Planner, Elyse Monat, complete the ITE Professional Transportation Planner Certificate Program. This program is a professional development program offered by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). It is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of transportation planners and engineers by providing comprehensive training in transportation planning principles, processes, and best practices. The program includes a series of online courses covering topics such as travel demand forecasting, land use and transportation integration, performance-based planning, and emerging technologies, followed by a certification exam. Participants who complete the required coursework earn a certificate that demonstrates their proficiency and commitment to the field of transportation planning.

In addition, the MPO will:

- As per the MPO's public participation plan and ongoing public outreach efforts, the planning staff will make available the documents and guidelines for transportation planning activities to the community, as well as keep abreast of federal and state requirements as they relate to the overall planning processes. These activities may include distribution of the current Billings Area Tour Map for bicycle and pedestrian users and visitors, distribution and explanation of the latest Billings Urbanized Area Traffic Count Map and Bicycle Count Map, explanation and distribution of the MPO's public participation plan to groups involved or interested in transportation planning processes in the community, and explanation and information dissemination of the TA or other grant programs to possible project applicants in the community.
- Staff will monitor the PL & Memorandum of Agreement as necessary to meet the requirements of the IJA or any new legislation that may be approved in the upcoming fiscal year.
- Quarterly progress and expenditure reports will be prepared and transmitted to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) in order to maintain federal funding support.
- The FY 2026 UPWP will be continually appraised and monitored in terms of content and budget allocations and will be revised when deemed necessary.
- The Fiscal Year 2027 UPWP will be developed under this work element.

- The Board of Planning, Board of County Commissioners and City Council will be kept informed of the activities of the staff and their progress in completing the approved UPWP.
- All planning staff will participate in recognized and approved training programs in order to improve staff skills and capabilities. Planning expertise will be maintained through enrollment in appropriate planning and transportation-related courses at area colleges, workshops, seminars, webinars and conferences.
- Staff will adapt software programs to effectively utilize traffic data and continue computer-training programs.
- The use of PL funds for out-of-state travel and/or registration fees for the above or other purposes will continue to be subject to prior approval of MDT.
- The MPO TA Program administration will be funded through this work element.
- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will be reviewed so staff may become familiar with changes affecting the metropolitan planning process.
- Planning activities pertaining to Bicycle-Pedestrian in this work element will include:
  - Work field inspections, handle complaints and investigate problem areas of the Bike/Pedestrian system.
  - Presentations as needed.

#### **Locally Funded Activities**

- General administrative activities will include maintenance of files, library documents, daily correspondence and preparation of necessary periodic reports.
- Interagency committee participation is included in this work element.
- All staff members will continue to participate in and encourage increased cooperation between state and local agencies, departments and governing bodies.
- The Planning Division will serve both as a coordinator of and a participant in meetings and committees.
- Planning Division involvement will include participation with such agencies as the Housing Authority, Big Sky Economic Development (BSED), Air Pollution Control Board, RiverStone Health (City-County Health Department), Healthy by Design, legislative study committees, and other agencies.
- Staff will continue to implement long-term document storage through virtual servers and cloud storage platforms.

**STAFFING**

22 Staff Months – City/County Planning

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

The Planning Division will be responsible for administering the area-wide planning process for the City and County.

**PRODUCT**

- An ongoing administrative program focused primarily on effective and expeditious implementation of this UPWP.
- The continual enhancement of the Planning Division staff skills and knowledge.
- Maintenance of a coordinated, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process that is endorsed and supported by the local community.
- The development of the FY27 UPWP.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE - ADMINISTRATION**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$295,900.00	\$242,100.00	\$538,000.00
TOTAL	\$295,900.00	\$242,100.00	\$538,000.00

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	55	45	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$171,600.00	\$140,400.00	\$312,000.00
TOTAL	\$171,600.00	\$140,400.00	\$310,000.00

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

\*\* Five computer replacements - \$9,500; ITE Transportation Planning Certificate Program - \$800.

## **101 Service**

### **Objectives**

To facilitate the sharing of information and the exchange of ideas among planning agencies, the interested public, decision-makers, and other relevant departments, agencies, and organizations associated with the Billings MPO.

### **Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025**

The planning staff engaged in a diverse range of service tasks. Their responsibilities included delivering presentations concerning roadways and alternative transportation, addressing citizen inquiries and complaints about streets, subdivision layouts, sight distances, zoning requests, and ensuring alignment with the 2024 Transportation Plan, the 2017 Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, the City of Billings 2016 Growth Policy, the Lockwood Growth Policy, and various neighborhood and community plans.

Staff also provided transportation planning information to organizational and agency partners as needed for education and decision-making purposes. Additionally, they shared updates and insights with the community and stakeholders throughout the development of several planning initiatives.

### **Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

#### **PL Eligible Activities**

- Planner I positions will also be working within this element. These positions will provide transportation and related planning information to the general public and interested organizations.
- Planning Division and Transportation Planning staff continually look at ways to disseminate and provide information on transportation activities, including by creating social media posts addressing transportation safety, and tabling at community events.

#### **Locally Funded Activities**

- Staff will continue to develop and use website tools enabling citizens to access information on upcoming planning activities, board and commission meetings, and recent land use applications, as well as interact with various planning processes through email notification and online comment programs. Staff will look at implementing citizen access to the Questys System software for access to historical data related to transportation, zoning and other planning applications.
- Continue increasing community and agency awareness of the interrelationships between land use development and transportation needs through dissemination of information and drafting of planning documents that incorporate both elements together.

### **STAFFING**

7 Staff Months – City/County Planning

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

As Assigned.

**PRODUCT**

- A responsive and flexible planning process utilizing staff capable of providing short-term findings and recommendations, as well as ongoing customer service to the public on all levels of planning projects and regulations.
- Provide transportation-related webinars to staff, local officials and the general public to educate on current transportation issues.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE - SERVICE**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$32,500.00	\$32,500.00	\$65,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,500.00</b>	<b>\$32,500.00</b>	<b>\$65,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	50	50	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$50,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>\$50,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

## **102 Citizen Involvement**

### **Objectives**

To gather community input on values and goals while encouraging participation in the development of plans and projects.

### **Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025**

Planning staff attended numerous meetings with service clubs, civic groups, and professional organizations to discuss various aspects of local planning. The Planning Board actively sought public input to review and gather feedback on a broad range of planning issues affecting both the City and County. Staff also participated in meetings of neighborhood task force organizations and advisory committees, responding to questions and addressing long-term planning topics, particularly those related to transportation projects and code enforcement concerns.

### **Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

#### **PL Eligible Activities**

- The City of Billings is undertaking the development of a Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map to comply with the Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA). The MLUPA legislation is aimed at fostering the well-being of Montana's residents by implementing comprehensive land use planning. Transportation will be very relevant to the development of the future land use map. Significant public outreach and engagement will be involved in this project. The MPO is proposing to allocate \$5,000 of PL funding towards this activity to assist in public engagement. This project was kicked off in May of 2025 with the majority of the engagement beginning summer into spring of 2026.
- Outreach to the public and all affected jurisdictions for ongoing transportation projects, including but not limited to several MDT planning and construction projects such as the North Billings Bypass, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North reconstruction, Zoo Drive and several MPO projects. The MPO has several projects that will be completed and initiated this upcoming year including an update to the 2017 Household Travel Survey.
- The staff will continue to support the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Committee is responsible for forwarding recommendations to the Planning Board and governing bodies on bicycle safety, bike lanes, pedestrian safety and access, and other matters. The group will be involved in the nomination and review of TA Program eligible projects, bicycle and pedestrian signing and safety projects, grant applications for non-motorized transportation projects, and community education and outreach on bicycle and pedestrian safety within the MPO.

- The MPO has several planning efforts this year and next, as part of its continuous efforts to engage the public in these transportation planning efforts, staff will be actively engaged with City and County Departments and partnering organizations to push information and public participation opportunities to the community.
- TAC and PCC meetings will be held, and meeting information disseminated as necessary.
- Staff will continue to update and maintain the MPO's website to provide the most current up to date information for the community.
- Staff will utilize web-based GIS and web mapping software for assistance in transportation planning.
- Some of the specific projects that will involve community participation include the completion of the update to the 2017 Household Travel Survey, MPO participation in the City of Billings Transportation Corridor Plan, and the significant development of the Billings Comprehensive Plan. These projects will include extensive public participation and solicitation.

### **Locally Funded Activities**

- Meetings with various citizen groups will be coordinated and attended for the purpose of soliciting information and ideas on a broad range of planning issues within the Billings Urban Area and throughout Yellowstone County.
- Community participation using new tools and techniques will also be included in all planning studies proposed within this document.
- Staff will utilize web-based GIS and Web mapping software for assistance in land-use planning.

### **STAFFING**

9.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

### **FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning

### **PRODUCT**

- A comprehensive and coordinated solicitation and collection of public opinions in order to accurately reflect the preferences and priorities of the citizens within the Billings Urban Area.
- An enhanced integrated web-based public participation software that includes MPO and general planning projects and procedures and other pertinent information.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE - CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$51,000.00	\$51,000.00	\$102,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$51,000.00	\$51,000.00	\$102,000.00

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	50	50	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$90,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$90,000.00

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%. Includes \$5,000 for public outreach and engagement activities associated with the City of Billings Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map development.

### 200 Community Planning

#### Objectives

The planning staff is responsible for maintaining accurate records and projections related to population, dwelling units, land use, employment data, and financial reports. They provide up-to-date information on the quantity of residential, commercial, industrial, and public land within the MPO and across the County. Staff analyze and summarize development trends, offering visual data and insights to the City Council, County Commission, Planning Board, and the public to support informed transportation and land-use decision-making. Additionally, they recommend implementing the goals, policies, and strategies outlined in the 2016 City of Billings and Lockwood Growth Policies and facilitate the implementation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and related planning studies.

#### Ten Planning Factors Incorporated into the UPWP:

1. **Economic Vitality:** Support the metropolitan area's economic vitality by fostering global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. **Safety:** Enhance the safety of transportation systems for both motorized and non-motorized users.
3. **Security:** Improve the security of transportation systems for all users.
4. **Accessibility and Mobility:** Increase accessibility and mobility for people and freight.
5. **Environmental Protection and Quality of Life:** Protect the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and align transportation improvements with State and local growth, housing, and economic development plans.
6. **System Integration and Connectivity:** Improve the integration and connectivity of transportation systems across different modes for both people and freight.
7. **System Efficiency:** Promote efficient management and operation of transportation systems.
8. **Preservation:** Prioritize the preservation and maintenance of existing transportation systems.

9. **Resilience and Reliability:** Enhance the resilience and reliability of transportation systems while reducing or mitigating stormwater impacts from surface transportation.
10. **Travel and Tourism:** Support enhancements to travel and tourism through transportation initiatives.

### **Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025**

Staff reviewed and analyzed the most current release of the 2019-2023 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data. Current ACS data is updated and placed in various databases as it has become available. Data gathered and updated included annual information related to population estimates for city and counties within the State of Montana. This annual information is used by the public and public agencies for planning purposes. The ACS is accessed for review and dissemination, and updated information released by the US Census Bureau in regard to commuting patterns. Other data gathered includes:

- Building Permits, Demolition Permits, Electrical Permits, Subdivision Applications, Zoning Applications, Special Reviews, Variances, temporary use permits, sign permits, zoning compliance permits and zoning clarification documents, annexation data, population trends, land use trends, school enrollment, employment data and general economic indicators.

The planning staff continues to review the most current ACS data and information from the 2020 Census data and estimates for population and demographic data. Census information is made available to various local agencies and organizations and to the general public. The data is used for developing reports, grant applications and planning documents such as Transportation and Land Use Plans and for projects like the Recreational Trails Program Grant and other grants as needed.

The City-County Planning Division, on behalf of the Billings MPO, is responsible for preparing a City of Billings Complete streets (excluding Yellowstone County) Progress Report. This direction was outlined in the City of Billings Complete streets (excluding Yellowstone County) Policy: “The City will periodically collect, review and report performance data and benchmark measurements to demonstrate the effectiveness of the policy.” This effort was completed with the first-ever City of Billings Complete Streets (excluding Yellowstone County) Benchmark Report prepared in 2013. This [Progress Report](#) includes comparison of various data sets related to motorized and non-motorized transportation.

Numerous other special purpose maps were prepared for meeting purposes including bicycle trail maps, annexation maps, estimated development density maps and tables for the Limits of

Annexation Map area, and other project influence areas. Natural resources, 2020 Census, and jurisdictional boundary information was updated or developed. Traffic count station locations were geo-positioned and linked with the City-County traffic count matrix. The City also upgraded its internal mapping system with an ArcGIS product that makes access to the most current property data and aerial photography better and easier for staff when researching existing conditions of transportation corridors and adjacent property. The new system provides a robust City GIS base map for use in application reviews, transportation planning efforts, and general customer inquiries. Ongoing review and implementation of sub-area neighborhood and transportation plans, and other planning documents were carried out by staff.

While not a part of PL funds, the City of Billings was awarded a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant from the US DOT. The Transportation Planner anticipates dedicating a significant amount of time to managing this grant, including coordinating a public education campaign about Safe Routes to School and helping to provide management for the implementation of Safe Routes to School projects.

### **Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

#### **PL Eligible Activities**

- In FY25, the MPO added an additional employee to the PL formula. In 2008, the recession forced the Planning Division to reorganize staffing and eliminated the Long Range/Neighborhood Planner position. Based on community and City Council goals, this position is needed to complete numerous neighborhood, subarea, and long-range plans. The funding structure is set at a 30-70 split, with 30 percent of the budget provided by the PL and the remaining 70 percent covered by local funding. This collaborative funding approach ensures that the Neighborhood Planner is well-resourced to address local needs while aligning with broader planning objectives. In May of 2025, the Planning Division successfully filled this position with Tate Johnson. Previously working the front lines for the Planning Division and processing numerous planning applications, Tate will be a great addition to the long-range planning activities. The Neighborhood Planner will play a crucial role in the MPO's transportation planning activities, including:
  - Community Engagement.
  - Data Collection and Analysis.
  - Assistance with the development of Transportation Plans.
- The web-based GIS software is compatible with available datasets and utilizes the existing data sets more effectively. The GIS software will be utilized to develop a series of maps, including existing and proposed pedestrian trail routes and projects in the community, maps to implement the Long-Range Transportation Plan, updates to a preferred growth

area map in conjunction with the City's Limits of Annexation Map, mapping of focus areas for implementation of the City's Infill Development Policy, and others. This ability of the GIS program allows for anticipating and planning for the transportation network in areas of annexation and infill. This will assist in the implementation of our LRTP and project planning for future plans and studies.

- The planning staff, under the direction of the Board of Planning, will continue to work on long-range planning projects according to the priorities established by both the City of Billings and Yellowstone County. In particular, the continuing implementation of the 2024 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, and to implement the 2017 Bikeway and Trails Master Plan.

Work related to Bicycle-Pedestrian activities in this work element will include:

- Work with staff to ensure a bike/pedestrian friendly community.
- Review of proposed subdivisions for non-motorized transportation connectivity.

### **Locally Funded Activities**

- Senior staff will be undertaking development of a variety of long-range land use plans this upcoming year that will all include significant public involvement and engagement including as mentioned earlier.
- The Planner I's will continue to undertake the review of:
  - Zoning applications. The development and adoption of Project Re:Code now ties land uses and land patterns to the road and street network.
  - Site development plans to address clear vision and controlled and shared access points.
  - Site development plans address newly implemented build to zones which prevent traffic flow in front of buildings.
  - Site orientations that allow for internal traffic and other services, for example, drive through locations.
- Staff also will continue to work with the Big Sky Economic Development (BSED) to implement the Master Plan for the East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD), the Hospitality Corridor Planning Study, the Exposition Gateway Concept Plan and the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) Master Plan. The plans include detailed analysis of the transportation and land use connections in the area and promote sustainable development projects.
- Staff plans to work with the City, County, BSED, and neighborhood groups to identify planning needs in various parts of the urbanized area.
- Continued maintenance and update of socio-economic and land use data for both transportation and comprehensive planning activities will continue in 2026, with 2020 Decennial Census data and the 2023 American Community Survey data.

- Various GIS databases and layers will continue to be developed and centrally maintained, including information on neighborhoods, community assets, route planning, trail systems and transportation plans.
- The new web-based system tracking and managing projects will include application information on zoning and subdivision applications.
- Neighborhood planning activities will be initiated to identify local issues and strategies to assist neighborhood groups and organizations with neighborhood sustainability, equity, and safety.

## **STAFFING**

21.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

## **FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning

## **PRODUCT**

- Various reports, files, and projections of socio-economic data necessary for current transportation and comprehensive planning activities, as well as support of City/County economic development activities.
- An ongoing GIS database/mapping system for the City of Billings and Yellowstone County.
- Ongoing updates to the preferred growth areas mapping and analysis for the City, implementation of the City Infill Development Policy, SBURD Master Plan, the 2024 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, 2018 Public Participation Plan, the Downtown Area Traffic Circulation and Safety Study, Wayfinding Sign Plan, and the Heritage Trail Tour Map and Application.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – COMMUNITY PLANNING**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$104,400.00	\$243,600.00	\$348,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$104,400.00</b>	<b>\$243,600.00</b>	<b>\$348,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	30	70	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$105,000.00	\$245,000.00	\$350,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$105,000.00</b>	<b>\$245,000.00</b>	<b>\$350,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

## **204 Zoning Administration**

### **Objectives**

The planning staff is responsible for overseeing, interpreting, and enforcing current City and County zoning regulations. They ensure effective administration of these regulations while providing efficient service to elected officials and the public. Additionally, staff maintain up-to-date zoning and land use information for all zoned properties within the jurisdiction of the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization, supporting long-range transportation planning studies, traffic analysis, and transportation projects.

### **Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025**

Staff continues to see robust applications for zone changes, special reviews, variances, and planned developments. Reports and recommendations were prepared on each case to the various boards, commissions, and governing bodies. Digital photos are now incorporated into all zoning reports and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations are given to all boards and commissions. Staff is in the process of ongoing scanning of historic zoning files in preparation of future citizen access through a new archiving system software. All applications for building permits were also reviewed for compliance with City and County zoning regulations. Special zoning studies and ordinance updates were prepared as requested by the governing bodies. These included making a series of zoning code amendments to bring the regulations into compliance with changes in State Law and changes driven by community interests.

Staff coordinated with the County GIS Department to ensure that all zone changes within the Billings MPO area were reflected on GIS online and printed maps to ensure land use information was current.

A significant amount of time was also spent assisting the public with general zoning questions. The status of all active zoning applications is now posted on the City/County Planning websites.

After 25 years of service, Nicole Cromwell, the City-County Zoning Coordinator, retired at the end of May. Nicole leaves very big shoes to fill. Karen Husman, a long-time planner with City/County Planning, stepped into this role at the end of May.

### **Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

#### **PL Eligible Activities**

- Zoning, Special Review, and Variance applications will be reviewed for land use compatibility, traffic, access, and overall site design.
- Staff will continue to maintain its zoning maps and land use information so that it is applicable to long-range transportation planning efforts in the Billings MPO. This

information is regularly applied to a variety of MPO functions, including corridor analysis efforts like those involved in the Billings Bypass project, specific road projects, TA program applications and non-motorized grant applications.

- Staff will continue implementing the Zoning Code. Staff continues to review and troubleshooting inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the code with the intent to make any needed amendments. As stated earlier, the Zoning Code places a higher emphasis on the transportation system, including road classification; safety and connectivity is vital to how the adjacent land uses for residential and commercial development are built. The road system emphasizes location and setting of any structures.
- Planner I's allow senior staff to take a more active role in long range planning. It is anticipated that Planner I's will undertake the review of:
  - Zoning applications. Project Re:Code now ties land uses and land patterns to the road and street network.
  - Site development plans to address clear vision and controlled and shared access points.
  - Site development plans to address newly implemented build to zones which prevent traffic flow in front of buildings.
  - Site orientations that allow for internal traffic and other services, for example, drive through locations.

### **Locally Funded Activities**

- Carrying out the day-to-day activities required to effectively administer the zoning regulations as well as ensure that land use information is current and available for all long-range transportation planning efforts, including Transportation Plan updates, specific road projects, corridor studies and the North Bypass project.
- Activity in 2026 will include ordinance updates as required by State law or requested by the public or governing bodies.
- All zone change applications will be reviewed for compliance with local plans.
- Staff will continue the update to the Zoning Code based on fulfilling policy goals set by the local governing body including Growth Policy, Neighborhood Plans, and by increasing safe and accessible transportation planning options Streets and Infill Policies.

### **STAFFING**

15.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

### **FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning

**PRODUCT**

- Effective zoning regulations and administration for the City of Billings and Yellowstone County. Effective enforcement of the zoning regulations for Yellowstone County.
- Online submittal capability for certain zoning permits, i.e., sign and fence will increase efficiency and convenience for applicants.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – ZONING ADMINISTRATION**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$42,000.00	\$168,000.00	\$210,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$42,000.00</b>	<b>\$168,000.00</b>	<b>\$210,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	20	80	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$24,000.00	\$96,000.00	\$120,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,000.00</b>	<b>\$96,000.00</b>	<b>\$120,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

## **205 Subdivision Administration**

### **Objectives**

The planning staff is responsible for maintaining current City and County subdivision regulations and updating them as needed to align with changes in State law. They ensure effective administration of these regulations, providing efficient service to developers, engineers, surveyors, elected officials, and the community. Staff work to minimize negative impacts of development on the community, ensuring that subdivisions are designed to be safe and sustainable. When subdivision applications are submitted, they evaluate traffic accessibility studies, general circulation data, and ensure conformity with the Functional Classification Map and elements of the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Additionally, they collect, manage, and apply subdivision development information to support long-range transportation planning activities for the MPO, including updates to the transportation plan and maintenance of traffic modeling inputs.

### **Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025**

The Board of Planning and the planning staff reviewed all preliminary major and minor plat applications. Numerous conceptual and pre-application meetings were coordinated and attended by staff. All final plats were reviewed and processed. Also, a significant amount of time was spent assisting the public with general subdivision questions. Updates to the City and County Subdivision Regulations due to legislative changes were drafted and approved.

Staff collected and compiled information on the details of each new subdivision, such as the number of lots and land area slated for development. This information is integral to any transportation plan updates or long-range transportation planning efforts undertaken by the MPO in the community to determine population growth and location of residents and commercial services that affect the transportation system. This involved monthly subdivision activity reporting and periodic reviews of new development locations. This is also considered in relation to the TA program and when the MPO pursues grants for non-motorized transportation projects in the community.

The MPO continues to implement and enforce the County Subdivision Regulations that require property currently outside the city limits but within the County Zoning Jurisdiction that may be annexed in the future to develop at city standards for infrastructure such as sidewalk, storm water management and future utility access. This procedure has been positive to residential development in the city fringe areas and contributes to the development of safe and accessible transportation options.

## **Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

### **PL Eligible Activities**

- Staff will review all subdivisions for compliance with the Billings Area Long Range Transportation Plan, and for conformity with the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, Lockwood Transportation Plan, Blue Creek Transportation Plan, and other neighborhood and community transportation plans as applicable.
- Staff also will continue to collect information on the details of each new subdivision as an integral data source for long-range transportation planning efforts undertaken by the MPO. The MPO expects to use this data in 2026 for a variety of projects, including the implementation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Bike/Ped Plan and continued analysis for the North Bypass.
- In the last couple of years with the addition of the new Planner I to the UPWP, the Division has additional assistance in reviewing subdivision applications for compliance with the various transportation and planning documents overseeing land use within the MPO and Planning jurisdictional area.

### **Locally Funded Activities**

- All subdivision applications will be reviewed for compliance with local and state subdivision law.
- Staff will continue to carry out the day-to-day activities required to effectively administer the subdivision regulations, and to keep the regulations current.
- Continued implementation of the Suburban Subdivision Regulations within the County Zoning Jurisdiction area.

### **STAFFING**

17 Staff Months – City/County Planning

### **FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning

### **PRODUCT**

- An effective subdivision review process regarding local and state law, the Growth Policy, and the Billings Area Transportation Plan.
- Accurately identified and reviewed the street segments proposed in the new subdivision to ensure their alignment with the designated road functional classifications as outlined in the 2023 Transportation Plan Functional Classification Map. This involved a thorough

analysis to verify that each street segment meets the specific criteria and standards set forth in the plan, ensuring consistency with the broader transportation network and supporting the intended flow of traffic. The review process included cross-referencing proposed street layouts with the functional classification map, assessing potential impacts on traffic patterns, and confirming that the street segments will contribute to an efficient and well-coordinated transportation system within the subdivision and its connection to existing infrastructure.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – SUBDIVISION ADMINISTRATION**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$63,900.00	\$149,100.00	\$213,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$63,900.00</b>	<b>\$149,100.00</b>	<b>\$213,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	30	70	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$45,000.00	\$105,000.00	\$150,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$45,000.00</b>	<b>\$105,000.00</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

## LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

### 300 Transportation System Data

#### Objectives

The planning staff is responsible for developing and maintaining the current transportation system data files and records. They provide transportation planning and data information to City and County staff, elected officials, developers, engineering firms, and the general public to support informed decision-making and project development.

#### Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025

The traffic, trail and bike lane count programs for FY 2025 was completed. Travel times/delay/speed studies were completed, calculations computed, and level-of-service values determined. This data was used for various planning and engineering projects throughout the year. In addition, the public commonly requests this data for land use planning.

Staff participated in the update of the City of Billings Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Crash information was compiled and analyzed. Crash data is also used in many of the planning studies undertaken by the MPO. The staff also continued to utilize the trail scanners that were purchased and found new and better ways to both use the scanners in more trail locations in the community and display the data for various applications. A couple of years ago, the MPO also took over collection and distribution of the data from the Lockwood sidewalk counters purchased through the Lockwood Pedestrian Safety District.

#### Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026

##### PL Eligible Activities

- The traffic count program for the Billings Urban Area as well as the Yellowstone County influence area will be conducted and the appropriate data recorded during FY2025. All traffic count data will be submitted to the MDT by February 1, 2026.
- Staff will update, where appropriate, the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- Continue with the contract position with City Engineering to continue traffic and trail counts.
- Staff will collect and maintain bike/pedestrian information through use of the trail-bike/pedestrian scanners. The information from the bike/pedestrian counts links directly to the development of the LRTP and the MPO's non-motorized planning studies. These counts also contribute to other planning projects such as the City of Billings Complete Streets Progress Report. This activity is in conjunction with MPO region wide planning.

- The traffic count data archive will be maintained and accessible for other agencies and the public.
- Data will also be used during proposed FY26 Planning Studies as needed.
- The Bicycle-Pedestrian activities will continue. Duties will include but are not limited to:
  - Maintain Bike/pedestrian databases in conjunction with MPO region wide planning purposes.
  - Maintain database for easement acquisition.

### **Proposed Special Activities or Projects**

#### **Replacement and Upgrades to Traffic and Trail Counters**

To support data-driven planning and performance measurements, the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) utilizes a network of traffic and trail counters to monitor bicycle and pedestrian activity across the region. As these devices age and technology evolve, many of the existing counters have become outdated, unreliable, or incompatible with newer data collection platforms. In response, the MPO proposes the replacement and necessary upgrades of its current counting equipment to ensure the continued accuracy, consistency, and usability of non-motorized traffic data.

Upgrading and replacing the counters will allow for better integration with current data platforms, improved remote access and maintenance, and more precise detection of different travel modes. This effort will also support year-round data collection with weather-resistant and automated systems that reduce manual labor and increase reliability.

Furthermore, high-quality count data is a critical asset in securing competitive state and federal funding. Many grant programs, including Transportation Alternatives, Safe Routes to School, and multimodal safety initiatives—require or strongly recommend supporting data that demonstrates community use and project justification.

Investing in modern, dependable traffic and trail counters will enhance the MPO’s ability to make informed decisions, track progress toward mobility and safety goals, and advance a connected, efficient, and inclusive non-motorized transportation network for the Billings region.

The MPO is proposing allocating \$15,000 towards the completion of this project.

The expenditure of these funds will occur throughout the federal fiscal year as needed.

## **Travel Demand Modeling Support for the Billings Transportation Corridor Plan**

The City of Billings is in the process of developing a comprehensive Transportation Corridor Analysis Plan to evaluate the existing roadway network and guide the future of transportation infrastructure across the metropolitan area. In support of this effort, the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) proposes the use of Planning (PL) funding to conduct advanced travel demand modeling. This modeling will serve as a critical analytical tool to assess how proposed roadway improvements and alternative development scenarios would impact travel patterns, traffic flow, and overall network performance.

The goal of the modeling effort is to provide data-driven insights that inform long-range transportation planning decisions, prioritize infrastructure investments, and ensure that the evolving transportation network meets the needs of a growing and changing population. By testing various roadway configurations and land use scenarios, the MPO will be able to forecast future conditions, identify potential congestion points, and evaluate the effectiveness of multimodal strategies, including public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure.

The MPO plans to continue its successful partnership with Kittelson & Associates, a firm with extensive experience in transportation modeling and planning. Kittelson has previously supported the MPO with travel demand modeling tasks on an as-needed basis and is well-versed in the specific characteristics and needs of the Billings region. Their expertise will help ensure that the modeling is technically sound, consistent with best practices, and tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities facing the community.

This project represents a strategic use of federal planning resources to enhance the technical foundation of the Billings model, support scenario planning, and advance the development of a safe, efficient, and resilient transportation system for the region.

The MPO is proposing allocating \$50,000 towards the completion of this project. This project will be initiated at the request of the City of Billings for the project.

## **Billings MPO Household Travel Survey Update – Project Description**

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is initiating an update to the 2017 Household Travel Survey to better understand current travel behavior and trends within the Billings urban area. This comprehensive survey will collect data on how, when, and why residents travel throughout the region, providing a critical foundation for transportation planning, modeling, and investment decisions.

The updated Household Travel Survey will incorporate contemporary data collection methods, including digital tools and mobile technology, to ensure broader participation and more accurate representation of daily travel patterns. The information gathered will include trip purposes, modes of travel, trip start and end times, and socio-demographic characteristics of participating households.

This effort is essential to support the development of future transportation plans, including the Billings Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), transit planning, corridor studies, and other transportation planning efforts. The updated survey will also help align transportation strategies with the changing needs of the community, promote equity in planning, and guide investments that improve mobility, safety, and accessibility for all users.

The Billings MPO is committed to a transparent and inclusive process, engaging stakeholders and the public throughout the survey's development and implementation phases. The updated data will be a vital tool in ensuring that transportation infrastructure and services continue to meet the needs of a growing and evolving region.

The MPO is proposing allocating \$150,000 towards the completion of this project with \$10,000 towards safe and accessible transportation options allocated to this project. The MPO will advertise this project in December of 2025 with project start in the spring of 2026.

#### **STAFFING**

9.0 Staff Months – City/County Planning

11.0 Staff Months – City of Billings Engineering

#### **FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning/MDT

#### **PRODUCT**

- Documentation as necessary, support of transportation grant programs, transportation system modeling, updated Traffic Count Program, and research and integration of traffic information into planning projects and development review activities.
- Current traffic count data. Traffic counts are vital for any long-range planning efforts and during development of commercial and residential projects. Traffic counts also directly relate to the development of projects in the LRTP and ultimately for programming in the TIP.
- Current bike/pedestrian counts. MPO uses these counts for the development of the non-motorized network. This information is used for the development of the Bikeway and Trails Master Plan as well as for applications for various grants.

- To comply with Federal Guidelines for reporting Performance Measures under the BUILD Grant, the MPO will contract to develop the following performance measure components: Crash rates by type and severity, average daily traffic, and bike and pedestrian count/trips. This information is required at various time frames including a baseline, year 1, year 2, and final report in year 3.
- The City of Billings is developing a Transportation Corridor Plan to evaluate the existing road network and various transportation elements. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) proposes using PL funding for travel demand modeling to analyze proposed roadway improvements or scenario planning. This modeling will help assess how the proposed roadways would function and their overall impact on the transportation network. The MPO has previously contracted with Kittelson & Associates for modeling assistance with transportation planning projects as needed.
- The proposed update to the 2017 Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Household Travel Survey aims to collect current and comprehensive travel behavior data from a representative sample of households within the Billings metropolitan area. This update will provide critical insights into daily travel patterns, mode choices, trip purposes, and household demographics, reflecting changes in population, land use, transportation infrastructure, and mobility trends since the original survey. The refreshed data will support transportation planning, travel demand modeling, and policy development to ensure an efficient, equitable, and future-ready regional transportation system. The updated survey will also incorporate technological advancements and best practices in data collection, including online and smartphone-based participation options, to improve accuracy and public engagement.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DATA**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$190,000.00	\$0.00	\$190,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$190,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$190,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	100	0	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$350,000.00	\$0.00	\$350,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$350,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$350,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%. \*\*This Includes - \$15,000 for Traffic Counters, \$50,000 for use of the Billings MPO Travel Demand Model for the Billings Transportation Corridor Plan, \$150,000 for an update to the 2017 Household Travel Survey (includes \$10,000 towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Options),

## **301 Transportation Plan**

### **Objectives**

As part of its ongoing commitment to strategic, data-informed transportation planning, the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will focus on implementing the goals and objectives outlined in the Billings Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This implementation effort involves translating the vision of the LRTP into actionable strategies that guide policy development, project prioritization, and investment decisions across the urban transportation network. To effectively support this process, the MPO will also work to develop and maintain comprehensive, up-to-date datasets for the Billings urban area. These datasets are essential for monitoring key performance indicators, tracking system performance, and evaluating the continued validity and relevance of the LRTP over time. By collecting and analyzing data on travel behavior, traffic volumes, safety trends, system usage, and demographic shifts, the MPO can ensure that the transportation plan remains aligned with current conditions and future needs. This data-driven approach not only strengthens regional planning efforts but also enhances the MPO's ability to respond to emerging challenges, adapt to growth, and pursue targeted improvements that support a safe, efficient, and equitable transportation system for all users.

### **Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025**

Staff implemented the 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Elements in the LRTP include Goals and Objectives, a Transit section, an analysis of the railroad interface with the community, and a review of current projects listed in the Plan.

The Billings MPO successfully completed the audit and redesign of the project list in the 2023 LRTP, addressing the constructive recommendations provided by FHWA during the FHWA/MDT audit. Several inaccuracies were corrected, and the revised project list was restructured to improve clarity and ease of review. PL funds were effectively utilized to support this effort. In addition, the MPO updated its urban planning boundary in accordance with the 2020 Census review of the urbanized area. These updates were incorporated into a formal modification of the 2023 LRTP, ensuring compliance and enhancing the accuracy and usability of the document.

### **Trail Mobile Application**

The Trail Mobile Application, originally created in 2019 to help residents and visitors easily navigate the bikeway and trail system, was updated to ensure continued compatibility with newer mobile devices and to enhance the user interface. Five years after its initial launch, the app was modernized to improve functionality and user experience.

**Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

**PL Eligible Activities**

- Projects will continue to be reviewed for future implementation in the City’s CIP and the MPO’s TIP.
- MPO Staff to meet recommendations from the 2024 Billings MPO FHWA/MDT Audit, will begin compiling a list of MPO processes to develop an internal handbook for MPO staff when implementing various transportation planning procedures.

**STAFFING**

15 Staff Months – City/County Planning

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning/MDT

**PRODUCT**

- Implementation of transportation projects identified in the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, the Transportation Improvements Program, Transportation Plan and the Capital Improvements Program.
- An internal guidance document for MPO staff to undertake the various transportation planning processes.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$150,000.00
TOTAL	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$150,000.00

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	100	0	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

<b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>			
<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$150,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$150,000.00

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

## **302 Planning Studies**

### **Objectives**

The planning staff develops and maintains up-to-date transportation system data files and records. They share this information with City and County staff, elected officials, developers, engineering firms, and the general public to facilitate informed decision-making and support project development.

### **Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2025**

During the FHWA/MDT audit of the Billings MPO, FHWA provided constructive recommendations on the project list in the 2023 LRTP, highlighting several inaccuracies and noting that the list was confusing to review. In response, the MPO used PL funds to audit and redesign the project list, ensuring accurate funding sources and listings. Additionally, the MPO updated its urban planning boundary to comply with the 2020 Census review of the urbanized area. These updates were incorporated into a modification of the 2023 LRTP to address the identified needs.

The update to the Billings Heights Neighborhood Plan was continued and completed. The plan included a significant MPO-led transportation element, incorporating accident and volume data, as well as considerations for neighborhood mobility, safety, and equity within the transportation system.

Projects will continue to be reviewed for future implementation in the City's CIP and the MPO's TIP.

### **Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2026**

#### **PL Eligible Activities**

#### **Proposed Special Activities or Projects**

#### **Alkali Creek Trail Connection – Feasibility and Planning Study**

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consulted the City of Billings' Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and there are several shared use path projects in the Planning Division's section. Several of these ideas are conceptual and need more evaluation of feasibility, definition of scope, and other planning-level pre-work to get them ready for a potential grant application. Grant opportunities come up yearly, but it is hard to complete the application in the allotted time if the groundwork is not laid when the application opens. Besides being listed in the City's CIP, this project is also listed in the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan.

## **The Project Narrative**

The Alkali Creek Trail Connection connects two sections of existing shared use path. The path would be generally parallel to Airport Road and would run at least partially on private property. Right now, the only way to get between the two existing path segments is the sidewalk on Airport Road which is uncomfortable as it is close to fast moving traffic. The new connector would provide a safer and more pleasant route.

The MPO's project would start with discussions with the property owners to determine feasibility and move into developing a planning-level design and cost estimate, taking into consideration the terrain by the creek while developing a cost-effective plan.

Separately, Billings TrailNet donated funds for work on this project. Funds from Billings TrailNet are more flexible and could be used for developing and obtaining easements from the property owners as well as more in-depth design past the planning-level design.

Getting this project more shovel ready could help it qualify grants like the Recreational Trails Program Grant, Montana Trail Stewardship Grant, and/or Transportation Alternatives, as well as any other grants that come available.

The MPO is scheduling this project to begin in the spring as part of a package of trail feasibility studies that includes this project and the Downtown and Aronson projects. The MPO proposes allocating a budget of \$20,000 to the completion of this feasibility and planning study, \$5,000 would be allocated towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options.

## **Downtown to Billings Heights Non-Motorized Connection – Feasibility and Planning Study**

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consulted the City of Billings' Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and there are several shared use path projects in the Planning Division's section. Several of these ideas are conceptual and need more evaluation of feasibility, definition of scope, and other planning-level pre-work to get them ready for a potential grant application. Grant opportunities come up yearly, but it is hard to complete the application in the allotted time if the groundwork is not laid when the application opens. Besides being listed in the City's CIP, this project is also listed in the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan.

## **The Project Narrative**

The Downtown to Billings Heights Non-Motorized Connection would provide a safer non-motorized connection to the Jim Dutcher Trail, Coulson Park, and the campgrounds in the area,

as well as the Billings Heights. Until the Stagecoach Trail is built, the Jim Dutcher Trail currently provides the only separated non-motorized connection between downtown Billings and the Billings Heights. Building the shared use path would require coordination with local businesses and possibly the railroad. Initial conversations with Phillips 66, one of the property owners in this area, have been positive.

Separately, Billings TrailNet donated funds for work on this project. Funds from Billings TrailNet are more flexible and could be used for developing and obtaining easements from the property owners as well as more in-depth design past the planning-level design.

Getting this project more shovel ready could help it qualify grants like the Recreational Trails Program Grant, Montana Trail Stewardship Grant, and/or Transportation Alternatives, as well as any other grants that come available.

The MPO is scheduling this project to begin in the spring as part of a package of trail feasibility studies that includes this project and the Alkali Creek and Aronson projects. The MPO proposes allocating a budget of \$20,000 to the completion of this feasibility and planning study, \$5,000 would be allocated towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options.

### **Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road Trail Connection – Feasibility and Planning Study**

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consulted with the Billings City Council on developing transportation planning projects that would benefit the city in advancing desired capital transportation projects. A request was made by the City Council to include a feasibility study on a non-motorized connection from Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road. This project is also listed in the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan.

### **The Project Narrative**

Completing a non-motorized study of the trail connection between Aronson Avenue and Annandale Road in Billings Heights offers valuable benefits for the community. This study would help identify the most feasible and safe route for pedestrians and bicyclists, improving access to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and schools. It would support efforts to enhance connectivity within the Billings trail system, reduce reliance on motor vehicles, and promote healthier, more active lifestyles. Additionally, the study would help address safety concerns, guide future infrastructure investments, and align with community goals for sustainable, multi-modal transportation options in the growing Heights area.

Getting this project more shovel ready could help it qualify grants like the Recreational Trails Program Grant, Montana Trail Stewardship Grant, and/or Transportation Alternatives, as well as any other grants that come available.

The MPO is scheduling this project to begin in the spring as part of a package of trail feasibility studies that includes this project and the Alkali Creek and Downtown projects. The MPO proposes allocating a budget of \$40,000 to the completion of this feasibility and planning study, \$5,000 would be allocated towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options.

### **St. Francis Catholic School/Poly Drive Elementary Safe Routes to School and Medicine Crow Middle School – Additional Evaluation and Public Input Study**

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consulted with the Billings City Council on developing transportation planning projects that would benefit the city in advancing desired capital transportation projects. Staff recommended additional evaluation and public input on certain Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects identified in two SRTS Studies. The City Council approved this request and is recommending two areas of evaluation. The first is the St. Francis Catholic School and Poly Drive SRTS project and the second is the Medicine Crow Middle School.

#### **The Project Narrative**

The MPO is scheduling this project to begin in the fall/winter of 2025 and is allocating a budget of \$75,000 to the completion of this evaluation and public outreach, \$10,000 would be allocated towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options.

#### **Transportation Corridor Analysis Public Outreach**

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is partnering with the City of Billings Public Works Engineering Division to support Phase II of the Transportation Corridor Analysis project. Initiated at the request of the Billings City Council, this project is focused on gathering meaningful community input to help define the future function and appearance of the city's transportation network.

#### **The Project Narrative**

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is actively participating in Phase II of the Transportation Corridor Analysis project, initiated by the City of Billings Public Works

Engineering Division (Engineering). This project was requested by the Billings City Council to engage the community in shaping how the transportation network should function and appear.

To meet this goal, Engineering launched a two-phase project. Phase I, led by Engineering, involves extensive public outreach using a variety of engagement tools and opportunities. Phase II, led by the MPO, will build upon the first phase by validating its findings and incorporating additional engagement efforts, including visual preference surveys, open houses, corridor pop-up events, and stakeholder group meetings.

The culmination of both the phases will allow Engineering to use the information developed in Phase I to develop a draft Vision and Typologies Document.

This effort is essential to support the development of future transportation plans, including the Billings Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), transit planning, corridor studies, and other transportation planning efforts.

The Billings MPO is committed to a transparent and inclusive process, engaging stakeholders and the public throughout the survey's development and implementation phases. The updated data will be a vital tool in ensuring that transportation infrastructure and services continue to meet the needs of a growing and evolving region.

#### **STAFFING**

11.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

#### **FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning/MDT

#### **PRODUCT**

- Implementation of transportation projects identified in the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, the Transportation Improvements Program, Transportation Plan and the Capital Improvements Program. This will include three non-motorized feasibility studies for Alkali Creek, Downtown Connection and Aronson.
- Safe Routes to School additional project evaluation and public input for two projects St. Francis Catholic School/Poly Drive and Medicine Crow Middle School. A completed a corridor study for Monad Road between Daniel Street and Moore Lane. The study will provide transportation planning-level information to inform future infrastructure projects identified and approved in the City's FY26–30 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Partnering with the City of Billings in the development of a Vision and Typologies Document.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – PLANNING STUDIES**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$123,000.00	\$82,000.00	\$205,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$123,000.00</b>	<b>\$82,000.00</b>	<b>\$205,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	60	40	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$201,000.00	\$134,000.00	\$335,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$201,000.00</b>	<b>\$134,000.00</b>	<b>\$335,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

\*\*Approximately \$20,000 for the Alkali Creek Trail Connector Feasibility Study, \$20,000 for a Downtown to Billings Heights Non-Motorized Connection Feasibility Study and \$40,000 for the Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road Trail Feasibility Study (includes \$15,000 towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Options)

## TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

### 500 Transportation Improvement Program

#### Objectives

To maintain a viable five-year program of transportation improvements for the Billings Urban Area.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2025

At the time of the development of this UPWP, the MPO completed two TIP amendments and one Administrative Modification in FY25. These updates included updating projects, project costs and project timing. The last amendment was approved on April 15, 2025, by the Policy Coordinating Committee.

#### PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2026

##### PL Eligible Activities

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be evaluated and updated as needed. A certification statement will be included, as appropriate, to conform to the planning regulations. Based on the Transportation Plan, projects will be evaluated and ranked in accordance with the Priority Ranking Procedures, and in accordance with consistency/conformity procedures. Necessary data will be gathered from primary and secondary sources by the planning staff based upon the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Billings Public Works Department, establishing areas of data responsibility. Conformity determinations will be prepared as necessary to ensure conformity with the Clean Air Act.

#### STAFFING

2.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

#### FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

#### PRODUCT

- A current transportation improvement program which reflects conformity with FHWA, the Clean Air Act, and local priorities.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE - TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$30,000.00	\$0.00	\$30,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$30,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$30,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	100	0	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$50,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

### 600 Environmental Considerations

#### Objectives

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for maintaining up-to-date records of monitored air pollution levels and acquiring additional environmental data as needed within the Metropolitan Planning Area. Additionally, the MPO reviews proposed development projects and transportation system improvements to ensure they align with environmental considerations within its area of influence.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2025

The MPO was notified that in July of 2021 the Billings Urban Area was removed from the Air Quality's "Not Classified" list. The MPO is now designated as an Attainment Area and will move the update of the LRTP from 4-years to 5-years.

The MPO collaborated with MDT on the development MDT Statewide Carbon Reduction Strategy Plan.

Air quality monitoring information was obtained from the County Air Pollution Control Board. Air quality mapping for the State Air Quality Bureau was revised. The Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program was implemented. Staff continues to monitor carbon monoxide (CO) information in the Urbanized Area.

The Socio-Economic and Environmental (SEE) effects guidelines were used to review proposed developments and transportation system improvements.

#### PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2026

##### PL Eligible Activities

- Continue to collaborate with MDT on the Carbon Reduction Plan.
- The planning staff will continue to utilize the SEE effects guidelines to evaluate all major development proposals in terms of transportation systems. This would include the CMAQ program.
- Work will continue to maintain the Billings air quality designation.
- Staff will continue to review the MOVES Program and others like it and their relationship to the MPO.

**STAFFING**

1.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City/County Planning

**PRODUCT**

Current environmental data as well as a comprehensive planning and transportation planning process that will substantially address the socio-economic and environmental consequences associated with growth and development.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$36,000.00	\$0.00	\$36,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$36,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$36,000.00</b>

**DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	100	0	100

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MPO	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### 700 Un-Programmed Funds

#### Objectives

To provide for the accounting of available un-programmed funds in the current UPWP.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2025

N/A

#### PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2026

#### PL Eligible Activities

- This work element will be utilized for accounting purposes only. No specific work activity will be charged to this work element.

#### STAFFING

N/A

#### FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

N/A

#### PRODUCT

N/A

#### FUNDING SCHEDULE - CONTINGENCY

##### FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025

##### FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$2,834.00	\$118,350.00	\$121,184.00
TOTAL	\$2,834.00	\$118,350.00	\$121,184.00

##### DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

**FUNDING SOURCE**

MPO	\$220,324.00	\$392,500.00	\$607,824.00
TOTAL	\$220,324.00	\$392,500.00	\$607,824.00

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

### SECTION 3 – FUNDING

**TABLE I  
FUNDING SUMMARY  
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2026**

WORK ELEMENT	FUNDING SOURCES FY 2026		
	PL*	LOCAL	EST. COST
100 Administration	\$171,600.00	\$140,400.00	\$312,000.00
101 Service	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$50,000.00
102 Citizen Involvement	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$90,000.00
200 Community Planning	\$105,000.00	\$245,000.00	\$350,000.00
204 Zoning	\$24,000.00	\$96,000.00	\$120,000.00
205 Subdivision	\$45,000.00	\$105,000.00	\$150,000.00
300 Transportation System	\$350,000.00	\$0.00	\$350,000.00
301 Transportation Plan	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$150,000.00
302 Planning Studies	\$201,000.00	\$134,000.00	\$335,000.00
500 T.I.P.	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
600 Environmental	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00
700 Un-Programmed Funds	\$204,224.00	\$321,600.00	\$525,824.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$1,395,824</b>	<b>\$1,112,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,507,824</b>

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

**TABLE II  
FUNDING COMPARISONS**

<b>WORK ELEMENT</b>	<b>FY 2026 ESTIMATED COST</b>	<b>FY 2025 ESTIMATED COST</b>
100 Administration	\$312,000.00	\$312,000.00
101 Service	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
102 Citizen Involvement	\$90,000.00	\$90,000.00
200 Community Planning	\$350,000.00	\$350,000.00
204 Zoning	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00
205 Subdivision	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00
300 Transportation System	\$350,000.00	\$350,000.00
301 Transportation Plan	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00
302 Planning Studies	\$255,000.00	\$335,000.00
500 T.I.P.	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
600 Environmental	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
700 Un-Programmed Funds	\$605,824.00	\$605,824.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,507,824.00</b>	<b>\$2,587,824</b>

**TABLE III  
FUNDING PERCENTAGES FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2026**

<b>WORK ELEMENT</b>	<b>RECIPIENT</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
100 Administration	MPO	55	45	100
101 Service	MPO	50	50	100
102 Citizen Inv.	MPO	50	50	100
200 Community Planning	MPO	30	70	100
204 Zoning Administration	MPO	20	80	100
205 Subdivision Admin.	MPO	30	70	100
300 Trans. System Data	MPO	100		100
301 Transportation Plan	MPO	100		100
302 Planning Studies	MPO	60	40	100
500 T.I.P.	MPO	100		100
600 Environmental	MPO	100		100
700 Un-Programmed Funds	MPO	100		100

**TABLE IV  
STAFF MONTHS BY WORK ELEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2026**

Work Element	Director-Friday	MPO Coord.- Mattox- Planner II	Planner I- Husman	Planning Manager- Vickers	Planner II (Trans)- Monat	Clerk- Berns	Planner II- Green	Planner I- Johnson	Planner I- Kelly	Zoning Coord.Pla nner II- Cromwell	Planner I (Multi- Modal)- Vacant	Planner II (LRP)-Vac	Total M.M.
100	7	1.5	1.5	6	0.5	2	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	22
101	0.5	0	2	0	0	1.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0	0.5	7
102	0.5	0	2	0.5	0.5	1.5	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	2	9.5
200	1.5	0	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	5	21.5
204	0	0	2	0.5	0	1	0.5	3	2	6	0	0.5	15.5
205	0	0	1.5	0.5	0	1	7.5	2	3	1	0	0.5	17
300	0	3	0	0.5	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	3	0	9
301	0.5	3	0	0.5	3	0.5	0	2.5	0	0	3	2	15
302	0.5	1.5	0	0.5	3	0.5	0	0	2.5	0	3	0	11.5
500	0.5	1	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5
600	0	1	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>132</b>

<b>WORK ELEMENT</b>	<b>CITY TRAF. TECHNICIAN</b>
300	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>

**TABLE V  
ELIGIBLE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS  
PLANNING ACTIVITY BY WORK ELEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2025**

<b>WORK ELEMENT</b>	<b>FY 2026 ELIGIBLE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS PLANNING ACTIVITY ESTIMATE COST</b>	<b>FY 2025 ELIGIBLE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS PLANNING ACTIVITY ESTIMATE COST</b>
300 Transportation System Data	\$ 15,000.00	
301 Transportation Plan	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00
302 Planning Studies	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,492.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 35,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 20,492.00</b>

The 2.5% PL Funding set-aside for Alternative Modes Planning activities have a match ratio of 86.58% Federal Share/13.42% State Share and are eligible for 100% Federal Share in FFY2024 and FFY2025.

## SECTION 4 – INDIRECT COST PLAN

### Introduction

The Office of Management and Budget Circular 2 CFR Part 200 is used as governing criteria for establishing the allowed costs.

### Identification of Costs

The costs are delineated below by type:

DIRECT	INDIRECT	BENEFITS
Salaries & Wages	Maintenance	FICA
Legal Notices	Reproduction	PERS
Travel	Supplies	Workmen's Compensation
Printing	Postage	Accident Insurance
Training	Subscriptions	Health Insurance
Consultants	Telephone	Sick Leave
Equipment	Utilities	Vacation
Mileage	Rent	Holidays
Moving/Interview	Audit	Maternity
	Messenger	Military
		Life Insurance
		Dental Insurance

### Allocation of Costs

Direct costs will be charged to the work program line item to which they apply.

An indirect cost rate of **9%** of the City and County's direct salaries and wages is proposed. The **9%** rate will be applied to the direct wages and salaries of each line item within the work program to cover all indirect expenses.

Benefits will be calculated at a rate of **55%** of the City and County's direct salaries and wages charged to each line item.

### Funding Sources

The degree of participation by each funding agency is based on the prorations which have been determined for each line item. Each agency will be billed their share of the total charges made against each line item according to the approved prorations.

Funding sources and amounts contained in the UPWP are as follows:

Planning Dept. Fees (City of Billings)	\$274,000
Planning Dept. Fees (Yellowstone Co.)	\$170,000
Yellowstone County (Mill)	668,000
PL*	\$1,395,824
TOTAL	\$2,507,824

\*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%.

### Summary

The indirect cost rate is a predetermined fixed rate which is not subject to adjustment. The base period used in determining the rate is the period from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The calculated rate is applicable to the grant period, which is October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026.

## **CHAPTER 2 – TRANSIT DIVISION**

### **SECTION 1 – UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

#### **44.21.00 PROGRAM SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION**

##### **44.21.01 Administration**

###### **OBJECTIVE**

The program aims to deliver comprehensive support through general administration and effective grant management, while also offering training to enhance transit planning activities.

###### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

Conformance with federal, state, and local administrative and regulatory requirements for maintenance of transit planning and development, as well as execution of developed plans.

Staff remained informed of Federal and State requirements concerning all federal funding sources including, but not limited to, Sections 5303, 5307, 5310, and 5339. Staff programmed, managed, revised, and closed grants from state and federal sources, as needed.

Staff prepared and submitted quarterly progress and expenditure reports to MDT to maintain federal and state funding support.

Staff attended training opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills, including the Spring Montana Transit Association conference focused on grant and budget guidance, American Public Transportation Association Marketing, Communications, and Customer Experience Workshop, Community Transportation Association of America Expo focused on training and system improvements, and other education opportunities and webinars on various safety and federal requirements.

Staff maintained and updated the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan with upcoming and in- process capital projects, as well as fleet and facility metrics to ensure accurate capital and asset planning.

Updated the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan for MET Transit for the required annual review; this included additional training program development for operator and dispatch

staff including focuses on transit employee assaults and de-escalation training. Submitted the newly required Safety Management System Report, including planning for future transit safety measures.

Staff managed FTA Section 5303 grant activities and prepared the transit aspect of Unified Planning Work Program.

Staff updated the DBE Program Plan based on newly required Federal updates and prepared the DBE Program semi-annual reports to ensure continued attempts to meet DBE Program goals while planning capital purchases.

Updated the MET Transit Title VI and Public Participation Plans due April 1, 2025.

### **PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

All administrative functions necessary in support of transit planning and development will be performed under this work element. Activities will include:

- Quarterly progress and expenditure reports will be prepared and transmitted to the Montana Department of Transportation, Urban Planning Division to maintain funding requirements.
- The FY2026 UPWP will be monitored and revised as necessary.
- Transit activities for the FY2027 UPWP will also be developed within this element.
- Staff will execute grant administrative functions; staff will continue research and development regarding the utilization of FTA funding, including furthering innovative funding practices and partnerships.
- Maintenance of coordination agreements with 5310 providers and, as the lead agency, updates to the Billings Area Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan.
- Research feasibility and make recommendations for capital grants in the 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities programs and other funding opportunities utilizing the TAM plan, as well as the City Equipment Replacement plan.
- Extensive division policy development includes procedures, regulations, codes, and practices to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local requirements as they relate to the transit planning process.
- Participate with the TAC, Transportation Coordination Plan Committee, citizen advisory boards and other committees throughout the community, as needed.
- Staff will continue updating and maintaining the FTA mandated Transit Asset Management Plan.
- Staff will continue to update and implement the required Public Transit Agency

Safety Plan, including annual updates to the PTASP and Safety Management System Reports, as well as further research and development of best practices.

**STAFFING**

- 120.00 Asst. Transit Director Staff Hours
- 280.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours
- 120.00 Transit Operations Coordinator
- 40.00 Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours

**560.00 Total Staff Hours**

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

**PRODUCT**

- An ongoing administrative program to carry out the transit elements identified within this UPWP.
- Administrative oversight and execution of transit planning and development functions, including federally required plans.
- Enhancement of transit division skills and knowledge.
- Proper maintenance and administration of grant related activities.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE - ADMINISTRATION**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$9,538	\$38,152	\$47,690
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,538</b>	<b>\$38,152</b>	<b>\$47,690</b>

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$ 10,706	\$42,825	\$53,531
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 10,706</b>	<b>\$42,825</b>	<b>\$53,531</b>

## 44.24.00 SHORT RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

### 44.24.01 Future Service Analysis and Enhancements

#### OBJECTIVE

To facilitate considerations of means to ensure citizens will have acceptable and improved public transportation alternatives in the future.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2025

Members of the transit division updated projections of future revenues and expenses and directed annual budget and financial resources analysis, including multi-year forecasts in response to changes to mill levy structure and funding sources.

Staff arranged for and ensured execution of on-going data gathering and analysis efforts to monitor current system effectiveness and efficiency. This assisted in identification of operating and capital needs required to ensure a reliable and effective system into the future.

Staff updated several fixed routes and bus stops previously implemented through the Transit Development Plan in response to needed and requested changes.

Staff tracked and compiled on-going ridership metrics by route and mode to support planning practices and updated cost of service rates with new routes and budget figures.

Staff completed the Request for Proposals process and awarded SRF Consulting, Inc. the contract to complete the Transit Financial Sustainability and Governance Study; Study meetings and research are still in progress.

Staff provided information and comments related to transit at meetings geared toward development, annexation, and traffic projects. Staff also received and responded to system inquiries, concerns, complaints, and suggestions.

Staff continued evaluating approximately 450 designated bus stop locations for placement, bus stop amenities, and ADA requirements.

Transit members attended and participated in a diverse range of transit-related and general community meetings including the Billings Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), City of Billings Transportation Team meetings,

City of Billings Annexation Committees, Bike and Pedestrian, West End and Heights Plan Steering Committees, Yellowstone County Health Improvement Planning Meeting, and Safe Routes to Schools. As the lead agency on the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Committee, staff also provided guidance and updates to the plan.

## **PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

Functions necessary in support of future transit planning and development will be performed under this work element, including continuation of activities undertaken in FY2025. These activities necessitate the ongoing cloud-based software costs and run-cutting module, for route development and planning, which is split between this element and current service enhancements. Activities are as follows:

- Continue investigating the feasibility of expanding service beyond existing city limits and engage county stakeholders in discussion regarding potential for service to outlying areas.
- Assess the feasibility of adding additional transfer locations, specifically in growing areas of the City, including the Heights and near the West End Reservoir locations.
- Assess feasibility of a rapid transit line to directly connect Heights, Downtown, and West End to decrease passenger travel time.
- Continue to analyze and evaluate current City and other area government practices for right of way requirements regarding future bus stop locations.
- Assessing ongoing and future capital and operating requirements based upon projected demand and growth. Continue to assess financial and infrastructure requirements of transitioning eligible fleet vehicles to electric or alternative fuel sources.
- Continue research on feasibility of, and make recommendations for additional technology conveniences for passengers, including amenities at transfer centers.
- Continuation of planning efforts regarding public and stakeholder involvement and input opportunities, including recruiting involvement from key partners.
- Facilitation of public meetings to support system improvements, as well as specialized services for seniors and disabled.
- Perform additional analysis of fare structure, including comparisons to similar systems and populations to ensure equitable and sustainable fare generation.
- Analyze, develop, and recommend opportunities for MPO and Transit collaboration on projects eligible for multiple funding sources, including flex funding, to support integration of transit and overall surface transportation structure.

180.00	Asst. Transit Director Staff Hours
160.00	Transit Planner Staff Hours
120.00	Transit Operations Coordinator
80.00	Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours

**540.00 Total Staff Hours**

**PRODUCT**

- Completed and approved Transit Financial Sustainability and Governance Study.
- Financial and capital analysis for future transit enhancements.
- Identification and assistance in implementation of future system modifications.
- Annual subscription to planning and scheduling software.

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – FUTURE SERVICE EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$43,400	\$173,599	\$216,999
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$43,400</b>	<b>\$173,599</b>	<b>\$216,999</b>

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$15,302	\$61,208	\$76,510
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,302</b>	<b>\$61,208</b>	<b>\$76,510</b>

\*\*The 2026 amounts figure above includes \$22,500 for planning software and \$54,010 budgeted for staff hours.

#### **44.24.02 Current Service Enhancement**

##### **OBJECTIVE**

To improve service, ridership, and effectiveness of the existing transit system.

##### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2025**

Staff continued implementation of expanded marketing programs, including outreach to various community groups, education institutions, and public events.

Completed the integration with Apple Maps in addition to previous integration with Google Maps.

Continued to develop the internal advertising program, by exploring additional amenity opportunities to support transit operations, as well as opportunities for capital support.

Continued to leverage data gained from the electronic fare system to make recommendations to admin regarding metric tracking and budget structure.

Updated and began redesign of agency website to increase ease of use, as well as improve overall communication with the public. Continued to develop and implement an improved social media presence for public engagement, including campaigns about the AVL system, designated bus stops, hiring events, and route updates.

Developed and implemented fixed-route service, including routes and schedules in the Downtown core due to the City's conversion of 1-way streets to 2-way streets.

Developed FY2025 APC Maintenance Plan update, due to mandatory sampling year.

Staff reviewed ridership data in analysis of system functioning and passenger miles travelled metrics; members also provided monthly ridership analysis (including ADA lift use and bike rack use), assessed ridership trends, and prepared other information on system functioning, as requested.

Staff prepared National Transit Database reports for monthly submission of ridership, safety, and operational data, as well as annual reporting requirements.

Staff members regularly participated in group meetings and committee meetings (both in person and virtual) to solicit partner and public feedback on current system usage, demands, successes, and shortfalls.

## **PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2026**

Functions necessary in support of planning and development of enhancements to the current systems will be performed under this work element, including continuation of activities undertaken in FY2025. These activities necessitate the ongoing cloud-based software costs and run cutting module, for route development and planning, which is split between this element and future service enhancements.

Activities are as follows:

- Continue to develop and implement criteria for bus stop amenities and other required items and make changes to stop amenities as needed; make recommendations on funding priorities to support bus stops with high usage and infrastructure needs.
- Enhance development and implementation of education and outreach strategies to guide market research, promote public awareness, and engagement to increase ridership.
- Develop and implement further education and outreach programs to increase partnerships and other forms of participation.
- Collect and analyze ridership data from automatic passenger counters hardware and software.
- Continue to sample manual ridership on all bus routes to ensure data reporting is correct and consistent; FY2026 is a mandatory sampling year for passenger miles traveled (PMT).
- Develop further marketing strategies, including opportunities for increased revenue generation through amenity expansion and innovative concession programs. Include analysis of potential concession for retail space and other revenue generators at the Downtown Transfer Center.
- Assessment of current personnel usage for areas of improvement in utilization of resources and effectiveness; evaluate effectiveness of current staffing levels.
- Maintain monthly ridership figures and summary figures for effective decision-making and complete related National Transit Database reports.
- Solicit and record public reaction to any modified routes, schedules, education efforts, and technology enhancements.
- Assessment of current budgetary impact of recommended improvements.

**STAFFING**

- 200.00 Asst. Transit Director Staff Hours
- 240.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours
- 60.00 Transit Operations Coordinator
- 95.60 Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours

**595.60 Total Staff Hours**

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

**PRODUCT**

- Information relating to potential enhancements to existing service and system with newly designed website.
- Recommendations for immediate improvements.
- Analysis of current system functions.
- Budget alternatives.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – CURRENT SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>FTA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MET	\$18,817	\$75,268	\$94,085
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,817</b>	<b>\$75,268</b>	<b>\$94,085</b>

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>FTA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MET	\$16,260	\$65,040	\$81,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,260</b>	<b>\$65,040</b>	<b>\$81,300</b>

\*\*The 2026 amounts figure above includes \$22,500 for planning software and \$58,800 budgeted for staff hours.

## **44.25.00 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

### **44.25.01 Transportation Improvement Program**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To maintain a viable five-year program of transit improvements for the Billings Urbanized Area.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2025**

Developed Transit specific data for a TIP/STIP update for the new five-year document, including programming for selected capital programs. Updated projects were also added to the Division's Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM), Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP).

Monitored projects for inclusion in the TIP and STIP. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) process was also addressed and monitored.

Completed TIP amendments; attended and participated in MPO meetings.

#### **PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2026**

Functions necessary in support of transit related project inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program will be performed under this work element. Activities are as follows:

- Division members will develop and compile information on operating and capital projects for which MET Transit plans to utilize grant assistance for inclusion in the TIP; this includes utilizing and updating the Division's TAM, CIP, ERP, and other plans as required.
- All applicable projects will be provided to the MPO for inclusion in the program.
- Staff will monitor inclusion in the TIP and STIP to ensure the ability to obtain federal Sections 5307, 5310, 5339, and other applicable grants

**STAFFING**

32.00 Asst. Transit Director Staff Hours

32.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours

**64.00 Total Staff Hours**

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit will provide transit-related information to the City/County Planning Department for the MPO's inclusion in the TIP document.

**PRODUCT**

- Monitoring of plans including Transit Asset Management, the Capital Improvement Program, and components of the Equipment Replacement Plan for related projects.
- Annual inclusion of projects in TIP, as necessary per FTA regulations.
- Amendments to TIP as necessary to include new projects.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – Transportation Improvement Program**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>FTA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MET	\$1,526	\$6,103	\$7,629
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,526</b>	<b>\$6,103</b>	<b>\$7,629</b>

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>FTA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MET	\$1,395	\$5,578	\$6,973
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,395</b>	<b>\$5,578</b>	<b>\$6,973</b>

## **44.26.12 COORDINATION ON NON-EMERGENCY HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION**

### **44.26.12 Coordination of Non-Emergency Human Service Transportation**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To ensure optimal use of City of Billings funds in meeting the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in both demand response and fixed route transportation in accordance with Federal Regulations.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2025**

Staff continued to investigate methods to improve paratransit efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Continued evaluating dispatch and customer service practices for potential modification in regard to dispatching software implementation, as well as other technology implementations.

Members also continued to assess the financial and operational functioning of paratransit services, including a contractual agreement with Adult Resource Alliance. MET staff worked with Alliance staff regarding certifications of clients to ensure program sustainability.

Staff monitored procedures and policies involving ADA accessible fixed-route service and other accessibility features/requirements and updated with relevant findings, including updates to the Paratransit and Dispatch Handbooks.

Assessed and updated paratransit vehicle specifications to support future vehicle purchases; continued implementation and further procurement development of smaller ADA equipped vehicles to enhance paratransit service efficiencies.

Staff familiarized passengers with fixed route system use as appropriate via MET's travel training program.

Staff continued to coordinate transportation services among 5310 transit providers, social service agencies, and the public to provide an overall strategy to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible within available resources. This also

included outreach and engagement to improve and advance the coordination plan, as well as to improve community relations.

## **PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2026**

Functions necessary in support of planning and development of transit related Americans with Disabilities projects, procedures, outreach, and other related activities will be performed under this work element. Activities are as follows:

- Continue developing and refining improvements to current travel training options to the public using available technology and updated delivery methods; improve education and outreach surrounding these services.
- Staff will continue to evaluate each bus stop for ADA compliance and suggest improvements based on priority of needs and funding availability, as outlined in the Bus Stop Master Plan.
- Staff will continue to provide outreach and education for professionals, organizations, and other identified entities in the community, including participating on advisory groups in order to maintain positive relationships with individuals with disabilities and senior communities.
- Staff will continue to facilitate and encourage involvement in regular Billings Area Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan meetings with human service providers, social service agencies, transportation providers, and the public to coordinate efforts associated with transit capital and service planning.
- Continue to facilitate effective service provision and usage of lift-equipped fixed-route vehicles; assess and recommend capital and operational projects with the intent of supporting existing service, increased demand, and adding potential enhancements.
- Continue identification of means to address transit and paratransit needs, assessing both short- and long-term paratransit needs, and the organizational and financial capabilities of addressing those needs.
- Continue community outreach to the public and organizations in support of improving access to transportation for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations; continue participation on community committee meetings, while exploring avenues for further outreach and engagement.
- Analyze and recommend improvements to current scheduling practices, including more advanced use of available technologies to expand availability of services to seniors and low-income groups.
- Continue to assess, evaluate, and recommend improvements to the Paratransit Eligibility process to respond to increased demand for services to ensure all requirements regarding capacity and service are executed efficiently and equitably.

**STAFFING**

- 160.00 Asst. Transit Director Staff Hours
- 100.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours
- 120.00 Transit Operations Coordinator
- 80.00 Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours
  
- 460.00 Total Staff Hours**

**FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

**PRODUCT**

- Continued community consensus and support of City of Billings methods for addressing specialized needs, including lift-equipped vehicles and other options for individuals with disabilities and seniors.
- Recommendations and proposals for enhancements to existing system and programs in support of ADA compliance and regulations aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness.
- Public involvement and feedback regarding potential system enhancements in support of transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

**FUNDING SCHEDULE – ADA SERVICE (COORDINATION OF NON-EMERGENCY HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION)**

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2025**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>FTA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MET	\$8,572	\$34,289	\$42,861
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,572</b>	<b>\$34,289</b>	<b>\$42,861</b>

**FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>FTA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MET	\$9,261	\$37,043	\$46,304
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,261</b>	<b>\$37,043</b>	<b>\$46,304</b>

## SECTION 2 – FUNDING SUMMARY

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2026

WORK ELEMENT	FUNDING SOURCES FY 2026			STAFF HOURS
	LOCAL	FTA	EST.COST	
<b>44.21.01 Administration</b>				
Staff Hours	\$10,706	\$42,825	\$53,531	560.00
<b>44.24.01 Future Service</b>				
Staff Hours	\$10,802	\$43,208	\$54,010	540.00
Planning Software	\$4,500	\$18,000	\$22,500	
<b>44.24.02 Current Service</b>				
Staff Hours	\$11,760	\$47,040	\$58,800	595.60
Planning Software	\$4,500	\$18,000	\$22,500	
<b>44.25.01 T.I.P.</b>				
Staff Hours	\$1,395	\$5,578	\$6,973	64.00
<b>44.26.12 Coordination of Non- Emergency Human Service Transportation</b>				
Staff Hours	\$9,261	\$37,043	\$46,304	460.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$52,924</b>	<b>\$211,694</b>	<b>\$264,618</b>	<b>2,219.60</b>

### ALLOCATION OF COSTS

Expenditures identified include direct costs, benefits at the rate of 73% of direct salary or wages, and indirect costs at the rate of 11% of direct salary or wages.

Federal Transit Administration Section 5303 funding is available at an 80% reimbursement rate, meaning the local to FTA funding ratio for all categories is 20% local, 80% federal.

# Proposed FY26 UPWP Project Locations

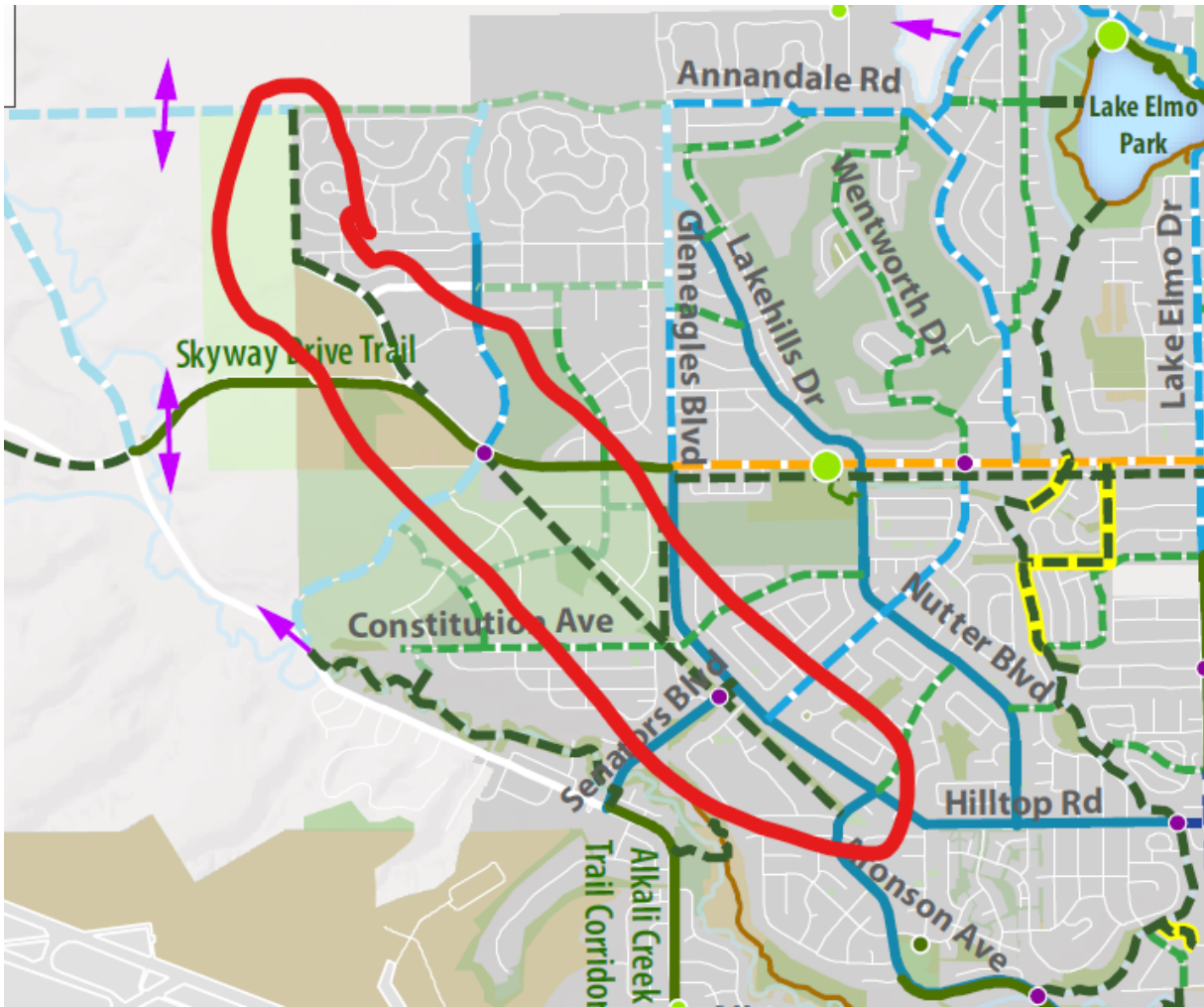
## Alkali Creek Trail Connection



## Downtown to Billings Heights Connection

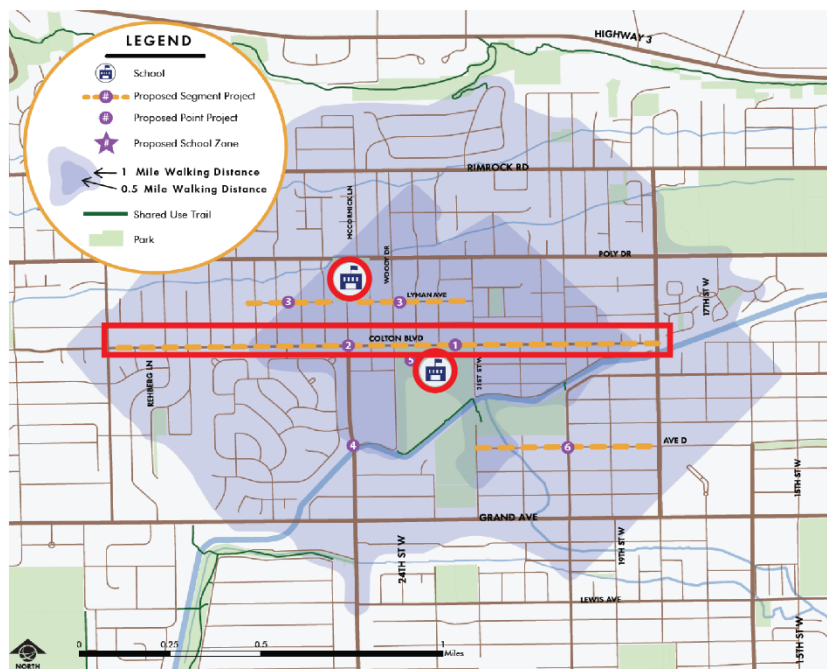


**Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road Trail Connection**



**Additional Safe Routes to School Evaluation and Public Input – St. Francis/Poly Drive & Medicine Crow**

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



# Proposed Projects Map at Medicine Crow Middle School

