

**CITY/COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**

**TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2025 at 6:00pm**

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

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

**Call the Meeting to Order:** President Gravgaard called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**Introduction of Planning Board Members and Planning Department Staff**

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

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

**Virtual:** Roger Gravgaard, Planning Board President

**1. Others in Attendance.** There were no others in attendance.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion**

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

**3. Delayed Approval of Minutes:** June 24, 2025

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

**5. Disclosure of Outside (Ex-Parte) Communication** – There were no outside communications.

**6. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest** – There were no conflicts of interests.

**7. Old Business**

- a. Presentation and Discussion. FY26 Draft Unified Planning Work Program. Presented by Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator.**

Ms. Mattox provided an overview of the 2026 UPWP, noting there was a revision made since the last presentation. She noted an addition was made to Element 302, to support the City of Billings' Transportation Corridor Project. The MPO is proposing to contribute \$80,000 toward Phase II of the project, which will include public outreach efforts such as surveys to inform and enhance planning for future arterial roadway improvements.

## **Recommendation**

Staff are requesting the board make a recommendation to approve the FY26 UPWP, to the Policy Coordinating Committee.

## **Motion**

Motion made by Board member John Staley, seconded by Board member Cook to recommend approval of the FY26 Unified Planning Work Program as submitted, to the Policy Coordinating Committee. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

## **8. New Business**

## **9. Other Business**

### **UPWP Projects – Updates**

#### **Long Range Transportation Plan**

Lora Mattox, stated that several current Transportation Plan projects will be coming before the Planning Board in the next few months. One of these is the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Project Review & Modification of the 2023 LRTP, which originated from a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) review conducted a few years ago. She explained that the review identified concerns with the project list and funding components, noting they were difficult to interpret, including some duplicated funding sources. FHWA recommended clarifying the project list to ensure it meets the federal requirement of fiscal constraint—ensuring all listed projects have realistic and identifiable funding sources over the 20-year planning horizon. As part of this effort, staff are currently reviewing and updating the LRTP project list. This initiative also led to the development of a public-facing data dashboard, which will be accessible on the MPO’s website. The dashboard will map all transportation projects—categorized by roadway, transit, pedestrian, and bicycles and allow users to click on a project to view its location and detailed information, enhancing transparency and public engagement.

Lora further explained that during the adoption of the 2023 LRTP, the new Census data and urbanized area boundaries were released. These boundaries determine where federal transportation funds—such as those for the upcoming Grand Avenue project—can be allocated. In response to the new data, a boundary amendment was made to include a few additional areas in the MPO planning boundary, which differs from the urbanized boundary. While the team considered delaying LRTP adoption to incorporate the new boundaries, they ultimately chose to adopt the plan as-is, with the understanding that the MPO boundary would be updated afterward. She noted that the current planning boundary “zigzags” on the west end and was designed with anticipated population growth in mind.

The MPO is now working with GIS staff to better reflect these urban changes, with the expectation that by the next Census, the MPO will be known as the Billings/Laurel MPO.

## **Discussion**

The Board discussed the scope of MPO partnerships, with clarification that participation is not limited to established or incorporated communities. Areas in the county, such as Lockwood, are included within the MPO boundary and are eligible for studies and transportation planning support. There was mention of anticipated growth in Lockwood, particularly with the future opening of the Bypass, and the potential impacts on transportation infrastructure and traffic flow. Board members also raised questions about jurisdictional boundaries, suggesting it may be beneficial to adjust them as the MPO area expands to ensure residents are adequately informed of transportation-related changes.

Staff explained that while the MPO boundary originally aligned with the zoning jurisdiction, it has since been amended to reflect growth trends. Concerns were also noted about traffic impacts in developing areas, with interest expressed in exploring additional traffic control measures.

## **Complete Streets**

Ms. Mattox stated that the City's Complete Streets Policy includes a provision for a review every three years to assess its effectiveness based on the policy's core elements. A few months ago, funding was allocated to support an economic analysis of the policy, which will examine factors such as health benefits and other economic impacts.

## **Mobile Trail Application**

She also noted that during updates to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or the Bikeway Plan, the trail map is regularly updated. A mobile app was previously developed to help users easily access and locate trail information.

## **Safe Streets for All**

Staff reported that a federal grant was awarded to implement Safe Routes to School projects, which includes not only construction improvements but also an educational campaign component. The first set of construction projects is expected to be under contract by the end of July. To support the outreach effort, Kinetic Marketing, a local Billings firm, was hired to develop and distribute media ads and educational materials, including TV spots, flyers, and other promotional content to raise awareness and encourage safe travel to and from schools.

## **Questions**

There was a discussion regarding the availability of modeling tools and data overlays. Staff noted that a travel demand model is maintained and will be supported by an updated household travel survey included in FFY26 UPWP. The original survey was conducted via a mobile app, and the data collected is used to inform the model. If needed, consultants can run specific scenarios through the model to support planning efforts.

Questions were raised about the City of Laurel's planning resources and its role within the MPO. It was clarified that while Laurel has planning leadership, it does not currently have a dedicated planner. Upon becoming part of the MPO, Laurel will have representation specific to transportation planning, though

the MPO would not assume responsibility for general city planning. The group also discussed the potential for expanded service agreements between jurisdictions. While there have been conversations around supporting zoning and subdivision review processes, Laurel would remain an independent municipality with its own local government. There is no intent on merging with Billings, though interlocal agreements—such as for Fire or EMS services—could be explored, depending on response requirements and community needs.

The conversation then turned to wastewater treatment capacity. While Billings operates a large sanitation facility that currently serves Lockwood and has ample unused capacity, it was emphasized that capacity must be reserved to avoid losing access to necessary water withdrawals from the river. Laurel, however, operates its own treatment plant, so direct integration is not immediately required.

**Mr. Friday reported on the recent Interim Planning Commission meeting**, where the consultant team from Orion presented an overview of their data collection process. This included information on population projections, housing demand, and expected business growth. The presentation offered a clear summary of the team's current findings and approach. The consultants are now beginning to review the future land use category map developed for the West End and intend to compare it with land use patterns across other areas of the city, including the Heights. This comparison aims to promote consistency and alignment in long-range planning efforts citywide.

**Anna Vickers provided an update on the upcoming stakeholder engagement activities scheduled for August 4th–6th.** During this time, the consultant team, Orion, will tour a variety of neighborhoods and key areas to better understand existing land use patterns and identify locations needing more focused planning efforts—such as the Inner Belt Loop, which currently lacks designated land uses and includes a city roadway that traverses county land. These site visits are intended to give consultants on-the-ground context, helping them assess infrastructure needs and development potential. Locations like Shiloh Commons will serve as examples of successful development and will be used to demonstrate the proposed “urban node” concept in the plan.

In addition to the site tours, Orion will conduct meetings with multiple departments and community organizations—including Fire, Police, EMS, Public Works, Billings Realtors, and support services—to gather input on land use issues, infrastructure challenges, and community priorities. The goal of these meetings is to collect meaningful feedback that will inform the direction of the long-range planning effort.

**Strawberry Festival on Saturday, July 12th**, with multiple departments participating in providing displays and information about city services. As part of the outreach effort, attendees will have the opportunity to sign up to receive updates and information related to the Future Land Use Map.

**Commissioner Ostlund's memorial service** will be held on Saturday, July 12th at 10:00 a.m. at MetraPark Arena.

#### **10. Future Agenda Items**

Mr. Friday advised the board that the Bureau of Mines will be returning for a future presentation, with additional details to be provided as they become available.

**ADJOURNMENT: 6:45PM**

*Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk*