



YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF PLANNING

CITY OF BILLINGS AND
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA



AGENDA

OCTOBER 14, 2025 MEETING TIME: 4:30 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
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
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 or call 406-247-8610.

- CALL TO ORDER - Planning Board President: Welcome and Introduction of Board Members and Staff.
- 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.
- Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 23, 2025
Attachments
Meeting Minutes of September 23, 2025
- 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
- DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
- DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION:
- OLD BUSINESS (Agenda items that were not discussed or not completed in a previous meeting or items requiring action).
- NEW BUSINESS: (Agenda items new to this meeting).

- a. South Billings Blvd Urban Renewal District Expansion: Growth Policy Conformance. Wyeth Friday

Attachments

- Review of Conditions that Contribute to Blight
2016 Billings Growth Policy
Draft SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan
Planning Board Conformance Letter to City Council
SBBURD Current Adopted Plan

b. **School District #2 Enrollment Projections & Building Capacities. Gordon Klasna, Billings Public Schools**

**Attachments**

SD2 Enrollment

SD2 Capacity

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**

Date: 10/14/2025  
Title:  
Presented by:  
Department: Planning & Community Services  
Presentation:

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### Information

#### RECOMMENDATION

MEETING MINUTES: September 23, 2025

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

#### ALTERNATIVES

City Council may:

- Approve; or,
- Not Approve

#### FISCAL EFFECTS

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### Attachments

Meeting Minutes of September 23, 2025

**CITY/COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025 at 4:30pm**

	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	-	1	1	1	1						
<b>Roger Gravgard President</b>	Billings Ward II	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	V	-	1	1	1	1						
<b>Dennie Stephenson</b>	Billings Ward III	1	1	1	1	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	-	1	1	1	A						
<b>David Nordel</b>	Billings Ward V	A	V	V	A	V	A	1	V	1	1	1	1	A	-	1	1	A	1						
<b>Troy Boucher</b>	YC District 1	A	A	A	A	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	-	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	-	1	1	1	1						
<b>Alexis Bonogofsky</b>	YC District 6	1	1	V	1	V	1	1	1	A	1	1	V	1	-	1	1	A	1						
<b>Morgan Tuss</b>	YC District 7	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	A	A	A						
<b>Vacant</b>	YC Cons. District	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Scott Reiter Megan Trevino</b>	Ex-Officio SD2	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	1	1	A	-	1		1	1						

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 4:30 PM

**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; Dave Green, Planner; Ben Jackson, Planner

**1. Others in Attendance:** John Halverson, Dominic Neameyer, Joey S. with Sanbell; Doug Wild

**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. Approval of Minutes: September 9, 2025**

**Motion**

Motion made by Board member Stephenson, seconded by Board Member Cook to approve the September 9, 2025 meeting minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

**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.

**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** – There was no old business.

**8. New Business**

**a. Public Hearing and Action. Trestles Preliminary Plat – City Major Subdivision**

The Trestles subdivision in Copper Ridge is proposed west of 70th Street and Rimrock Road, encompassing 337 lots and a 25.16-acre remainder lot. Formerly farmland, the site is zoned Neighborhood 3 (N3), Neighborhood 1 (N1) and Public 1 (P1) and includes planned parkland. The development will provide 10.55 acres of parkland, exceeding the required 2.7 acres, and will connect to surrounding neighborhoods and infrastructure.

Dave Green gave an overview of the Trestles subdivision, plat information, and added that the parks will be privately owned and maintained by a private HOA created by the subdivider.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends conditional approval subject to the four (4) conditions of approval as presented in the staff report. City Council action will be held on October 27, 2025.

President Gravgaard opened the Public Hearing. There were no members of the public present, the Public Hearing was closed.

### **Questions**

The Board discussed concerns regarding the widening of Grand Avenue, noting that the project will stop short of 62nd Street. The Board also inquired about the proposed 25-foot lot widths and whether any restrictions apply.

**Applicant's Agent:** John Halverson, Sanbell; Mr. Halverson addressed the Board's concerns, and it was explained that the narrower lots are intended for duplexes with a 0-foot lot line, sharing a party wall, and a 5-foot setback on the opposite side. The development meets the N1 zoning requirement as measured at the front setback—one building per two lots, side by side.

### **Discussion**

Questions arose regarding egress for emergency services, and the Board was informed that three access points are planned at Rimrock Road, Bronze Boulevard, and Shiny Penny. The Board also expressed appreciation for the inclusion of parkland in the proposal.

### **Motion**

Motion made by board member Stephenson, seconded by board member Woods to forward a recommendation of approval, with the findings of fact and four (4) conditions of approval. Motion carries unanimously.

## **9. Other Business**

### **Volunteer Board Appreciation Dinner**

Wyeth Friday advised the Board of the upcoming volunteer board appreciation dinner scheduled for October 29th. He noted there will be a guest presenter, with additional details to be shared in the future. Mayor and council members will also be in attendance.

### **Billings2045 Community Survey**

Mr. Friday informed the Board that a community survey is available on the City's website regarding the Billings2045 plan. He encouraged the Board to provide feedback and requested that they share the survey link with others to increase participation. The survey is also being promoted on social media, and outreach efforts will include Harvest Fest on October 11th and the library on October 14th.

### **Westend Ground Water Modeling**

Mr. Friday reported that information regarding the Westend Ground Water Modeling is expected to be available sometime in October.

### **School Capacity Discussion**

Following discussions at the previous meeting regarding schools operating over capacity, the Board requested that School District 2 provide an update on current capacity challenges and potential strategies to address them. Gordon Klasna will attend the October 14th Planning Board meeting to present this information.

## **10. Future Agenda Items**

Southside Urban Renewal District: On October 14th, the City will consider the proposed expansion of the Southside Urban Renewal District, with the hearing date set in accordance with state statutes. The Planning Board is required to confirm that the proposed expansion aligns with the City's growth policy. An analysis has been completed and indicates that the proposal meets the State's requirements for deficiencies; further details will be shared at the October 14th meeting. Additional information will be provided in the coming days, and an informational meeting will be held at Orchard School. Approximately 3,900 letters will be sent to property owners within the urban renewal project area.

The meeting focused on discussing several infrastructure projects and concerns. The group discussed changes to a turn lane on Jackson and State Avenue, with some confusion about whether proper notifications were made about the changes. They also addressed ongoing construction on 9th and 10th Avenue South between 27th and 31st, where storm drains were supposed to be installed before blacktopping. Planning staff agreed to follow up on both issues, with plans to check with Public Works about the intersection improvements and to investigate the status of the storm drain installation project.

**ADJOURNMENT: 4:59PM**

*Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk*

## Planning Board

**Date:** 10/14/2025  
**Title:** South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District Expansion - Growth Policy Conformance  
**Presented by:** Wyeth Friday  
**Department:** Planning & Community Services  
**Presentation:** Yes

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### Information

#### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Yellowstone County Board of Planning review the proposed District expansion and Draft Urban Renewal Plan amendments, and make a recommendation to the City Council that the expansion and plan amendments are in conformance with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy.

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

The City Council found that expansion of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District into the Southside Neighborhood area would help address hurdles to development with property conditions and cleanups, and public infrastructure needs that continue to align with the goals and purpose of urban renewal efforts in South Billings. Part of the concern is South Park which has significant infrastructure deficiencies as well as park amenity needs, including replacement of the South Park Pool and aquatic support facilities. The proposal to expand the District was brought to the City Council at a Work Session in August 2024 and September 2025. Council took action at its September 22 Business Meeting to pass a resolution of intent to expand the SBBURD and set a public hearing date for October 27. The Planning Board was informed of this item at its September 23 meeting and is scheduled to take action on this item at this meeting. Conformance with the City of Billings 2016 Growth Policy is one requirement for expanding an urban renewal district. Growth Policy conformance is outlined in Section 2 of the Review of Conditions that Contribute to Blight report attached to this memo. This action by the Planning Board is one of the critical steps to move the process forward to the City Council for action on the expansion.

The existing SBBURD boundary may be modified by ordinance in accordance with the procedure described in M.C.A. § 7-15-4221. City Council at its September 22 Business Meeting approved a resolution of intent to expand the SBBURD. The SBURA Board supports the expansion of the SBBURD by the City. Acting on a resolution of intent to expand the District is the first formal step for the City Council to move the process forward. The District was formed and amended in 2008, the Urban Renewal Plan for the District was amended in 2019, and the District and Plan was expanded and updated in 2021.

While expanding urban renewal districts is not common, it is a tool available to communities under the urban renewal laws, and Billings has most recently used the tool in the SBBURD in 2021. The process mirrors the process to create a district, with Council taking action on a resolution of intent to expand the District, updating the Urban Renewal Plan, notification of property owners both within the existing SBBURD boundary and the area to be included in the expansion, Planning Board review of expansion, legal notice of public hearing, and final Council action to expand the District.

#### DETERMINATION OF BLIGHT

Based on an analysis by City staff and Pioneer Technical Services completed in August 2025, it was found that properties within the proposed 903-acre expansion area (See Report with Map attached) have qualifying conditions per MCA 7-15-4202 and 7-15-4206 (2), that the area requires public infrastructure improvements, and the expansion area could benefit from program recommendations in the currently adopted SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan. The proposed SBBURD Expansion area contains a number of underdeveloped properties and areas lacking complete infrastructure. The Council previously determined that the property included in the SBBURD was "blighted" in its adoption of Ordinance #08-5462, Ordinance #08-5484, Ordinance #19-5725, and Ordinance #21-5765 that (a) created the SBBURD originally, amended the urban renewal plan, and last expanded the SBBURD in 2021. As cited in the attached Review of Conditions that Contribute to Blight report, the proposed expansion area meets several definitions of blight:

- Deficient Structures - buildings, street infrastructure, water and sewer infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure;
- Deficient Land Use - surface storage lots, vacant lots.

The City desires to improve the quality of land use, city infrastructure and economic development potential of these properties by including them in the SBBURD to construct needed public infrastructure improvements, grow the tax base, stimulate commercial development, and further implement the visions of the SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan.

#### PROCEDURAL HISTORY TO DATE

- In August 2024, the Council discussed the approach to expanding the SBBURD at a Work Session

- In April 2025, staff contracted with Pioneer Technical Services to assist in the technical analysis and process for the SBBURD expansion
- On August 4 the South Billings Urban Renewal Association (SBURA) heard an update on the plans to expand the District.
- On September 2, 2025, the Council heard a presentation on expansion of the SBBURD and directed staff to move the process forward.
- On September 22, 2025, the Council passed a resolution of intent to expand the SBBURD and set a public hearing date for October 27.
- On October 14, the Yellowstone County Board of Planning is scheduled to act affirmatively on a recommendation to the City Council as to the SBBURD expansion's consistency with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy.
- On October 9, a Community Information Meeting is scheduled to inform property owners in the SBBURD, in the proposed expansion area, and for the community in general of the plans to expand the District.
- If the City Council approves the ordinance modifying the SBBURD on first reading on October 27, the Council will conduct a second reading of the ordinance on November 10. The ordinance will take effect 30 days after second reading on December 10.

The Yellowstone County Board of Planning must review the proposed expansion of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District and Plan update, and affirm for the City Council that the District expansion conforms to the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy. Specifically, several Growth Policy Guidelines are addressed by potential development and redevelopment that may occur on properties to be included in the existing District and the District expansion. Some examples are called out here for the Board's reference:

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**2025 Project and Program Recommendations:**

Transportation Corridor Improvements -- Construct and reconstruct transportation infrastructure in the District to include streets, sidewalks, lighting, traffic control, multi-purpose side paths, landscaping, water, sewer, stormwater, and transit access projects.

Improve the many uncontrolled intersections within the district with proper traffic controls. Also, improved traffic controls on South 27th Street to allow safer access for vehicular traffic, particularly northbound South 27th Street.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

Infrastructure and service investments that stabilize or improve property values, secure future utility costs, consider maintenance costs, and improve our environmental quality far into the future (i.e. energy efficient) are desirable

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**Parks & Recreational Amenities** -- Construct and enhance public facilities that will increase the quality or quantity of parks and recreational activities within the District. This may include, but is not limited to, a recreation center, swimming pool, ice arena, indoor and outdoor park development, and other amenities.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Place Making** (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)

â€¢ *A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable*

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

â€¢ *Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community*

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**Public Safety** -- Construction of Police or Fire facilities within the District, to include necessary furnishings for such facilities.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

â€¢ *Public health and safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors*

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**Walking Paths and Trails** -- Construct sidewalks, trails and pathways throughout the District with landscaping to ensure the safety of children and all pedestrians, as well as provide access to neighborhoods and services.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

â€¢ *The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans*

**Community Fabric** (*attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings*)

â€¢ *Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings*

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**School and Community Services** -- Assist in funding projects and programs in the District to enhance school playgrounds and athletic fields, health and wellness programs, access to community meeting and activity spaces, and other efforts that improve access to school and community services.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Mobility and Access** (*transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all*)

â€¢ *"Safe Routes to Schools" promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation*

## STAKEHOLDERS

There are multiple opportunities for direct and indirect public participation for the process to expand the SBBURD boundary. This item is not a public hearing for this meeting, but the Planning Board meeting is open to the public so that the community may be aware of this process. This process comes before the City Council at two separate business meetings, both of which are open to the public, and one of which will be a public hearing. The City Council also conducted several Work Sessions on the expansion, one in August 2024 and one in September 2025. Further, the property owners in the existing SBBURD District and the property owners in the proposed expansion area also were directly noticed via US Mail of a community information meeting on October 9, 2025 and the public hearing at the Council Meeting on October 27. Per State Law, Yellowstone County, Billings School District #2 and Elysian School District #23 were also notified and staff attended meetings of those entities to explain the process and provide for comment from these taxing jurisdictions. This is all per Montana Code requirements for a District expansion process and public hearing notification.

## ALTERNATIVES

The Planning Board may:

- Find the proposed expansion of the SBBURD and Urban Renewal Plan amendments are in conformance with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy; or,
- Find the proposed expansion of the SBBURD and Urban Renewal Plan amendments are not in conformance with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy. However, review of the adopted 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy and the Findings of Blight Analysis conducted by the City and the proposed amendments to the SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan demonstrates several statements and guidelines in the policy align with the SBBURD purpose and future development opportunities within the District expansion area.

## FISCAL EFFECTS

There is no direct fiscal impact by making a recommendation of conformance of this expansion to the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District and Urban Renewal Plan amendments with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy. However, this District expansion will open up future development and public infrastructure improvement opportunities with urban renewal funds in the expanded area of the District.

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## Attachments

Review of Conditions that Contribute to Blight  
2016 Billings Growth Policy  
Draft SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan  
Planning Board Conformance Letter to City Council  
SBBURD Current Adopted Plan



# South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District Potential Expansion Area: Review of Conditions that Contribute to Blight

*August 18, 2025*



**Prepared for:**

City of Billings  
Planning and Community Services Department

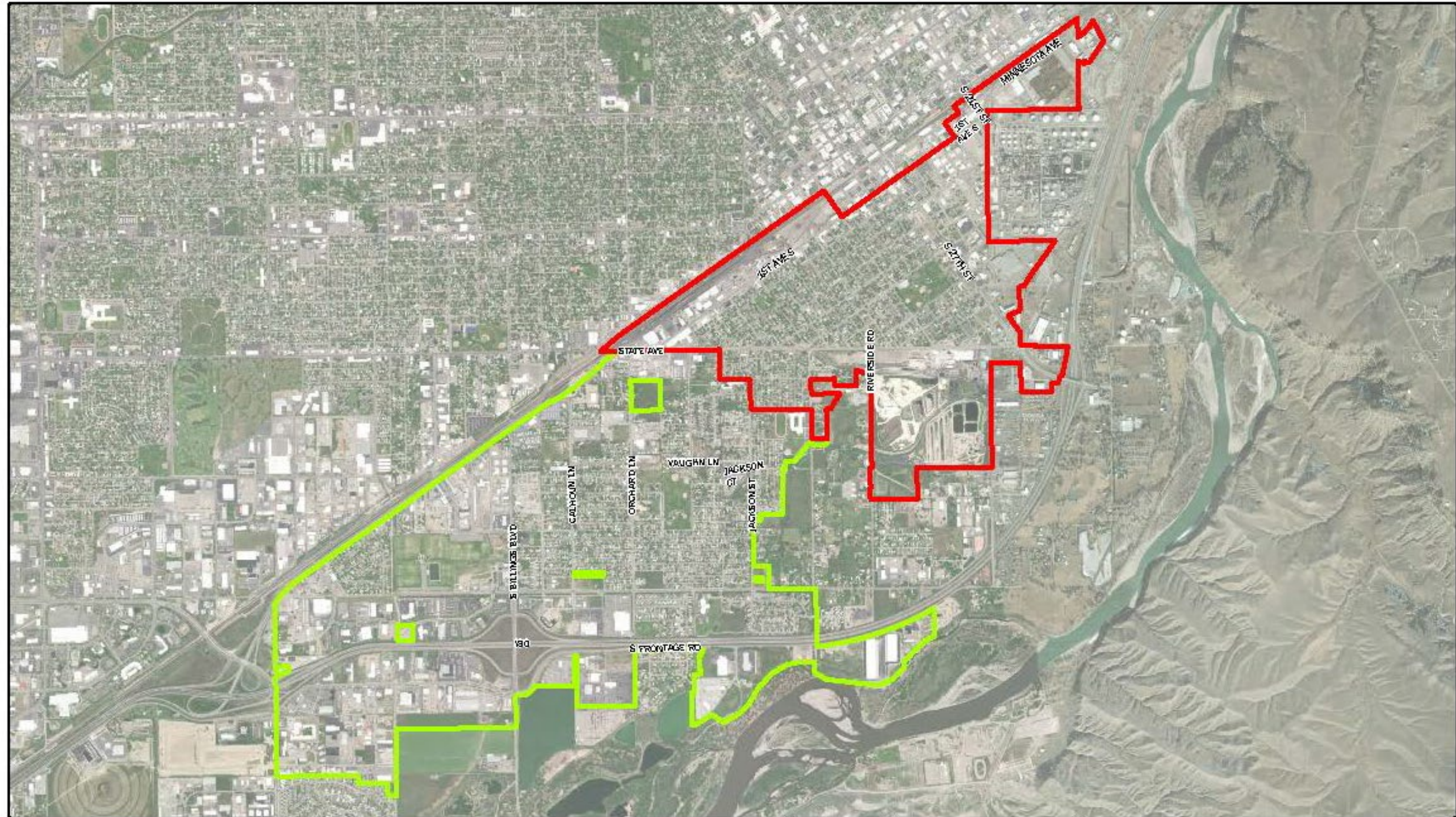


**Prepared by:**

Pioneer Technical Services, Inc.  
2310 Broadwater Ave., Suite 1  
Billings, Montana 59102

# 1 Introduction

The City of Billings, Montana (City) is working to improve the overall economic health of the community through the revitalization and redevelopment of blighted areas. To that end, on May 12, 2008, the City of Billings adopted an ordinance creating the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) with a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) provision. Part of this ordinance included the adoption of an urban renewal plan and the boundaries of the tax increment financing district. In October of 2008, the City modified the SBBURD to include three additional properties. The SBBURD was amended a second time in July 2019 and then was amended for the third and last time in 2021, as codified in Ordinance 21-5765 of the Billings Municipal Code. The 2021 amendment expanded the boundary of the SBBURD to add five new properties to the district. The SBBURD boundary, as of the 2021 amendment, is shown on Figure 1.



<p><b>LEGEND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">▬</span> PROPOSED EXPANSION AREA</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">▬</span> EXISTING URD BOUNDARY</li> </ul>		<p>CREATED BY: [REDACTED]</p> <p>COORD SYS / ZONE: MONTANA STATE PLANE</p> <p>DWTU: NAD 1983</p> <p>UNITS: INTL FEET</p> <p>SOURCE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>DATE: 2/7/2025</p> <p>SCALE IN FEET</p> <p>0 1,000 2,000</p>	<p>www.pioneer-technical.com (406) 762-9177</p>	<p><b>FIGURE</b></p> <p>SOUTH BILLINGS BOULEVARD URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT PROPOSED EXPANSION</p>
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\\p1\billings\GIS\Projects\2025\South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District\Map\_Series\Map\_Series\_02\_Proposed Expansion.mxd

Figure 1. South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District and Proposed Expansion

The City is now considering amending the SBBURD to include additional areas adjacent to the existing district. These areas could benefit from inclusion in the SBBURD to provide resources to address conditions contributing to blight and help to achieve the City's goal to improve the overall economic health of the community through the revitalization and redevelopment of blighted areas. Therefore, the City initiated an examination of conditions that can be considered to contribute to blight in an area generally east of and adjacent to the SBBURD. The purpose of this review is to determine whether such conditions exist and whether rehabilitation, redevelopment, or both, are necessary and in the interest of the public health and welfare of Billings residents. This evaluation is required by Montana's Urban Renewal statutes in §7-15-4210, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) (Montana State Legislature, 2025a), as a first step in amending the SBBURD.

The statutory definitions of blight are found in §7-15-4206, MCA (Montana State Legislature, 2025b) and detailed in Section 2.2 of this review; for purposes of clarity, visible signs of conditions that contribute to blight are as follows:

- Structures that have become ill-suited for their original use.
- Deterioration of building structure components or infrastructure, such as roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.
- Buildings or structures that endanger the life, limb, health, property, or safety of the general public or their occupants.
- Inadequate utilities and infrastructure, such as storm sewers and storm drainage, sanitary sewers, water lines, power, roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and communication services, that are shown to be lacking, of insufficient capacity to serve the uses of the area, deteriorated, antiquated, obsolete, or in disrepair.
- Real property in the area that has incurred or may incur future planned Montana Department of Environmental Quality or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency remediation costs.
- Excessive vacancies occurring in buildings that are unoccupied and underutilized and that represent an adverse influence on the area because of the frequency, extent, or duration of the vacancies.

Following this examination, the City will determine whether it is appropriate to expand the SBBURD. Expanding the Urban Renewal District (URD) will enable the City to address conditions that contribute to blight through:

- The investment in public infrastructure in support of economic development.
- The attainment of urban density to achieve greater efficiency in the delivery of public services.
- Retention and recruitment of commerce.
- Leveraging private and public local, state, and federal capital.
- The creation of opportunities for living wage jobs.

## 2 Growth Policy Conformance

One of the requirements of Montana’s Urban Renewal Law (Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, MCA) is that the urban renewal plan must conform to the community’s growth policy. The 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy ("Growth Policy") (City of Billings, 2016) refers to and promotes economic development and urban renewal in various ways. Note that the Growth Policy was officially adopted by the City of Billings via Resolution 16-10575 on August 8, 2016. The City of Billings Growth Policy Statement is:

*“In the next 20 years, Billings will manage its growth by encouraging development within and adjacent to the existing City limits, but preference will be given to areas where City infrastructure exists or can be extended within a fiscally constrained budget and with consideration given to increased tax revenue from development. The City will prosper with strong neighborhoods with their own unique character that are clean, safe, and provide a choice of housing and transportation options” (City of Billings, 2016).*

Expanding the SBBURD and developing plans and means to address conditions contributing to blight can help to achieve the vision included in this Growth Policy Statement. While a more detailed analysis of compliance with the Growth Policy will be incorporated into the Urban Renewal Plan, this preliminary evaluation indicates that including this area into the SBBURD will most likely be in compliance with the City of Billings Growth Policy.

## 3 Background

### 3.1 History and Previous Activities

The SBBURD lies within the City, is situated between major transportation routes, and stretches from the east side of the King Avenue Overpass east to Washington Street and from State Avenue South to the City limit boundaries. Located within the SBBURD is Interstate Highway 90 and the major railway line through the City. Figure 1 shows the boundary of the existing SBBURD.

Billings, Montana, was established in 1882 by the Northern Pacific Railway and named after Frederick H. Billings, a former president of the company. The City quickly grew as a railroad hub. The City’s commercial core developed along Montana Avenue, with the Parmly Billings Memorial Library, built in 1901, symbolizing its growing civic pride. Billings’ strategic location and access to railroads helped it flourish as a distribution center during the homesteading boom (Montana Historical Society, 2025).

Following the homesteading boom, Billings evolved from a railroad town into Montana's leading economic center. Its strategic location and access to transportation networks helped it become a hub for agriculture, energy, and trade. Over time, the City diversified its economy, adding healthcare, education, finance, and tourism as major sectors. Today, Billings accounts for roughly 20% of Montana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with a metropolitan population nearing 200,000. The City serves a regional market of over 650,000 people, stretching across multiple states and provinces. With two major hospitals, several colleges, and a growing technical and service industry, Billings continues to attract businesses and workers. Investments in infrastructure, housing, and air travel have further solidified its role as a dynamic and resilient economic powerhouse in the Northern Rockies (Big Sky Economic Development, 2024). However, portions of the City have not enjoyed growth and prosperity to the same extent, including the SBBURD and the area being considered for expansion.

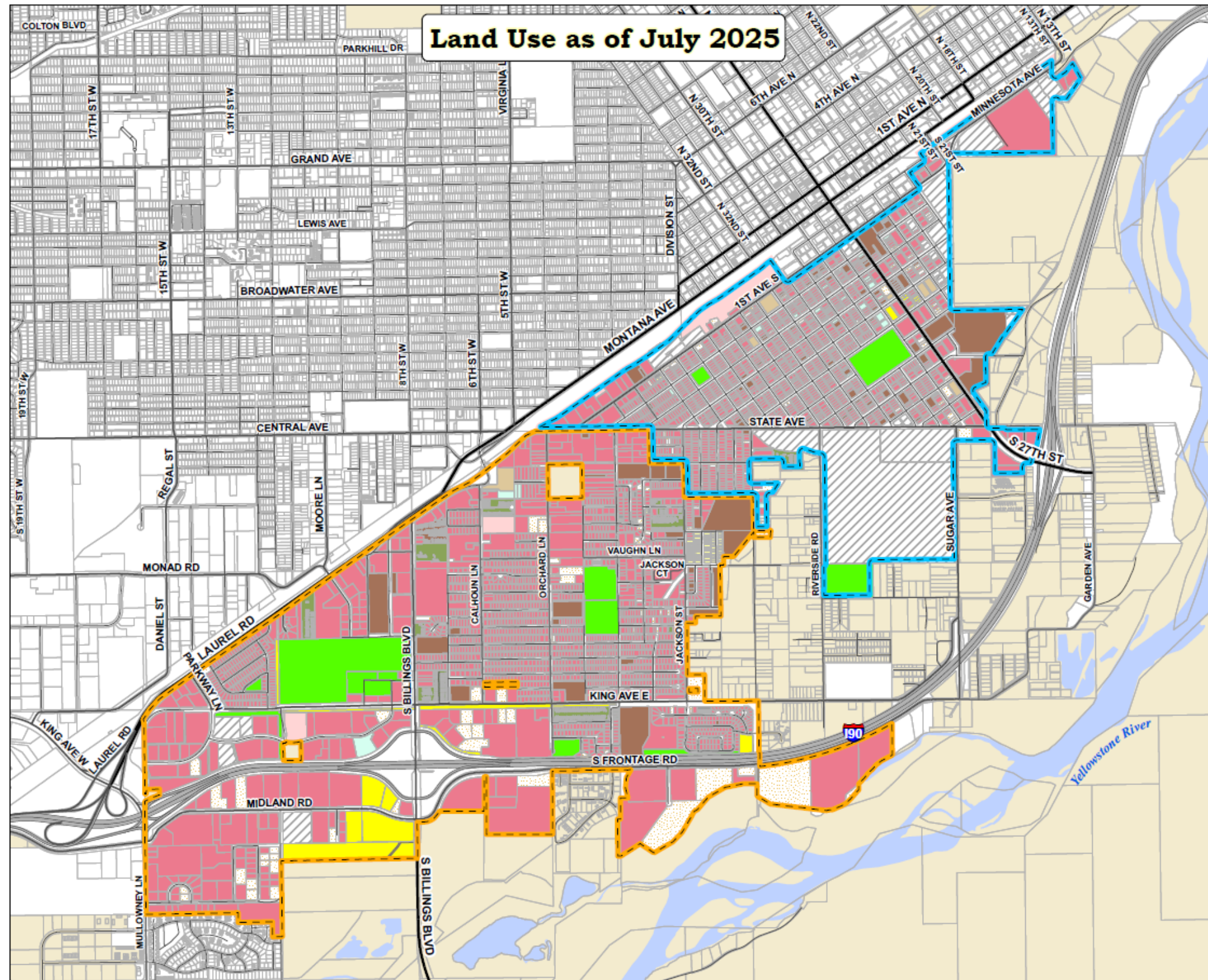
While the SBBURD is administered by the City of Billings, it is advised by the South Billings Urban Renewal Association (SBURA). The SBURA advises the Billings City Council on the SBBURD's administration and tax increment expenditures. This includes funding of public infrastructure projects and support of private development that promote economic development and/or reduce blight in the SBBURD.

Due to the location, the SBBURD has demonstrated an immense amount of potential to become a major economic force. Development has occurred since the formation of the SBBURD given its destination for retail, goods and services, manufacturing, and entertainment. The area considered for expansion also has significant potential to add to this positive economic impact.

### ***3.2 Area General Description***

The current SBBURD is in the south-center region of the City of Billings. Bordered by the interstate corridor, the main railroad line, and principal transportation routes, it is an area with numerous economic development opportunities. In addition, numerous service-related, commercial, industrial, parks and recreation, and housing choices are located within the area.

The area being considered for the URD expansion encompasses the area generally north and east of the SBBURD, starting near the intersection of State Street and Orchard Lane in the west, extending northeast along and south of Montana Avenue to the City's boundary near the Yellowstone River, and then south to include the Western Sugar Co-op, generally following the City's southern boundary in this area. The area includes commercial, residential, and industrial properties. It covers approximately 903 acres and encompasses 1,597 non-right-of-way parcels of property. The area is shown on Figure 1. A more detailed description of the boundary is included in Appendix A. The entire area is within the City of Billings. Existing land uses and current zoning are shown on Figures 2 and 3.



### South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) - Current Boundary and Proposed Expansion

SBBURD comprised of Levy Districts 2T5 and 23T5



**Legend**

- SBBURD Boundary
- SBBURD Proposed Expansion
- Billings City Limits
- Yellowstone County Boundary
- City Owned Property**
  - City Park
  - Other City Property
- Property Type (Land Use)**
  - Apartment
  - CN - Centrally Assessed Non-Valued Property
  - Condominium
  - Exempt Property
  - Improved Property
  - Industrial Property
  - Mobile/RV Parks
  - Non-Valued Property
  - On Leased Land
  - Partial Exempt Property
  - Townhouse
  - Vacant Land

The parcel data mapped hereon does not constitute a legal survey. Inaccuracies exist with both the mapped data and the Montana Department of Revenue CAMA data; when seeking the definitive description of real property, consult the deed recorded at the Yellowstone County court house.

Land uses are determined from CAMA property type values for residential and commercial properties, and may not be entirely consistent with actual ground conditions.

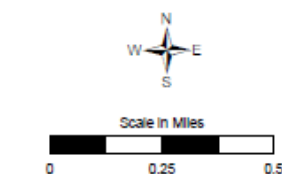
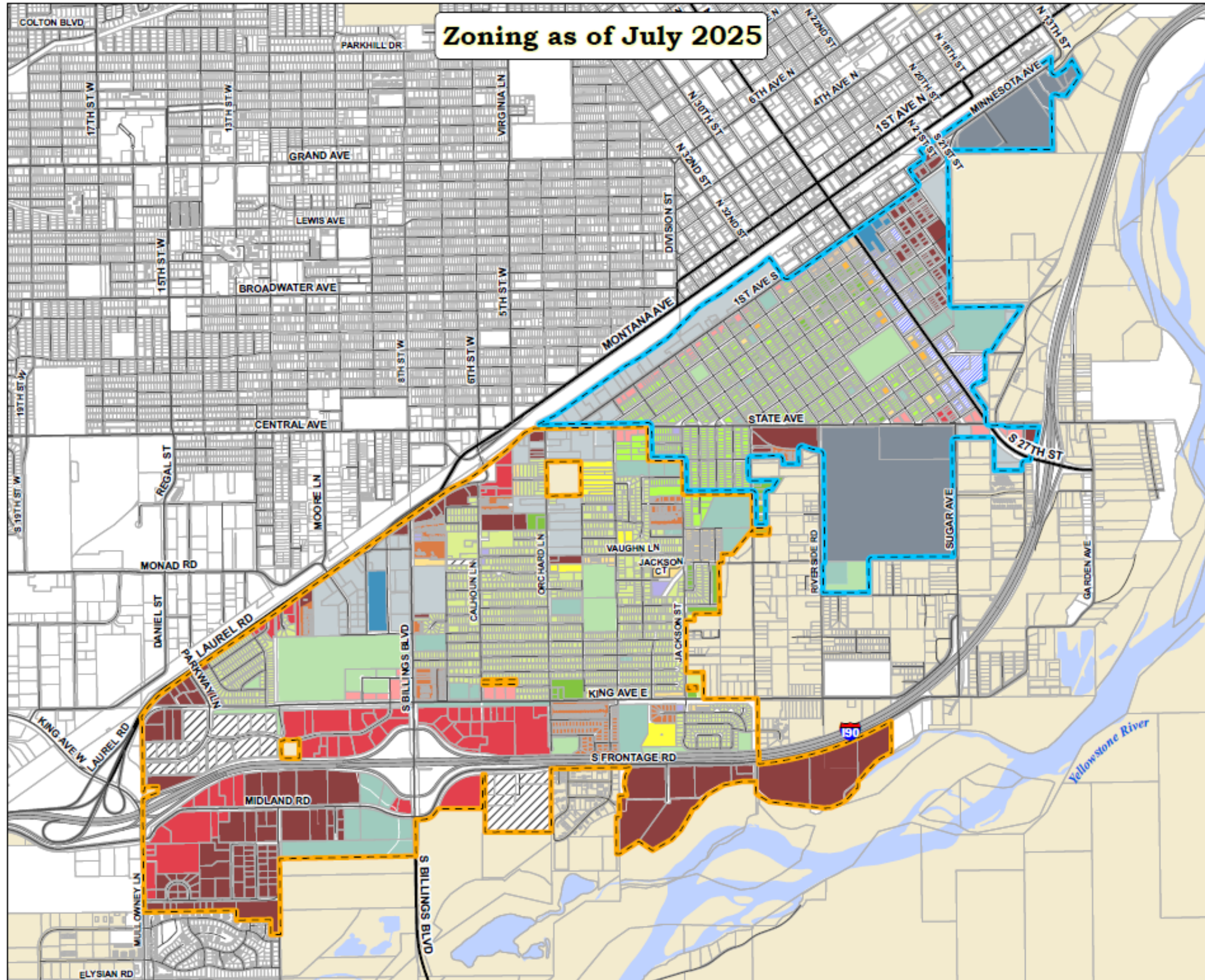


Figure 2. Current Land Uses.



### South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) - Current Boundary and Proposed Expansion

SBBURD comprised of Levy Districts 2T5 and 23T5



**Legend**

- SBBURD Boundary
- SBBURD Proposed Expansion
- Billings City Limits
- Yellowstone County Boundary

**Zoning**

- A - Agriculture (10+ acres)\*
- C3 - General Commercial
- CBD - Central Business District
- CMU1 - Corridor Mixed-Use
- CMU2 - Corridor Mixed-Use & Commercial Centers
- CX - Heavy Commercial
- DX - Downtown Support
- EBURD Industrial Sanctuary
- I1 - Light Industrial
- I2 - Heavy Industrial
- N1 - First Neighborhood
- N2 - Mid-Century Neighborhood
- N3 - Suburban Neighborhood
- N4 - Large Lot Suburban Neighborhood\*
- NMU - Neighborhood Mixed-Use
- NX1 - Mixed Residential 1 (1-4 du/structure)
- NX2 - Mixed Residential 2 (2-8 du/structure)
- NX3 - Mixed Residential 3 (>=5 du/structure)
- P1 - Open Space, Parks, Recreation
- P2 - Public- Civic, Institutional
- P3 - Public- Campuses - Medical, Civic, Educational
- PD - Planned Development
- RMH - Residential Mobile Home
- RR1 - Rural Residential (1 to 2.99 acres)\*
- RR3 - Rural Residential (3 to 9.9 acres)\*

The parcel data mapped hereon does not constitute a legal survey. Inaccuracies exist with both the mapped data and the Montana Department of Revenue CAMA data; when seeking the definitive description of real property, consult the deed recorded at the Yellowstone County court house.

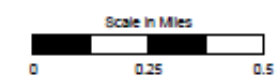
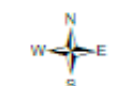


Figure 3. Current Zoning.

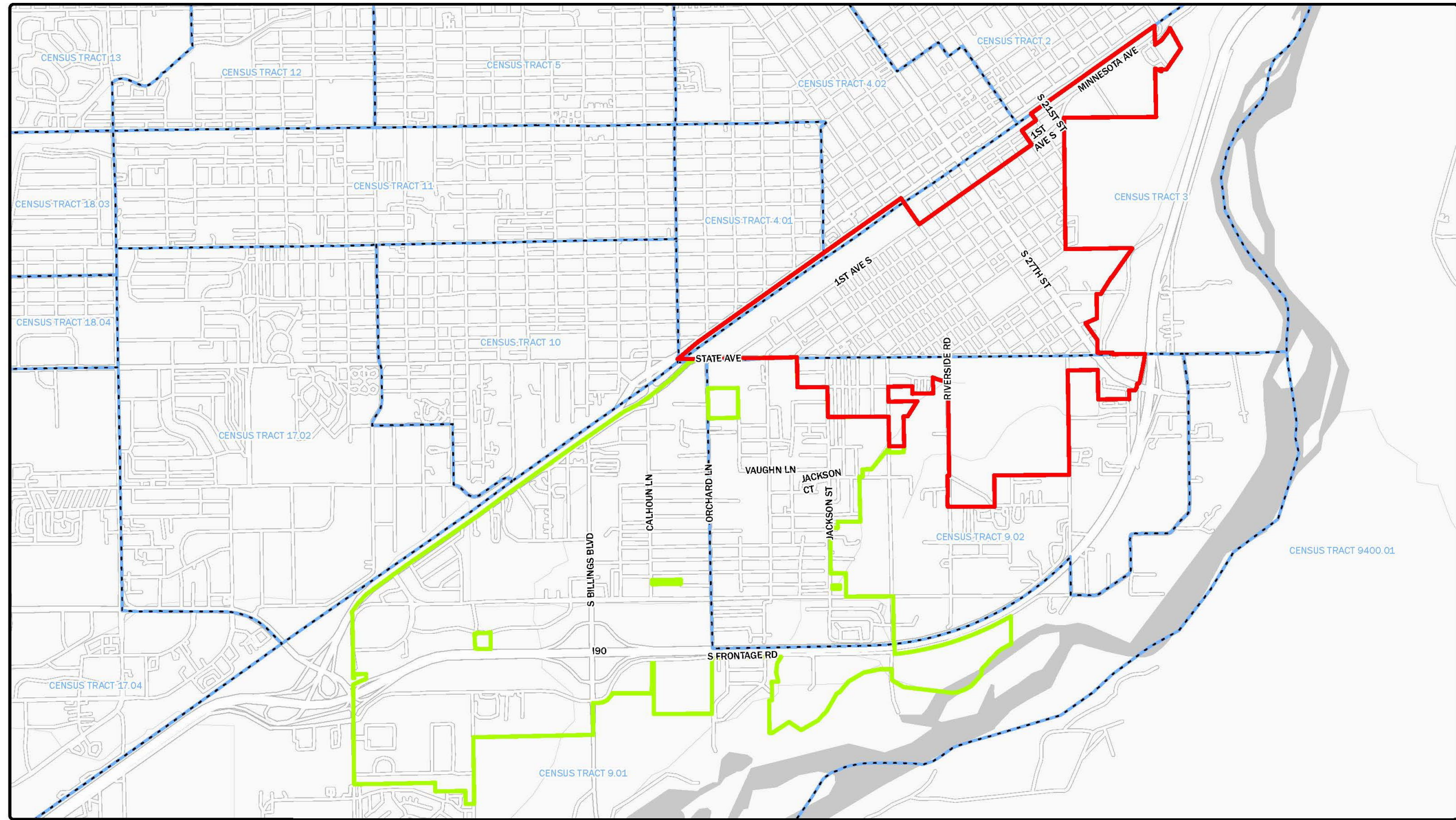
The current SBBURD neighborhood includes an established mixed residential and commercial area. It also includes three elementary schools and one middle school. Some areas include unimproved streets with no sidewalk, curb, or gutter. In addition, a few areas are still not served by municipal water and sewer. While some municipal water and sewer services consist of old, inadequate infrastructure, much of the District has seen utility improvements under the SBBURD, which was one of the reasons for its establishment as conditions contributing to blight. A significant concern raised by residents within the SBBURD has centered around routes for children to get to school, including bus routes that run on unimproved streets and children walking down the street instead of on sidewalks. Many of these infrastructure deficits were identified in the SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan and projects have been completed to remedy the deficiencies.

### ***3.3 Current Demographic Conditions for Billings and the SBBURD***

The City of Billings has a population of 120,874 as of 2023 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a). It has a land area of 44.6 square miles, and the median age of the residents is 38.2, less than the median age in Montana of 40.6. Those aged 65 and older comprise 19.0% of the population, again less than the Montana average of 20.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

The racial makeup of Billings is predominantly White at 78.2%, with significant fractions of Hispanic or Latino (6.3%), American Indian or Alaska Native (4.6%) populations, and 7.0% of the population identify as belonging to two or more races.

The proposed expansion area falls primarily in Census Tract 3, with a smaller fraction falling within Census Tract 9.02, as shown on Figure 4.



**LEGEND**  
 PROPOSED EXPANSION AREA  
 EXISTING URD BOUNDARY  
 CENSUS TRACT BOUNDARYS (2020 CENSUS)



DISPLAYED AS:  
 COORD SYS/ZONE: MONTANA STATE PLANE  
 DATUM: NAD 1983  
 UNITS: INTL FEET  
 SOURCE: ESRI/PIONEER  
 DATE: 9/9/2025  
 SCALE IN FEET  
 0 1,000 2,000



**FIGURE**  
 SOUTH BILLINGS BOULEVARD  
 URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT  
 CENSUS TRACTS

9/9/2025 12:27 PM Path: Z:\Shared\Active Projects\City\Billings\Urban\_Renewal\_District\GIS\URD\_BILLINGS\_PRO\_PROJECT\URD\_Billings.aprx\Billings\_URD\_Census

Figure 4. SBBURD Census Tracts

Table 1 shows the housing data for the census tracts that cover the proposed expansion area, as well as for the City of Billings overall, based on American Community Survey 2023 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 1. Housing Data**

	<b>City of Billings</b>	<b>Census Tract 3</b>	<b>Census Tract 9.02</b>
Total Housing Units	54,758	1,459	2009
Occupied Housing Units	52,878	1,357	1927
Occupancy Rate	97%	93%	96%
Vacancy Rate	3%	7%	4%
Median Gross Rent	\$ 1,033	\$ 852	\$ 911

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a).

In 2023 Billings had a median annual household income of \$67,028, less than the state median of \$70,804. In Billings, 11.2% of the people live in poverty, as compared to a state-wide average of 11.7% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a). Within the proposed expansion area, median incomes are lower. In Census Tract 3, the median household income is \$50,765, 24% less than the median for Billings and 28% less than the state median. In census tract 9.02, the median household income is estimated at \$52,202, 22% and 26% lower, respectively, than the Billings and state median household incomes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023b). Both Census Tracts experience more poverty than the rest of Billings or the state. The Census Bureau estimates that 13.3% of the population in Census Tract 9.02 live below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023c) and 15.6% of the population in Census Tract 3 lives below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023c).

Both of these census tracts are designated as Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), thereby qualifying for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program (Office of Policy Development and Research, n.d.) To be designated as a QCT, a census tract must have at least 50% of households with incomes below 60% of the Area Median Gross Income or have a poverty rate of at least 25%, per Section 42(d)(5)(C) of the Internal Revenue Code (Office of the Law Revision Council, n.d.).

The labor force participation rate in Billings is 65.7% for those aged 16 years and over, above the state-wide average of 60.8%, per the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a). According the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, city-wide the total work force in April 2025 was 99,068, of which 96,487 were employed and 2,581 were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 2.6% (U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2025). As shown in Table 2, the “Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance” sector is the largest, employing 25.7% of the workforce, followed by “Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services,” which employs 12% of the workforce (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

**Table 2. City of Billings Industry for Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Older**

<b>City of Billings Industry for Civilian Employed Population</b>	<b>% of Workforce</b>
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25.7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	11.4%
Retail trade	10.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.9%
Construction	6.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6.0%
Public administration	5.5%
Other services, except public administration	5.4%
Manufacturing	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.

Labor participation is slightly lower in the area of the proposed expansion based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Census Tract 3 has a labor force participation rate of 56.6% for those aged 16 years and older. In Census Tract 9.02, the rate is 64.7% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a).

### **3.4 The Montana Urban Renewal Law**

The expansion of an URD must be undertaken in accordance with §7-15-4201, et Seq., MCA (Montana State Legislature, 2023a) and enables local government to use the TIF provision to help fund its efforts. Tax Increment Financing is a locally driven funding mechanism that allows cities to direct property tax increments that accrue from increases in taxable value within a specified URD to a special fund that can be used to finance economic development and infrastructure projects within that district.

Taxpayers located within a district where TIF is in effect pay the same amount of property tax as they would if the property were located outside the district. Tax Increment Financing only affects the way that taxes, once collected, are distributed. Taxes that are derived from base-year taxable values continue to be distributed to the various taxing jurisdictions, including local and state government entities and school districts. Taxes derived from the incremental increase in taxable value are placed in a special fund for purposes set forth in an urban renewal plan (see Figure 5 below). The TIF provision for the SBBURD is due to sunset in 2047. Funds may be used for a variety of purposes as detailed in §7-15-4288, MCA (Montana State Legislature, 2023c) and include improvements to vehicular and pedestrian transportation infrastructure, land acquisition, streetscapes, parks and landscaping, water and sewer lines, and connecting to infrastructure outside the district.

### How a Tax Increment Finance Provision (TIF) Works

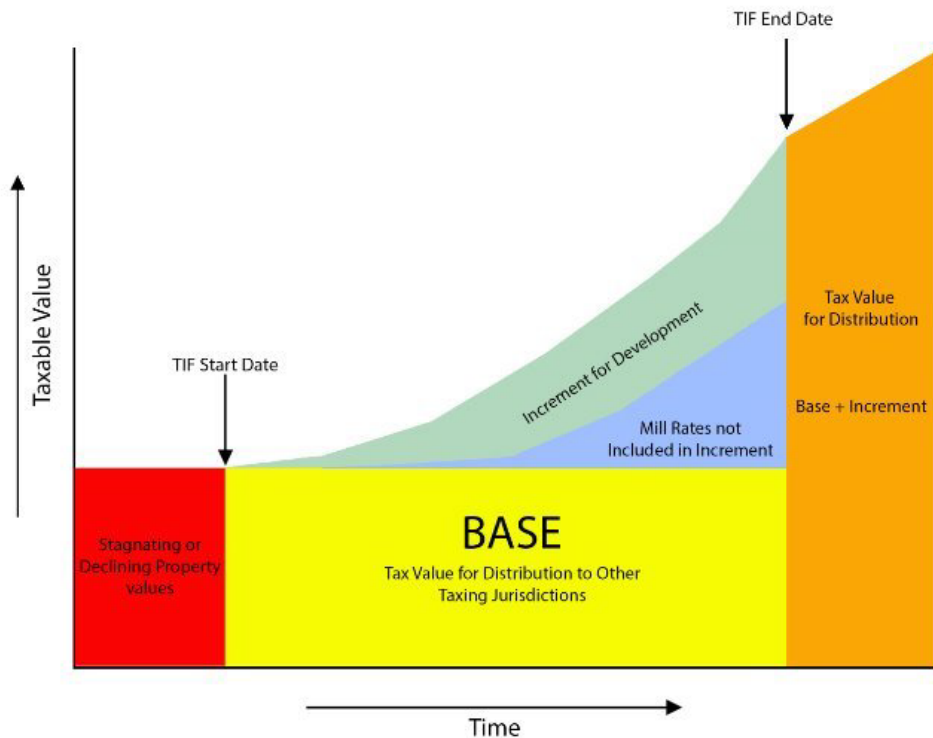


Figure 5. Tax Increment Financing Schematic

As stated in § 7-15-4209, MCA (Montana State Legislature, 2023d), a local government “may formulate a workable program for using appropriate private and public resources:

- (a) to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blighted areas;
- (b) to encourage needed urban rehabilitation;
- (c) to provide for the redevelopment of such areas; or
- (d) to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible municipal activities as may be suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such workable program.”

While funds are typically used for public infrastructure investments, there are instances where local governments have used TIF funds to partner with private property owners to make improvements to historic buildings, to address life-safety issues, and to enhance landscaping. The statutes also provide for the establishment of a TIF revolving loan program that can support private investment in the district. Loan funds can continue to “revolve” in perpetuity; however, eligible projects must be undertaken in accordance with and in the area encompassed by an urban renewal (URD) plan for the district.

This review of conditions contributing to blight constitutes the first step in the process to create the URD. This document will determine if the proposed boundary meets the statutory requirements for an URD, which would allow the City to incorporate the area into the SBBURD and undertake revitalization programs and activities. This is followed by the adoption of a Resolution of Necessity and the update of the urban renewal plan with a TIF provision to include the proposed area. The urban renewal plan acts as a guide for revitalization activities and the ability to address critical issues within the district.

## **4 Establishing Blight**

### ***4.1 Resolution of Necessity***

As previously discussed, the City council must first adopt a resolution of necessity required per §7-15-4210, MCA (Montana State Legislature, 2025a), finding that the area being proposed displays at least three conditions as described in §7-15-4206, MCA (Montana State Legislature, 2025b). This action enables the preparation of an urban renewal plan and provides the rationale for using public funds in redevelopment activities.

### ***4.2 Defining Blight***

Montana law defines specific conditions regarding blight in §7-15-4206, MCA (Montana State Legislature, 2025b). A “blighted area” means an area that is determined to be detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare due to the presence of at least three of the following characteristics or conditions:

- (a) An advanced state of disrepair or neglect of necessary repairs to the primary structural components of buildings or improvements in such a combination that a documented building condition analysis determines that major repair is required, or the defects are so serious and so extensive that the buildings must be removed.
- (b) Structures that have become ill-suited for their original use.
- (c) Deterioration of building structure components or infrastructure, such as roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.
- (d) Buildings or structures that endanger the life, limb, health, property, or safety of the general public or their occupants.
- (e) Inadequate utilities and infrastructure, such as storm sewers and storm drainage, sanitary sewers, water lines, power, roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and communication services, that are shown to be lacking, of insufficient capacity to serve the uses in the area, deteriorated, antiquated, obsolete, or in disrepair.
- (f) Real property in the area that has incurred or may incur future planned Montana Department of Environmental Quality or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency remediation costs.

- (g) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of a majority of the land and improvements.
- (h) Excessive vacancies occurring in buildings that are unoccupied and underutilized and that represent an adverse influence on the area because of the frequency, extent, or duration of the vacancies.

### **4.3 Conditions Identified in the Area that Contribute to Blight**

Many instances of conditions contributing to blight are apparent in the proposed expansion area. These include deteriorating or inadequate infrastructure, disrepair of buildings and buildings ill-suited for their original use, and environmental contamination. Parks and recreation infrastructure is deteriorating in places and in need of repairs or upgrades. Neighborhoods, in some cases, suffer from lack of connectivity, and access for disabled people is not always adequate, which substantially limits access and reduces overall safety. Specific instances of conditions contributing to blight, as defined in §7-15-4206, MCA (2) (Montana State Legislature, 2025b), are described below.

#### **§7-15-4206, MCA (2)(b): Structures that have become ill-suited for their original use**

Structures that have become ill-suited for their original use can significantly deter economic vitality by limiting their functionality and appeal to potential investors, businesses, and residents. Such structures often fail to meet modern requirements, creating an environment of neglect and underutilization. This contributes to blight by reinforcing perceptions of decline, reducing property values, and discouraging economic activities in the affected area.

There are examples of this in the proposed expansion area, including warehouses and other buildings that have been repurposed as commercial businesses, or structures designed for one type of commercial business but repurposed for a different use, which often leads to underutilization of the structure.



The Garfield School has been repurposed for alternative use, which may not be the most efficient use of the structure without extensive remodeling and retrofitting.



The South Park Pool building does not include secondary containment for chemical storage and does not function efficiently, which is a safety concern.

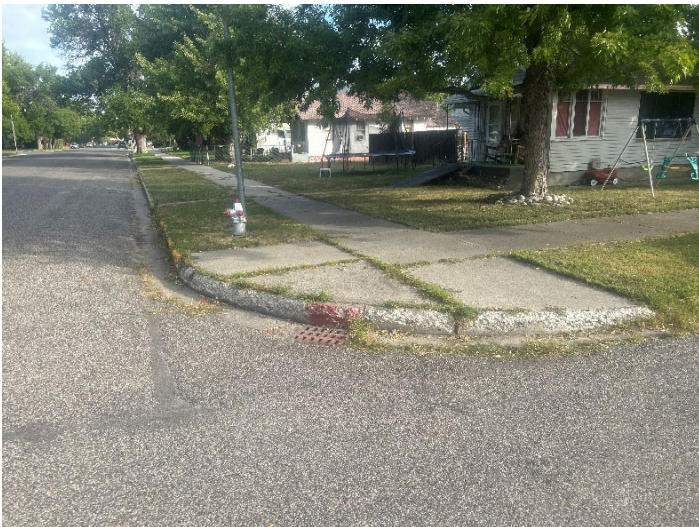
**§7-15-4206, MCA (2)(c): Deterioration of building structure components or infrastructure, such as roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks**

Deterioration of building structure components or infrastructure refers to the visible and functional decline of essential physical elements such as walls, roofs, and foundations, as well as public infrastructure like roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. This degradation can result from age, neglect, weather exposure, or lack of maintenance, and it often leads to safety hazards, reduced accessibility, and a negative visual impact on the surrounding area. Over time, such deterioration can contribute to broader community decline by discouraging investment and diminishing the overall quality of life in the neighborhood.

Examples of this can be seen throughout the district and include, but are not limited to, the following:



Deteriorated sidewalk near the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and South 25<sup>th</sup> Street.



Deteriorated curb and gutter and sidewalk at intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and South 36<sup>th</sup> Street.



Deteriorated alleyway near the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and South 28<sup>th</sup> Street.



Roof of ancillary building in South Park is in disrepair and in need of replacement.





The South Park Pool and associated infrastructure is in an advanced state of disrepair.



Much of the curbing around South Park is in deteriorated condition.



Damaged, unsafe sidewalks in South Park.



Deteriorated curb and gutter at Highland Park.



Deteriorated curb and gutter near the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and South 31<sup>st</sup> Street.

**§7-15-4206, MCA (2)(d): Buildings or structures that endanger the life, limb, health, property, or safety of the general public or their occupants**

Buildings or structures that pose a danger to life, limb, health, property, or public safety are considered hazardous and can significantly impact both their occupants and the surrounding community. These dangers may arise from structural instability, fire hazards, exposure to harmful materials, or other unsafe conditions that make the building or property unsafe to the public. When such risks are present, they not only threaten the well-being of individuals but can also lead to broader public safety concerns, including emergency response burdens and neighborhood decline. Addressing these issues promptly is essential to protect residents and maintain a safe, livable environment.

Examples of this can be seen in the district, including the following.



The City of Billings, via legal action, is trying to compel significant improvement or demolition of The Colonial Apartments on South 27<sup>th</sup> Street due to conditions endangering residents and neighboring properties, including structural damage, electrical and plumbing hazards, peeling paint, broken windows and doors..

**§7-15-4206, MCA (2)(e): Inadequate utilities and infrastructure, such as storm sewers and storm drainage, sanitary sewers, water lines, power, roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and communication services, that are shown to be lacking, of insufficient capacity to serve the uses in the area, deteriorated, antiquated, obsolete, or in disrepair**

Inadequate utilities and infrastructure refer to essential systems—such as storm and sanitary sewers, water lines, power, roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and communication services that are either missing, outdated, deteriorated, or insufficient to meet the needs of the area. When these systems lack capacity or fall into disrepair, they hinder daily operations, reduce quality of life, and can pose safety and environmental risks to the community.

The Billings Engineering Department has a lengthy list of infrastructure that is lacking and in need of improvement. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Replace the contaminated storm main in State Avenue from South 35<sup>th</sup> Street to South 27<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Pipe the existing Kratz Drain between the Mitchell and Jackson Court Apartments.
- Replace the water mains in the President streets south of State Avenue: Buchanan, Roosevelt, Monroe, Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Washington.
- Install a sidewalk or trail on Sugar Avenue from State Avenue to Riverside Drive, located south of Interstate 90 to improve safety for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles.
- Add streetlights in areas without any or inadequate lighting.

Other examples of infrastructure requiring improvements throughout the district include, but are not limited to, the following examples.



There are over 6,700 feet of residential streets in the proposed expansion area that are gravel and do not meet the City's standards for residential streets, like this example from Newman Lane. This is after significant street improvements have already been made in the area.



Washington Street between State Avenue and King Avenue East does not have proper drainage controls, curb and gutter, or sidewalks. There are many other similar streets within the area that need infrastructure upgrades, including portions of Riverside Road and Jackson Street.



Properties within the SBBURD either have inadequate drainage controls, such as this example lacking curb and gutter, and controlled parking with an approach onto an arterial street, which can cause confusion and safety concerns. This picture is from Washington Street just south of State Avenue.



The sidewalk approaches at this intersection of State Avenue and South 35<sup>th</sup> Street are not fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



Evidence of improper drainage on South 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, leading to asphalt damage, and not fully compliant crossings with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



Improper drainage and missing curb, gutter or sidewalk on Fifth Avenue South near 27<sup>th</sup> Street, right at the entrance to Downtown Billings.



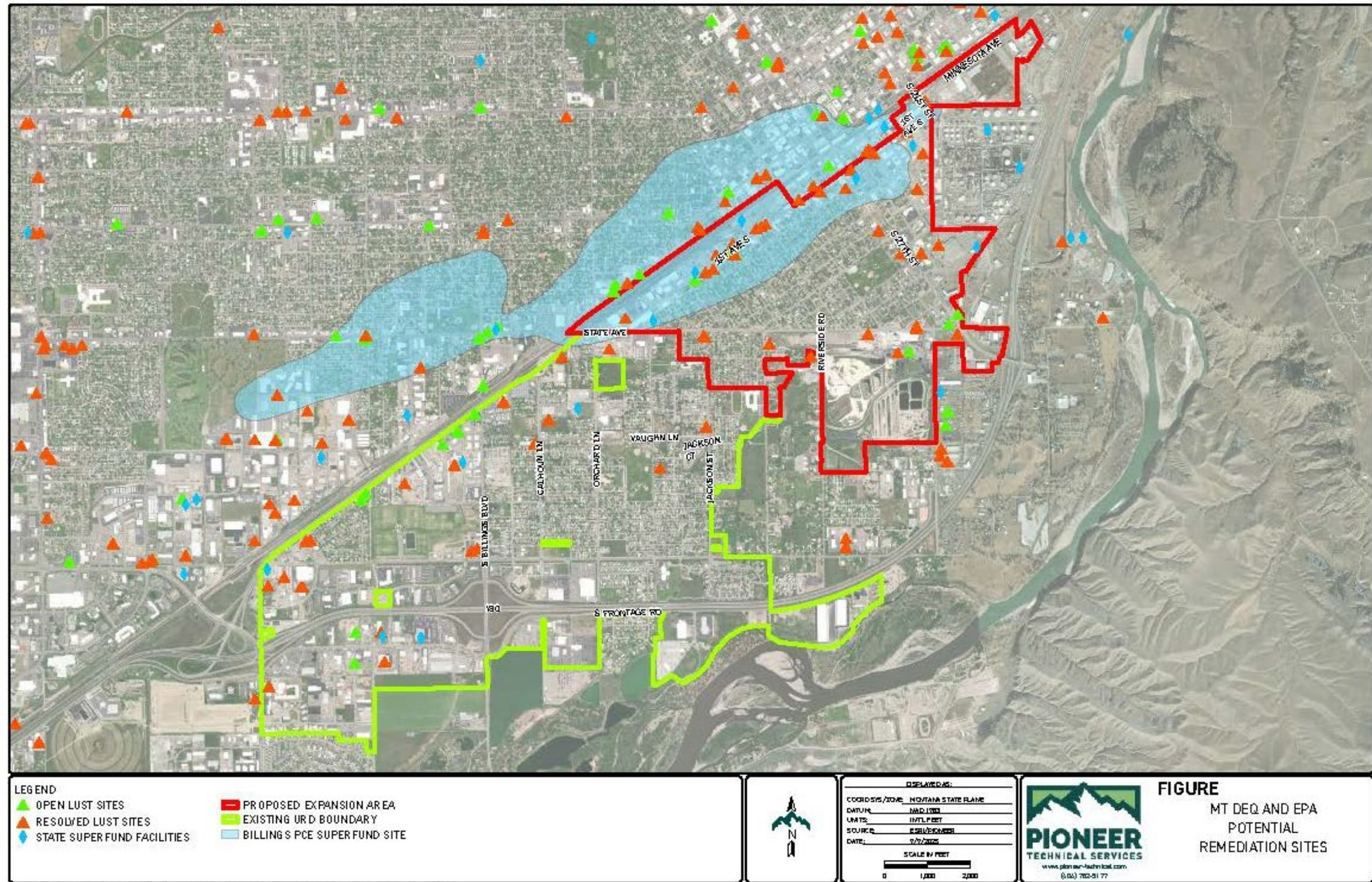
Damaged electrical infrastructure in South Park.

**§7-15-4206, MCA (2)(f): Real property in the area that has incurred or may incur future planned Montana Department of Environmental Quality or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency remediation costs**

Properties affected by contamination, whether due to hazardous waste, chemical spills, or other environmental pollutants, face significant barriers to development. Developers may be discouraged by the high costs of remediation required to meet environmental safety standards, as well as the potential legal liabilities and prolonged timelines associated with cleanup efforts. Contaminated sites often remain undeveloped for extended periods, fostering neglect and disrepair. This not only diminishes the aesthetic and functional value of the area but also discourages investment and economic activity, perpetuating a cycle of blight that affects the broader community. Such properties can become eyesores and even health hazards, further exacerbating their adverse impact on neighborhood vitality and public welfare.

Within the proposed expansion area, there are numerous sites that have or may incur environmental remediation costs, as shown on Figure 6. The Billings PCE Superfund site overlies a portion of the area. There are also some state Comprehensive Environmental Cleanup and

Responsibility Act (CECRA) Superfund sites within the boundary, and some active and remediated leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites.



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Figure 6. Environmental Remediation Sites

**§7-15-4206, MCA (2)(h): Excessive vacancies occurring in buildings that are unoccupied and underutilized and that represent an adverse influence on the area because of the frequency, extent, or duration of the vacancies**

Conditions relating to excessive vacancies refer to situations where buildings remain unoccupied or underutilized for extended periods, either frequently or across large areas. These vacancies can negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood by creating a sense of neglect, reducing property values, and discouraging investment or development. When such buildings are left empty for too long or in significant numbers, they can become a visible sign of economic decline and contribute to broader social and environmental challenges in the area.

Examples of this in the district include, but are not limited to, those below:



Partially vacant commercial space on State Avenue.



Vacant, underutilized and poorly maintained property on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South near South 35<sup>th</sup> Street. The top photograph is from 2021, and the bottom photograph is from 2025, demonstrating further dilapidation and lack of maintenance.



Vacant, underutilized property on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South with deteriorating infrastructure and no maintenance.

## 5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings presented in this review clearly demonstrate that the proposed area being considered for expansion of the SBBURD meets the statutory criteria for designation as an URD. To be included in an URD, the area must display at least three conditions contributing to blight as described in §7-15-4206, MCA. This area clearly meets six of the conditions included in the MCA, and likely more.

The presence of deteriorating infrastructure, unsafe structures, and excessive vacancies collectively contribute to conditions of blight that hinder the area’s economic vitality and public welfare. Expanding the SBBURD will provide the City with the necessary tools to address these challenges through strategic reinvestment, infrastructure improvements, and community revitalization efforts. This designation marks a critical step toward realizing the goals outlined in the Growth Policy (City of Billings, 2016) and fostering a more vibrant, safe, and economically resilient neighborhood.

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**Appendix A**  
**SBBURD Expansion Legal Description**

**SBBURD PROPOSED EXPANSION AREA LEGAL DESCRIPTION (VERSION 2)**

Created 9.9.2025 by S. Gilbert

**DESCRIPTION**

A tract of land as described as follows: Commencing at the SE corner of the SW ¼ of Section 4 of Township 1S, Range 26E, thence North 19.46 Feet, thence S 89° W a distance of 653.81 Feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

Thence S 89° 16' 30.39" W a distance of 430.222 Feet  
Thence N 50° 19' 31.53" E a distance of 169.088 Feet  
Thence N 50° 19' 32.21" E a distance of 57.113 Feet  
Thence N 50° 19' 32.91" E a distance of 25.116 Feet  
Thence N 50° 19' 31.77" E a distance of 37.848 Feet  
Thence N 48° 21' 43.22" E a distance of 20.329 Feet  
Thence N 48° 20' 20.92" E a distance of 32.688 Feet  
Thence N 48° 20' 22.73" E a distance of 19.095 Feet  
Thence N 48° 20' 22.23" E a distance of 4.691 Feet  
Thence N 50° 11' 48.55" E a distance of 2.013 Feet  
Thence N 50° 11' 45.1" E a distance of 152.909 Feet  
Thence N 50° 11' 45.04" E a distance of 78.186 Feet  
Thence N 54° 39' 25.74" E a distance of 128.391 Feet  
Thence N 54° 39' 23.94" E a distance of 489.371 Feet  
Thence N 54° 39' 23.25" E a distance of 339.631 Feet  
Thence N 54° 39' 25.85" E a distance of 725.489 Feet  
Thence N 54° 39' 25.95" E a distance of 685.485 Feet  
Thence N 54° 39' 29.96" E a distance of 760.585 Feet  
Thence N 54° 38' 36.86" E a distance of 308.22 Feet  
Thence N 54° 43' 48.42" E a distance of 253.72 Feet  
Thence N 54° 43' 48.08" E a distance of 190.311 Feet  
Thence N 54° 47' 18.81" E a distance of 206.073 Feet  
Thence N 54° 54' 6.24" E a distance of 12.552 Feet  
Thence N 54° 54' 5.36" E a distance of 587.473 Feet  
Thence N 54° 54' 6.09" E a distance of 654.278 Feet  
Thence N 54° 54' 5.42" E a distance of 117.704 Feet  
Thence S 35° 6' 40.01" E a distance of 151.186 Feet  
Thence S 35° 1' 53.83" E a distance of 546.505 Feet  
Thence N 54° 53' 14.91" E a distance of 323.612 Feet  
Thence N 54° 23' 52.07" E a distance of 465.296 Feet  
Thence N 54° 27' 34.96" E a distance of 284.505 Feet  
Thence N 54° 43' 0.71" E a distance of 299.174 Feet  
Thence N 54° 38' 33.15" E a distance of 110.376 Feet  
Thence N 55° 28' 48.21" E a distance of 110.995 Feet  
Thence N 55° 38' 36.14" E a distance of 43.966 Feet  
Thence N 54° 28' 39.14" E a distance of 48.394 Feet

Thence N 55° 15' 21.18" E a distance of 74.811 Feet  
Thence N 55° 28' 59.96" E a distance of 68.858 Feet  
Thence N 54° 48' 38.79" E a distance of 73.624 Feet  
Thence N 54° 46' 32.28" E a distance of 79.476 Feet  
Thence N 54° 34' 34.17" E a distance of 267.078 Feet  
Thence N 54° 41' 51.07" E a distance of 677.634 Feet  
Thence N 54° 37' 2.18" E a distance of 110.663 Feet  
Thence N 44° 0' 11.62" W a distance of 41.621 Feet  
Thence N 34° 37' 24.52" W a distance of 337.945 Feet  
Thence N 54° 32' 35.67" E a distance of 385.465 Feet  
Thence N 37° 2' 46.44" W a distance of 185.958 Feet  
Thence N 54° 37' 27.97" E a distance of 1737.218 Feet  
Thence N 54° 37' 53.6" E a distance of 21.073 Feet  
Thence N 54° 37' 27.84" E a distance of 908.045 Feet  
Thence N 54° 42' 42.89" E a distance of 670.642 Feet  
Thence S 0° 50' 3.18" E a distance of 417.134 Feet  
Thence N 55° 25' 11.43" E a distance of 168.623 Feet  
Thence N 37° 55' 15.0" E a distance of 250.157 Feet  
Thence N 26° 38' 13.96" E a distance of 82.484 Feet  
Thence S 28° 47' 56.35" E a distance of 507.998 Feet  
Thence S 34° 40' 19.79" W a distance of 570.149 Feet  
Thence N 84° 35' 15.63" W a distance of 133.286 Feet  
Thence S 25° 11' 40.53" E a distance of 54.679 Feet  
Thence N 64° 54' 21.59" W a distance of 150.674 Feet  
Thence S 1° 8' 38.46" E a distance of 1067.245 Feet  
Thence S 89° 31' 32.1" W a distance of 2028.008 Feet  
Thence S 0° 41' 59.61" E a distance of 2893.302 Feet  
Thence N 88° 57' 40.13" E a distance of 1447.412 Feet  
Thence S 57° 39' 19.83" E a distance of 23.85 Feet  
Thence S 35° 22' 9.98" W a distance of 786.803 Feet  
Thence N 61° 52' 59.86" W a distance of 10.003 Feet  
Thence S 31° 59' 49.27" W a distance of 426.009 Feet  
Thence S 89° 5' 38.6" W a distance of 95.244 Feet  
Thence S 0° 59' 5.43" E a distance of 533.055 Feet  
Thence S 66° 26' 46.56" W a distance of 276.158 Feet  
Thence S 35° 23' 54.6" E a distance of 449.701 Feet  
Thence S 0° 57' 18.95" E a distance of 284.029 Feet  
Thence N 89° 37' 54.52" E a distance of 331.656 Feet  
Thence S 0° 0' 0.0" W a distance of 33.048 Feet  
Thence N 89° 23' 58.41" E a distance of 677.333 Feet  
Thence S 89° 20' 18.44" E a distance of 32.763 Feet  
Thence S 6° 8' 25.23" W a distance of 44.426 Feet  
Thence S 7° 17' 58.72" W a distance of 58.241 Feet  
Thence S 8° 50' 0.96" W a distance of 49.739 Feet

Thence S 10° 54' 29.39" W a distance of 108.147 Feet  
Thence S 11° 19' 54.5" W a distance of 79.885 Feet  
Thence S 11° 38' 40.85" W a distance of 117.421 Feet  
Thence S 11° 6' 14.23" W a distance of 147.711 Feet  
Thence S 20° 50' 11.84" W a distance of 43.52 Feet  
Thence S 40° 31' 11.82" W a distance of 14.888 Feet  
Thence S 57° 46' 53.1" W a distance of 9.411 Feet  
Thence S 69° 18' 47.1" W a distance of 7.969 Feet  
Thence S 78° 59' 33.75" W a distance of 9.428 Feet  
Thence N 89° 37' 34.63" W a distance of 10.312 Feet  
Thence S 8° 0' 34.95" W a distance of 82.517 Feet  
Thence S 31° 32' 11.0" W a distance of 75.035 Feet  
Thence S 89° 24' 24.72" W a distance of 130.005 Feet  
Thence S 0° 46' 46.3" E a distance of 192.15 Feet  
Thence N 85° 26' 19.67" W a distance of 38.426 Feet  
Thence S 89° 21' 20.12" W a distance of 641.241 Feet  
Thence N 0° 54' 2.09" W a distance of 646.026 Feet  
Thence S 89° 24' 6.82" W a distance of 659.486 Feet  
Thence S 0° 47' 2.95" E a distance of 2299.337 Feet  
Thence S 89° 32' 39.14" W a distance of 1648.248 Feet  
Thence S 0° 42' 53.91" E a distance of 686.649 Feet  
Thence S 89° 50' 34.09" W a distance of 1028.642 Feet  
Thence N 0° 51' 53.15" E a distance of 21.738 Feet  
Thence S 89° 17' 59.9" W a distance of 9.963 Feet  
Thence N 1° 5' 41.08" W a distance of 207.902 Feet  
Thence N 89° 25' 35.66" E a distance of 9.999 Feet  
Thence N 0° 58' 8.71" W a distance of 451.712 Feet  
Thence N 89° 25' 50.48" E a distance of 37.048 Feet  
Thence N 0° 39' 11.62" W a distance of 2070.194 Feet  
Thence N 80° 6' 3.27" W a distance of 153.298 Feet  
Thence N 71° 44' 49.26" W a distance of 99.996 Feet  
Thence N 68° 45' 0.77" W a distance of 99.99 Feet  
Thence S 1° 4' 30.23" E a distance of 186.003 Feet  
Thence N 89° 0' 21.28" E a distance of 7.375 Feet  
Thence S 1° 6' 32.89" E a distance of 165.001 Feet  
Thence S 89° 0' 5.05" W a distance of 460.522 Feet  
Thence N 1° 10' 12.73" W a distance of 165.003 Feet  
Thence S 88° 59' 59.41" W a distance of 527.991 Feet  
Thence S 1° 7' 12.78" E a distance of 329.927 Feet  
Thence N 89° 0' 28.17" E a distance of 631.791 Feet  
Thence S 32° 14' 23.97" W a distance of 394.341 Feet  
Thence S 88° 59' 32.0" W a distance of 90.284 Feet  
Thence S 1° 1' 0.48" E a distance of 657.516 Feet  
Thence S 89° 26' 59.89" W a distance of 300.002 Feet

Thence N 86° 40' 24.32" W a distance of 30.085 Feet  
Thence N 1° 1' 0.34" W a distance of 653.141 Feet  
Thence S 89° 41' 43.4" W a distance of 1333.209 Feet  
Thence N 1° 9' 50.67" W a distance of 657.024 Feet  
Thence S 89° 56' 35.09" W a distance of 658.512 Feet  
Thence N 0° 54' 23.58" W a distance of 659.483 Feet  
Thence S 87° 47' 22.64" W a distance of 118.606 Feet  
Thence S 87° 47' 23.53" W a distance of 99.665 Feet  
Thence S 89° 10' 21.9" W a distance of 1980.38 Feet  
Thence S 89° 16' 30.39" W a distance of 430.222 Feet  
Thence N 50° 19' 31.53" E a distance of 169.088 Feet  
Thence N 50° 19' 32.21" E a distance of 57.113 Feet  
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Thence N 48° 21' 43.22" E a distance of 20.329 Feet  
Thence N 48° 20' 20.92" E a distance of 32.688 Feet  
Thence N 48° 20' 22.73" E a distance of 19.095 Feet  
Thence N 48° 20' 22.23" E a distance of 4.691 Feet  
Thence N 50° 11' 48.55" E a distance of 2.013 Feet  
Thence N 50° 11' 45.1" E a distance of 152.909 Feet  
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Thence N 54° 38' 36.86" E a distance of 308.22 Feet  
Thence N 54° 43' 48.42" E a distance of 253.72 Feet  
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Thence N 54° 43' 0.71" E a distance of 299.174 Feet  
Thence N 54° 38' 33.15" E a distance of 110.376 Feet  
Thence N 55° 28' 48.21" E a distance of 110.995 Feet  
Thence N 55° 38' 36.14" E a distance of 43.966 Feet

Thence N 54° 28' 39.14" E a distance of 48.394 Feet  
Thence N 55° 15' 21.18" E a distance of 74.811 Feet  
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Thence N 37° 2' 46.44" W a distance of 185.958 Feet  
Thence N 54° 37' 27.97" E a distance of 1737.218 Feet  
Thence N 54° 37' 53.6" E a distance of 21.073 Feet  
Thence N 54° 37' 27.84" E a distance of 908.045 Feet  
Thence N 54° 42' 42.89" E a distance of 670.642 Feet  
Thence S 0° 50' 3.18" E a distance of 417.134 Feet  
Thence N 55° 25' 11.43" E a distance of 168.623 Feet  
Thence N 37° 55' 15.0" E a distance of 250.157 Feet  
Thence N 26° 38' 13.96" E a distance of 82.484 Feet to the POINT OF  
BEGINNING for a total area of 933.13 US survey acres.



**2016 CITY OF BILLINGS  
GROWTH POLICY**  
AUGUST, 2016



Prepared for the Community by:  
City-County Planning Division  
2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N. 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Billings, MT 59101



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**Appendix A – Public Involvement**

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Reports**

Since the last update to the City and County Growth Policy in 2008, the City of Billings has added more than 6,000 people and has expanded by 1.5 square miles. The change in population and land area places a greater demand on public services and infrastructure. As a reflection of these increases, the City budget also increased. In Fiscal Year 2010, the General Fund revenues were \$29,561,687 and in Fiscal Year 2016 General Fund revenues were \$33,454,515; an increase of \$3.9 million. Growth alone has public costs associated with it but the needs and preferences of the public may also increase costs as values and priorities change.

One of the main purposes of this Growth Policy is to determine current public values and priorities. A second purpose is to compare patterns of growth to examine if there are more cost effective ways to develop. The approach to this Growth Policy and the methods used were tailored to address the two main purposes.

Through an extensive public comment process and carefully modeled growth scenario planning, a vision for Billings in the next 20 years emerged. This vision is embodied in the Growth Policy Statement:

**In the next 20 years, Billings will manage its growth by encouraging development within and adjacent to the existing City limits, but preference will be given to areas where City infrastructure exists or can be extended within a fiscally constrained budget and with consideration given to increased tax revenue from development. The City will prosper with strong neighborhoods with their own unique character that are clean, safe, and provide a choice of housing and transportation options.**

This statement, along with the Growth Guidelines, provides the City Council and other decision makers with an insight into public values and priorities. ***The Guidelines are not regulatory, but meant to be considered when Council acts on land use and infrastructure decisions.*** This Growth Policy will be used consistently as land use applications are brought before Council for action.

Billings has emerged as a regionally important small City that provides a high quality of life, good business and employment opportunities, and excellent public services and amenities. The improvements to the City made over the past few decades have not been by accident. The City has adopted and implemented several plans related to parks, transportation, utilities, and land use that have provided the framework for progress. This Growth Policy is an important element in that framework and will help ensure Billings will remain a great City, now and beyond!



The planning process and methodologies used for the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy were conceived and designed by Candi Millar, Planning and Community Services Department Director. She was ably assisted by the **Planning Division staff**:

- Wyeth Friday, **Planning Division Manager**
- Nicole Cromwell, **Zoning Coordinator; Supervisor, Code Enforcement Division**
- Dave Green, **Planner II**
- Scott Walker, **Transportation Planning Coordinator**
- Lora Mattox, **Transportation Planner**
- Karen Husman, **Planner I**
- Jeffery Butts, **Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator**
- Jeannette Vieg, **Planning Assistant**
- Tammy Deines, **Planning Clerk**
- Robbin Bartley, **Administrative Support I**

**Geodata Services, Inc.** of Missoula, Montana was invaluable for its help with the Scenario Planning piece, especially Ken Wall and Kyle Balke.

Support from other City Departments was most appreciated, including:

- Kevin Moore, **IT – GIS Specialist** and Ron Frisbie, **IT- GIS Coordinator**
- Barb McCrae, **IT – Application Development Manager**
- All the Department Directors that reviewed parts of the document
- Christina Volek, **City Administrator**

A substantial effort was given by the members of the Growth Policy Steering Committee who attended six meetings and provided great insight into public values and priorities:

- Anya Fiechtl, **High Plains Architects**
- Wyeth Friday, **Planning Division Manager**
- Keith Hart, **Keller Williams Realty**
- Melissa Henderson, **RiverStone Health**
- John How, **Kadmas, Lee & Jackson**
- Dianne Lehm, **Big Sky Economic Development**
- Bruce MacIntyre, **Billings Chamber of Commerce**
- Scott Reiter, **School District 2**
- Michael Sanderson, **Sanderson Stewart**
- Amber Sunsted, **Billings Association of Realtors**
- Connie Wardell, **League of Women Voters**

Most importantly, the citizens of Billings who provided comments and attended the public meetings need to be recognized. Thanks to everyone for the support and direction given during this process.



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# Chapter 1 – The Planning Process



Community planning is a continuous process. Community values change, conditions change, and policies change requiring a community plan to be re-evaluated periodically. Montana law recommends re-examining a growth policy every five years and determining, based on a list of conditions “what will lead to a revision of the growth policy”, MCA 76-1-601 (3)(f)(ii). This policy, as the policy it replaces, recommends that the growth policy be revised when the following occurs:

- Major changes in existing conditions or projected trends
- Modifications in the legal requirements a Growth Policy must meet
- Significant changes in community direction or goals
- Citizens desire for changes to the Growth Policy

Since the 2008 City/County Growth Policy was adopted a lot has changed in Billings as the following comparison of metrics between 2010 and 2014 demonstrates:

**TABLE 1.1. COMPARISON OF GROWTH METRICS 2010 AND 2014**

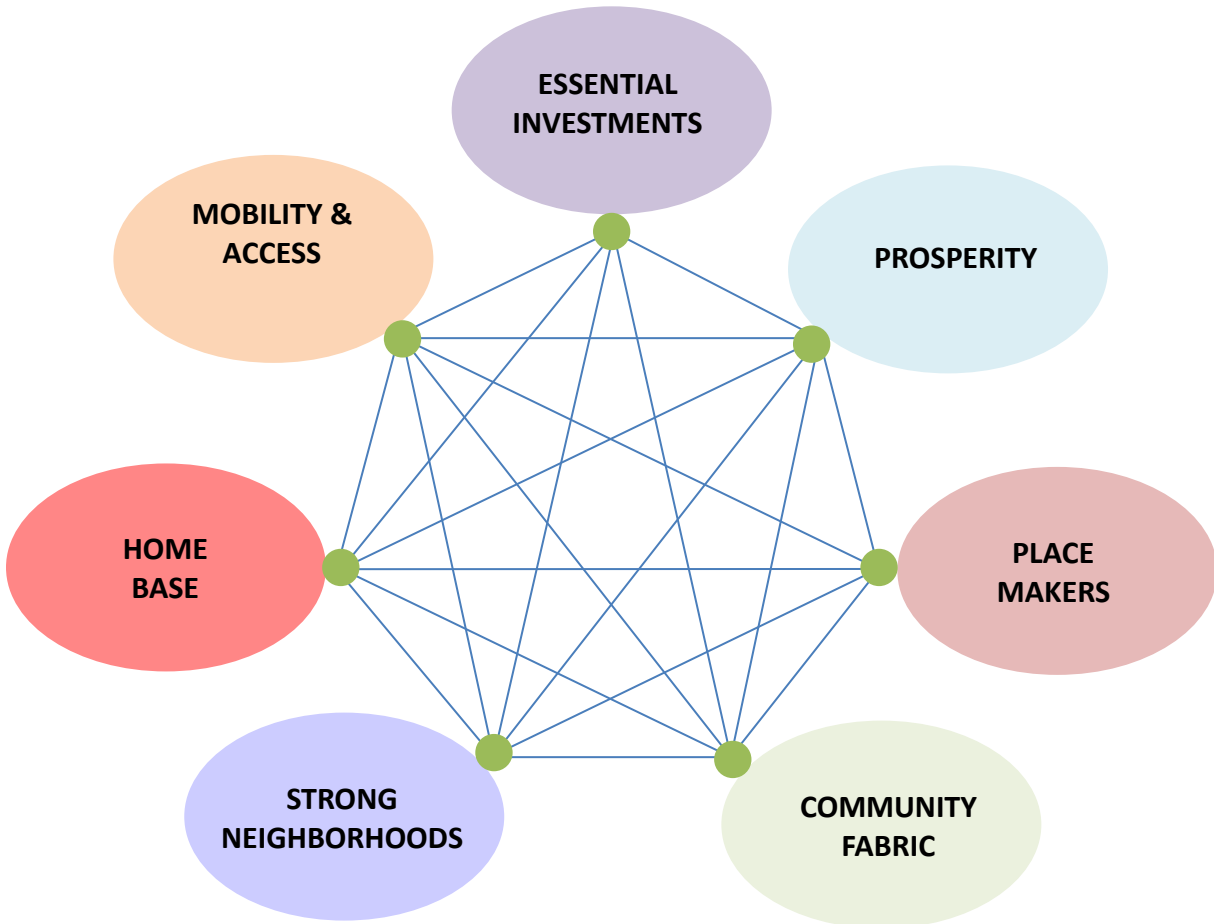
	2010	2014
<b>Population</b>	<b>104,170</b>	<b>106,979</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>37.1</b>
<b>Housing Units</b>	<b>46,317</b>	<b>46,674</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$46,433</b>	<b>\$49,265</b>
<b>City Area</b>	<b>41.9 sq. mi</b>	<b>42.9 sq. mi</b>
<b>Street Miles</b>	<b>532.7</b>	<b>565.7</b>

Updating the 2008 City of Billings/Yellowstone County Growth Policy was identified as a priority in the 2014 City Council Strategic Plan. The City Council recognized at that time that a policy was needed to achieve its goal of “comprehensive, cost-effective, and orderly growth.” Staff was directed to “prepare a comprehensive growth policy focused on existing service gaps in the City growth areas.” To achieve this directive, two questions needed to be answered:



associations. For instance the value of outdoor spaces under the Community Fabric goal is also an essential value in Strong Neighborhoods and Place Makers.

FIG. 1.1. COMMUNITY GOALS AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIP



The public comments were also the basis for three other important elements of this Policy: objectives, toolboxes, and performance measurements. Goal objectives are targeted outcomes that provide definition to what the goal can achieve or how the goal can be achieved. Toolboxes suggest ways, means, and methodologies to accomplish the goal, and performance measurements are recommended metrics for determining if the goal is being achieved.

Referring back to the Council’s Strategic Plan goal of “comprehensive, cost-effective, orderly growth”, the planning process also evaluated seven different growth scenarios to estimate the relative cost and revenue of various growth patterns in three separate growth areas: North (around the proposed Inner

Belt Loop), West (west of Shiloh Road) and Infill (existing parcels within the City limits and adjacent properties). The scenarios were developed to accommodate approximately 50,000 more residents. The costs to provide selected services and facilities the public preferred were calculated for high, low, and mixed residential density scenarios in the North and West growth areas. The residential density used for the infill scenario was based on existing zoning. The revenue estimates were developed by extrapolating the average tax and assessment revenue from existing residential housing developments of comparable densities.

The scenario planning results were looked at three ways:

1. Total cost of selected services and facilities and total revenue from housing unit per scenario
2. Total anticipated annual revenue/total cost of selected services and facilities (Return on Investment)
3. Total anticipated annual revenue from residential development/acre

**CHART 1.1. SCENARIO COSTS AND ANNUAL REVENUES**

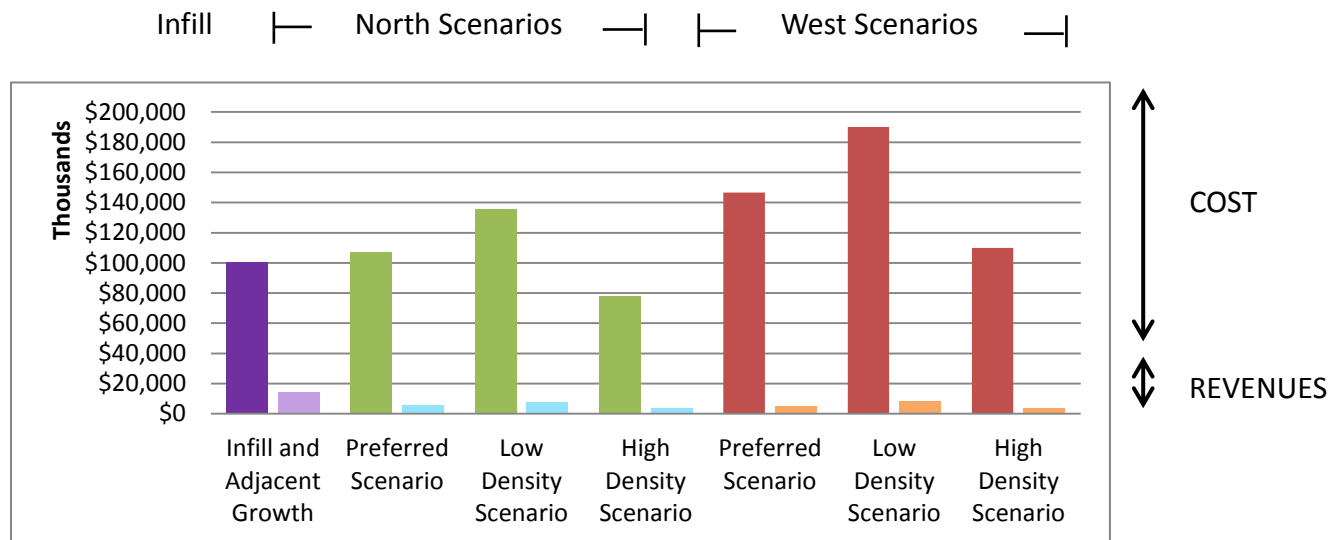
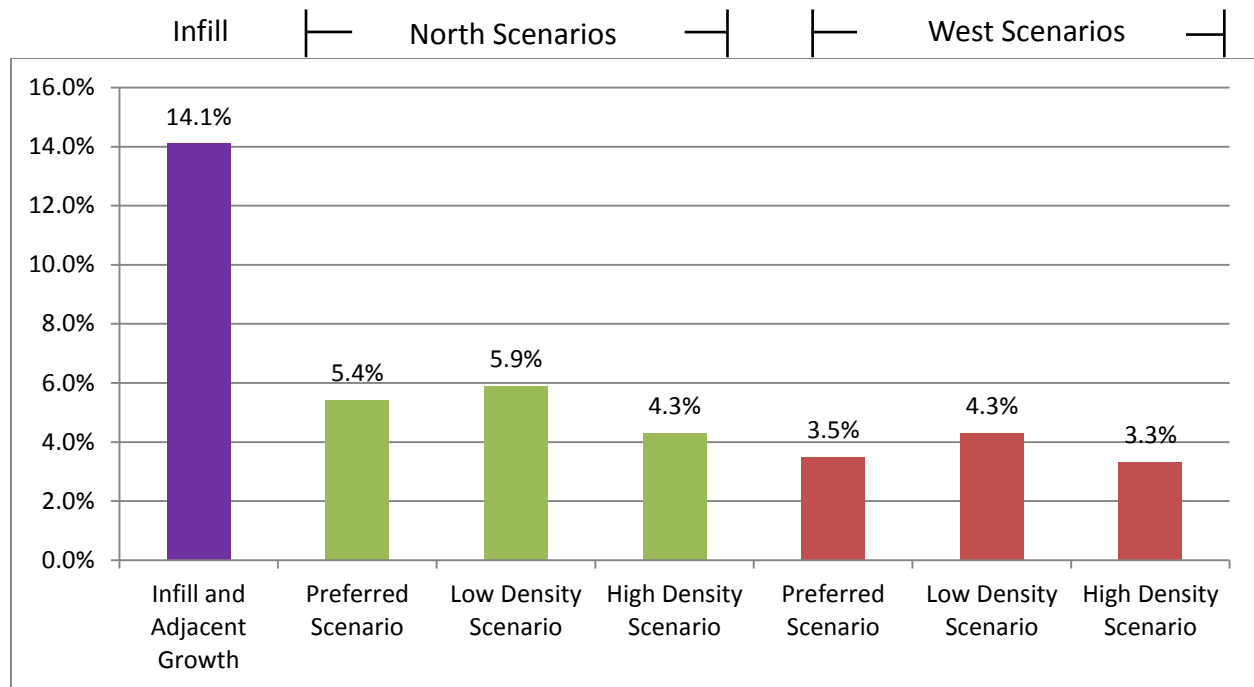


CHART 1.2.-ANNUAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT



The scenario planning data and the values expressed by the public support a general consensus that development of infill parcels and properties adjoining the existing City limits is preferred. Also substantiated by public comment and the scenario planning data, is that a mix of residential densities is also preferred. There are clear revenue advantages to the low density scenarios in terms of return on investments and total revenue per acre, mostly because the revenue generated by higher valued houses on larger lots is greater than any other scenario. However, the infill scenario returns the highest total revenue per acre largely because of the concentrated value on smaller lots and provides a mix of housing. The Scenario Planning demonstrates that the Infill and Adjacent Parcels growth pattern is most cost effective and has the highest rate of return. It should be noted that maintenance and replacement costs were not factored into the scenario planning. It stands to reason that infill development will require replacement and repair of existing infrastructure sooner than newer development in the north and west scenarios. This repair and replacement of existing infrastructure will be necessary regardless of the growth area as the majority of the City population still live in areas served by existing infrastructure and rely on this infrastructure.

The primary purpose of the planning process is to formulate a *Growth Policy* for the selected time horizon, or 20 years. In the end, the *Policy* is derived from the comments, goals, objectives and data. The *Growth Policy* stands as a framework to evaluate future public and private development and investment. The *Policy* is further supported by a *Growth Policy Statement* (vision) and suggested *Growth Guidelines* that can be referred to when making decisions for land use applications and infrastructure projects.

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## **Chapter 2 – Growth Policy Statement and Guidelines**

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The **Growth Policy Statement** and **Guidelines** provide elected officials and other decision-makers an understanding of the public’s vision for future growth and development, and recommendations on how to achieve that vision within the City of Billings in the next 20 years. As stated in state statute, “*a growth policy is not a regulatory document and does not confer any authority to regulate that is not otherwise specifically authorized by law or regulations adopted pursuant to the law,*” MCA 76-1-605(2)(a). It does, however, provide guidance when developing future regulations, policies, and projects. Most specifically, subdivision and zoning regulations are required to “*be made in accordance with the growth policy,*” MCA 76-1-605(1)(c) and MCA 76-2-304(1)(a). State law also provides for the governing bodies “*to be guided by and give consideration*” to the growth policy on other matters including public infrastructure, utilities, and structures, MCA 76-1-605(1).

The Growth Policy Statement may be considered a vision of where and how the City will grow in the next 20 years. The Growth Guidelines describe more specifically what people value and desire as outcomes or objectives and these are categorized under seven headings that define general goals.

### City of Billings Growth Policy Statement

**In the next 20 years, Billings will manage its growth by encouraging development within and adjacent to the existing City limits, but preference will be given to areas where City infrastructure exists or can be extended within a fiscally constrained budget and with consideration given to increased tax revenue from development. The City will prosper with strong neighborhoods with their own unique character that are clean, safe, and provide a choice of housing and transportation options.**

### Growth Guidelines

#### Essential Investments (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

- The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans
- Public transit and commercial air service are critical to ensure access to and around the City
- Planning and construction of safe and affordable interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings.
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Natural landscapes are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment
- Landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors
- Public health and safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings’ residents, businesses, and visitors
- Infill development and development near existing City infrastructure may be the most cost effective
- Accessible, friendly and cost-effective government are important public values

- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Infrastructure and service investments that stabilize or improve property values, secure future utility costs, consider maintenance costs, and improve our environmental quality far into the future (i.e. energy efficient) are desirable
- It is important to factor in maintenance costs when programming public spaces and infrastructure
- Integrated, long range water planning that better utilizes existing resources and treatment options, and when necessary acquires new ones, is vital
- Regulatory compliant water and wastewater treatment plants that provide sufficient capacity will help sustain community growth
- A supportive school system that inspires, motivates, and prepares students for meaningful employment is important for ensuring a high quality, competitive community
- A cost/benefit study is important to make cost effective land use decisions

### **Place Making (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)**

- A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable
- Enhancement and maintenance of public spaces and buildings through City stewardship is integral to a vibrant community
- Park master plans and transportation plans are important to facilitate the preservation and improved public access to the Yellowstone River and the Rims
- Public and private partnerships are valuable for creating enhanced entryways into Billings
- Locally grown foods help sustain agriculture, provide healthy options, and support local businesses
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Natural landscapes are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment and beautify neighborhoods
- Encouraging the installation of art in public spaces enhances the places and showcases the talents and diversity of the community
- Enhancing public buildings and spaces to be more efficient in their uses of energy, money, and space is important to having a vibrant and livable City

### **Community Fabric (attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings)**

- Developed landscape areas in commercial areas encourage more pedestrian activity and vibrant commercial activity
- Attractive streetscapes provide a pleasant and calming travel experience in urban and suburban neighborhoods
- Outdoor public spaces provide casual and relaxing gathering areas for people
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities, and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Natural landscapes and parks are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment
- Cost-effective landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors

### **Strong Neighborhoods (livable, safe, sociable and resilient neighborhoods)**

- Zoning regulations that allow a mixture of housing types provide housing options for all age groups and income levels
- Walkable neighborhoods that permit convenient destinations such as neighborhood services, open space, parks, schools and public gathering spaces foster health, good will and social interaction
- Safe and livable neighborhoods can be achieved through subdivision design that focuses on complete streets, pedestrian-scale street lights, street trees and walkable access to public spaces
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Zoning and subdivision regulations that utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies result in safer neighborhoods
- Implementation of the Infill Policy is important to encourage development of underutilized properties
- Public safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents and businesses

### **Home Base (healthy, safe and diverse housing options)**

- A mix of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population is important
- The Housing Needs Assessment is an important tool to ensure Billings recognizes and meets the demands of future development
- Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy and safe

- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- Public safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents
- Homes that are safe and sound support a healthy community
- Accessory dwellings units provide an important type of affordable housing options if compatible
- Energy efficient housing can reduce energy consumption

### **Mobility and Access (transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all)**

- Connecting people to places with transportation choices is vital to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses and visitors
- Safe and accessible transportation systems benefit everyone's quality of life
- Affordable public transit is much desired
- Development oriented to transit routes will provide more transportation choices and is preferred
- "Safe Routes to Schools" promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- On-street bike facilities promote predictability for all users
- Expanded air service ensures that Billings remains a competitive and an accessible destination
- Technology can reduce congestion and facilitate emergency vehicle travel at railroad crossings

### **Prosperity (promoting equal opportunity and economic advancement)**

- Predictable, reasonable City taxes and assessments are important to Billings' taxpayers
- A diversity of available jobs can ensure a strong Billings' economy
- Successful businesses that provide local jobs benefit the community
- Community investments that attract and retain a strong, skilled and diverse workforce also attracts businesses
- Retaining and supporting existing businesses helps sustain a healthy economy
- Continued workforce training benefits the community and helps attract and retain businesses
- Strategically placed industrial parks will encourage a more diverse city economy, and will better help manage effluent and emission from industrial processes

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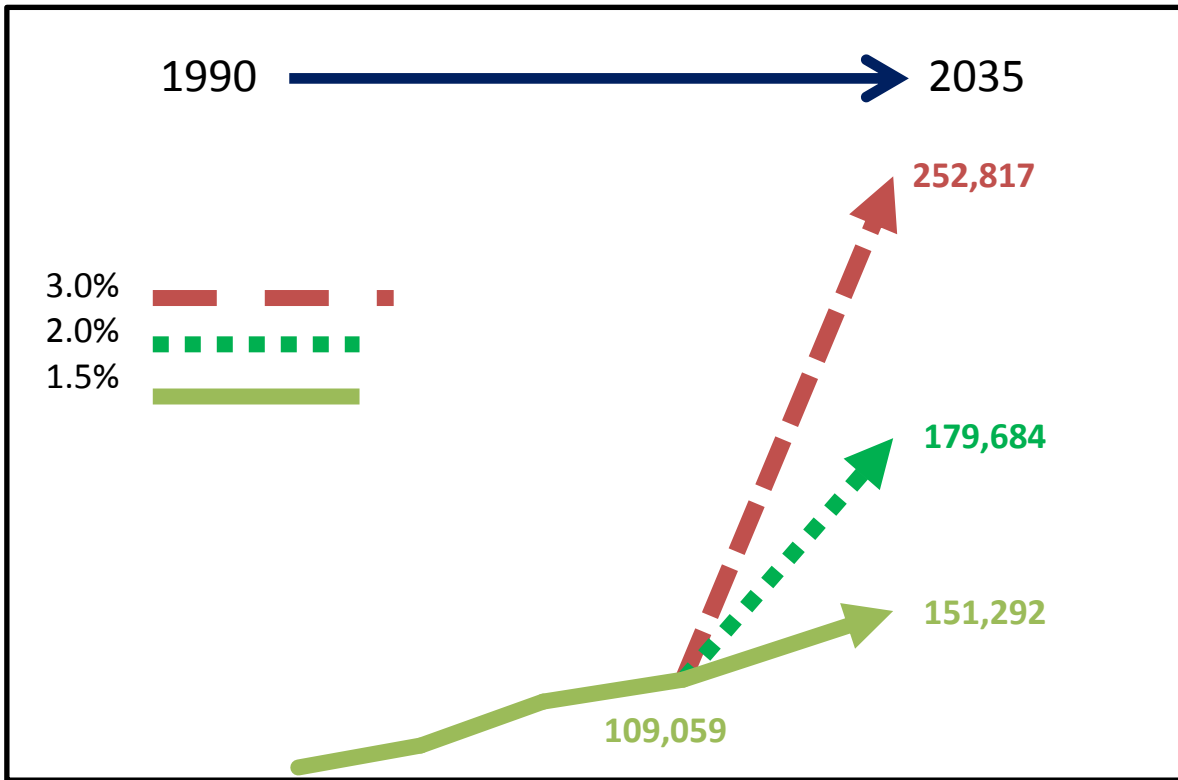
## **CHAPTER 3 – Billings – Then, Now, and Beyond...**



## Demographics

Early in the public comment phase of the planning process, the public was shown a graph with three potential growth rates (Figure 3.1). One was based on past trends and two were examples of what a slight increase in the growth rate could mean in terms of population increase. None was meant as a projection.

FIGURE 3.1. POPULATION INCREASE BASED ON SAMPLE GROWTH RATES



The best population data comes from the Decennial Census compiled by the US Census Bureau. Population data for Billings from the last 13 decades is shown in Table 3.1. The 2015 estimate is also provided by the Bureau of Census, from the Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2015 Population Estimates. The average annual growth rate since 1990 is 1.5 percent.

**TABLE 3.1. CITY OF BILLINGS POPULATION CHANGE OVER THIRTEEN DECADES**

Decade	City of Billings	Avg. Annual Growth Rate
1890	836	
1900	3,221	28.5%
1910	10,031	21.1%
1920	15,100	5.1%
1930	16,380	0.8%
1940	23,261	4.2%
1950	31,834	3.7%
1960	52,851	6.6%
1970	61,581	1.7%
1980	66,798	0.8%
1990	81,151	2.1%
2000	89,847	1.1%
2010	104,170	1.6%
2015	110,263	1.2%

The population of Billings is getting increasingly older, with the majority of the population between the ages of 25 and 65, as shown in Table 3.2. The average age increased by almost a year from 2000 to 2010. Since 1980, it has increased nearly 8 years from 29.3 years old to 37.5 years old.

**TABLE 3.2. POPULATION AGE BY DECADE, 1980 – 2010**

Age	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	Total Population	Percent of Total	Total Population	Percent of Total	Total Population	Percent of Total	Total Population	Percent of Total
Under 5	4,907	7.35%	6,021	7.42%	5,882	6.55%	7,293	7.00%
5 to 9	4,673	7.00%	5,804	7.15%	5,985	6.66%	6,457	6.20%
10 to 14	4,635	6.94%	5,848	7.21%	6,063	6.75%	6,070	5.83%
15 to 19	6,032	9.03%	5,501	9.78%	6,290	7.00%	6,325	6.07%
20 to 24	7,377	11.04%	5,345	6.59%	6,483	7.22%	7,654	7.35%
25 to 34	11,801	17.67%	14,096	17.37%	11,869	13.21%	15,318	14.70%
35 to 44	7,071	10.59%	12,433	15.32%	13,882	15.45%	12,025	11.54%
45 to 54	6,664	9.98%	8,145	10.04%	12,284	13.67%	14,799	14.21%
55 to 64	6,401	9.58%	6,973	8.59%	7,770	8.65%	12,623	12.12%
65 to 74	4,424	6.62%	6,319	7.79%	6,464	7.19%	7,508	7.21%
75+	2,813	4.21%	4,666	5.75%	6,875	7.65%	8,098	7.77%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,798</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>81,151</b>	<b>71.55%</b>	<b>89,847</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>104,170</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>29.3</b>		<b>33.7</b>		<b>36.8</b>		<b>37.5</b>	

## Population Predictions

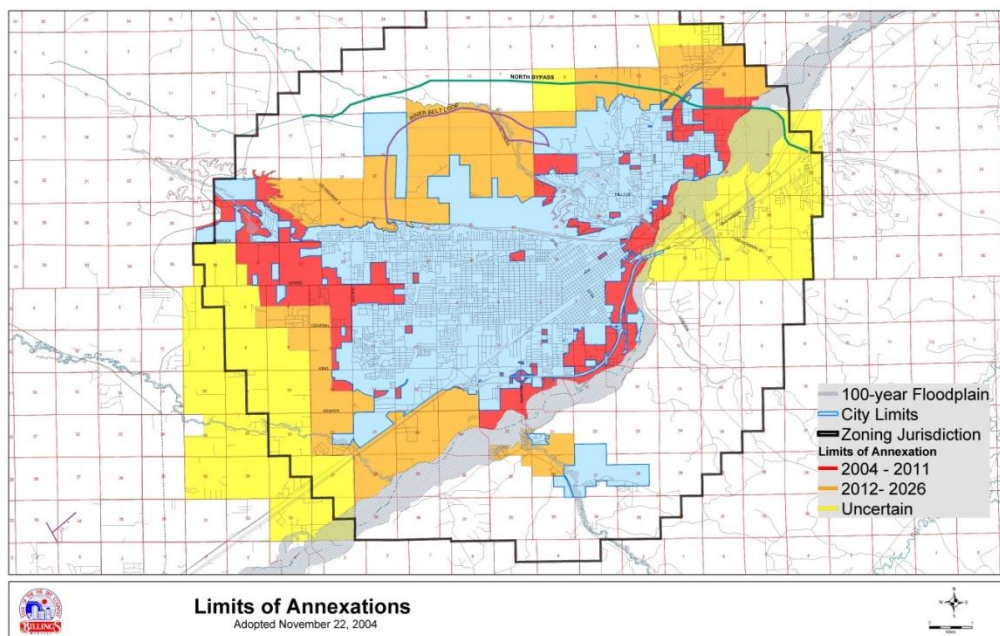
Historic trends are often used to make predictions on future growth rates, but how far back is appropriate? Considering the last four decades, a reasonable estimate would be 1.5 percent per year. At this rate, Billings would add approximately 42,233 people by 2035. However, trends are not necessarily destiny. Many events will happen that will likely change the predictions: resurgence in the Bakken oil play, another recession, recruitment of a major employer, loss of a major employer. Population projections based on trends should be used with caution. Given the stability of our economy, the quality of our schools, and the continuing improvement to our quality of life, a 1.5 percent annual increase is not an unreasonable prediction.

## Land Use

### Current Planning

The City of Billings has added 1.0 square mile since 2014 and is currently at 42.9 square miles. It is still the largest city in Montana. Roughly 33 percent of the city is zoned for commercial use, 12 percent for industrial use, and the remainder as residential. As property is annexed, it is zoned according to the City zoning designation closest to what it was zoned in the County. Most annexations have been residential. However, property owners that intend to develop soon after annexation rezone their property to suit at the same time as annexation. The City's Annexation Policy has done much to manage the expansion of the City since its adoption in 2004. Maps 3.1 and 3.2 show the change in city limits and limits of annexation from 2004 to 2016.

**MAP 3.1. LIMITS OF ANNEXATION, 2004**



MAP 3.2. LIMITS OF ANNEXATION, 2016

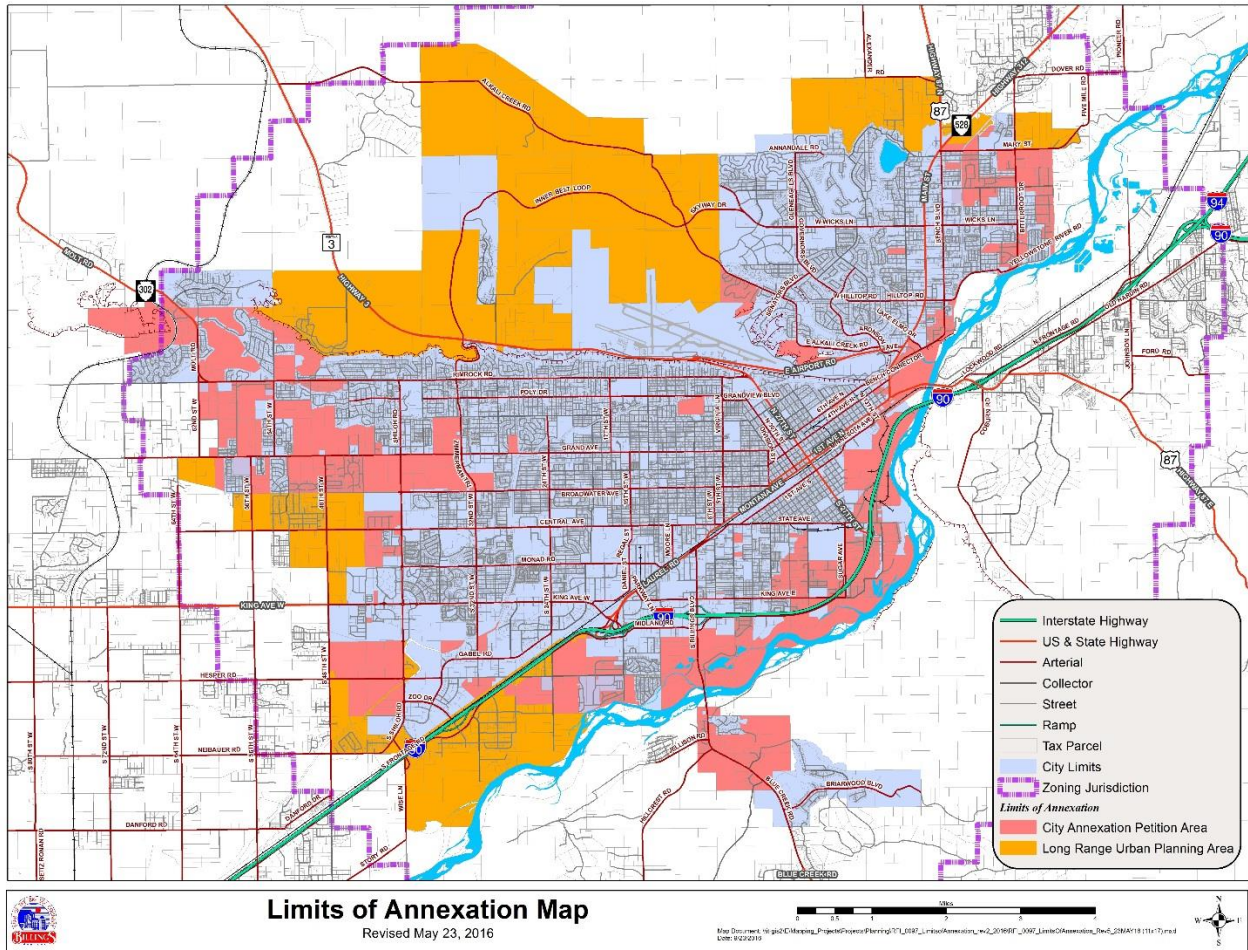
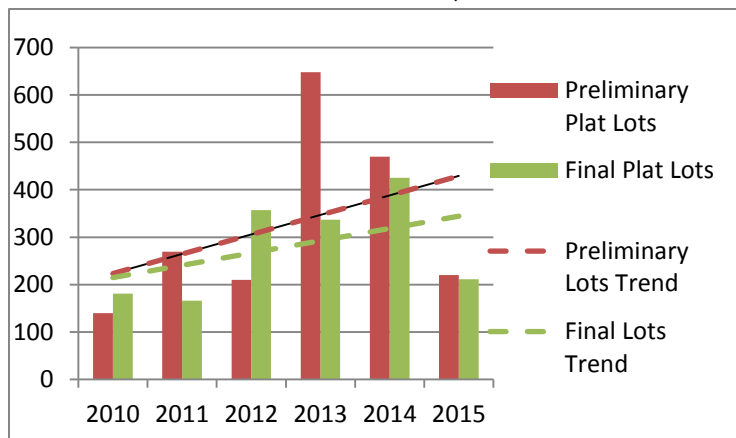


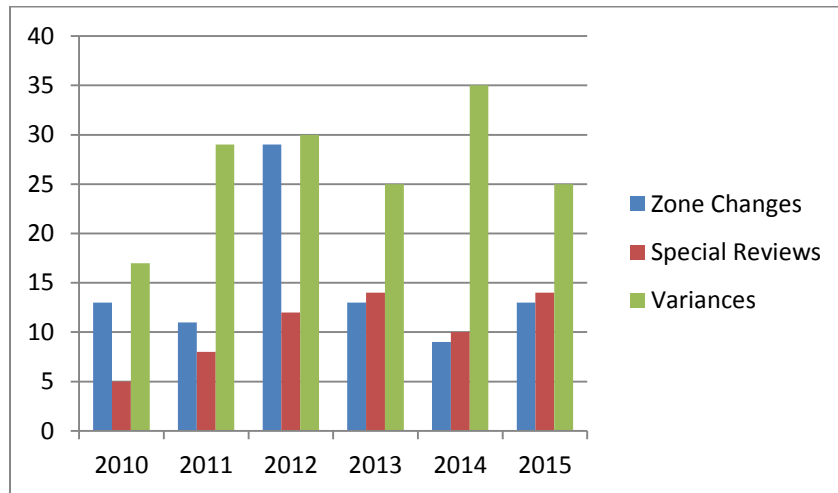
CHART 3.1. LOTS CREATED BY SUBDIVISION 2010 – 2015

Commensurate with growth are changes in zoning, special reviews, variances and subdivision activity. The number of lots created through subdivision steadily increased since 2010, but fell off sharply in 2015 as the chart below shows. A total of 1,677 lots were created since 2010.



With the exception of 2012, when there were 29 zone changes, zoning activity has remained fairly consistent. Chart 3.2 shows the number of Zone Changes, Special Reviews, and Variances processed in the City between 2010 and 2015.

**CHART 3.2. CITY ZONING ACTIVITY 2010 – 2015**



## Housing

In 2010, Billings had an estimated 46,317 housing units. The number of units has increased significantly since then. Since 2010 the City Building Division issued permits for almost 3,000 new units, including 2,006 single family units and 258 duplex units. Building permits in the past 6 years were also issued for 465 multi-family structures containing at least 3 units apiece but many of them were 4 to 10 unit structures so the estimate of total units built is probably low.

The greater Billings area housing market continues to be strong in 2016 but is showing signs of adjustment. Pending sales in March, 2016, were 447 compared to pending sales at the same time in 2015 of 396. In 2006, before the recession, pending sales were 320. Other signs of a strong market include closed sales up by seven percent, and inventory was up 20 percent. Interest rates were down 2 percent.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, some negative aspects of the market that need to be recognized.

Activity in the Bakken Oil Field in North Dakota and Montana has slowed considerably due to a significant decrease in oil prices. In April 2015, the drilling rig count in North Dakota was 88. In 2016 the rig count dropped to 27 and no rigs were drilling in Montana in 2016. The regional coal industry has also been negatively affected recently. Montana coal production is down by one third from 2015<sup>2</sup> and Arch Coal has declared bankruptcy and laid off workers, and the coal-fired generators in Colstrip are being threatened by out-of-state clean energy interests.<sup>3</sup> The effect on the local real estate market does not

<sup>1</sup> Howard Sumner, Howard Sumner Real Estate, Market Update at a Glance, March 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Billings Gazette, Montana Coal Production Down a Third, June 9, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Billings Gazette, Washington Plans for Colstrip’s Closure, but Stops Short of Ordering It, Mar 9, 2016

appear to be significant at this time but may result in fewer families and individuals associated with the oil and coal industries moving to Billings and purchasing homes.

A problem identified in the 2012 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, concerns social equity and possible discriminatory housing practices.<sup>4</sup> The study reported Billings as having a dual housing market; one for Whites and Asians and one for American Indians, Hispanics and African Americans. The concentration of minorities in some neighborhoods which coincides with areas of low income is characteristic of discrimination which *distorts* a free housing market. A free housing market may be distorted by practices such as racial steering, mortgage lending discrimination, discriminatory advertising, discriminatory rental policies, mortgage and insurance redlining or discriminatory appraisals.

Another problem facing the Billings' housing market is affordability for our most vulnerable populations:<sup>5</sup>

- Small family households (two to four members) with incomes from zero to 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Households with members aged at least 75 years of age with incomes from 30 percent to 80 percent AMI.

*The following text is excerpted from the FY2015 – 2019 Consolidated Plan:*

“The greatest housing need in Billings is the development and renovation of affordable housing for both owners and renters with incomes from zero to 80% AMI. Local housing options are limited due to cost burden, low vacancy rates and increased competition for available units.

According to the American Community Survey data, population growth appears to be keeping pace with the number of available housing units in Billings. However, more recent data point to a higher number of people experiencing homelessness and a considerably tight rental market with a vacancy rate of less than two percent. The largest qualifying income category for Community Development programs is the 50% to 80% category at 7,330 households. Excluding total households and households with incomes over 80%, the next largest cohort includes households with incomes between 50% and 80% AMEI (6,315). Small family households are the largest cohorts in all income categories (4,633) followed by those at least 75 years (3,387).

Most in demand are smaller affordable rental units, as the Housing Authority of Billings has identified over 1,200 households on the waiting list for rental units with one bedroom. The development of

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<sup>4</sup> Billings, Montana, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, 2012, Planning/Communications, River Forest, Illinois, April 2013. Commissioned by the City of Billings Community Development Division

<sup>5</sup> FY2015 – 2019 City of Billings Five Year Consolidated Plan, Community Development Division, April 27, 2015. For reference, the 2015 HOME income limits for a two person household at 80% AMI is \$41,100 and for a four person household the limit is \$51,350.

smaller rental units would also meet the needs of the Millennials, who prefer to rent small units. It would also support the needs of the elderly, who may prefer to rent or purchase maintenance-assisted condominiums.”

### Transportation

According to the 2015 statistics maintained by the City Public Works Department, Billings has 544.4 miles of streets and 124.2 miles of alleys. This is a 3.5 percent increase in total street and alley miles since 2008. In Billings, streets are classified by their function in the overall context of the highway transportation system. The functional classification system is established by the following hierarchy:

**Freeways** – serve high speed, long distance travel movements and provide limited access to adjacent lands. Interstate 90 is the only freeway designated route in Billings.

**Principal and Minor Arterials** – intended to serve higher volumes of traffic, particularly through-traffic at higher speeds. Examples of Principal Arterials include Shiloh Road, 24<sup>th</sup> Street West, N 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Main Street, Rimrock Road, Zimmerman Trail, Grand Avenue and King Avenue West. Examples of Minor Arterials include King Avenue East, State Street, North 30<sup>th</sup>, Aronson Avenue and Poly Drive.

**Collectors** – represent the intermediate class and collect traffic from the local street system and link travel to the arterial roadway system. Examples of collectors include Lake Elmo Drive, Parkhill Drive, Calhoun Lane, 19<sup>th</sup> Street West and 29<sup>th</sup> Street West.

**Local Roads and Streets** – these roadways carry locally generated traffic at relatively low speeds. Local streets provide connectivity through neighborhoods and are generally designed to discourage cut-through traffic.

A map showing the classification of the Billings street network is available on the City’s website: <http://ci.billings.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/26253>. A full description of the functional classifications and the City street network is provided in the 2014 Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan.<sup>6</sup>

The City approves a Capital Improvement Plan, (CIP), each year for capital projects in excess of \$25,000 that are planned for a six fiscal year time frame. The plan identifies the project, years in which the expenditures will be made, the cost of the project per year, and the funding source(s). The last five CIPs list the following projects and the primary funding sources for road improvements and reconstruction. Table 3.3 below shows the amounts in each funding source that were listed in the year the CIP was approved by City Council.

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<sup>6</sup> 2014 Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan, prepared for City of Billing/Yellowstone County Metropolitan Planning Area by Kittelson & Associates, Inc. and DOWL HKM, Inc., August 2014.

**TABLE 3.3. FUNDING SOURCE TOTALS IN CIP BY YEAR**

Funding Source	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016
Storm Drain Bonds	\$0	\$9,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$10,253,750	\$0
Safe Routes to School	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Community Development Block Grants	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sidewalk Bonds	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
Gas Tax	\$570,436	\$3,650,000	\$3,375,000	\$3,537,000	\$2,867,000
Storm Drain		\$2,202,500	\$817,250	\$2,802,500	\$1,325,000
Public Works Bond Utility Repair	0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$0
Street Maintenance Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Improvement Bonds	\$1,200,000	\$1,000,000	\$800,000	\$1,000,000	\$800,000
Street Lights	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$0
Developer Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$59,800	\$0
State & Federal	\$0	\$0	\$7,400,000	\$0	\$0
Tax Increment Financing	\$0	\$330,000	\$2,300,000	\$2,200,000	\$3,300,000
Community Transportation Enhancement Program (federal)	\$170,564	\$0	\$415,000	\$0	\$0
BSEDA	\$0	\$0	\$120,000	\$0	\$0
Arterial Fees	\$400,000	\$2,250,000	\$4,500,000	\$3,050,200	\$0
Unfunded		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,120,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,341,000</b>	<b>\$17,687,833</b>	<b>\$23,937,250</b>	<b>\$23,103,250</b>	<b>\$12,812,000</b>

Billings enjoys more than 37 miles of paved, off-street multi-use trails. The trail network includes trails through parks, such as Swords Park trail; trails within road rights-of-way, such as Zimmerman Trail and Shiloh Road, and trails within other City right-of-way, such as the Kiwanis Trail. These trails function both for commuters and recreationists. Eleven miles of soft surface trails through Riverfront, Two Moon, and Phipps Parks and around Lake Elmo provide recreational opportunities to pedestrians and bicyclists alike. There are also over 17 miles of on-street bicycle facilities such as bike lanes and sharrows around the City that are used primarily by commuters.

Trail usage has steadily increased in the past eight years and the City also has expanded its trail counting system to collect more data in both fixed and mobile locations across the community. Based on daily counts across the trail system, there were about 770,000 user trips in 2015, factoring for the most severe winter months (December through February) where usage is expected to be significantly reduced. The City produces a number of planning documents that report on the state of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are updated periodically.

**TABLE 3.4. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITY PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

Planning Document	Last Update	Scheduled Update
Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan	2011	2016
Complete Streets Progress Report	2013	2016
Long Range Transportation Plan	2014	2018

In 2011, the City Council adopted the first Complete Streets Policy. Contributors to the first Complete Streets Policy included members of the Healthy by Design Built Environment Workgroup; BikeNet (now Billings TrailNet), Downtown Billings Alliance, Montana Department of Transportation, MET Transit, City Engineering Division, City/County Planning Division and Big Sky Economic Development Authority. The 2011 Policy was repealed and a new policy was adopted by City Council on May 23, 2016. The 2016 Complete Streets Policy “intends to promote and encourage the development of a multi modal transportation system that will provide access to all users where practicable.” The policy provides definitions and outlines implementation procedures that provide a framework for planning and designing the City’s transportation network.

MET Transit, the City’s public transit provider, currently operates with 17 routes and has two primary transfer centers. MET operates 41 fleet vehicles all containing wheelchair lifts or ramps and two-slot bicycle racks. In 2016, MET intends to modify its current routes by eliminating some routes (2, 4, 6, and 8) and changing other routes and hours of service. The changes will add or enhance service to the two new middle schools as well as increase evening service to the Heights.

### Economics

Billings is commonly referred to as a regional economic hub with a trade area of over a half million people<sup>7</sup>. There are approximately 6,200 businesses operating in Yellowstone County with a combined gross national product of about \$10,000 million in 2014.<sup>8</sup> Yellowstone County enjoys a low unemployment rate of 3.0% (2016) compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 3.6%.<sup>9</sup> Medical and education are the largest employers making up 22 percent of the total employment<sup>10</sup>. In 2012, the health care sector employed nearly 13,000 people, paying \$641 million in wages. Retail trade is also a large economic sector because of Billings’ regional status. Because Montana has no sales tax, Billings is a shopping destination for Wyoming, and North and South Dakota residents. One dollar out of seven dollars spent on retail purchases in Montana is being spent in Billings.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “Best Places to Launch a Small Business 2009 – Billings, MT, Fortune Magazine, October 13, 2009

<sup>8</sup> Economic Pulse Billings Montana, ECONorthwest, October 20, 2015

<sup>9</sup> Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Current Labor Force Statistics, May, 2016”

<sup>10</sup> US Census Bureau, Economy-wide key statistics: 2012, 2012 Economic Census of the United States

<sup>11</sup> Lutey, Tom (December 18, 2011, “Billings ahead of almost everywhere: Agriculture, retail, energy, health care driving economy: Missoulian.com

### Natural Resources

The physical environment of Yellowstone County has strongly influenced the economic, social, and physical development of the County. The following subchapters on climate, vegetation, wildlife, soil, geology, and hydrology describe the physical environment of Yellowstone County. The purpose of this section is to provide enough information on the physical conditions that future land use controls can take into account the unique constraints and opportunities presented by the natural environment.

#### Climate

Yellowstone County enjoys a relatively mild climate and experiences few significant weather events during an average year. Extremely low temperatures, less than 0 degrees Fahrenheit, may prevail in the winter for short periods of time. High wind events are possible in the spring and summer and may include rare tornadic activity. Heavy rainfall is rare, but localized thunderstorms can deposit significant rainfall in a small area resulting in flashfloods. Flooding is a problem on the Yellowstone River and tributaries particularly when warmer temperatures rapidly melt snow and ice during spring break up.

#### Vegetation and Wildlife

The major vegetation type in the County is grassland which supports, in addition to domestic livestock, a healthy population of deer, antelope and several small mammal species. Critical to the survival of many native species are the riparian and prairie wetland habitats. In the semi-arid terrain, access to water, forage and cover these habitats provide increase their importance to wildlife. Weeds are a threat to all vegetation types, including cultivated crops. Yellowstone County has an aggressive weed management program that focuses on noxious weed containment and eradication. Most of the conflicts between humans and wildlife occur at the urban and wildland interface. This area is most susceptible to wildlife habitat destruction and noxious weed invasion due to soil disturbance from construction. The dry grassland and uncontrolled weed populations make many areas within the county susceptible to wildfires, especially in wildland urban interface areas.

#### Soil

The soil units in Yellowstone County are generally derived from nearby bedrock sources, or from transported alluvial sediments. Soils formed in place tend to contain high amounts of clay, silt and sand and low amounts of organic material. These soils are located on the higher terraces and hills north and south of the Yellowstone River valley. Many of these soils are suited only for rangeland but some support dryland cultivation. The transported soils found in the valley are more loam rich and highly suited to cultivation, especially when irrigated. The Yellowstone River valley in the vicinity of Billings and Huntley Project possesses some of the most productive soil in the State. These soils are designated as Prime Agricultural Soils by the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

### Geology

Much of the geology of Yellowstone County is starkly visible when viewed from the sandstone rims north of downtown Billings. To the south, the view encompasses the broad Yellowstone River valley composed of several alluvial benches. Across the valley a wide terrace underlain by early Cretaceous and Jurassic sedimentary formations ramps gently upward towards the Pryor Mountains. These formations are composed predominantly of shale. Near Billings and north of the river valley, the eye is drawn to the prominent sandstone cliffs formed by the resistant Eagle Formation. The plains north of the Yellowstone River are broken by a series of northeast trending faults which expose interbedded shale and sandstone of the Judith River Formation. The geology of the County presents both obstacles and opportunities. Shallow bedrock and unstable slopes can pose difficulties for construction. However, near surface gravel and coal deposits have contributed to the area's economic development.

### Hydrology

Clean water and reliable flows are critical for human consumption, agricultural production, wildlife and recreation uses. Yellowstone County is dependent on the main source of water, the Yellowstone River, for all these reasons. While there are numerous tributaries to the Yellowstone River, few carry water year round. Because of the scarcity of surface water, early settlers to the area constructed elaborate ditch systems to carry water from the Yellowstone River to the higher benches. Ditches continue to play an important role for groundwater recharge and agricultural production. Except in the alluvial deposits within the river valley, groundwater is scarce and usually found at depths too great to be economically developed. Within the valley, groundwater can be found at very shallow depths and susceptible to contamination from surface uses.



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## **Chapter 4 – Community Goals**

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# Goal



## ESSENTIAL INVESTMENTS – prioritize public and private investment in areas, policies, programs and projects that achieve the community vision as described in the Growth Policy Statement:

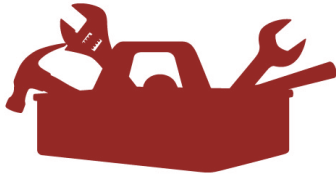
“In the next 20 years, Billings will manage its growth by encouraging development within and adjacent to the existing city limits, but preference will be given to areas where city infrastructure exists or can be extended within a fiscally constrained budget and with consideration given to increased tax revenue from development. The city will prosper with strong neighborhoods with their own unique character that are clean, safe, and provide a choice of housing and transportation options.”

*Essential Investments are where and how the public and private sectors should spend their time and resources. These policies, programs or projects are considered extremely important to achieve the community vision. For budgeting public funds, the objectives may be considered priorities. These objectives may also guide private investments in our community.*

# Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Locations for investments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Infill and contiguous County properties</li> <li>▪ Downtown</li> <li>▪ Urban Renewal Districts</li> <li>▪ Interstate Interchanges</li> <li>▪ Major Arterials</li> <li>▪ Inner Belt Loop</li> <li>▪ West End</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Public Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public safety</li> <li>▪ Schools</li> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Parks and Recreation</li> <li>▪ Snow removal</li> <li>▪ Street maintenance</li> <li>▪ Trail maintenance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrated water systems</li> <li>▪ Waste water treatment</li> <li>▪ Communications</li> <li>▪ Street lights</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regulation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Animal control</li> <li>▪ Traffic control</li> <li>▪ Architectural control</li> <li>▪ Growth management</li> <li>▪ Water conservation</li> <li>▪ Energy conservation</li> <li>▪ Preservation of sensitive natural environments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Businesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neighborhood commercial and public services</li> <li>▪ Improved air service</li> <li>▪ Recycling programs</li> <li>▪ Local businesses</li> <li>▪ Local foods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Amenities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dog Parks</li> <li>▪ Recreation Center/Sports Facility</li> <li>▪ Branch Libraries</li> <li>▪ Convention Center</li> <li>▪ Museums</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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# Toolbox



- ❖ Priority based budgeting
- ❖ Fees and assessments
- ❖ Municipal and tax increment finance bonds
- ❖ Grants
- ❖ Mill levies
- ❖ Local option tax
- ❖ City Charter amendments
- ❖ Public/private partnerships
- ❖ Special districts
- ❖ Regulatory changes

# Performance Indicators

- Annual tax increment growth in Urban Renewal Districts
- Annual change in the area added to the City
- Number of neighborhood and park master plans prepared annually
- Miles of streets and trails maintained annually
- Quality of waste water discharge at the treatment plant measured annually
- Annual number of vehicle crashes
- Annual change in the average dwelling units per acre within the City limits
- Acres of land zoned for neighborhood commercial services measured annually
- Number of annual business licenses (Business Determination Tax) issued and renewed
- Number of dog parks developed annually



# Goal



**PLACE MAKERS** – Enhance existing public places, create new ones, preserve natural and historic places, and maintain our agricultural landscape to define the community for its residents and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives or visits here.

*The Billings area should continue to make places that we all enjoy by preserving and improving public space as well as the natural and historic landscape to bring the community together where people are comfortable and share activities. These places are ones that you go back to, share with visitors and recall when someone asks you to describe your community.*

# Objectives

<p><b>Enhanced public spaces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Public property</li> <li>• Interstate interchanges</li> <li>• Street corridors</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation center/sports facility</li> <li>• Branch libraries</li> <li>• Museums</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protection and Preservation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic preservation controls</li> <li>• Integrated landscape and storm water controls</li> <li>• Preservation of view sheds</li> <li>• Preservation of natural areas</li> <li>• Preservation of historic places</li> </ul> <p><b>Amenities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellowstone River access</li> <li>• Rimrock views and access</li> <li>• Preserved agricultural lands</li> </ul>
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# Toolbox



- ❖ Landscaping regulations
- ❖ Site development regulations
- ❖ Zoning regulations
- ❖ Subdivision regulations
- ❖ Agricultural land acquisition program
- ❖ Farm to table program to supply local food
- ❖ Public/private partnerships to develop community facilities
- ❖ City-wide Public Arts Committee program
- ❖ Develop City-owned spaces downtown
- ❖ Local/State coordination for community entryway right-of-way improvements
- ❖ Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan updates
- ❖ City-Wide Parks Master Plan
- ❖ Rims to Valley Bike/Ped Feasibility Study implementation
- ❖ Highway 3 Corridor Study implementation
- ❖ Prepare and implement park master plans
- ❖ Funding Sources
  - County-Wide Library Levy
  - Transportation Planning Program
  - County-Wide Planning Levy
  - City-wide and Downtown Park District
  - Business Improvement District
  - Tax Increment Finance District

# Performance Indicators

- Number of acres of agricultural land preserved every five years
- Number of street trees planted in the public right of way annually
- Number of park master plans adopted and implemented (funded) every five years
- Number of public art installations added city-wide annually
- Miles of trails added annually
- Gallons of storm water retained annually using landscaping (use project design calculations)
- Number of community events held in public spaces community-wide annually
- Access, trail, historic place improvements along Highway 3 built every five years
- Two branch libraries opened
- Recreation Center opened
- Annual number of visitors to City parks

# Goal



**COMMUNITY FABRIC** - is what makes the City of Billings unique, attractive, a desirable place to live and aesthetically pleasing to residents and visitors. Community fabric can make Billings a draw to others looking for a place to call home.

*A strong community promotes the City’s appeal to residents, businesses and visitors. Elements of community fabric include access to outdoor activities, enjoyment of urban greenspace and participation in a rich cultural heritage.*

# Objectives

<p><b>Attractive entryways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require trees and landscaping</li> <li>• City beautification</li> <li>• New landscaping code</li> <li>• Design standards</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood parks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require developers to improve parks</li> <li>• Variety of parks</li> <li>• Small neighborhood parks</li> <li>• More natural areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Green space in commercial areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More places to enjoy trees</li> <li>• More green space in commercial development</li> <li>• Green space and landscaping in Downtown</li> <li>• More attractive freeway frontage</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vibrant Downtown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pocket parks downtown</li> <li>• Shopping and dining Choices</li> <li>• Green buildings</li> <li>• Fun centers / science centers</li> <li>• Museums</li> <li>• Walking mall in Downtown</li> </ul> <p><b>Outdoor public spaces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown square</li> <li>• Dog parks</li> <li>• Community gardens</li> <li>• River access</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreation/cultural opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marathon loop</li> <li>• Bike trails</li> <li>• Make use of river frontage</li> <li>• Paths between neighborhoods</li> <li>• Walkable paths through the city</li> </ul> <p><b>Historic preservation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect rims</li> <li>• Protect river</li> <li>• Historic buildings</li> </ul>
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# Toolbox



- ❖ Landscape/Zoning regulations
- ❖ Infill policy implementation
- ❖ Updated Engineering Site Development code
- ❖ Connectivity of streets and pedestrian facilities
- ❖ Integrated storm water management
- ❖ Cultural Partner Funding
- ❖ City forestry program
- ❖ Prepare city wide park program
- ❖ Local Historic Districts
- ❖ Grassroots community groups

# Performance Indicators

- Number of park master plans adopted and implemented (funded) every five years
- Acreage urban heat islands (infrared imagery) reduced
- Number of cultural and recreational events Downtown
- Miles of trails added annually
- Number of street trees planted in public right of way annually
- Number of Downtown parks or parklets constructed



# Goal



**STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS** – Create and enhance strong neighborhoods that are clean and safe with streets and public places that provide convenient access for our most vulnerable citizens – our children and grandparents. A strong neighborhood is a place where we will be comfortable no matter our age, income or heritage and provides gathering spaces to encourage everyday interaction between residents.

*Billings is a city of neighborhoods. A neighborhood can be as small as one block of houses between two intersections or as large as a 400 homes in a distinctive subdivision. How our neighborhoods are designed and built sets a course for its livability, safety, sociability and resilience.*

# Objectives

<p><b>Safe, accessible and comfortable places for people to walk and gather</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood green space, play spaces and parks</li> <li>• Neighborhood events</li> <li>• Street trees</li> <li>• Complete sidewalks</li> <li>• Street and pedestrian lighting</li> <li>• Neighborhood Watch programs</li> </ul> <p><b>Access to everyday conveniences within walking distance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete neighborhoods</li> <li>• Small neighborhood businesses for services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing choices for all ages and families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed housing types</li> </ul> <p><b>Interconnected network of sidewalks and trails that are safe at all times</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete sidewalks</li> <li>• Pedestrian lighting</li> </ul> <p><b>Connect Neighborhoods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transit</li> <li>• Sidewalks and trails</li> </ul> <p><b>Attractive and safe neighborhood streets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-speed design</li> <li>• On-street parking</li> <li>• Street trees</li> </ul>
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# Toolbox



- ❖ Complete Streets Policy
- ❖ Zoning regulations
- ❖ Site development regulations
- ❖ Subdivision regulations
- ❖ Landscape regulations
- ❖ General Obligation Bonds
- ❖ Neighborhood Grant Program
- ❖ Special Improvement Districts (city-wide)
- ❖ Neighborhood Task Forces
- ❖ Grassroots organizations

# Performance Indicators

- Crime rate
- Carbon emissions monitoring
- Community Health Impact Assessment
- Conflicts/crashes between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians
- Happiness quotient 😊
- Vehicle crashes
- Housing + Transportation Index <sup>TM</sup>
- WalkScore <sup>TM</sup>



# Goal



**HOME BASE – Enable a home environment for all residents that is healthy, safe and affordable, and offers a choice of housing options.**

*Residents of Billings prefer a choice of housing that is healthy, safe, and affordable. The resident’s age and household diversity create needs that are no longer served by only the traditional single family home. For many residents, lifestyle dictates the type of housing preferred. Busy households without children or households with aging residents may opt for smaller, more compact homes, even apartments. Larger households with children might prefer single family homes on small to large lots. Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy and safe.*

# Objectives

- Housing Options
- Affordability
- Safety
- Convenience
- Healthy
- Energy Efficient



# Toolbox



- ❖ Housing Needs Assessment
- ❖ Subdivision regulations
- ❖ Accessory dwelling units
- ❖ Affordable housing incentives/requirements
- ❖ Infill Policy
- ❖ Public/private partnerships
- ❖ Neighborhood Planner/Coordinator
- ❖ Housing rehabilitation program
- ❖ First Time Home Buyer program
- ❖ Land Bank
- ❖ Foreclosure and acquisition program
- ❖ Affordable housing project

# Performance Indicators

- Number of new residential building permits by Neighborhood Task Force area
- Housing + Transportation Index <sup>TM</sup>
- Crime rate
- Number of Nuisance Code violations by Neighborhood Task Force area



# Goal

**MOBILITY AND ACCESS** - The transportation system is designed to be safer and more efficient for all users.



*A transportation network allows people to make transportation mode choices that work best for them and helps reduce traffic congestion, protect air quality and promote public health. Mobility and access means projects, policies and programs to ensure transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all residents.*

# Objectives

<p><b>Connectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People to places</li> <li>• North, south, east and west</li> <li>• Vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians</li> <li>• Neighborhoods and subdivisions</li> <li>• Essential services</li> <li>• Bus routes</li> <li>• Transportation options</li> <li>• Public safety</li> <li>• Safe Routes to School</li> </ul> <p><b>Accessible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential services</li> <li>• Public transportation</li> <li>• ADA compliant</li> <li>• Safe</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predictable use of facilities</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> <li>• Separated shared-use facilities</li> <li>• Boulevard sidewalks</li> <li>• Safe Routes to School</li> <li>• Speed control/traffic calming</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transit and Air</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent headways and convenient routes</li> <li>• Extended hours</li> <li>• Technology (mobile apps for bus tracking)</li> <li>• Airport shuttle</li> <li>• Economically stable</li> <li>• Smaller/energy efficient fleet</li> <li>• Expanded air service</li> </ul> <p><b>Rail and Freight</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe railroad crossings (both vehicle and pedestrian)</li> <li>• Passenger rail</li> <li>• Reduced congestion</li> <li>• Improved traffic flow</li> <li>• Designated truck routes</li> </ul>
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# Toolbox



- ❖ Complete Streets Policy
- ❖ Complete Streets Progress Report
- ❖ Long Range Transportation Plan
- ❖ Transportation Planning Studies
- ❖ Billings Bikeway and Trail Master Plan
- ❖ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies
- ❖ Federal, state and local grants
- ❖ Permanent, local non-motorized funding
- ❖ Targeted traffic enforcement
- ❖ Data
- ❖ Zoning regulations
- ❖ Subdivision regulations
- ❖ Site development regulations
- ❖ Inter-agency cooperation (planning/projects)
- ❖ Private/public partnerships
- ❖ Connected node ratio
- ❖ MET mill levy

# Performance Indicators

- Crash rates
- Ridership/modal splits
- Travel times
- Community health indicators
- Emergency response times
- Air quality
- WalkScore™
- Housing + Transportation Index™
- Livability index



# Goal



## PROSPERITY – enable “a diverse, welcoming community where people prosper and business succeeds.”

VISION STATEMENT, CITY OF BILLINGS FY 2015-2019 CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

*As Billings grows, its population becomes more diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, and culture. Every individual has the right to enjoy a quality of life that is free from discrimination and provides equal opportunity for social and economic advancement. As the Vision Statement in the Council’s Strategic Plan states, Billings strives to welcome this diversity and create a community that encourages individual and commercial success. Government’s role is to ensure charges, fees, taxes and assessments are affordable and reasonably related to the services it provides. Both the public and private sector can contribute to the prosperity of the City by attracting and retaining businesses that pay competitive wages.*

# Objectives

### City taxes and assessments

- Affordable
- Equitable

### Job creation

- Professional jobs
- Competent workforce
- Living wages
- Business development

### Tax and assessment reform

- Local tax authority
- Equalization (revenue neutral)



# Toolbox



- ❖ Impact fees
- ❖ Tax incentives
- ❖ Workforce training and recruitment
- ❖ Gasoline tax
- ❖ Local Option tax
- ❖ Tiered assessments (based on location)

# Performance Indicators

- Annual net job growth
- Annual change in average wages with and without benefits
- Annual change in median home prices
- Annual change in median household income
- Annual amount of tax revenue received from local authority tax



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## **Chapter 5 – Growth Scenario Planning**

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### Process

Growth scenario planning was undertaken to demonstrate, in general, the costs and benefits of different growth patterns. The initial step was to identify areas of growth. The preferred growth areas were easily determined from the public's response on where growth should occur. While the overwhelming response was for infill development, or development within the existing city limits, there was also a strong preference for the area around the proposed Inner Belt Loop and west Billings Heights and area west of Billings. These areas were chosen to examine the cost implication of future growth. The next step was to apply different development patterns to these areas to evaluate if one pattern was more cost-effective than another. The three patterns evaluated were predominantly high density residential development, predominantly low residential density development, and a mix of densities. From the public comments, a mix of densities providing a variety of housing choice is preferred. The scenarios with a mix of densities are referred to as "public preferred." The area determined for infill development considered only one growth pattern that is defined by densities permitted by the City's existing zoning regulations.

Before the placement of land uses which define the scenarios could occur, the growth areas were mapped for suitability. Areas that constrained growth because of steep slopes, in public ownership, or in a floodplain were removed for consideration. This step allowed for a more realistic placement of land uses and the road network.

After the growth areas and growth scenarios were determined, indicators were selected to approximate the costs of providing preferred services, facilities and infrastructure to the scenarios. The indicators are based on how the public responded to "How should Billings grow?" While this list could be extensive, it was narrowed down to seven key indicators: Branch Libraries, Walkability, Community Parks, Public Safety, Public Transit, and Arterial and Collector Roads. The software, CommunityViz™, was used to help analyze the costs and revenues for each scenario based on these indicators and also provided results of a number of fixed indicators which are provided in Appendix F.





In order to calculate the extent the growth scenarios were already served by existing services and facilities, these were mapped in accordance to accepted standards for those services. For instance, the National Recreation and Parks Association guidelines suggest each resident should be within a three miles from a Community Park. Three-mile radii from existing Community parks were mapped to determine the existing coverage. Most of these standards are based on proximity of the service, facility or infrastructure to dwelling units. The standards for growth indicators are listed in the Indicator Description section in this chapter. If gaps existed in the service coverage areas, hypothetical facilities, services or infrastructure were placed in order to ensure full coverage.


The number or length of the hypothetical indicators was then calculated and a cost was assigned. The total costs were calculated for each scenario and the total revenues from taxes and assessments were estimated. These calculations and estimates are also described in the Indicator Description section of this chapter. From these results, total development costs, total revenue generated, total development costs per acre, total revenue generated per acre, and return on investment were calculated.


The final scenarios showing the added hypothetical transportation network, bus routes, and other facilities used as indicators are shown in the following series of images.

**Scenario Map Legend**












**Hypothetical Facilities/Infrastructure**

-  Branch Libraries
-  Elementary Schools
-  Community Parks
-  Co-located Police/Fire Stations

 Bus Routes

 Arterials & Collectors

**Land Use Type**

-  Commercial High Density
-  Commercial Low Density
-  Commercial Medium Density
-  Industrial Light-Craftsman
-  Institutional
-  Mixed Use
-  Open Space Conservation
-  Open Space Park
-  Residential High Density
-  Residential Low Density
-  Residential Medium Density

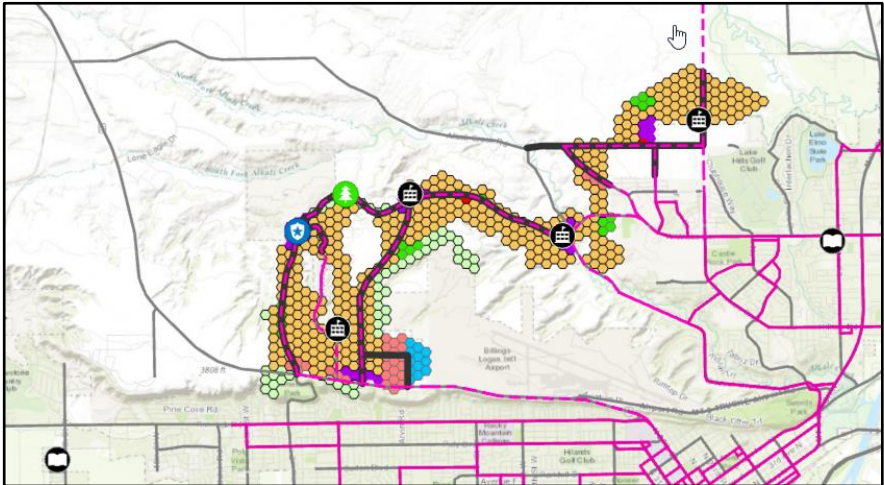
1 hexagon = 5.739 acres or approximately  
2.8 city blocks

Residential high & mixed use density = 16 d.u./acre

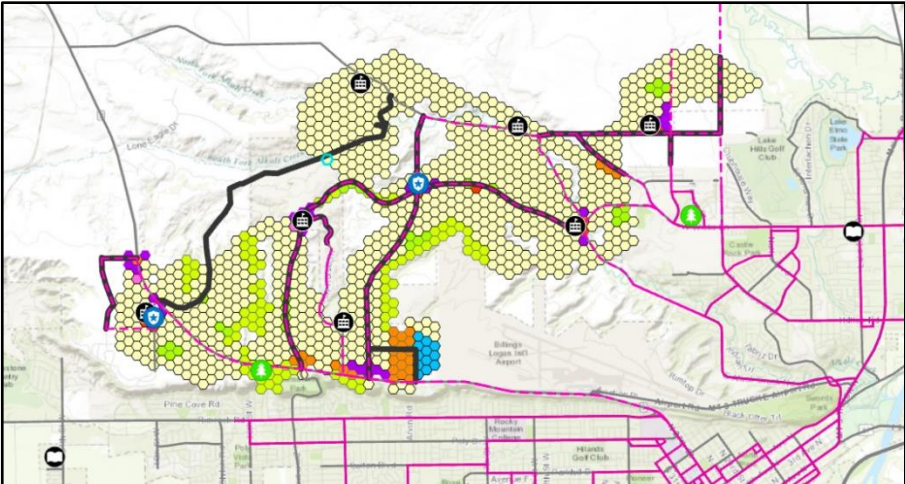
Residential medium density = 9 d.u./acre

Residential low density = 5 d.u./acre

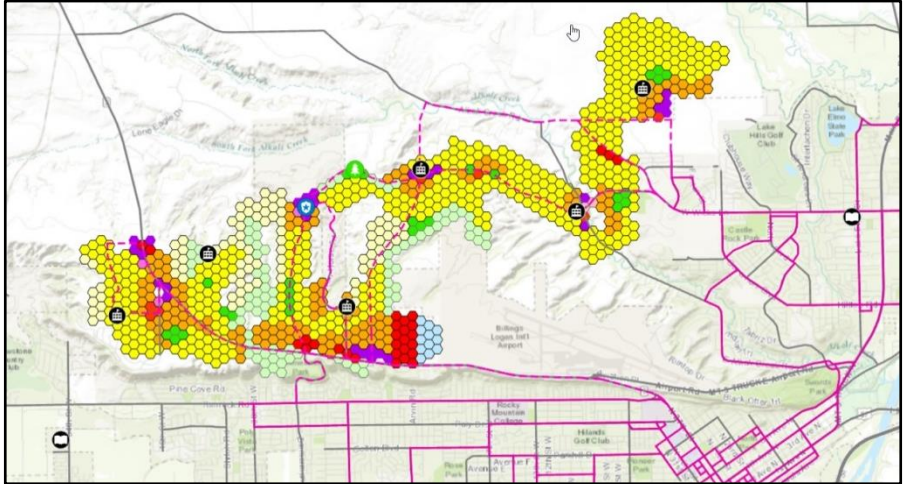
**NORTH HIGH DENSITY SCENARIO (NHD)**



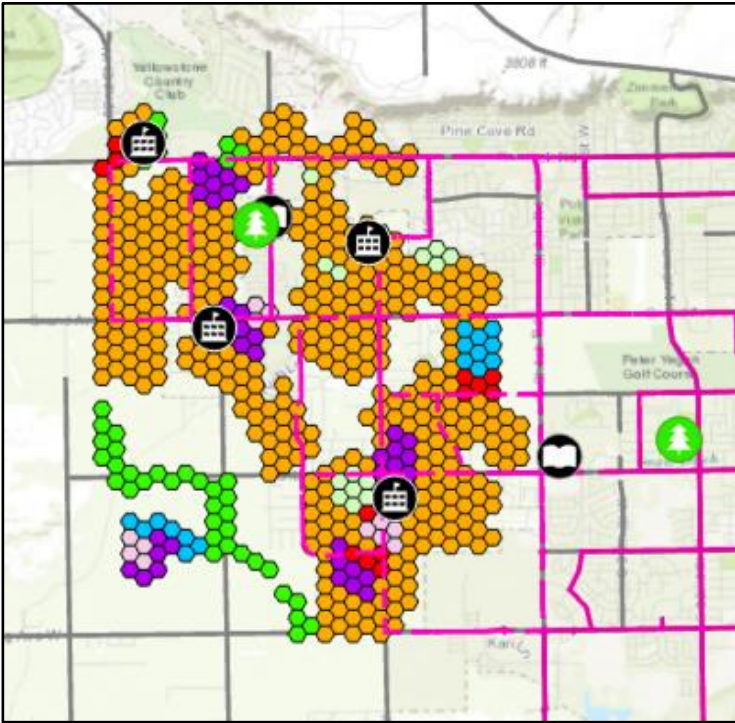
**NORTH LOW DENSITY SCENARIO (NLD)**



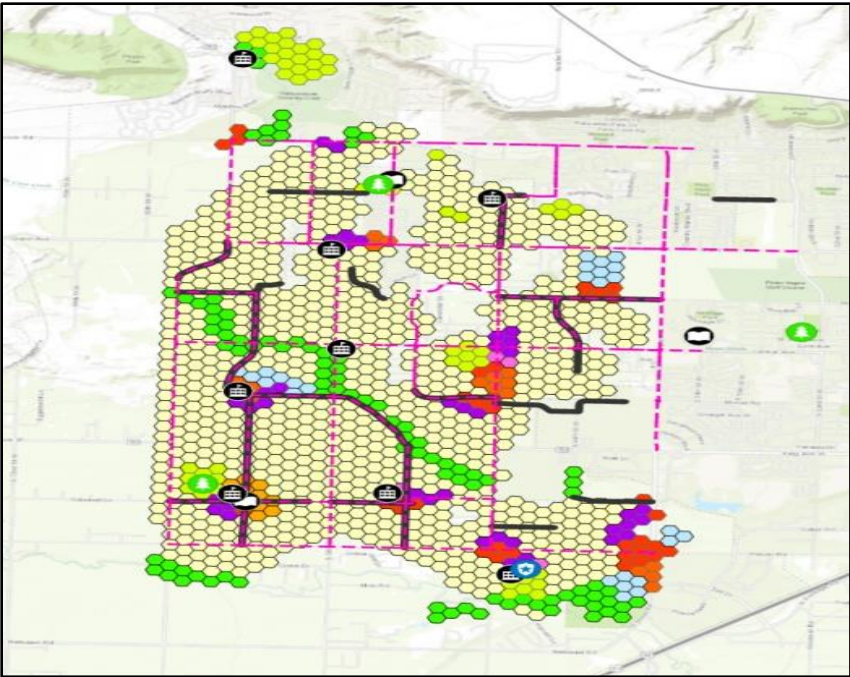
**NORTH PUBLIC PREFERRED SCENARIO (NPP)**



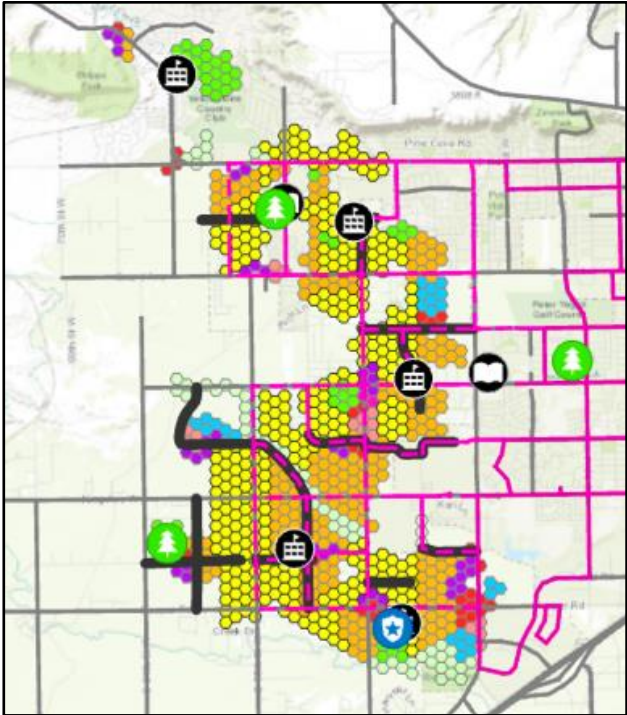
WEST HIGH DENSITY SCENARIO (WHD)



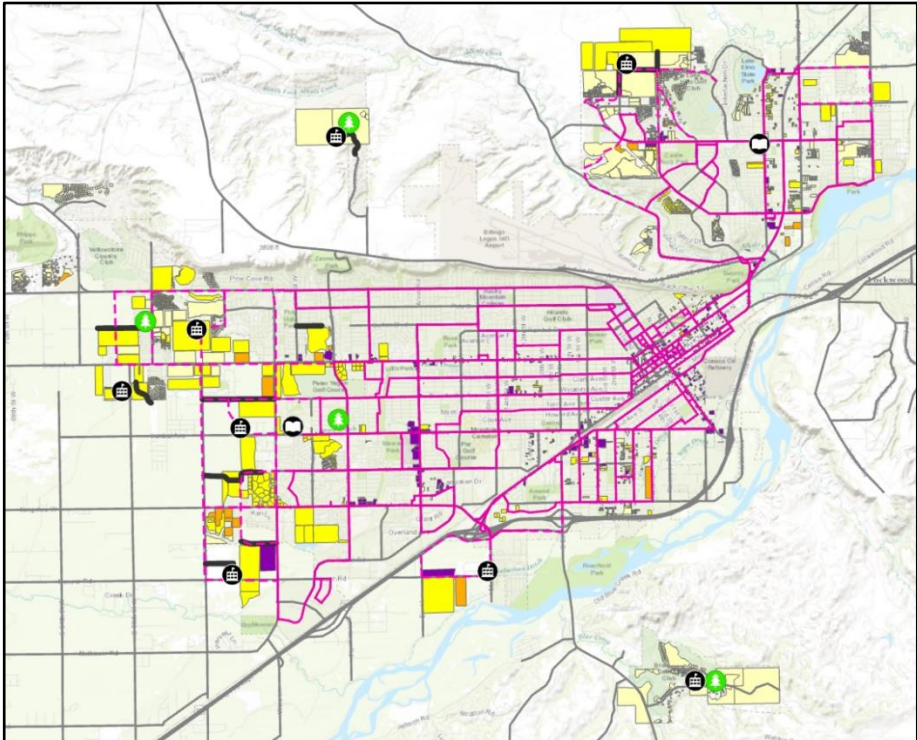
WEST LOW DENSITY SCENARIO (WLD)



**WEST PUBLIC PREFERRED (WPP)**



**INFILL AND ADJACENT PARCELS**



### Growth Indicator Descriptions

#### Branch Libraries

The estimate for the number of branch libraries needed to meet the needs of the population in 2035 is based on two factors: 1) the average square feet per capita for urban public libraries in Montana, which has held steady for many years at .65, and 2) the distance from the branch library locations that should be constructed to meet existing resident's needs. The projected population of Billings in year 2035 is 151,404 based on a 1.5% growth rate, resulting in a recommended total square footage of 98,413. The Billings Public Library is 66,000 square feet. The minimum size for a branch library is 15,000 s.f. which would accommodate adult and children's collections, computers, and a multi-purpose meeting room. The formula used to calculate the number of branch libraries needed in 2035 is:  $(98,413 \text{ s.f.} - 66,000 \text{ s.f.}) / 15,000 \text{ s.f.} = 2.1$ . For practical purposes two branch libraries was used as a minimum for each scenario. The cost was based on the 2014 construction cost for the Billings Public Library at \$200 per square foot excluding land acquisition costs. The assumption was made that two branch libraries are needed within the existing city limits. These locations are fixed. If growth occurs more than four miles from these locations, as in the case of the North Scenarios, a third branch library was located.

#### Walkability

Elementary schools were used to represent the walkability of a neighborhood. If an elementary school is located within 20 minutes (1 mile) of every residential unit, the neighborhood is considered walkable. This situation currently exists within Billings. The placement of hypothetical elementary schools within the scenarios ensured 20 minute coverage for every residential unit. The construction cost is calculated at \$185 per square foot based on an architects' estimate excluding land acquisition costs.

#### Community Parks

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) offers a classification for municipal parks based on size and use. Billings, generally speaking, maintains Subdivision, Community and Regional parks. Subdivision parks are acquired through the subdivision process and serve the immediate development. Regional parks, because of their size have been acquired through private donations or arrangements with other public agencies and attract users from the community and beyond. Community parks are generally acquired by the City for use by the community. The cost of acquisition and improvement is paid for through city funds. Community parks are used as indicators of parkland needs for the growth scenarios. The location of the hypothetical community parks are based on distance to a residential unit. Using the NRPA guidelines of a three-mile radius, community parks were located to ensure every residence was within at least three miles. The cost of acquisition was not calculated but the improvement costs, based on 2015 prices are estimated to be approximately \$112,370 per acre. Based on the NRPA guidelines, community parks should be approximately 30 acres in size.

#### Public Safety

Billings' residents value their safety both at home and on the road. The distance from existing fire and police stations is used as an indicator of personal safety. A five-minute response time is considered reasonable according to the Billings Fire Chief, Paul Dextras. The existing city area is within this

response time coverage as is much of the outlying area. However, there are gaps in this coverage area that would require a new station to ensure the same level of service throughout the community. Future facilities will be built as co-located Fire and Police facilities similar to Fire Station 7 on 54<sup>th</sup> Street West. The approximate cost of a new facility, \$1,714,414, is based on the cost to construct Fire Station 7 but does not include the land acquisition costs. Where gaps in the five-minute response time coverage were identified, a hypothetical facility was placed at a location deemed appropriate by the Fire Chief (i.e. not in residential areas and with good access to arterial roads). Most scenarios required at least one additional co-located Fire and Police station, while the North Low Density Scenario required two additional locations.

### Public Transit

Public transit is desired in Billings and is considered an important service to provide to new growth areas. MET transit currently operates 17 fixed routes. The cost of hypothetical bus routes serving the scenarios were used as indicators of growth impacts. The hypothetical bus routes were located along existing and hypothetical arterial and collector roads at about the same level of coverage as the existing city limits. The 2015 cost of operating a bus for one mile was multiplied by the number of route miles for each scenario. The operating cost for one mile in 2015 was \$31,293.

### Arterial Roads

Roads within the growth areas are currently in the County and are built to county standards. They generally lack shoulders and have no curb and gutter or sidewalks. Arterial roads in the City are wider and include curb, gutter, sidewalk and usually landscaping and a multi-purpose path. As the City expands into the County, the County arterials will eventually need to be brought up to City standards. In some locations where arterials do not exist, new roads will need to be constructed. The locations of arterials, including roads that need to be upgraded and constructed, were obtained from the 2014 Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan. Additionally, if existing or proposed arterials were not shown in this plan but are needed to serve the scenarios, hypothetical arterials were added. The cost to reconstruct or construct arterial roads is approximately \$5,000,000 per mile. The miles of hypothetical arterials that need to be reconstructed or constructed was multiplied by the cost per mile to arrive at the arterial cost of roads for each scenario.

### Collector Roads

Similar to arterial roads, some collector roads exist in the County and some need to be constructed in order to serve the growth areas. Local roads through subdivisions were not considered because these routes would be entirely constructed at the time of development. The location of collectors was also derived from the Long Range Transportation Plan, except where none existed or are proposed. In those cases, routes were added to ensure a reasonable transportation network in each of the scenarios. The cost of constructing or reconstructing a collector is approximately \$1,000,000 per mile. This cost was multiplied by the number of miles of hypothetical collectors to arrive at the total cost of collectors for each scenario.

### Development Costs

The total development cost of all growth indicators were summed to compare how much it would cost the public to ensure services and facilities are provided to each of the scenarios. Table 5.1 shows the cost of the indicators and the total cost for each scenario.

TABLE 5.1. GROWTH INDICATOR COSTS PER SCENARIO

SCENARIO	INFILL	NORTH GROWTH AREA			WEST GROWTH AREA		
	Infill and Adjacent Growth	Preferred Scenario	Low Density Scenario	High Density Scenario	Preferred Scenario	Low Density Scenario	High Density Scenario
Estimate Population to Accommodate	50,000	48,574	48,141	48,960	48,928	48,390	49,112
Acres of New Community Parks	130	30	60	30	100	100	70
Development Cost per acre	\$112,370	\$112,370	\$112,370	\$112,370	\$112,370	\$112,370	\$112,370
<b>TOTAL PARK COSTS</b>	<b>\$14,608,100</b>	<b>\$3,371,100</b>	<b>\$6,742,200</b>	<b>\$3,371,100</b>	<b>\$11,237,000</b>	<b>\$11,237,000</b>	<b>\$7,865,900</b>
Number of New Elementary Schools @ 30K s.f.	5	6	8	4	5	6	4
Elementary School Costs (30K*\$185)*#	\$27,750,000	\$33,300,000	\$44,400,000	\$22,200,000	\$27,750,000	\$33,300,000	\$22,200,000
New Fire/Police Stations	0	1	2	1	1	1	0
Facility Costs	\$1,714,414	\$1,714,414	\$1,714,414	\$1,714,414	\$1,714,414	\$1,714,414	\$1,714,414
<b>TOTAL STATION COSTS</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,714,414</b>	<b>\$3,428,828</b>	<b>\$1,714,414</b>	<b>\$1,714,414</b>	<b>\$1,714,414</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Miles of New Bus Routes	35.32	24.98	31.26	22.55	29.19	40.29	22.22
Transit Operation Costs per mile	\$31,293	\$31,293	\$31,293	\$31,293	\$31,293	\$31,293	\$31,293
<b>TOTAL TRANSIT COSTS</b>	<b>\$1,105,269</b>	<b>\$781,699</b>	<b>\$978,219</b>	<b>\$705,657</b>	<b>\$913,443</b>	<b>\$1,260,795</b>	<b>\$695,330</b>
New Branch Libraries	2	2	3	2	2	3	2
Branch Library Costs	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000
<b>TOTAL LIBRARY COSTS</b>	<b>\$6,500,000</b>	<b>\$6,500,000</b>	<b>\$9,750,000</b>	<b>\$6,500,000</b>	<b>\$6,500,000</b>	<b>\$9,750,000</b>	<b>\$6,500,000</b>
Miles of Arterial Construction/Re construction	9.1	11.0	12.6	7.8	17.6	24.0	13.7
Cost per mile	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Miles of Collector Construction/Re construction	5.0	6.4	7.2	4.6	10.6	13.0	4.2
Cost per mile	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
<b>TOTAL ROAD COSTS</b>	<b>\$50,540,000</b>	<b>\$61,400,000</b>	<b>\$70,200,000</b>	<b>\$43,600,000</b>	<b>\$98,590,000</b>	<b>\$132,910,000</b>	<b>\$72,580,000</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS FOR SCENARIO</b>	<b>\$100,503,369</b>	<b>\$107,067,213</b>	<b>\$135,499,247</b>	<b>\$78,091,171</b>	<b>\$146,704,857</b>	<b>\$190,172,209</b>	<b>\$109,841,230</b>

### Revenues Generated by Unit and Per Acre

Growth comes with a cost; residents and visitors desire city services, amenities, and infrastructure which need to be maintained and eventually replaced. In order to determine if there is a growth pattern, i.e. housing density, that is more effective at paying for those costs, the potential revenues generated by each growth pattern were evaluated. Revenue, in terms of City taxes and assessments, was calculated for each growth pattern by extrapolating revenue generated from similar existing growth patterns. The average annual tax and assessment revenue generated from recently created subdivisions of high, low and medium densities was applied to similar housing types in each scenario. For purposes of this calculation, the return from high density housing in Josephine Crossing and Lenhardt Square Subdivisions were used; for low density housing, Ironwood and Yellowstone Ridge were used; for medium density housing, Trails West, Cottonwood Grove and Grand Peaks Subdivisions were used.

The amount of land needed to accommodate the three growth patterns; high, medium and low, varies significantly. The land area is an important factor when comparing the total development costs for each scenario. Residential development that is more spread out and further from service centers and infrastructure, costs more than development that is more compact, as shown in Table 5.1. The relationship is similar to the revenues generated. More revenue is generated for higher density units on a per acre basis than for lower density units on a per acre basis. This is because there is more tax generated in a smaller area. Table 5.2 below shows the results of the taxes generated on a per unit basis and a per acre basis for each growth pattern or housing density.

**TABLE 5.2. AVERAGE TAX AND ASSESSMENT VALUES BY HOUSING DENSITY.**

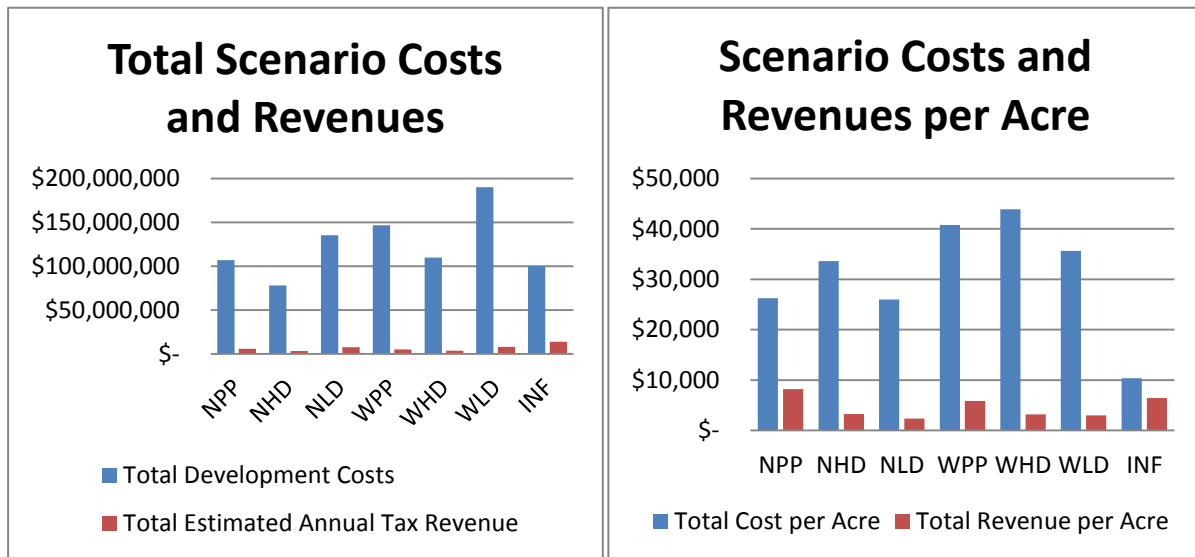
		High Density	Medium Density	Low Density
Sampled Subdivisions	Total units	178	219	59
	Total acreage	13.06	55.28	37.2
Average tax + assessment/unit		\$419	\$731	\$1,461.26
Total revenue generated in subdivision		\$45,893	\$158,181	\$87,422
Total revenue in subdivision/acre		<b>\$3,514</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,350</b>

The average tax + assessment value per unit calculated from the sampled subdivision was multiplied by the number of the housing units by density in each scenario. The revenue generated on a per acre basis was divided by the number of acres occupied by that density for each scenario. The results are shown in Table 5.3 and Charts 5.1 and 5.2.

TABLE 5.3. COMPARISON OF COST AND REVENUES PER SCENARIO.

	Total Development Costs	Total Estimated Annual Tax Revenue	Total Cost per Acre	Total Revenue per Acre
North Public Preferred	\$ 140,314,390	\$ 5,831,510	\$ 34,436	\$ 8,183
North High Density	\$ 114,548,989	\$ 3,393,900	\$ 49,283	\$ 3,280
North Low Density	\$ 193,189,585	\$ 7,949,106	\$ 37,073	\$ 2,350
West Public Preferred	\$ 178,743,468	\$ 5,134,254	\$ 49,674	\$ 5,873
West High Density	\$ 125,800,259	\$ 3,653,680	\$ 50,276	\$ 3,184
West Low Density	\$ 198,481,205	\$ 8,125,472	\$ 37,228	\$ 3,023
Infill and Adjacent Parcels	\$ 100,503,369	\$ 14,171,362	\$ 23,893	\$ 6,430

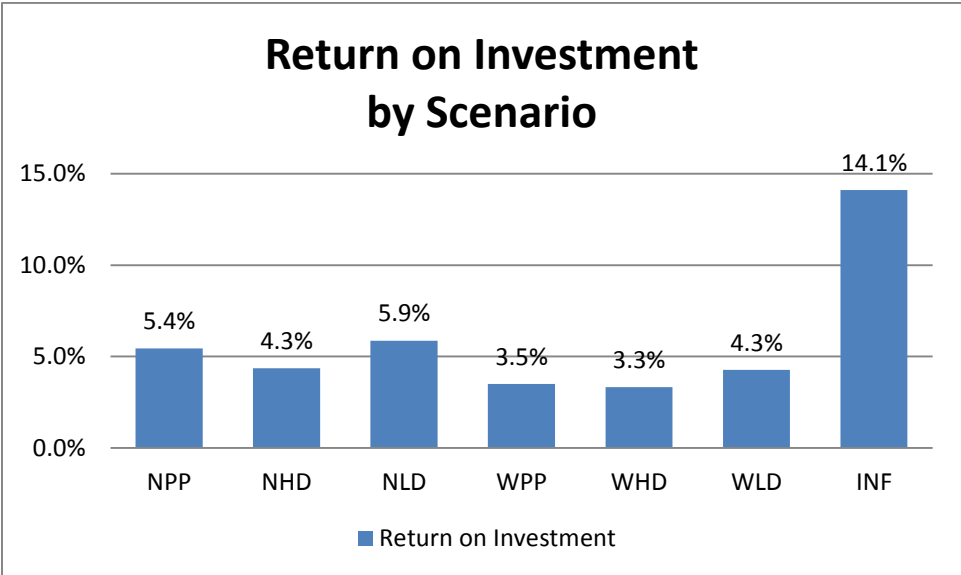
CHARTS 5.1 AND 5.2. COMPARISON OF COST AND REVENUE PER SCENARIO.



### Return of Investment

Another way to look at the cost and benefit of each scenario is to consider the return on investment. In other words, what is the percentage of costs recouped by one year of revenue? The result is presented as the Return on Investment which calculates the annual revenues divided by the development costs and presented as a percentage. The higher the percentage, the better rate of return. Chart 5.3 shows the Return on Investment for each scenario.

CHART 5.3. RETURN ON INVESTMENT BY SCENARIO



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## Appendices



Public input is paramount in producing a growth policy that reflects the community's goals and values. Past planning efforts have demonstrated that holding a few public meetings after work hours rarely attracts a meaningful number of people. Rather than expecting the public to attend randomly scheduled meetings, it was decided early in the process to take the information to them. Since so many citizens are members of civic organizations, working groups and neighborhood committees it was more effective to schedule presentations and solicit input during their regularly scheduled meeting times.

The initial round of presentations began in October, 2014. Between then and February, 2015, 30 “scoping” meetings were held in addition to one public hearing, three steering committee meeting, one City Council meeting, one County Commissioner meeting, and one Planning Board meeting. The first presentation provided an overview of existing conditions in Billings, constraints and opportunities for growth, and asked the participants to answer the questions:

- How should we grow?
- Where should we grow?

Postcards were provided to the participants and collected after each meeting. The response was very good. A total of 312 cards were submitted. While some cards had a simple, one line response to each question; most cards had multiple ideas embedded in the response. Staff transcribed each card and separated the various ideas into distinct comments. A total of individual 1,200 comments were obtained from those responses.

The Planning Division staff took considerable time reviewing the comments and categorizing them into general themes. The themes that emerged from this exercise formed the basis of the community goals and the individual comments formulated the essence of the growth guidelines. Both the community goals and guidelines are discussed within the main body of this document and the list of comments is provided at the end of this section.

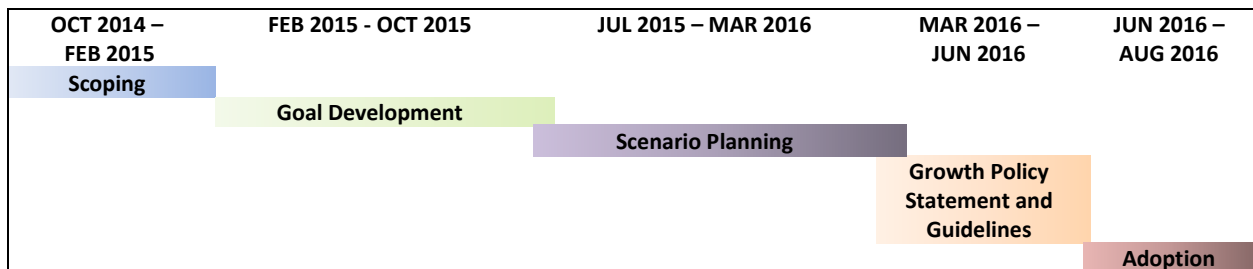
In the next round of meetings, only eight of the groups were revisited as well as the steering committee, Planning Board, County Commissioners and City Council. This was considered the Goal Development Phase of the process where the results of categorizing the public comment into themes and later goals were presented. At these meetings, people were asked to review the results and comment on whether they made sense? Was something missing? Could it be presented differently? The most substantial comment pointed out that another category could be added: Prosperity. This was later done and the comments relating to this goal were re-categorized. This process took another eight months at which time the goal descriptions, toolboxes and performance measures were also developed.

The time between July, 2015 and March, 2016 was used primarily to develop and analyze the growth scenarios and referred to as the Scenario Planning Phase. The development and analysis of the growth scenarios was largely done in-house with the assistance of Geodata Services, Inc. from Missoula, Montana. However, a very critical piece of this phase, creating the preferred scenarios, was performed

with the input of the steering committee and the Planning Board. Seven scenarios were eventually developed based on three growth patterns: infill, high density, low density, and public preferred. The high, low and preferred growth patterns were applied to the area north of the Billings Airport around the proposed Inner Belt Loop alignment, and west of the existing City limits out to 64<sup>th</sup> St. West between Rimrock Road and Neibauer Road. The infill scenario identified vacant and potentially re-developable parcels in the City and adjacent to the City. A full explanation of the scenario planning process is provided in the body of this document. The results of the Scenario Planning Phase were presented to the City Council, the steering committee, and the Planning Board. A third public meeting was also held in March, 2016 to explain the process and get input on the results. As a result of these meetings, some changes to the placement of selected ‘growth indicators’ were modified and the scenarios were rerun to reflect those changes.

The final public meeting was held in May, 2016. The purpose of this meeting was to present the proposed Growth Policy Statement and Growth Guidelines. These elements are the most important part of this Growth Policy in that they provide decision-makers information to consider when making future land use decisions. The public comments gathered at this meeting were incorporated into the proposed Growth Policy Statement and Growth Guidelines and presented to the steering committee, Planning Board and City Council.

As required by state law, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the Draft 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy – BillingsBeyond, and forwarded, by resolution, a recommendation of approval. The City Council passed the Resolution of Intent to Adopt the Growth Policy on July 11, and The Growth Policy adopted, by resolution 16-10575, on August 8, 2016.



### Introduction

The tools available to implement a Growth Policy are limited by legal authority, by administrative cost, and to some degree, political acceptance. Implementation tools may be enforced through regulations, adopted as policy by governing bodies or emplaced voluntarily by landowners. They may be mandated by state law or authorized by City Code or County Ordinances. Some tools are simply policies, without the force and effect of law, while others are purely educational. There is a wide variety of tools currently used in the City of Billings. The first part of this section briefly describes the existing and recommended implementation tools available to the City to achieve the Goals and Objectives of this Growth Policy. The last section describes a reasonable timetable for update and revision to the 2016 Growth Policy.

### Implementation Tools

This section provides general information on a range of planning tools that can be used to implement a growth policy. It includes brief definitions or descriptions for each tool. Some tools are already in use in Billings and others are suggested for further consideration. This list is not intended to be comprehensive of all planning tools available to local jurisdictions.

The implementation tools are organized into the following descriptive categories: Regulatory, Planning and Programming, Financial, Educational, and Cooperative. **Regulatory tools** are enforced by regulations and are authorized by state statute. Governing bodies adopt **Planning and Programming** tools to demonstrate a commitment to a particular direction or course of action, and can be employed with discretion. **Financial tools** require a financial commitment to appropriate funds for specific projects. **Educational tools** include a broad range of items used to inform governing bodies, policy makers, and the public on key planning and community development issues. **Cooperative tools** describe partnerships between departments and agencies to develop joint policies or action plans. These may serve as the basis for creating, reviewing, and revising policies and regulations. Cooperative tools are generally enforced or administered at the discretion of cooperating agencies.

### Regulatory Tools

#### *Subdivision Regulations*

Counties and incorporated municipalities must adopt subdivision regulations that comply with the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act (76-3-101 *et seq.*, MCA). Subdivision regulations control the creation of new parcels by imposing design and infrastructure standards and by establishing procedures for local governmental and public review. Regulating the division of land ensures that development can be adequately served without adversely impacting public services and natural resources.

The City of Billings has adopted subdivision regulations. Appendix D provides more detailed information on the relationship between subdivision regulations and this Growth Policy. Subdivision regulations are among the most effective tools available for implementation of a growth policy and land use changes.

### *Design Standards*

Design standards are typically part of subdivision regulations or incorporated into the municipal code to preserve community character, protect property values, and ensure public safety. The Montana Subdivision and Platting Act authorizes the adoption of design standards, and self-chartered municipalities may include them in their municipal code.

Design standards can significantly affect the appearance and functionality of a development. For these reasons, they are often employed to address a variety of issues including land use, aesthetics, transportation, and public service. Flexible design standards may help reduce costs to the developer. Development costs can also increase if design standards are complex and rigid. Both the City and the County have adopted the Entryway/Interchange zoning regulations, which require a higher level of landscaping and building design in the Entryway/Interchange zoning districts. Additional design standards have been adopted by the City for the Zoo Drive-Shiloh Road Corridor as zoning ‘overlay districts’. These districts are at major entryways into the community and are intended to be developed in an attractive and appealing manner.

### *Zoning Regulations*

Zoning is another commonly used tool for implementing land use policy. The historical rationale for zoning was to separate incompatible land uses. Zoning ordinances generally address type of use, intensity of use, and space and bulk requirements. Development and design standards for such things as signage, parking, landscaping, noise, lighting, buildings, and site layout can also be addressed through zoning regulations. A zoning map and the descriptive text of districts are the two critical components of zoning regulations. Municipal or County zoning must comply with the Growth Policy and its amendments.

The Billings-Yellowstone County Unified Zoning Regulations govern zoning in the City and County. Most of the County is not zoned. Billings, Laurel, and Broadview all maintain their own zoning within their corporate boundaries. Laurel has extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction that extends approximately one mile outside of the city limits. Yellowstone County has a zoning jurisdiction that extends out from the Billings city limits approximately 4-1/2 miles. The majority of the zoned property within Yellowstone County is located in and around the Billings and Laurel urban areas. Additionally, there are a number of citizen-initiated zoning districts located throughout the County as described in the Land Use Element chapter.

The City of Billings Zoning Ordinance #1099, originally adopted on July 15, 1930, governs zoning within the municipal limits of the City of Billings. In addition to the more traditional form of zoning, jurisdictions may explore other zoning approaches that can be used to regulate development of property. Some of these alternatives are described below.

### *Performance Zoning*

Performance zoning is an alternative to traditional “Euclidian” zoning because it uses measurable standards to regulate the impact a land use may have on its surroundings instead of separating uses by zoning districts. Performance zoning for residential uses can be used to protect natural resources and provide flexibility in the development design. Common performance thresholds established through performance zoning include minimum amount open space, maximum density, and maximum percent of impervious surface.

Performance zoning has also been used to address commercial and industrial uses by requiring more intense uses to meet higher standards for site and building design. For example, the City has adopted the Medical Corridor Permit Zoning District. In this district, a proposal is evaluated for compliance with absolute standards and a point system is used to determine compliance against a set of relative standards. All projects have to meet the absolute standards; then, the more intense the use, the greater the number of relative standards must be met.

### *Interim Zoning*

Interim zoning may be employed by the City or County as an emergency measure to protect the public health, safety and under the County’s authority, morals (76-2-306, MCA). A jurisdiction may use interim zoning to prohibit uses that may conflict with a “contemplated zoning proposal” which the governing body is considering. The City can implement interim zoning initially for only six months, with an extension up to one year. Interim zoning has been used by the City of Billings to implement the Entryway/Interchange zoning regulations until permanent regulations could be adopted and more recently to implement buffering standards for sexually oriented businesses.

### *Transfer of Development Rights*

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) uses zoning to allow owners of land in areas called “sending districts” to sever the development rights from their property and sell, or otherwise legally transfer those rights to owners of property located in specified “receiving districts”, where higher intensity of development is preferred. There are several components essential to a TDR program: a designated protection/preservation area (sending zone), a designated growth area (receiving zone), development rights that can be severed from the land, and a procedure for transferring development rights between properties. TDR procedures have not been established in Yellowstone County.

### ***Building Permits***

The City Building Division administers building codes for the City of Billings only. The Building Codes that are adopted by the State, including building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical, are also required to be adopted by the City. The Code provides the City with minimum standards to safeguard life and property by regulating building construction. They also serve to create an enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing place to live while preserving property values. A building permit is required for almost any type of construction on private property. Several Departments are involved in the review process, including Fire, Engineering, Planning and Community Services and Public Utilities to ensure compliance with their associated codes.

### ***Floodplain Regulations***

The purpose of floodplain regulations is to protect the watercourses and their flood storage areas, as well as the public health, safety, and welfare. Montana state law requires local governments to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations. The City and the County administer separate floodplain regulations.

## **Planning and Programming Tools**

### ***Long-Range Planning***

Critical implementation tools for this Growth Policy are more detailed neighborhood or area plans, and plans to address a particular issue such as transportation, parks and recreation, economic development, infrastructure or housing. This Growth Policy establishes a framework for future plans by specifying public values through Growth Statement and Guidelines and the Goals and Objectives. With the adoption of this Growth Policy, plans may be developed that provide a higher level of detail and include content specific to an area or issue. Since 2003, five neighborhood plans within the City have been written and adopted as part of this Growth Policy.

In addition to the development of new plans, existing plans which presently have a role in decision making may need to be revised and updated. These include the 2014 Urban Area Transportation Plan, 2013 Billings Bicycle and Trail Master Plan, Parks2020, and several neighborhood plans. Updates to these plans could be simple additions or modifications or may require a new approach to become more consistent with the Growth Policy Goals and Objectives.

### ***Annexation Policy***

A city expands its boundaries and its jurisdictional authority through the process of annexation. State statute authorizes six separate methods for annexation. Adjacent land may be annexed as described in Parts 42 through 44 of Title 7, Chapter 2, Montana Code Annotated (MCA). Property

that is wholly surrounded by a city may be annexed under Part 45 with the exception of land used for agricultural, mining, smelting, refining, transportation, industrial or manufacturing purposes, golf course, cemeteries, or outdoor entertainment uses. Private property owners can petition for annexation as described in Part 46. When property owners petition for annexation, the City of Billings' Annexation Policy requires them to enter into an annexation agreement and comply with the other conditions under which annexation will occur. The Annexation Policy is used to help plan for expansion and provision of municipal services. In 2004, a 'Limits of Annexation' map was added to the policy indicating which areas surrounding the City limits could be reasonably supported for annexation if requested by the property owner. This map was developed based on expected and potential capital improvements the City has planned and is updated annually in coordination with the City's Capital Improvements Plan.

### *Urban Planning Area*

The Urban Planning Area is an area surrounding the City of Billings established for the purpose of planning for its future growth within a 10-year horizon. The UPA was initially created in 1967 under Article 20-300, BMCC, and has historically been the City's growth boundary. The UPA policy states that no City services shall be provided outside of the UPA; however, to quote a 1980 study, "the UPA is not designed to limit growth, merely limit the amount of land that is consumed and reduce the cost of services needed when this growth occurs." Expansion of the UPA requires the completion of an Urban Planning Study so that the City can determine the impacts of annexing and serving the property. City departments review UPS documents for conformance with operating policies, capital improvement plans, the Growth Policy, and other plans. A property must be within the Urban Planning area before it can be annexed into the City limits.

### *Urban Renewal Districts*

Title 7, Chapter 15, Part 42 of MCA, otherwise known as the Urban Renewal Law, gives municipalities the authority to redevelop and rehabilitate "blighted" areas. State law specifies requirements for preparing Urban Renewal Plans and also authorizes the expenditure of funds on Urban Renewal Districts, including tax increment funds. Urban Renewal Plans have been most recently prepared in 2006 for the 'East Billings Urban Renewal District' located east of downtown to MetraPark, and in 2008 for the 'South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Area' located near the South Billings Boulevard interchange.

### *Departmental Work Plans*

Every City department develops annual work plans to assist them in their budgeting process. Work plans establish a list of priority projects that the department can implement within the year, in addition to their regular work duties. For some departments, such as the Planning and Community Services and Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Departments, the annual work plan is

reviewed and approved by their citizen advisory boards. Work plans are also programming tools that establish the timeframes for completion of priority tasks and projects.

### Financial Tools

#### *Capital Improvements Programs*

The City of Billings adopts an annual Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) which identifies all capital projects that are in excess of \$25,000 and equipment needs in excess of \$5,000. The projects and equipment needs are then prioritized and budgeted over a five year period. The City undertakes a comprehensive review of the Capital Improvements Plan every two years. The importance of a CIP for land use planning is the critical connection between where and when infrastructure is provided and what the desired land use pattern is for a community or neighborhood. Proposals included in the CIP are reviewed for compliance with adopted land use and transportation planning policies.

#### *Fee Incentives*

Some City and County departments are authorized to charge fees for their services and facility maintenance. The most common fees are for solid waste service, storm drainage, water and sewer service. The location of development can be influenced by tying the location to a fee increase or decrease. Municipalities, particularly, have the ability to develop a utility fee structure that can be used as an incentive for directing growth.

#### *Purchase of Development Rights*

A Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program involves the outright purchase of development rights from a private property owner by local or state governments to preserve resource land. Funding for PDRs can come from sources such as bond initiatives, grants, and public matching funds programs. The difference between PDRs and land acquisition is that a property owner in a PDR program can continue to use this land in ways that are consistent with the objectives of the PDR program. PDR procedures have not been developed in Yellowstone County.

#### *Land Acquisition*

Land acquisition programs involve a jurisdiction or organization purchasing land usually for some public benefit. Some communities and organizations have used this tool to purchase land to be used for affordable housing development; others have used it to purchase property for its open space or agricultural value.

#### *Impact Fees*

An impact fee is a charge on new development assessed by a governmental entity at the time of the development approval process to pay for the construction or expansion of off-site capital improvements that are necessitated by and benefit the new development. In 2005, the state

legislature passed enabling legislation known as the “Montana Impact Fee Act” (7-6-1601, et seq., MCA) to allow local governments to establish impact fees provided certain requirements are met. In general, the collection and expenditure of impacts fees must be reasonably related to and reasonably attributed to the development’s share of the cost of infrastructure improvements made necessary by the new development.

### **Educational Tools**

#### *Inventories and Planning Studies*

Land use policies and decisions can be better informed if supported by studies and inventories. Typically, these studies help identify and rank critical social, environmental, historic and cultural resources. Studies and inventories can also provide the rational nexus required for exactions and other dedications. The information obtained from these studies must be well organized, accurate and easy to understand. Maps and databases developed using Geographic Information Systems can satisfy these criteria.

#### *Health Impact Assessments (HIA)*

The built environment can have substantial effects on the health of the community. By using a new tool known as the Health Impact Assessment, or HIA, one can research the potential health effects of an anticipated policy, program or project and offer recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize potential adverse health effects. HIAs are similar in some ways to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), which are mandated processes that focus on potential environmental outcomes of a proposed project, such as changes in air and water quality. However, unlike EIAs, HIAs are currently voluntary assessments that can be used to focus on possible community health outcomes of a proposal and subsequently highlight proactive measures to improve individual or community health. For example, an HIA may identify that a project or policy may inadvertently cause physical inactivity and lead to obesity, or that it may negatively impact air quality which may increase asthma occurrences, or even that it may promote inefficiencies in design that may lead to increased injuries. In these cases, the HIA would then recommend project alterations in order to help resolve these detrimental health impacts before they occur. HIAs are being increasingly used to proactively promote social equity and improve the health of many growing communities.

### Cooperative Tools

#### *Interjurisdictional Coordination and Partnerships*

The City and County must coordinate their efforts on several levels to provide safe and dependable services to the public. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an important mechanism for ensuring that transportation projects are coordinated between the City and the County. Both jurisdictions have representation in the MPO and jurisdictional interests are further represented by members from the joint City-County Planning Board. The Planning Board is composed of City and County residents and is advisory to both the City Council and the County Commissioners. The Billings Fire Department also cooperates with the County and other Fire District to provide services outside the City. Many quasi-governmental boards also have cooperative agreements with the City and County such as the Billings Downtown Partnership and Big Sky Economic Development Authority. It is through these partnerships that the interest of all jurisdictions are discussed and addressed.

#### *Interagency Coordination*

Some federal, state and local government land management agencies share similar responsibilities for the same resources. In some cases, these agencies are not well informed of other agencies' proposed plans or tasks. This lack of communication can result in ineffective policies or inconsistent regulations if agencies do not coordinate their planning and implementation efforts. Opportunities for interagency coordination are particularly possible in land and water conservation areas because the resources overlap agency jurisdictions.

### Timetable for Implementation and Updates

The planning horizon for this Growth Policy is 20 years; however, it is unreasonable to assume it will be relevant in 2035. State law requires that a growth policy be reviewed at least once every 5 years and revised as necessary (76-1-601 (3)(f)(iii), MCA). It is recommended that the Yellowstone County Board of Planning review this policy in 2021 and direct staff to make necessary revisions or perform a complete update.

Because this document is not prescriptive and does not include a list of strategies, projects, or policies to be implemented, no timetable is given for implementation. Instead, a list of implementation tools is provided in each of the Goal categories. These tools are to be considered when the City initiates certain actions that are listed as an Objective or Growth Guideline.

State law requires that this Growth Policy include a statement on how the governing bodies will coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions in matters related to the growth policy (76-1-601 (2)(f), MCA). Coordination of planning matters between Yellowstone County and the City of Billings is facilitated primarily through the Yellowstone County Planning Board. The jurisdiction of this board is the entire County, including the City of Billings and Town of Broadview but not including the City of Laurel planning jurisdiction. This countywide jurisdiction enables the Planning Board to coordinate policies with the County Commissioners and the City Council.

### **Coordinated Planning in Yellowstone County**

The history of coordinated planning in Yellowstone County goes back approximately 60 years. Based on records kept in the Planning Department, there has been some form of a joint planning board since the early 1940s. The most recent Planning Board structure was authorized through an Interlocal Agreement adopted in 1984 and amended in 1990 and again in 1995. The Interlocal Agreement establishes the administrative and financing responsibilities of each jurisdiction, the relationship of the Planning Board to the governing bodies and the relationship of the Planning Board and Planning Department Director and staff.

There are 15 members on the County Planning Board: seven are appointed by the County Commissioners, five are appointed by the Mayor of Billings, and one member is appointed by the County Commissioners from the governing board of the Yellowstone County Conservation District, and two members are ex-officio non-voting representative of School District No. 2 and the County Superintendent of Schools. Board members serve 2-year terms. The duties and responsibilities of the Planning Board are described in the By-Laws, last amended in 2012. In addition to other duties, the Board is responsible for developing a Growth Policy for the Board's jurisdiction.

In 1991, the City of Billings, Town of Broadview, and Yellowstone County adopted the first countywide comprehensive plan: The 1990 Yellowstone County Comprehensive Plan. Until then, the City and County developed separate planning documents. The Comprehensive Plan established goals and objectives and addressed separate City and County issues, as well as joint issues that involved both the City and County. In 2003, the Comprehensive Plan was updated, and renamed the 2003 Yellowstone County and City of Billings Growth Policy. The Growth Policy for the City and County was updated again in 2008.

The Yellowstone County Planning Board, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, is also charged with the responsibility for transportation planning for the Billings Urban Area. To accomplish this, the Board prepares a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) each year that contains a description of projects to undertake during the upcoming program year. It also contains appropriate funding information, staffing information, and a schedule for each project. The UPWP is supplemented by a five-year Transportation Improvements Plan (TIP). The TIP is a fiscal planning program for federally assisted

highway and transit improvements for the Billings urban area. Approximately every ten years, the MPO is responsible for drafting a Transportation Plan that assesses the transportation needs of the Billings Urban Area and recommends actions to address those needs. The most recent Transportation Plan was adopted in 2014.

The City and County conduct transportation planning together for the Billings urban area. Two committees, the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), were created through a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the City, County, County Planning Board, and the Montana Department of Transportation. The PCC is responsible for directing transportation policy for the study area and the TAC provides technical advice to the PCC.

In addition to the 1990 Comprehensive Plan, the 2008 Growth Policy and the 2014 Long Range Transportation Plan, there have been a number of other plans, primarily transportation related, adopted by both the City and County to address common issues. This Growth Policy supersedes previous Growth Policies but only for the City of Billings jurisdiction.

### Ongoing City and County Planning Coordination

There are a number of other coordinated efforts to address common issues, primarily for the Billings urban area. As a joint City-County office, the Planning and Community Services Department administers all planning programs for both jurisdictions. Additional city-county coordination on planning issues includes the following:

- Subdivision proposals adjacent to the City limits are reviewed by both City and County agencies. Subdivision proposals are also reviewed by state agencies when applicable for such issues as impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat, wildfire hazards, transportation, as well as other issues.
- The City and County have a joint Health Department that is responsible for public and environmental health programs in both jurisdictions. RiverStone Health's water quality and sanitation programs have strong links to land use and transportation planning in Yellowstone County.
- The City of Billings, City of Laurel, Yellowstone County, and the Crow Indian Tribe entered into an Interlocal Agreement for historic preservation. This agreement created the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board and Certified Local Government. This board reviews and implements various policies for historic, archeological, and cultural preservation issues throughout Yellowstone County. Each governmental agency has representation on this board.
- The Yellowstone County Air Quality Board serves both the City and County through a Memorandum of Agreement to address local air quality issues.
- The City Fire Department has a contractual agreement with the Billing Urban Fire Service Area (BUFSA) to provide fire suppression and first response services. The Department also contracts equipment and labor to the Montana Department of Natural Resources for wildfire suppression in times of need. The Department also has mutual aid agreements with the three oil refineries, Lockwood Fire Department, Billings Logan International Airport Aircraft Rescue Firefighting, and

the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department as well as all of the surrounding volunteer fire departments.

- Subdivision, zoning, floodplain administration, permitting, and enforcement programs rely on strong collaborative efforts with other departments in the city and county, as well as with state and federal agencies.
- The City, County and State share Geographic Information System Resources pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding. Based on this agreement, the Montana Department of Revenue shares property ownership and tax information with the Yellowstone County Information Systems Department. In return, the County maintains the City and County parcel coverage with the assistance of the City of Billings.

### **Strategy for Future Cooperation**

The City and the County will continue to improve their cooperative relationships by maintaining a joint City-County Planning Board and continuing the existing cooperative agreements. The Planning Board and existing coordinating organizations will strive to implement this Growth Policy equitably, openly, and for the benefit of all City residents.

Every county, city and town is required to adopt and enforce subdivision regulations that provide for the orderly development of their jurisdictional areas, (76-3-501, MCA). The Montana Subdivision and Platting Act (Title 76, Chapter 3, MCA) specifies the purpose and minimum requirements of the subdivision regulations. It is incumbent on the local governing body to adopt regulations consistent with this law and to review subdivision applications in accordance with the criteria provided in 76-3-608(3)(a):

1. The impact on agriculture
2. The impact on agricultural water user's facilities
3. The impact on local services
4. The impact on the natural environment
5. The impact on wildlife and wildlife habitat
6. The impact on public health and safety

This chapter presents both definitions of the review criteria and describes how these criteria are to be used to review subdivisions.

### Primary Review Criteria

A growth policy is required to include a statement explaining how the governing bodies will define agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and public health and safety and describe how these items will be used in the evaluation and decisions of a subdivision proposal (76-1-601(3)(h), MCA). The following section provides detailed definitions of the primary review criteria and how the criteria will be applied in subdivision review.

Each subdivision proposal shall be evaluated based on its effect on certain factors expressed in this Growth Policy and implemented through the City and County Subdivision Regulations. The evaluation factors specify what effects should be considered at the time of subdivision review. The degree to which these effects play a role in subdivision approval and denial will be dependent on 1) whether the effects are allowed by existing laws and regulations, and 2) whether the effects can be reasonably mitigated.

#### **Agriculture**

##### ***Definition***

Agriculture means the use of land for growing, raising, or marketing of plants or animals to produce food, feed, and fiber commodities. Examples of agricultural activities include, but are not limited to, cultivation and tillage of the soil; dairying; growing and harvesting of agricultural or horticultural commodities; and the raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals, or poultry. Agriculture does not include gardening for personal use, keeping of house pets, kenneling, or landscaping for aesthetic purposes. The definition of agricultural land also includes land

## Appendix D – Subdivision Review Criteria and Process

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considered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to have a soil of agricultural importance and lands devoted to a soil conservation or rangeland management program.

### ***Evaluation Factors***

1. The amount of agricultural land removed from production shall be considered.
2. The amount of agricultural land with soil considered prime or having statewide or local importance by the Natural Resources and Conservation Service shall be considered.
3. Subdivision review shall consider the potential conflicts between the proposed subdivision and adjacent agricultural operations, including:
  - a. Interference with the movement of livestock or farm machinery
  - b. Maintenance of fences
  - c. Proliferation of weeds
  - d. Harassment of livestock by pets
  - e. Odors
  - f. Visual quality
4. It shall be determined whether the proposal is located within the Urban Planning Area or in the “Limits of Annexation” as defined by the City’s Annexation Policy.

### **Agricultural Water User Facilities**

#### ***Definition***

Agricultural water user facilities shall mean those facilities which provide water for agricultural land or provide water for the production of agricultural products. These facilities include, but are not limited to ditches, canals, pipes, head gates, tanks, drains, reservoirs, ponds and developed springs used for agricultural purposes.

#### ***Evaluation Factors***

1. The location and proximity of an agricultural water user facility shall be considered.
2. Potential conflicts between facility users and subdivision residents shall be evaluated.
3. The rights of all water right owners and users of the facility shall be considered.

### **Local Services**

#### ***Definition***

Local services means any and all services provided to the public by local government entities or public utilities such as transportation systems, including non-motorized facilities, parking, law enforcement, fire protection, drainage structures, water supply, sanitary sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, recreation, parks, libraries, or schools.

#### ***Evaluation Factors***

1. Subdivision review shall consider the goals and objectives of existing plans.
2. Subdivision review shall consider increased demand on services and need to expand services as a result of the proposal. Lack of adequate service capacity and capability of a

local service may be grounds for denial if the situation cannot be mitigated by the applicant.

3. The cost of providing services shall be evaluated by determining the per capita or per lot cost of services and current and anticipated tax and fee revenue.

### **Natural Environment**

#### ***Definition***

The natural environment means the physical, chemical, and biological factors that exist within or influence a geographic area or community. These factors include, but are not limited to, geology, soils, topography, climate, surface water, groundwater, floodplain, vegetation, and objects or places of cultural, historic, or aesthetic significance.

#### ***Evaluation Factors***

1. Review of the subdivision shall consider the degree of impact to the following environmental features:
  - a. Riparian or wetland areas
  - b. Vegetation cover or type
  - c. Noxious weeds
  - d. Important or sensitive natural habitats
  - e. Surface and groundwater quality
  - f. Stream bank stability
  - g. Erodible soils
  - h. Cultural and historic landmarks
2. The amount of appropriate open space preserved for natural resource conservation shall be considered.
3. Results of water and sanitary facility inspection for all lots shall be considered.
4. Subdivision review shall also evaluate the amount of cuts and fill on slopes as a result of road or building construction.

### **Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat**

#### ***Definition***

Wildlife means animals that are not domesticated or tamed. Wildlife habitat means an area containing the complex of environmental conditions essential to wildlife for feeding and forage, cover, migration, breeding, rearing, nesting, or buffers from those areas. It also includes areas essential to the conservation of species protected by the Endangered Species Act or of special interest or concern to the State of Montana.

#### ***Evaluation Factors***

1. The presence and potential destruction of wildlife and wildlife habitat shall be considered in subdivision review.
2. Subdivision review shall consider the potential for human-wildlife conflicts or unhealthy encounters.

3. The amount of wildlife-friendly amenities, such as preserved open space, enhanced habitat or wildlife protection devices shall be considered in subdivision review.

### **Public Health and Safety**

#### ***Definition***

Allowable standards established by Federal, State and local policies, codes, and regulations shall be the primary means for defining the limits of acceptable public health and safety. Any variance from these standards shall be reasonably mitigated and approved by the governing body.

#### ***Evaluation Factors***

1. The subdivision review shall consider all potential hazards to residents of the subdivision from high voltage lines, high-pressure gas lines, highways, railroads or railroad crossing and nearby industrial or mining activity.
2. Any creation of public health or safety hazards by the subdivision, such as traffic or fire conditions, contamination or depletion of groundwater supplies, accelerated storm water runoff, widening or existing floodplain or flood hazard area, or existence within the Wildland-Urban Interface, must be considered in subdivision review.

### **Public Hearing Process**

As part of the major subdivision preliminary plat review process, a public hearing is required. The requirement for a public hearing is not applicable to the first minor subdivision of a tract of record. State law requires the governing body or its authorized agent to conduct the public hearing. Both the Board of County Commissioners and the City Council have relinquished that task to the County Planning Board. An outline of the public hearing process adopted by the Planning Board can be found in the By-Laws of Yellowstone County Board of Planning, as amended. The following hearing process is reproduced in its entirety from Section 5 of the By-Laws.

#### **SECTION 5 PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The Board shall cause to be published a Notice of Public Hearing containing the date, time, location, and purpose pursuant to statutory requirements in a newspaper of general circulation for each hearing held by the Board.

##### **A. Public Hearings for Subdivisions**

1. When a preliminary plat application is set for a public hearing pursuant to a public notice, the matter shall be heard even though no one in favor or in opposition to the application appears at the hearing, unless the Board has received a written request from the sub divider, twenty-four (24) hours prior to the public hearing, to continue such hearing at a later time due to good and sufficient reason, or to withdraw or to postpone the application for reason approved by the Board.

## Appendix D – Subdivision Review Criteria and Process

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2. Each person who speaks at the public hearing shall stand and furnish his/her name and address to the Board and shall thereby become a part of the record.
  3. Each preliminary plat application shall be heard in the following order:
    - a. A Planning Department staff member shall summarize pertinent data and present or amplify the recommendations of staff and department heads.
    - b. The applicant, or his representative, shall present the application to the Board, and summarize the proposed subdivision and, if applicable, the following criteria of public interests:
      - i. Effects on Agriculture
      - ii. Effects on Local Services.
      - iii. Effects on Natural Environment.
      - iv. Effects on Wildlife Habitat and Wildlife.
      - v. Effects on Public Health and Safety.
      - vi. Effects on Agricultural Users Facilities.
    - c. Persons in favor or opposed to the application shall be heard or written comments received up and until the time of the close of the public hearing.
- B. Other Public Hearings
1. All other public hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedure unless the Board determines by a majority vote to follow some different procedure:
    - a. The Board shall first hear a report on the subject item from the Planning Department staff, which report may include a recommendation as to the action to be taken by the Board.
    - b. The Board shall then hear and/or receive written or oral statements from the public in the following order:
      - i. Proponents of the proposal.
      - ii. Opponents of the proposal.
      - iii. Members of the public who, being neither proponents nor opponents of the proposal wish to make a general statement or comment regarding the same.
      - iv. The Board shall then hear any brief rebuttal to previous comments, testimony, or statements.
      - v. The Board shall then hear any brief final comments, statements, or recommendations, if any, from the Planning Department staff.
      - vi. Any person wishing to speak a second time may do so only during the proper course of the proceedings, only after all persons wishing to speak have been heard, and only with the permission of the President or the approval of the majority of the Board members.
  2. Prior to hearing and/or receiving oral statements, comments, or testimony from the public, the Board may, by majority vote, impose reasonable and prudent limitations on the time allotted for each person's oral statement, comments, or testimony.

## Appendix D – Subdivision Review Criteria and Process

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3. The Board or any member thereof, may at any time question any person about his/her statements, comments, or testimony.
  4. After hearing any and all statements, comments, and testimony as above provided, the President shall close the public testimony portion of the hearing. After closure, and after such discussion as may be appropriate, the Board may vote upon a recommendation for the item under consideration.
  5. Subject to any time constraints imposed by law, the Board may, at any stage of a public hearing or proceeding, continue the same to a later date in order to allow or facilitate full public participation, to obtain additional information, to properly consider or deliberate any matter, or for any other lawful reason. In the case of such continuance, the time and place of all further proceedings in regard thereto shall be immediately fixed and announced to the Planning Department staff and the public, in which case no further legal notice of the hearing need be given.
- C. Informal Hearings
- The Board, by majority vote, may follow some other procedures for the conduct of hearings.



## Appendix E – Scenario Planning Worksheet and CommunityViz™ Indicator Reports

Scenario Planning Worksheet									
Name	Base Scenario	NPP	NHD	NLD	WPP	WHD	WLD	INF	
Proposed Libraries Development Costs	0	\$ 6,500,000	\$ 6,500,000	\$ 9,750,000	\$ 6,500,000	\$ 6,500,000	\$ 9,750,000	\$ 6,500,000	
Proposed Schools Development Costs	0	\$ 33,300,000	\$ 22,200,000	\$ 44,400,000	\$ 27,750,000	\$ 22,200,000	\$ 33,300,000	\$ 27,750,000	
Proposed Community Parks Development Costs	0	\$ 3,371,100	\$ 3,371,100	\$ 6,742,200	\$ 11,237,000	\$ 7,865,900	\$ 11,237,000	\$ 14,608,100	
Proposed Police and Fire Station Development Costs	0	\$ 1,714,414	\$ 1,714,414	\$ 3,428,828	\$ 1,714,414	-	\$ 1,714,414	-	
Proposed Bus Routes Development Costs	0	\$ 781,699	\$ 705,657	\$ 978,219	\$ 913,443	\$ 695,330	\$ 1,260,795	\$ 1,105,269	
Proposed Arterial Roads Development Costs	0	-						-	
Proposed Collector Roads Development Costs2	0	\$ 61,400,000	\$ 43,600,000	\$ 70,200,000	\$ 98,590,000	\$ 72,580,000	\$ 132,910,000	\$ 50,540,000	
Proposed Community Parks Costs	0								
<b>Total Development Costs</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>107,067,213</b>	<b>78,091,171</b>	<b>135,499,247</b>	<b>146,704,857</b>	<b>109,841,230</b>	<b>190,172,209</b>	<b>100,503,369</b>	
<b>Total Estimated Annual Tax Revenue</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,831,510</b>	<b>3,393,900</b>	<b>7,949,106</b>	<b>5,134,254</b>	<b>3,653,680</b>	<b>8,125,472</b>	<b>14,171,362</b>	
<b>Total Cost per Acre</b>		<b>26,276</b>	<b>33,598</b>	<b>26,002</b>	<b>40,770</b>	<b>43,898</b>	<b>35,669</b>	<b>10,393</b>	
<b>Total Revenue per Acre</b>		<b>8,183</b>	<b>3,280</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>5,873</b>	<b>3,184</b>	<b>3,023</b>	<b>6,430</b>	
<b>Return on Investment</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
HexCountHD	0	148	378	0	234	395	9	93	
HexCountLD	0	87	0	881	0	0	882	733	
HexCountMD	0	448	0	0	354	0	0	684	
HexCountMixed	0	27	27	27	39	41	38	175	
ROI	NaN	0.113605404	0.070341334	0.179016383	0.138702261	0.123271658	0.257959017	0.218521683	
		88.6%	93.0%	82.1%	86.1%	87.7%	74.2%	78.1%	
Rank		2	1	5	4	3	7	6	
*1 hex = 16 high or mixed density units/9 med. density units/5 low density units									
HexCountHD du	16	2368	6048	0	3744	6320	144	1488	
HexCountLD du	5	435	0	4405	0	0	4410	3665	
HexCountMD du	9	4032	0	0	3186	0	0	6156	
HexCountMixed du	16	432	432	432	624	656	608	2800	
*1 hex = 5.739 acres	5.739								
HexCountHD acres		849.37	2169.34	0.00	1342.93	2266.91	51.65	533.73	
HexCountLD acres		499.29	0.00	5056.06	0.00	0.00	5061.80	4206.69	
HexCountMD acres		2571.07	0.00	0.00	2031.61	0.00	0.00	3925.48	
HexCountMixed acres		154.95	154.95	154.95	223.82	235.30	218.08	1004.33	
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>4,075</b>	<b>2,324</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>3,598</b>	<b>2,502</b>	<b>5,332</b>	<b>9,670</b>	



## Appendix E – Scenario Planning Worksheet and CommunityViz™ Indicator Reports

Scenario Planning Worksheet									
Name	Base Scenario	NPP	NHD	NLD	WPP	WHD	WLD	INF	
Total Cost/Acre/Growth Pattern									
High Density (including mixed use)		\$ 106,606	\$ 33,598	\$ 874,454	\$ 93,637	\$ 43,898	\$ 705,039	\$ 65,345	
Low Density		\$ 214,438	\$ -	\$ 26,799	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37,570	\$ 23,891	
Medium Density		\$ 41,643	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 72,211	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,603	
<b>Total cost per acre</b>		<b>362,687</b>	<b>33,598</b>	<b>901,253</b>	<b>165,848</b>	<b>43,898</b>	<b>742,609</b>	<b>114,839</b>	
<b>Rank</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	
Total Revenue/Growth Pattern	Rev/ac								
High Density (including mixed use)	\$ 3,514	\$ 2,984,693	\$ 7,623,068	\$ -	\$ 4,719,042	\$ 7,965,904	\$ 181,502	\$ 1,875,517	
Low Density	\$ 2,350	\$ 1,173,339	\$ -	\$ 11,881,739	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,895,225	\$ 9,885,714	
Medium Density	\$ 2,861	\$ 7,355,837	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,812,425	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,230,787	
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>11,513,869</b>	<b>7,623,068</b>	<b>11,881,739</b>	<b>10,531,467</b>	<b>7,965,904</b>	<b>12,076,727</b>	<b>22,992,018</b>	
Total Revenue/Acre/Growth Pattern									
High Density (including mixed use)	\$ 2,972	\$ 3,280	\$ -	\$ 3,012	\$ 3,184	\$ 673	\$ 1,219		
Low Density	\$ 2,350	\$ -	\$ 2,350	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,350	\$ 2,350		
Medium Density	\$ 2,861	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,861	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,861		
<b>Total Revenue/Acre</b>		<b>8,183</b>	<b>3,280</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>5,873</b>	<b>3,184</b>	<b>3,023</b>	<b>6,430</b>	
<b>Rank</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	
Total Revenue/Unit/Growth Pattern									
High Density (including mixed use)	\$ 419	\$ 1,173,200	\$ 2,715,120	\$ 181,008	\$ 1,830,192	\$ 2,922,944	\$ 315,088	\$ 1,796,672	
Low Density	\$ 1,461	\$ 635,535	\$ -	\$ 6,435,705	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,443,010	\$ 5,354,565	
Medium Density	\$ 731	\$ 2,947,392	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,328,966	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,500,036	
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,756,127</b>	<b>2,715,120</b>	<b>6,616,713</b>	<b>4,159,158</b>	<b>2,922,944</b>	<b>6,758,098</b>	<b>11,651,273</b>	
<b>Rank</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	



<b>CommunityViz™ Indicators</b>									
<b>Assumption</b>	<b>Default</b>	<b>NPP</b>	<b>NHD</b>	<b>NLD</b>	<b>WPP</b>	<b>WHD</b>	<b>WLD</b>	<b>INF</b>	<b>Units</b>
CI Assumption - Annual Household Energy Use	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	million BTU / household / year
CI Assumption - Auto Emissions - CO	226.34	226.34	226.34	226.34	226.34	226.34	226.34	226.34	grams / gallon
CI Assumption - Auto Emissions - CO2	19.56	19.56	19.56	19.56	19.56	19.56	19.56	19.56	lbs / gallon
CI Assumption - Auto Emissions - Hydrocarbons	25.94	25.94	25.94	25.94	25.94	25.94	25.94	25.94	grams / gallon
CI Assumption - Auto Emissions - NOx	16.69	16.69	16.69	16.69	16.69	16.69	16.69	16.69	grams / gallon
CI Assumption - Average Vehicle Trip Length	9.72	9.72	9.72	9.72	9.72	9.72	9.72	9.72	miles
CI Assumption - Daily Household Water Use	282	282	282	282	282	282	282	282	gallons / household / day
CI Assumption - Household Vehicle Trips per Day	5.66	5.66	5.66	5.66	5.66	5.66	5.66	5.66	household vehicle trips / day
CI Assumption - Passenger Car Fuel Efficiency	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	miles / gallon
CI Assumption - Percent Employed	58.41	58.41	58.41	58.41	58.41	58.41	58.41	58.41	percent of population
CI Assumption - Percent School-aged Children	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	percent of population
CI Assumption - Persons per Household	2.61	2.61	2.61	2.61	2.61	2.61	2.61	2.61	persons / household



**RESOLUTION 16-02**

**RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE 2016 CITY OF BILLINGS GROWTH POLICY – “BILLINGSBEYOND – A GROWTH POLICY FOR BILLINGS” TO THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL AT ITS REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING ON JULY 11, 2016.**

WHEREAS, the Yellowstone County Board of Planning desires the Billings City Council to adopt the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy – “BillingsBeyond – A Growth Policy for Billings”; and

WHEREAS, on the 28th day of June, 2016, a public hearing was held by the Yellowstone County Board of Planning for the purpose of receiving public comments on the proposed City of Billings Growth Policy; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Montana Codes Annotated Section 76-1-601, the Yellowstone County Board of Planning may prepare and propose a Growth Policy for any part of its entire jurisdictional area; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Montana Codes Annotated Section 76-1-603, the Yellowstone County Board of Planning must recommend, by resolution, the proposed Growth Policy and any proposed ordinances and resolutions for implementing to the governing bodies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT THE YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF PLANNING recommends the Billings City Council adopt the proposed 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy – “BillingsBeyond – A Growth Policy for Billings”.

DONE BY ORDER of the Yellowstone County Board of Planning this 28<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2016.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF PLANNING

  
Darell Tunnicliff, President

ATTEST:

  
Candi Millar, Executive Secretary

RESOLUTION NO. 16- 10575

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE CITY OF BILLINGS 2016 GROWTH POLICY**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 76, Chapter 1, PART 6, Montana Code Annotated, the Billings City Council desires to adopt a Growth Policy covering the City of Billings and any future annexed land within Yellowstone County Board of Planning jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, the Growth Policy contains those elements listed in subsection (3) §76-1-601, MCA;

WHEREAS, on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2016, a public hearing was held by the Yellowstone County Board of Planning for the purpose of receiving public comments on the proposed Growth Policy;

WHEREAS, The Yellowstone County Board of Planning by Resolution 16-02, recommends the Billings City Council adopt the proposed Growth Policy, and;

WHEREAS, The City Council by Resolution 16-10572, intended to adopt the proposed Growth Policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED,

The Billings City Council approves this Resolution to Adopt the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy and in doing so, also adopts the Growth Statement and Guidelines for the City of Billings, Montana:

City of Billings Growth Policy Statement

In the next 20 years, Billings will manage its growth by encouraging development within and adjacent to the existing City limits, but preference will be given to areas where City infrastructure exists or can be extended within a fiscally constrained budget and with consideration given to increased tax revenue from development. The City will prosper with strong neighborhoods with their own unique character that are clean, safe, and provide a choice of housing and transportation options.

Growth Guidelines

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

- The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans
- Public transit and commercial air service are critical to ensure access to and around the City
- Planning and construction of safe and affordable interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings.
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Natural landscapes are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment
- Landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors
- Public health and safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors

- Infill development and development near existing City infrastructure may be the most cost effective
- Accessible, friendly and cost-effective government are important public values
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Infrastructure and service investments that stabilize or improve property values, secure future utility costs, consider maintenance costs, and improve our environmental quality far into the future (i.e. energy efficient) are desirable
- It is important to factor in maintenance costs when programming public spaces and infrastructure
- Integrated, long range water planning that better utilizes existing resources and treatment options, and when necessary acquires new ones, is vital.
- Regulatory compliant water and wastewater treatment plants that provide sufficient capacity will help sustain community growth
- A supportive school system that inspires, motivates, and prepares students for meaningful employment is important for ensuring a high quality, competitive community
- A cost/benefit study is important to make cost effective land use decisions

**Place Making (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)**

- A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable
- Enhancement and maintenance of public spaces and buildings through City stewardship is integral to a vibrant community
- Park master plans and transportation plans are important to facilitate the preservation and improved public access to the Yellowstone River and the Rims
- Public and private partnerships are valuable for creating enhanced entryways into Billings
- Locally grown foods help sustain agriculture, provide healthy options, and support local businesses
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Natural landscapes are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment and beautify neighborhoods
- Encouraging the installation of art in public spaces enhances the places and showcases the talents and diversity of the community
- Enhancing public buildings and spaces to be more efficient in their uses of energy, money, and space is important to having a vibrant and livable City

**Community Fabric (attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings)**

- Developed landscape areas in commercial areas encourage more pedestrian activity and vibrant commercial activity
- Attractive streetscapes provide a pleasant and calming travel experience in urban and suburban neighborhoods
- Outdoor public spaces provide casual and relaxing gathering areas for people

- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities, and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Natural landscapes and parks are important because they define the uniqueness of Billings and help protect the environment
- Cost-effective landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors

**Strong Neighborhoods (livable, safe, sociable and resilient neighborhoods)**

- Zoning regulations that allow a mixture of housing types provide housing options for all age groups and income levels
- Walkable neighborhoods that permit convenient destinations such as neighborhood services, open space, parks, schools and public gathering spaces foster health, good will and social interaction
- Safe and livable neighborhoods can be achieved through subdivision design that focuses on complete streets, pedestrian-scale street lights, street trees and walkable access to public spaces
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Zoning and subdivision regulations that utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies result in safer neighborhoods
- Implementation of the Infill Policy is important to encourage development of underutilized properties
- Public safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents and businesses

**Home Base (healthy, safe and diverse housing options)**

- A mix of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population is important
- The Housing Needs Assessment is an important tool to ensure Billings recognizes and meets the demands of future development
- Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy and safe
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- Public safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents
- Homes that are safe and sound support a healthy community
- Accessory dwellings units provide an important type of affordable housing options if compatible
- Energy efficient housing can reduce energy consumption

**Mobility and Access (transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all)**

- Connecting people to places with transportation choices is vital to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses and visitors
- Safe and accessible transportation systems benefit everyone's quality of life
- Affordable public transit is much desired
- Development oriented to transit routes will provide more transportation choices and is preferred
- "Safe Routes to Schools" promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- On-street bike facilities promote predictability for all users
- Expanded air service ensures that Billings remains a competitive and an accessible destination
- Technology can reduce congestion and facilitate emergency vehicle travel at railroad crossings

**Prosperity (promoting equal opportunity and economic advancement)**

- Predictable, reasonable City taxes and assessments are important to Billings' taxpayers
- A diversity of available jobs can ensure a strong Billings' economy
- Successful businesses that provide local jobs benefit the community
- Community investments that attract and retain a strong, skilled and diverse workforce also attracts businesses
- Retaining and supporting existing businesses helps sustain a healthy economy
- Continued workforce training benefits the community and helps attract and retain businesses
- Strategically placed industrial parks will encourage a more diverse city economy, and will better help manage effluent and emission from industrial processes

APPROVED AND PASSED by the City Council of the City of Billings this 8<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2016.

THE CITY OF BILLINGS:

BY: Thomas W. Hanel  
THOMAS W. HANEL, MAYOR

ATTEST:  
BY: Denise R. Bohman  
DENISE R. BOHLMAN, CITY CLERK



# DRAFT

## Urban Renewal Plan for the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District



Prepared by the Planning & Community Services Department  
Adopted by the Billings City Council on December 8, 2008  
Amended by the Billings City Council on July 22, 2019  
Amended by the Billings City Council on July 26, 2021  
Amended by the Billings City Council on November 10, 2025

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## Acknowledgements

### 2008 Participants and Stakeholders

City of Billings

Ron Tussing, Mayor

City Council Members:

Richard (Dick) Clark

Mark Astle

Peggie Denney Gaghen

Jim Ronquillo

Vince Ruegamer

Chris "Shoots" Veis

Ed Ulledalen

Jani McCall

Denis Pitman

Larry Brewster

Planning and Community Services Department

Southwest Corridor Task Force Officers

Tom Ruschkewicz, Chair

Floyd Martin, Vice Chair

Alan Pomick, Treasurer

Debbie Rowe, Secretary

Big Sky Economic Development Authority

Downtown Billings Partnership

Stakeholders

Alene Malloy

Allen Krenz

Alta Dean

Arlene Bierwagen

Barbara Kipp

Barbara Prewett

Barry Wilson

Beth Kirkwood

Betty Hofstad

Betty Kegley

Beverly Bennetts

Bob Franks

Brandy Pmter

Brenda Estill

Brenda Ryan

Brian Reid

Bruce Burrows

Candice Reinschmidt

Carl Howard

Casey Ryan

Charles Deunow

Cindy Linse

Cindy Reid

Clarence Perkins

Clifton Burns

Coleen Apps

Connie Wagner

Connie Wittman

Cris Ruckman

Dale Kiel

Daryle Young

David Mora

Dean Haley

Dean Miller

Dennis Randall

Don Pell

Dorothy Plouffe

Doug Toomey

Edyth Davis

Elanor Aukshun

Elissa Linse

Elsie Arntzen

Floyd Martin

Gary Cooper

Gary Tipton

Gene Frank

Gerald Apps

Georgia Kembel

Glen Kibbee

Gloria Krenz

Greg Sennett

Harriet Conklin

Ida Stuart

Irene Aure

James Lasater

Jay Hanson

Jean Randall

## Stakeholders Continued

Carol Atchley	Duane Bender	Jeannine Swoboda
Carol Dale	Ed Gabbo	Jed Porter
Jerald Mohr	Kevin Nelson	Mary Ann Kraske
Jerry Driscoll	Lany Estill	Mary Duenow
Jimmie Frasch	Leonard Bierwagen	Maurice Muth
Joan Dosch	Linda Furlong	Mavis Schultz
JoAnne Moffet	Linda Hayworth	Mavis Wilkinson
Joe Morin	Linda Pettengill	Mel Maier
John Hoffman	Linda Vansky	Michele Johnson
John Hurless	Loren Bice	Michelle Grasswick
Jon Gowan	Louis Plouffe	Mike Kenney
Jon Rupprecht	Lynn Toomey	Mike Vinton
Joyce Kenney	Marc Swoboda	Neal Armfield
Joyce Pirrie	Margaret Schantz	Nelda Reimschmidt
Judy Coles	Margo Allen	Paige Tipton
Judy Mmiin	Margo Smith	Patrice Schuman
Julie Bender	Marian Leligdowize	Pat Jensen
Karen Hergett	Marjorie Bishop	Pat Morin
Katherine Gowan	Marlene Anderson	Pat Newbury
Kathy Doty	Marlis Boadsack	Pat Perkins
Kathy Wilkinson	Marlis Bufford	Patsy Kahler
Kelly Handley	Martha Sheldon	Patty Nordlund
Kerri Tallerico	Marvin Forquer	Paul Hartman
Paul Hendershot	Rebekah Wales	Richard Deis
Richard Ruff	Rick Leuthold	Robbin Ostrum
Robert Neal	Robert Propelka	Robyn Ruppreat
Roger Mollett	Ron Herget	Ron Kaneski
Ron Kirkwood	Ronald Schultz	Roy Linse
Sammy Handley	Sandra Fiscus	Shane Keehn
Shanna Fredrickson	Sharon Franks	Sharon Young

## 2019 Participants and Stakeholders

### City of Billings

Bill Cole, Mayor

### City Council Members:

Brent Cromley  
Mike Yakawich  
Frank Ewalt  
Roy Neese  
Denise Joy  
Chris Friedel

Reg Gibbs  
Penny Ronning  
Richard Clark  
Shaun Brown

South Billings Urban Renewal Association

Carolyn Rukstad  
Scott Hanser  
Debbie Keller  
Chuck Barrett  
Sam Hadley  
Mike Mayott  
Jeff Muri  
Zeier Consulting

City Administration  
City Finance Department  
Planning and Community Services Department  
Billings Police Department

**2021 Participants and Stakeholders**

City of Billings

Bill Cole, Mayor

City Council Members:

Kendra Shaw  
Mike Yakawich  
Frank Ewalt  
Roy Neese  
Denise Joy  
Danny Choriki  
Pam Purinton  
Penny Ronning  
Mike Boyett  
Shaun Brown

South Billings Urban Renewal Association

Carolyn Rukstad  
Scott Hanser  
Debbie Keller  
Andrew Houlihan  
Dick Zier  
Mike Mayott  
Jeff Muri  
Tevlin Consulting

City Administration  
Planning and Community Services Department

## 2025 Participants and Stakeholders

City of Billings

Bill Cole, Mayor

City Council Members:

Kendra Shaw

Ed Gulick

Jennifer Owen

Roy Neese

Bill Kennedy

TJ Rogers

Scott Aspenlieder

Daniel Tidswell

Mike Boyett

Tom Rupsis

South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal

District Advisory Committee

Scott Hanser

Andrew Houlihan

Mike Mayott

Jeff Muri

Kelphen Lienemann

County Commissioner Mark Morse

SD#2 Trustee Jourdan Guidice

SD#23 Trustee XXXXXX

Dick Zier, SBURA Consultant

City Administration

Planning and Community Services Department

Project Consultants

Pioneer Technical Services, Inc.

## **Section 1 – Introduction**

On May 12, 2008, the City of Billings adopted an ordinance creating the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) and established a Tax Increment Finance District. As part of this ordinance, an urban renewal plan and the boundaries of the tax increment finance district were adopted. Public participation for preparing the urban renewal plan involved public meetings and participation with the City of Billings, the Southwest Corridor Neighborhood Task Force, residents and property owners, Downtown Billings Partnership, and Big Sky Economic Development Authority.

In October of 2008, the City began a modification of the SBBURD to include three additional properties. Two of these properties were recently annexed and contiguous to the existing SBBURD; therefore, the properties are now eligible to be included within the SBBURD. The third property is contiguous and requested an expansion of the district boundary. The modification of the urban renewal plan reflected the addition of those properties.

The December 2008 modification of the urban renewal plan:

- Served as a framework for the official urban renewal plan.
- Fulfilled Montana state law.
- Updated and defined district boundaries.
- Classified blight
- Set forth the protocol for its authorization, execution, and management.
- Illustrated the development opportunities.
- Documented baseline taxable property values and potential areas for redevelopment

The July 2019 amendment of the urban renewal plan:

- Identified future projects and programs.
- Ensured the City has the option to bond future projects.
- Updated the 2008 Plan to reflect the 2019 amendment process.

The July 2021 amendment of the urban renewal plan expanded the boundary of the SBBURD to add five new properties to the District.

The November 2025 amendment expands the SBBURD boundary significantly to the east, adding 903 acres and 1,597 non-right-of-way properties (see Appendix I). The amendment has been completed in accordance with Section 7-15-4221 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA), which describes the requirements for modifying an Urban Renewal Plan.

## **Section 2 - Definitions**

The following terms have the following meanings unless a different meaning is clearly indicated by the context:

1. "Agency" or "urban renewal agency" means a public agency created by Section 7-15-4232 of the Montana Code Annotated.

2. "Blighted area" means an area that is determined to be detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare, and morals in its present condition and use, by reason of due to the presence of at least three of the following characteristics or conditions:
  - a. An advanced state of disrepair or neglect of necessary repairs to the primary structural components of buildings or improvements in such a combination that a documented building condition analysis determines that major repair is required, or the defects are so serious and so extensive that the buildings must be removed;
  - b. Structures that have become ill-suited for their original use
  - c. Deterioration of building structure components or infrastructure, such as roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks
  - d. Buildings or structures that endanger the life, limb, health, property, or safety of the general public or their occupants
  - e. Inadequate utilities and infrastructure, such as storm sewers and storm drainage, sanitary sewers, water lines, power, roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and communication services, that are shown to be lacking, of insufficient capacity to serve the uses of the area, deteriorated, antiquated, obsolete, or in disrepair.
  - f. Real property in the area that has incurred or may incur future planned Montana Department of Environmental Quality or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency remediation costs.
  - g. Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of a majority of the land and improvements.
  - h. Excessive vacancies occurring in buildings that are unoccupied and underutilized and that represent an adverse influence on the area because of the frequency, extent, or duration of the vacancies.
3. "Bonds" means any bonds, notes, or debentures (including refunding obligations) authorized to be issued pursuant to Section 7-15-4300 MCA.
4. "Clerk" means the clerk or other official of the municipality who is the custodian of the official records of the municipality.
5. "Local governing body" means the council or other legislative body charged with governing the municipality.
6. "Mayor" means the chief executive of a city or town.
7. "Municipality" means any incorporated city or town in the state.
8. "Redevelopment" may include:
  - a. acquisition of a blighted area or portion of the area;
  - b. demolition and removal of buildings and improvements;
  - c. installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements necessary for carrying out in the area the urban renewal provisions in accordance with the urban renewal plan; and
  - d. making the land available for development or redevelopment by private enterprises or public agencies, including sale, initial leasing, or retention by the municipality itself, at its fair value for uses in accordance with the urban renewal plan. If the property is condemned pursuant to Title 70, chapter 30, the private enterprise or public agencies may not develop the condemned area in a way that is not for a public use.
9. "Urban renewal area" means a blighted area that the local governing body designates

as appropriate for an urban renewal project or projects.

10. "Urban renewal plan" means a plan for one or more urban renewal areas or for an urban renewal project. The plan:
  - a. must conform to the growth policy if one has been adopted pursuant to Title 76, Chapter 1 of the Montana Code Annotated; and;
  - b. must be sufficiently complete to indicate, on a yearly basis or otherwise:
    - i. any land acquisition, demolition, and removal of structures; redevelopment; improvements; and rehabilitation that is proposed to be carried out in the urban renewal area;
    - ii. zoning and planning changes, if any, including changes to the growth policy if one has been adopted pursuant to Title 76, Chapter 1;
    - iii. land uses, maximum densities, building requirements; and
    - iv. the plan's relationship to definite local objectives respecting appropriate land uses, improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, and other public improvements.

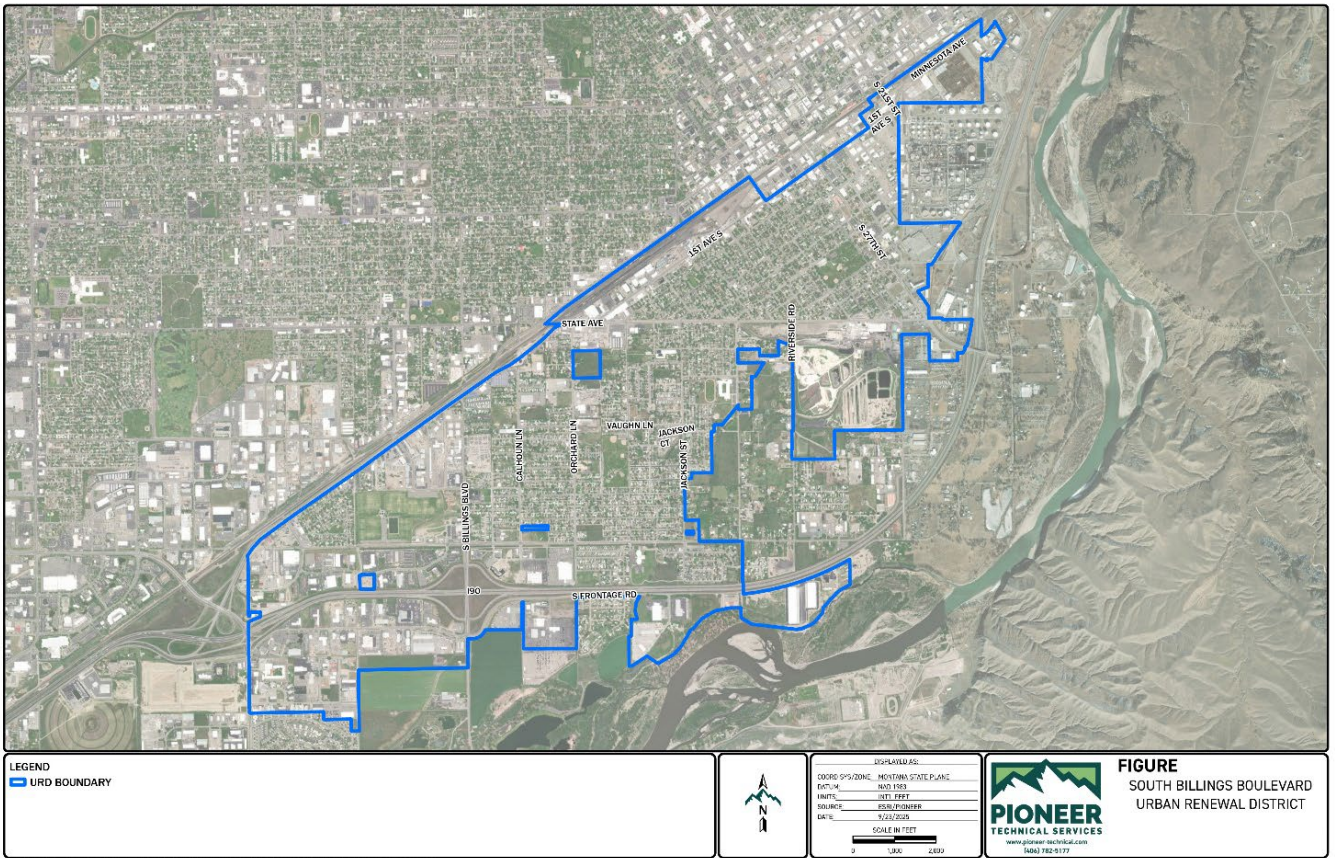
### **Section 3 – Background**

The South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (the “District”) lies within the City of Billings (the “City”), is situated between major transportation routes, and stretches from the east side of the King Avenue Overpass east to the city limit boundaries near the Phillips 66 refinery and from State Avenue South and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South to the city limit boundaries. Located within the district is Interstate Highway 90 and the major railway line through the city. Map 1 shows the boundary of the SBBURD. Existing land uses and current zoning are shown on Maps 2 and 3.

A closer look at this neighborhood shows an established area of mixed residential and commercial uses. This area also includes three elementary schools and one middle school. Some areas include unimproved streets with no sidewalk, curb, or gutter. In addition, many areas were not served by municipal water and sewer or there was old, inadequate water and sewer infrastructure. Many of the concerns raised by residents within the district center around routes for children to get to school, including bus routes that run on unimproved streets and children walking down the street instead of sidewalks to get to school. Many of these infrastructure deficits have been addressed since the District was created in 2008 as evidenced by the project list updates in Section 13 of this Plan.

Due to the location, the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District continues to have a tremendous amount of potential to grow further as a major economic force. With the interstate corridor located in this district, the potential exists for this area to continue to become a major destination place for retail, goods and services, manufacturing, regional sports events, and entertainment.

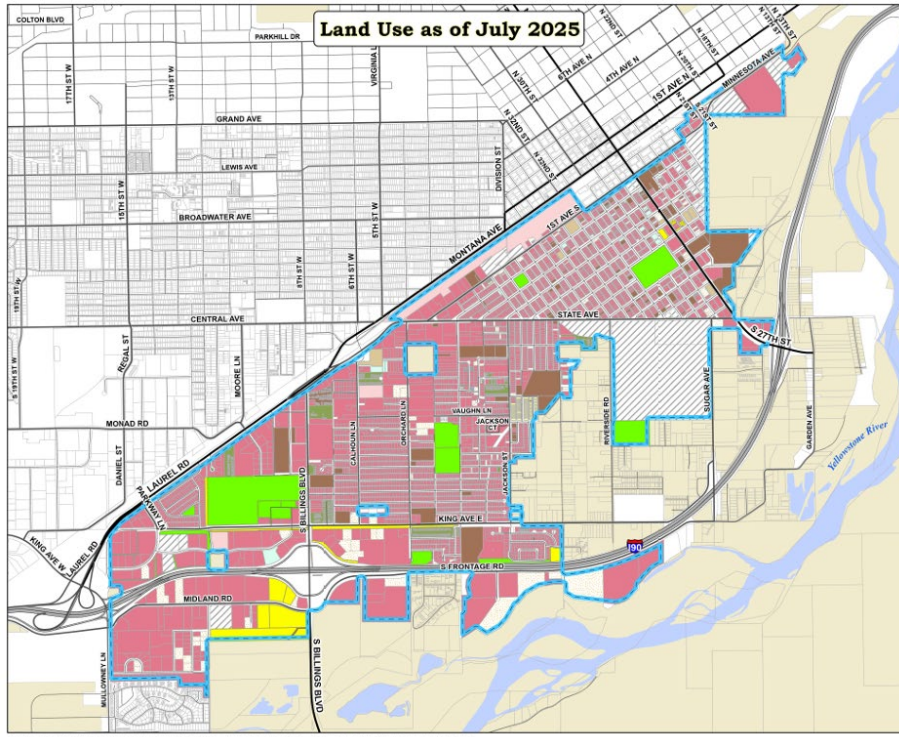
# Map 1. South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District



\\p1\GIS\Projects\2018\20180815\_SouthBillingsURD\Map1\_SouthBillingsBoulevardURD.aprx

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Map 2. South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District Current Land Use.



**South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) - Combined Area Existing & Proposed Expansion**

SBBURD comprised of Levy Districts 215 and 2375



**Legend**

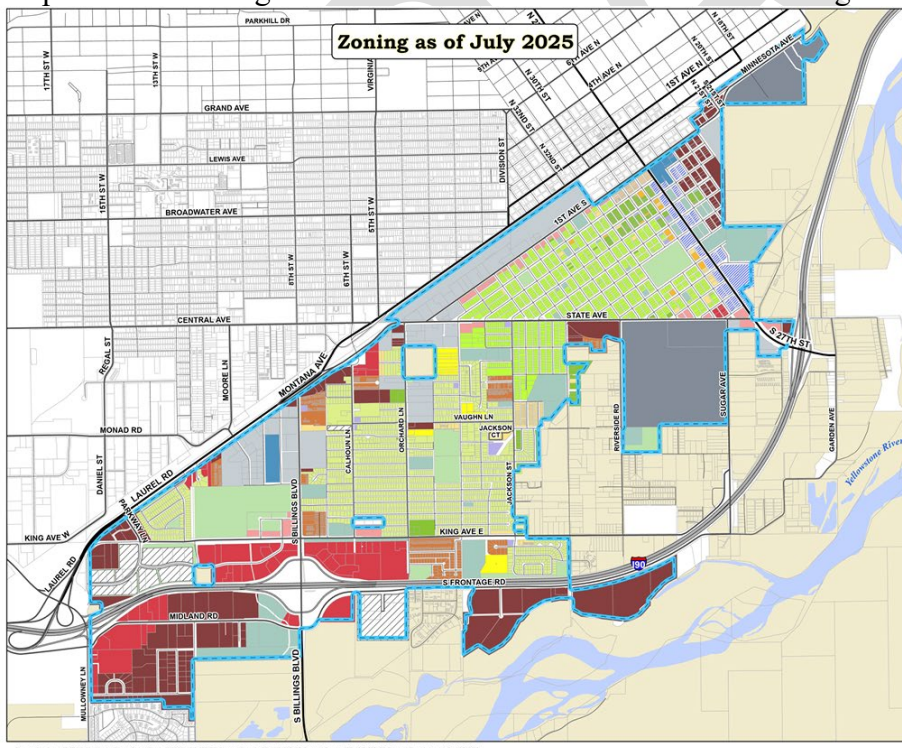
- SBBURD Boundary Combined (Existing & Proposed)
- Billings City Limits
- Yellowstone County Boundary
- City Owned Property
- Other City Property
- Property Type (Land Use)
  - Apartment
  - City - Centrally Assessed Non-Valued Property
  - Condominium
  - Exempt Property
  - Improved Property
  - Industrial Property
  - Mobile/RV Parks
  - Non-Valued Property
  - On-Leased Land
  - Partial Exempt Property
  - Townhouse
  - Vacant Land

The parcel data mapped herein does not constitute a legal survey. Inaccuracies may exist with both the mapped data and the Montana Department of Revenue CADL data. When seeking the definitive description of real property, consult the deed recorded at the Yellowstone County court house.

Land uses are determined from CAMA property type values for residential and commercial properties, and may not be entirely consistent with actual ground conditions.

Scale in Miles: 0, 0.25, 0.5

Map 3. South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District Existing Zoning



**South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) - Combined Area Existing & Proposed Expansion**

SBBURD comprised of Levy Districts 215 and 2375



**Legend**

- SBBURD Boundary Combined (Existing & Proposed)
- Billings City Limits
- Yellowstone County Boundary
- Zoning
  - A - Agriculture (10+ acres)\*
  - C3 - General Commercial\*
  - CBD - Central Business District
  - CMU1 - Corridor Mixed-Use
  - CMU2 - Corridor Mixed-Use & Commercial Centers
  - CX - Heavy Commercial
  - DK - Downtown Support
  - ES/WD Industrial Sanitary
  - I1 - Light Industrial
  - I2 - Heavy Industrial
  - N1 - First Neighborhood
  - N2 - Mid-Century Neighborhood
  - N3 - Suburban Neighborhood
  - N4 - Large Lot Suburban Neighborhood\*
  - NM2 - Neighborhood Medium-Density
  - NX1 - Mixed Residential (1 to 4 structures)
  - NX2 - Mixed Residential 2 (2-8 structures)
  - NX3 - Mixed Residential 3 (9+ structures)
  - P1 - Open Space, Parks, Recreation
  - P2 - Public - Civic, Institutional
  - P3 - Public - Campuses - Medical, Civic, Educational
  - P4 - Planned Development
  - RM1 - Residential Mobile Home
  - RR1 - Rural Residential (1 to 2.99 acres)\*
  - RR3 - Rural Residential (3 to 9.9 acres)\*

The parcel data mapped herein does not constitute a legal survey. Inaccuracies may exist with both the mapped data and the Montana Department of Revenue CADL data. When seeking the definitive description of real property, consult the deed recorded at the Yellowstone County court house.

Scale in Miles: 0, 0.25, 0.5

## **Section 4 - Description of Blight**

A requirement of Montana Code Annotated, Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, is to justify an urban renewal plan supported through a tax increment finance district through the determination of blight. Blight means an area that is determined to be detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare, and morals in its present condition and use, by reason of due to the presence of at least three of the following characteristics or conditions:

- An advanced state of disrepair or neglect of necessary repairs to the primary structural components of buildings or improvements in such a combination that a documented building condition analysis determines that major repair is required, or the defects are so serious and so extensive that the buildings must be removed;
- Structures that have become ill-suited for their original use
- Deterioration of building structure components or infrastructure, such as roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks
- Buildings or structures that endanger the life, limb, health, property, or safety of the general public or their occupants
- Inadequate utilities and infrastructure, such as storm sewers and storm drainage, sanitary sewers, water lines, power, roadways, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and communication services, that are shown to be lacking, of insufficient capacity to serve the uses of the area, deteriorated, antiquated, obsolete, or in disrepair.
- Real property in the area that has incurred or may incur future planned Montana Department of Environmental Quality or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency remediation costs.
- Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of a majority of the land and improvements;
- Excessive vacancies occurring in buildings that are unoccupied and underutilized and that represent an adverse influence on the area because of the frequency, extent, or duration of the vacancies.

## **Section 5 - Summary of Blight**

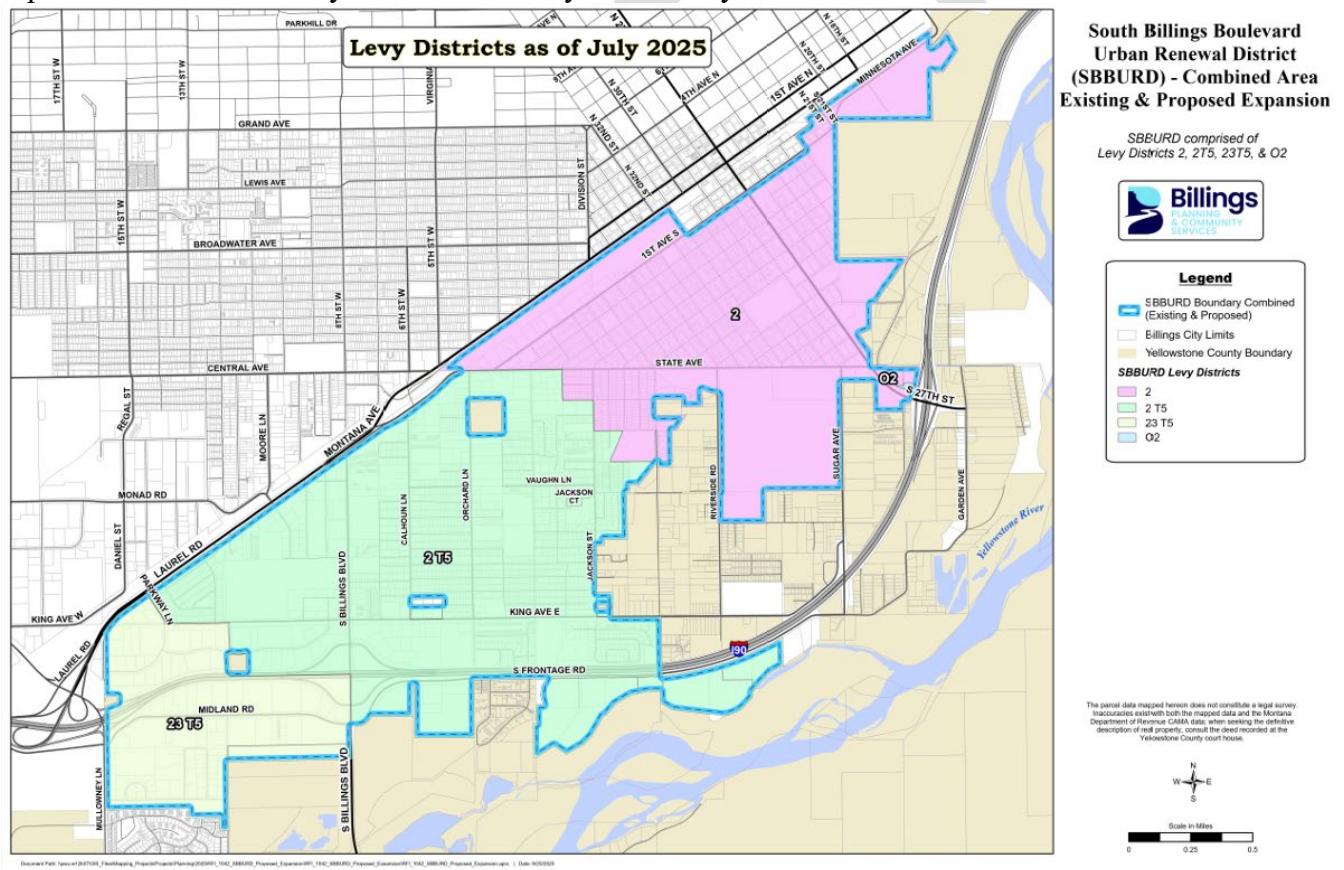
The area in the district has experienced a lot of redevelopment and infrastructure improvements since it was first created, but it still contains significant areas of blight. Within the district there is substantial evidence of blight, including structures that have become ill-suited for their original use; deterioration of building structure components and infrastructure; dangerous buildings or structures; inadequate utilities and infrastructure; properties that have or will incur remediation costs; and excessive vacancies. Several of the commercial buildings in the district are vacant or deteriorated and need demolition. Some sidewalks are cracked or nonexistent, alleys are deteriorated, and, in general, much of the area is below City standards. In addition to previous findings of blight by the City, this was documented for the most recent expansion by Resolution 25-11296. In contrast to the above, there are certain properties within the District in good repair but included in the District

to allow for a contiguous block of land within the district; and because pockets of revitalization cannot be sustained if areas of neglect and blight surround them. Over time, without continued managed urban renewal, even these success stories will once again decline in taxable value. Portions of the District fall into the blighted, neglected, and under-utilized categories.

## Section 6 - The Site and Its Relationship to the City

The South Billings Boulevard Tax Increment Finance District (“TIFD”) and Urban Renewal District is located in the south-center region of the City of Billings. Bordered by the Interstate 90 corridor, the main railroad line and principal transportation routes, it is an area where economic development opportunities are numerous. In addition, numerous service-related, commercial, industrial, parks and recreation and housing choices are located within the District. Map 4 below shows the TIFD boundary in relationship to the rest of the city.

Map 4. SBBURD Boundary in relation to City and County Limits in the area.



## Section 7 - Description of the District Boundary

A description of the district boundary is included in Appendix II.

## **Section 8 - Planning Process**

### **Stakeholder and Community Participation**

The initial concept of developing a Tax Increment Finance District and an Urban Renewal Plan in the South Billings Boulevard area was brought forward by the City of Billings, Big Sky Economic Development Authority, and the Downtown Billings Partnership. After discussions and meetings with the Southwest Corridor Task Force, it was determined that a steering committee would be established to move forward with the development of an Urban Renewal Plan for the creation of the South Billings Boulevard TIF District. After discussions with the participating members, it was apparent that direct communication with business owners, landowners and public participation was critical for the project to be a success. Two public meetings were scheduled to open dialogue on the proposed Urban Renewal Plan and TIF District process, and to set goals and objectives of the project. It also became clear that a grass-roots effort conducted and led by the property owners themselves was needed. On May 12, 2008, the City of Billings adopted an ordinance creating the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) and established a Tax Increment Finance District.

In October of 2008, the City began an urban renewal plan modification process to include three additional properties to the district pursuant to Montana Code section 7-15-4221. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan modification were notified by mail of the public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held November 24, 2008.

In May 2019, the City, in coordination with the South Billings Urban Renewal Association (the advisory entity to the City Council on urban renewal activities in the SBBURD), began the process to amend the South Billings Urban Renewal Plan. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan amendment were notified by mail of a public meeting to discuss and receive public comment on the Plan amendment on May 30, 2019. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan amendment were also notified of the public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held July 8, 2019.

In summer 2020, City staff in coordination with the South Billings Urban Renewal Association and its consultant, began discussion of expanding the District Boundary to include additional properties. The proposed expansion was brought to the City Council at a December 2020 Work Session for review and discussion. The Council at that meeting directed staff to move the process to expand the District forward in 2021. All property owners whose property was proposed to be included in the District expansion were notified of the public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held July 12, 2021.

In 2025, City staff in coordination with the South Billings Urban Renewal Association began discussion of expanding the District Boundary to the east, including South Park and additional areas up to the city boundaries south of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South. The City prepared a report documenting conditions contributing to blight, which was presented to the City Council Work Session on September 2, 2025, for review and discussion. At that meeting the Council directed staff to begin the process to expand the District in 2025. The Council passed a resolution documenting the finding of blight in the expansion area at their September 22, 2025, meeting. A community meeting was held on October 9, 2025, at the Orchard Park school to inform the public of the plans to expand the district and answer questions. The Planning Board met to consider the updated Urban Renewal Plan at their October 14, 2025, meeting. They adopted a resolution with a recommendation to the Council that the Urban Renewal Plan was in accordance with the City's Growth Policy and zoning ordinances. All property owners whose property was proposed to be included in the District expansion were notified, via US Mail, of the

public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held October 27, 2025. All taxing jurisdictions, including the school district and Yellowstone County, were also notified of the public hearing.

### **Urban Renewal Plan**

This Urban Renewal Plan is the tool that governs what public improvements are needed and desired within the District. Through public meetings as well as input from the Public Works Department, neighborhood needs and projects were identified.

With input from property owners and the identification of goals and objectives, the City of Billings moved forward with the completion of the Urban Renewal Plan. For the original plan, a draft was reviewed with the property owners and the Southwest Corridor Task Force prior to review by the City of Billings City Council. Each amendment has followed a similar process. The 2025 amendment, the plan was discussed with the SBURA, the Southside Task Force prior to the review by the Billings City Council.

The high level of transparency and frequency of meetings has ensured that a large local constituency has been involved, and as many stakeholders as possible participate and approve of the plan.

### **Eminent Domain**

In no case shall eminent domain be used as a tool in the redevelopment of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District except as a last resort in the case of needed public infrastructure improvements and/or rights-of way.

### **Residential Relocation Plan**

If a residential structure requires relocation as a result of right-of-way acquisition and/or a public infrastructure construction project, that is partially or fully funded with federal assistance (Housing and Urban Development, Federal Highway, etc.), the City of Billings shall abide by the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act.

### **Planning, City Administration and Legal Review**

During the many meetings with the local property owners and the Southwest Neighborhood Task Force, it was decided to begin the process of finalizing the urban renewal plan and take it to the City Council before the end of 2007. The Urban Renewal Plan was sent to the City Legal Department and City Administration for review and comments. Comments and recommendations from both City Legal and City Administration were taken into account and incorporated into this Plan.

The Plan was also sent to the Yellowstone County Board of Planning for its review and recommendations regarding the plan's conformity to the City's 2003 Growth Policy Plan. A recommendation of approval was passed by the Planning Board on October 23, 2007. The plan was then presented at a City Council Work Session on November 5, 2007. The public hearing and first reading of the Ordinance was held by the City Council on November 26, 2007 with the

second reading and final adoption on December 10, 2007.

A modification to the SBBURD plan began in October of 2008. On November 10, 2008, the Billings City Council passed a Resolution Declaring Blight, Intent to Modify the District, and Setting a Public Hearing Date. The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council regarding the Plan's conformity with the 2003 Growth Policy on November 12, 2008. The affected property owners were notified of the Plan's modification and public hearing notices were published on November 6, 2008 and November 13, 2008 for the first reading and public hearing on the modification of the Plan.

The City initiated an amendment to the Plan in May 2019 to ensure future projects contemplated by the City and via public comments and recommendations would be possible if funded by bonding or directly through tax increment funds generated by the SBBURD. The process to amend the Plan has followed the process described in Montana Code as follows: The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council regarding the Plan's conformity with the 2016 Growth Policy on June 25, 2019. The affected property owners were notified by mailed postcard of the Plan's modification, and public hearing notices were published on June 28, 2019 and July 5, 2019 for the first reading and public hearing on the Plan amendment.

The City initiated an expansion to the SBBURD boundary in December 2020 to include additional properties in the District. The process to expand the District has followed the process described in Montana Code as follows: The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council regarding the Plan's conformity with the 2016 Growth Policy on April 13, 2021. The City Council acted upon a Resolution of Intent to expand the boundaries of the District on May 10, 2021 and set a public hearing date to act on an ordinance to expand the District in July 12, 2021. The affected property owners were notified by mailed letter of the District expansion, and public hearing notices were published for the first reading and public hearing set for July 12, 2021.

The City initiated an expansion to the SBBURD boundary in 2025 to include an additional 1,597 non-right-of-way properties in the District. The process to expand the District has followed the process described in Section 7-15-4212 through 7-15-4219 of the MCA as follows. The City prepared a report documenting conditions contributing to blight, which was presented to the City Council Work Session on September 2, 2025, for review and discussion. At that meeting the Council directed staff to begin the process to expand the District. At this same meeting, the Council also acknowledged the need to ensure that representatives of the school district and county are appointed to the SBURA to comply with the new requirements of Section 7-15-4234 as a result SB-3 of from the Montana State Legislature. The Council passed a resolution documenting the finding of blight in the expansion area at its September 22, 2025, meeting. A community meeting was held on October 9, 2025, at the Orchard Elementary School to inform the public of the plans to expand the district and answer questions. The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council regarding the Plan's conformity with the 2016 Growth Policy on October 14, 2025. All property owners whose property was proposed to be included in the District

expansion were notified, via US Mail, of the public hearing on the District expansion and the amendments to the Urban Renewal Plan held October 27, 2025. All taxing jurisdictions, including the school district and Yellowstone County, were also notified of the public hearing.

### **Financial Programming**

The City of Billings, to ensure a sound and adequate financial program to fund projects, has concluded the following: For every \$1 million dollars of increased market value, assuming Class 4 (commercial) property @ 1.69% taxable rate and a mill levy of \$0.62, it is anticipated that an increment value of approximately \$10,500 will be generated yearly.

### **Modification of SBBURD Plan**

The SBBURD may be modified at any time by the City Council as necessary to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blighted areas and encourage urban rehabilitation. The process for plan modification shall follow the procedures set forth in 7-15-4212 through 7-15-4219 MCA, with respect to initial adoption of this Plan. For purposes of urban renewal district boundary changes only, the notice of public hearing, as described in 7-15-4215 MCA, may only be mailed to those owners whose properties are situated within the area of expansion or contraction of the Urban Renewal District boundaries. In cases where the boundaries are not modified, but the contents of the urban renewal plan are substantially modified, notification shall be mailed to all owners of property within the District area. For the 2025 amendment, notices were mailed to all owners of property within the existing District area and the area of proposed expansion.

### **Section 9 - Housing (Conservation of Existing Affordable Housing)**

Housing is an important element to the District. Providing the District with housing opportunities is vital to the sustainability of the District. With housing opportunities, individuals and families can live and work within the District. This provides a dual benefit; first, the commute to work for individuals will be reduced and second, the businesses within the District will have a local work force to draw from.

Current housing in the area consists of single-family, duplex, and multi-family units and includes rental units and owner-occupied. Also, manufactured home parks are located within the District. The main concentration of housing is in the central and eastern portion of the District. Based on data from the Montana Department of Revenue, average housing conditions within the District are not as good as city-wide, as shown on Table 1 below. City-wide, 2.61% of the residential homes are considered in poor, very poor, or unsound condition, whereas within the expanded District 8.92% of the homes are in this condition. Conversely, city-wide 60.5% of the homes are in good or better condition, whereas in the District, only 9.23% are considered good or better.

Table 1. Housing Conditions

Condition of Residential Properties								
Count	Unsound	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Billings City Limits	58	184	796	3412	11259	14034	6874	3144
SBBURD - Existing	7	50	154	406	1178	192	21	14
SBBURD + Proposed Expansion	22	99	293	1083	1486	245	35	23
Percentage by Category	Unsound	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Billings City Limits	0.15%	0.46%	2.00%	8.58%	28.32%	35.30%	17.29%	7.91%
SBBURD - Existing	0.35%	2.47%	7.62%	20.08%	58.26%	9.50%	1.04%	0.69%
SBBURD + Proposed Expansion	0.67%	3.01%	8.92%	32.96%	45.22%	7.46%	1.07%	0.70%

Future housing for the District is encouraged to be developed for the goal of ownership. When rental housing occurs, such facilities should be developed in connection with mixed-uses and managed by a company that will provide active policy measures to eliminate crime and blight. Some multi-family housing projects will require a Zone Change request that requires approval by the City Council. Housing is a priority of the City Council and the Council looks to support housing development that provides housing choice and high quality additions to neighborhoods

Housing in the area shall also be designed to cater to a variety of income demographics as well. All current affordable housing needs in the District shall be accounted for through the development of owned and rental housing that remain within the District. Recent projects along Jackson Street in the existing District – Jackson Court and Mitchell Court – utilized urban renewal funds and are bringing high quality affordable housing to the District. Housing for mid- and higher-level income groups shall also be encouraged. To avoid creation of substandard housing or encourage future blight, mixed-use housing developments should when practical incorporate all income demographics within the same project in a safe and positive way.

### Section 10 - Transportation and Pedestrian Circulation

The transportation and circulation situation in the District should be a major focus during redevelopment of the area. Traffic patterns and access issues can affect the function and livability of a community or neighborhood.

During discussions and public meetings throughout each expansion or Plan amendment, including in 2025, it was apparent that the need for ongoing improvements to street conditions and the addition of adequate transportation and pedestrian facilities was a high priority for property owners. The majority of traffic that comes into the District is either pass-through or destination traffic to the major transportation routes located within the District. Significant improvements have been made to many transportation corridors in the District utilizing urban renewal funding, including King Avenue East, Orchard Lane, Calhoun Lane, Hallowell Lane, and South Billings Boulevard. There are still unimproved streets and locations of missing or damaged sidewalks in the entire District area. Safe and attractive pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks, boulevards, crosswalks, improved signage and shelters or benches have and should continue to enhance pedestrian safety and experience.

## **Section 11 - Public Services and Facilities**

Currently there are four public schools located within the District; three elementary schools and one middle school. A concern mentioned many times by residents was the lack of sidewalks for school children to get to school. It has been observed that students have had to walk directly in the street due to a lack of sidewalks. Many of these locations have been improved already, along King Avenue East is a recent project example. But ongoing improvements for safe school access is important. To address this concern, safe routes plans have been developed, including two recently (Safe Routes to School Phase I 2021, and Safe Routes to School Phase II 2023), to identify projects to improve safe routes to schools across Billings and within the District.

There are several developed parks located in the District. Amend Park provides a multi-use facility for soccer, Lacrosse and rugby as well as picnic sites and shelters. Optimist Park has a variety of amenities that include basketball courts, jogging trails, playground, softball and baseball fields and picnic areas. Ponderosa Park provides horseshoe courts, playground, softball and baseball fields and soccer and rugby fields. In the 2025 expansion area, South Park is a significant community asset, including a swimming pool, splash park, and wading pool. It also has athletic fields and courts, horseshoe courts, a playground, and picnic gazebos. Certain aspects of the park are in disrepair and in need of rehabilitation, specifically the swimming pool and pool support facilities. Highland Park, also in the 2025 expansion area, has a playground, picnic facilities, a wading pool, and other features. It also needs rehabilitation of its spray ground, restrooms and other elements.

The City of Billings also provides services to the District with MET Transit. Currently, three MET routes serve the District: the Midtown; the Central South and the Southside Loop. All routes connect Stewart Park and Downtown Transfer Centers. As infrastructure projects are considered in the District, facilities for MET Transit services will be provided, including bus pull outs, bus stop shelters, pedestrian crossings, and other improvements that support transit services.

## **Section 12 - Infrastructure and Utilities**

The District, including the expansion area, has infrastructure and utilities deficiencies that need to be addressed to support redevelopment efforts. Water and sewer conditions need to be assessed to determine what updates are still needed in the area beyond work already accomplished across areas of the District. Storm water drainage also needs to be further evaluated to address any remaining inadequate storm water facilities.

Infrastructure deficiencies are documented in the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District Potential Expansion Area: Review of Conditions that Contribute to Blight (City of Billings, 2025), adopted by the Billings City Council as part of the Resolution 25-11296.

By upgrading infrastructure and utilities, therein lies the opportunity for more attractive development opportunities and better delivery of City services to the residents and businesses of the area.

## Section 13 - Urban Renewal Projects and Programs

The goal of this Urban Renewal Plan is to remedy blight in South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District via urban renewal. This plan identifies projects and programs intended to achieve that goal.

The Urban Renewal Projects were identified by property owners within the District during the public meetings at the time the Plan was first adopted in 2008 and also during the amendment processes in 2019, 2021, and 2025. Information for the 2008 Plan adoption process utilized the Southwest Corridor Task Force meetings and delivery through comments mailed to the Planning Division. For the 2019 amendment process, a public meeting was held at Orchard Elementary School on May 30, 2019, where projects ideas and comments were collected, as well as at the South Billings Urban Renewal Association meeting on June 4, 2019.

For the 2025 amendment, a public meeting was held at Orchard Elementary School on October 9, 2025, where projects ideas and comments were collected. The South Billings Urban Renewal Association was also consulted regarding the District expansion at its meeting on August 4, 2025. Direct opportunities for input were also provided to the School District #2 Development Committee on August 4, 2025, Board of County Commissioners on September 4, 2025, and the Elysian School District #23 on October 1, 2025. It is the City's intent to use tax increment to finance public improvement projects. In addition to TIF financing, the City may also use Special Improvement District financing as well as grant funding through, but not limited to, the Community Development Block Grant Program and City Enterprise funds for water, sewer and storm water projects and maintenance. By combining funding opportunities, more projects will be able to be completed.

The project and program list below encompasses both items included in the 2008, 2019, and 2021 Plans, as well as the new project recommendations for the 2025 Plan amendment. The items are identified by the year:

### **2008 Project and Program Recommendations: (The status of these projects will be updated before final publication)**

**Project:** Traffic calming measures on Calhoun and Orchard Streets. (Completed)

**Project:** Street improvements on Newman Drive between Simpson and Stone Streets, install curb and gutter. (Completed)

**Project:** Pave, curb, and gutter on Simpson from Calhoun to Newman.

**Project:** Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave Calhoun the full length. (Completed)

**Project:** Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave Orchard the full length. (Completed)

- Project:** Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave Hallowell the full length. (Under Construction 2021)
- Project:** Widen, curb and gutter and install bike path or sidewalk the full length of King Avenue East from Parkway to Riverside Drive. (Completed to Jackson Street)
- Project:** Safety to school plan. (SRTS Maps Updated, Plan Update in 2021/2022)
- Project:** Crosswalks within the District (where needed).(In Progress)
- Project:** Sidewalks within the District (where needed). (In Progress)
- Project:** Street lights along King Avenue East. (In Progress)
- Project:** Street widening at Optimist Park. (Addressed with Hallowell Lane Project)
- Project:** 4100 Block of Vaughn Street - sidewalk. (Included in FY22 CIP – Jackson to Hallowell)
- Project:** 4100 Block of Vaughn - public sewer needed, drain fields failing. (Included in FY22 CIP – Jackson to Hallowell)
- Project:** Bike/pedestrian routes along King Avenue. (Mostly Completed, section east of Jackson Street)
- Project:** Sewer improvements on South Billings Boulevard from Mitchell north to Underpass Road. Sewer line currently runs east under adjoining residential development. (Completed)
- Project:** Repave Morgan Avenue between Hallowell Lane and Jackson Street include sidewalks, streetlights. (Included in FY22 CIP)
- Project:** Install public sewer along Morgan Avenue that includes storm water improvements. (Included in FY22 CIP)
- Project:** More bike trails throughout neighborhood. (In Progress)
- Project:** Park improvements for Little League and soccer leagues. (Amend Park and Optimist Park projects addressing this need)
- Project:** Community Resource Officer within the neighborhood to steer kids away from drugs and promote a safe neighborhood. (Coordination between SD#2 and City PD is ongoing)
- Project:** Pave Newman Lane behind Newman Elementary School. (Completed)
- Project:** Storm water improvement at the Northeast corner of Phillip and Hallowell. (Addressed with Hallowell Lane Project)
- Project:** Need school zone signage at Newman Elementary School. Completed)

**Project:** Installation and improvement of municipal water and sewer lines within the District. (Completed)

**Project:** Installation of sidewalks on Jackson Street (where needed). (In Progress)

**Project:** Stop light at South Billings Boulevard and Midland Road. (Completed)

**Project:** Neighborhood wide traffic study for traffic calming strategies. (In Progress through SRTS and Complete Streets efforts)

**Project:** Assess adequacy of fire hydrants throughout the neighborhood and add fire hydrants as needed. (Not Completed)

**Project:** Traffic light at State Avenue and Hallowell Lane. (Completed)

**Project:** Continuation of streetlights on Jackson to King Avenue. (Not Completed)

In addition to property owner identification of projects for the District, the City of Billings Public Works Department has several ongoing or future infrastructure projects scheduled. These projects include the following:

- **Orchard Lane** - Replacement of a water main in Orchard Lane from just south of King Avenue East to Underpass Avenue. (Completed)
- **Calhoun Lane** – Replacement of water main in Calhoun Lane from King Avenue East to Underpass Avenue. (Completed)
- **Jackson Street** - Jackson Street is split into two phases. The first phase will provide sidewalk and drive approaches on the west side of Jackson Street from King Avenue East to Ryan Avenue. The second phase will provide drive approaches, sidewalk, curb and gutter, and ADA ramps along both sides of Jackson Street from State Avenue to Kratz Lane. (Completed)
- **Newman Lane and Bruce Avenue** - Sanitary sewer rehabilitation work was completed in the TIF District in 2007 at Newman Lane and Bruce Avenue.

### **2019 Project and Program Recommendations:**

**Parks & Recreational Amenities** – Construct and enhance public facilities that will increase the quality or quantity of parks and recreational activities within the District. This may include, but is not limited to, a recreation center, swimming pool, ice arena, indoor and outdoor park development, and other amenities. Of note, the ice arena identified as a priority in the 2019 update is currently under construction as a public-private partnership within the District at Amend Park, as is an indoor court, walking track and community recreation facility adjacent to the ice arena.

**Public Safety** – Construction of Police or Fire facilities within the District, to include necessary furnishings for such facilities. Since the 2019 Urban Renewal Plan amendments, the Billings Police Department replaced its Evidence Facility on Moore Lane in the southern part of the District.

**Railroad Infrastructure** – Coordinate with BNSF Railway and Montana Rail Link on safety and long-term viability of railroad crossings and corridors in the District and cooperate on projects with the railroads and City of Billings.

**Walking Paths and Trails** – Construct sidewalks, trails, and pathways throughout the District with landscaping to ensure the safety of children and all pedestrians, as well as provide access to neighborhoods and services.

**Transportation Corridor Improvements** – Construct and reconstruct transportation infrastructure in the District to include streets, sidewalks, lighting, traffic control, multi-purpose side paths, landscaping, water, sewer, stormwater, and transit access projects.

**School and Community Services** – Assist in funding projects and programs in the District to enhance school playgrounds and athletic fields, health and wellness programs, access to community meeting and activity spaces, and other efforts that improve access to school and community services. Since 2019, several school projects have been completed, including an enhanced bus pick up and drop off and school entryway at Newman School, an expansion of athletic field space at Riverside Middle School as well as addition of solar panels at the school.

**2021 SBBURD Gravel Street Inventory – Programming in Current or Future CIP (The status of these projects will be updated before final publication)**

Branch Name	To	From
ARDEN AVE	JACKSON STREET	VICEROWY STREET
BRUCE Ave	HALLOWELL	STEPHENS
CLEVENGER AVENUE	600' W OF JACKSON ST	JACKSON ST
FRANCES AVENUE	ORCHARD LANE	END W. ORCHARD LANE
HILLVIEW LANE	MORGAN AVE	ALLEY N OF PHILLIP STREET
HILLVIEW LANE	VAUGHN LANE	MITCHELL AVENUE
HOLIDAY AVENUE	SONGBIRD DRIVE	WELL STREET
MCDOUGALL DRIVE	CUL-DE-SAC E OF WASHINGTON STREET	WASHINGTON STREET
MITCHELL AVENUE	HILLVIEW	HALLOWELL
MONROE STREET	MADISON AVENUE	371'S. MADISON AVE
MOREY STREET	UNDERPASS AVENUE	WONDERPARK DRIVE
MOREY STREET	END OF GRAVEL	SIMPSON STREET
MULLOWNEY LANE	320' N/O PARKWAY LN	130' S/O PARKWAY LANE
NEWMAN LANE	LUX AVENUE	RUTH LANE
NOVA LANE	SONGBIRD DRIVE	WELL STREET
RYAN AVENUE	JACKSON STREET	HALLOWELL LANE
SONGBIRD DRIVE	MIDLAND ROAD	FRONTIER DRIVE
STEPHENS LANE	ARDEN AVENUE	VAUGHN LANE
STEPHENS LANE	SIMPSON STREET	RYAN AVENUE
STEPHENS LANE	ALLEY N OF JANSMA AVENUE	ALLEY S OF JANSMA AVE
VAUGHN LANE	JACKSON	HALLOWELL

FY 2022 SBURD Project
FY 2021 City Project and SID
Proposed Future CIP Inclusion

**2025 Project and Program Recommendations:**

**Transportation Corridor Improvements** – Construct and reconstruct transportation infrastructure in the District to include streets, sidewalks, lighting, traffic control, multi-purpose side paths, landscaping, water, sewer, stormwater, and transit access projects.

Improve the many uncontrolled intersections within the district with proper traffic controls. Also, improved traffic controls on South 27<sup>th</sup> Street to allow safer access for vehicular traffic, particularly northbound South 27th Street.

Address remaining gravel streets, not constructed to City of Billings standards, including:

Branch Name	To	From	Length of Street
ARDEN AVE	JACKSON STREET	VICEROY STREET	610
CLEVENGER AVENUE	600' W OF JACKSON ST	JACKSON ST	600
FRANCES AVENUE	ORCHARD LANE	END W. ORCHARD LANE	600
MCDUGALL DRIVE	CUL-DE-SAC E OF WASHINGTON STREET	WASHINGTON STREET	610
MONROE STREET	MADISON AVENUE	371'S. MADISON AVE	371
MOREY STREET	UNDERPASS AVENUE	WONDERPARK DRIVE	225
MOREY STREET	END OF GRAVEL	SIMPSON STREET	840
MULLOWNEY LANE	320' N/O PARKWAY LN	130' S/O PARKWAY LANE	320
NEWMAN LANE	LUX AVENUE	RUTH LANE	848
NOVA LANE	SONGBIRD DRIVE	WELL STREET	410
STEPHENS LANE	ARDEN AVENUE	VAUGHN LANE	1,030
STEPHENS LANE	ALLEY N OF JANSMA AVENUE	ALLEY S OF JANSMA AVE	285

**Parks & Recreational Amenities** – Construct and enhance public facilities that will increase the quality or quantity of parks and recreational activities within the District. This may include, but is not limited to, a recreation center, swimming pool, ice arena, indoor and outdoor park development, and other amenities. Specific projects identified within the 2025 expansion area include the following.

- South Park
  - Replace pool and building
  - Replace restroom
  - Re-surface basketball and tennis courts, and possibly convert a couple to pickle ball
  - Sidewalk replacement and improve ADA accessibility
- Highland Park
  - Update and replace spray ground
  - Update and re-model restroom
  - Update and replace irrigation system
  - Sidewalk replacement and improved ADA accessibility

**Walking Paths and Trails** – Construct or reconstruct sidewalks, trails, and pathways throughout the District with landscaping to ensure the safety of children and all pedestrians, and to provide ADA-compliant access to neighborhoods and services. Specific areas include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Add pedestrian crossings to South 27<sup>th</sup> (currently crossings only at 1st Avenue South and State Avenue).
- Add pedestrian crossings on 1st Avenue South west of 27th Street (there is a significant gap after leaving the downtown portion of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, and there are no pedestrian crossings east of 27th Street).
- Add pedestrian crossings on State Avenue.
- Address areas with no or limited pedestrian facilities, including:

- Riverside Road
- Washington Street
- Minnesota Avenue
- 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, east of 21<sup>st</sup> Street
- South 27<sup>th</sup> Street up to the I-90 bridge.

**School and Community Services** – Assist in funding projects and programs in the District to enhance school playgrounds and athletic fields, health and wellness programs, access to community meeting and activity spaces, and other efforts that improve access to school and community services.

**Public Safety** – Public safety remains a priority. Construction of Police or Fire facilities within the District, to include necessary furnishings for such facilities, are improvements that will help meet revitalization goals of this Plan. The Billings Police Department has identified the need for expansion of its evidence facility storage yard and the project is included the City's Capital Improvement Plan for 2027-2031.

**Railroad Infrastructure** – Continue coordination with BNSF Railway on safety and long-term viability of railroad crossings and corridors in the District and cooperate on projects with the railroad and City of Billings.

The SBURA provides support to the City's SBBURD Advisory Committee including evaluating each project and how it would help achieve the goals of this Urban Renewal Plan. The SBBURD Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the City Council regarding potential projects; the City Council makes the final project funding decisions,

## **Section 14 - Identified Projects and Programs in Relationship to the Goals and Objectives Respective to the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy**

One of the requirements of Montana's Urban Renewal Law (Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, MCA) is that the urban renewal plan must conform to the community's growth policy. On October 14, 2025, the Yellowstone County Board of Planning acted affirmatively on a recommendation to the City Council as to the SBBURD expansion's consistency with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy. The 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy ("Growth Policy") refers to and promotes economic development and urban renewal in a variety of ways. The preceding list of urban renewal goals listed in Section 13 are relevant to the Growth Guidelines identified in the Growth Policy in the following areas:

### **Growth Guidelines**

#### **Essential Investments (relating public and private expenditures to public values)**

- The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans.
- Public transit and commercial air service are critical to ensure access to and around the City.

- Planning and construction of safe and affordable interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings.
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community.
- Landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors.
- Public health and safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Infill development and development near existing City infrastructure may be the most cost effective.
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community.
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired.
- Infrastructure and service investments that stabilize or improve property values, secure future utility costs, consider maintenance costs, and improve our environmental quality far into the future (i.e. energy efficient) are desirable
- A supportive school system that inspires, motivates, and prepares students for meaningful employment is important for ensuring a high quality, competitive community.

**Place Making (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)**

- A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable.
- Enhancement and maintenance of public spaces and buildings through City stewardship is integral to a vibrant community.
- Park master plans and transportation plans are important to facilitate the preservation and improved public access to the Yellowstone River and the Rims
- Public and private partnerships are valuable for creating enhanced entryways into Billings.
- Enhancing public buildings and spaces to be more efficient in their uses of energy, money, and space is important to having a vibrant and livable City.

**Community Fabric (attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings)**

- Developed landscape areas in commercial areas encourage more pedestrian activity and vibrant commercial activity.
- Attractive streetscapes provide a pleasant and calming travel experience in urban and suburban neighborhoods.
- Outdoor public spaces provide casual and relaxing gathering areas for people.
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings.
- Cost-effective landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors.

### **Strong Neighborhoods (livable, safe, sociable, and resilient neighborhoods)**

- Walkable neighborhoods that permit convenient destinations such as neighborhood services, open space, parks, schools, and public gathering spaces foster health, good will and social interaction.
- Safe and livable neighborhoods can be achieved through subdivision design that focuses on complete streets, pedestrian-scale streetlights, street trees and walkable access to public spaces.
- Implementation of the Infill Policy is important to encourage development of underutilized properties.

### **Home Base (healthy, safe, and diverse housing options)**

- A mix of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population is important.
- Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy, and safe.
- Homes that are safe and sound support a healthy community.

### **Mobility and Access (transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all)**

- Connecting people to places with transportation choices is vital to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Safe and accessible transportation systems benefit everyone's quality of life.
- Affordable public transit is much desired.
- Development oriented to transit routes will provide more transportation choices and is preferred.
- "Safe Routes to Schools" promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation.
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings.
- On-street bike facilities promote predictability for all users
- Technology can reduce congestion and facilitate emergency vehicle travel at railroad crossings.

### **Prosperity (promoting equal opportunity and economic advancement)**

- Predictable, reasonable City taxes and assessments are important to Billings' taxpayers.
- Successful businesses that provide local jobs benefit the community.
- Community investments that attract and retain a strong, skilled, and diverse workforce also attracts businesses.
- Retaining and supporting existing businesses helps sustain a healthy economy.

## **Section 15 - Neighborhood Planning**

Another tool that is expected to be used in the future to address current conditions within the District and the identification of neighborhood needs will be accomplished through Neighborhood Plans. The

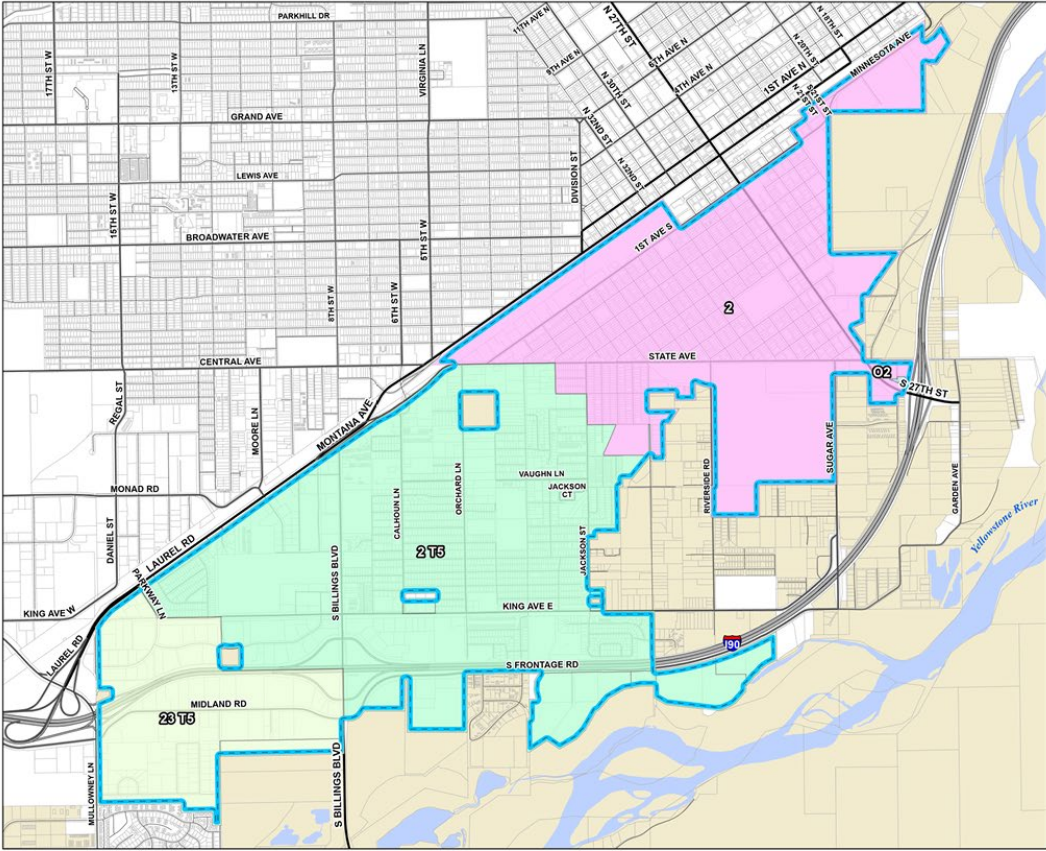
Southside Neighborhood Plan was last updated in 2008 and is on a new list of neighborhood plans to be prioritized for updating in the next few years. The City-County Planning Division was without a Neighborhood Planner between 2009 and 2024, when the City Council approved the position to be funded. There is a lot of catching up for the City in its neighborhood plans, and the Southside plan is one of them. The purpose of the neighborhood plan is to assist residents, governing agencies, planners, and developers in making the right choices when determining future growth patterns and development within the neighborhood. The plan also encourages local government, developers, and businesses to discuss future land use decisions with neighborhood residents and business owners prior to the proposed land use change. The neighborhood plan is not a regulatory document; instead, it is adopted by the City Council and the Board of County Commissioners as an implementation strategy and an updated plan will be adopted in the future as a component of the Billings 2045 Land Use Plan.

An updated plan is likely to include general and specific recommendations that reflect the values of the community, encourage sound decision-making, and empower people to take action.

## **Section 16- Conclusion**

The South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District continues to have a tremendous amount of potential to become a viable and reliable economic engine. The District is becoming a destination where Billings residents, business owners, and visitors purposefully go to conduct business, have goods and services manufactured and enjoy recreation and leisure activities. At the end of the life of this TIFD program, it is the hope of all involved that this area of Billings will be a wonderful place to live, work and play far into the future.

# Appendix I – 2025 Expansion



## South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) - Combined Area Existing & Proposed Expansion

SBBURD comprised of Levy Districts 2, 2T5, 23T5, & O2



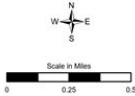
**Legend**

- SBBURD Boundary Combined (Existing & Proposed)
- Billings City Limits
- Yellowstone County Boundary

**SBBURD Levy Districts**

- 2
- 2 T5
- 23 T5
- O2

The parcel data mapped herein does not constitute a legal survey. Inaccuracies exist with both the mapped data and the Montana Department of Revenue. C.A.M.A. State, when seeking the definitive description of real property, consult the deed recorded at the Yellowstone County court house.



Document Path: I:\p\13471241\_PlanMapping\Projects\Planning\2025\01\_142\_SBBURD\_Proposed\_Expansion\01\_142\_SBBURD\_Proposed\_Expansion\01\_142\_SBBURD\_Proposed\_Expansion.aprx | Date: 10/1/2024

**Appendix II – SBBURD Boundary Description**

DRAFT



## YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF PLANNING

City/County  
Planning Division

Billings  
Metropolitan  
Planning  
Organization

316 N 26<sup>th</sup> St  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Billings MT 59101

P.O. Box 1178  
Billings, MT 59103  
P 406.657.8247

October 14, 2025

Mayor and City Council  
City of Billings, Montana

RE: Expansion of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District

As President of the Yellowstone County Board of Planning, I am forwarding the Board’s recommendation for the expansion of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) and amendments to the District Urban Renewal Plan. On October, 14, 2025, the Planning Board reviewed the proposed expansion of the SBBURD as to conformity with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy. The Planning Board voted to forward a recommendation to City Council of approval of the SBBURD expansion and associated amendments to the Urban Renewal Plan and its conformity with the Growth Policy.

This item was posted on the Planning Board agenda for its regular meeting held October 14, 2025. The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the amendments to the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan and found the changes conformed with the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy. Specifically, several Growth Policy Guidelines are addressed by the Project and Program elements described in Section 13 in the plan, and some examples are called out here by the Board:

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**2025 Project and Program Recommendations:**

Transportation Corridor Improvements – Construct and reconstruct transportation infrastructure in the District to include streets, sidewalks, lighting, traffic control, multi-purpose side paths, landscaping, water, sewer, stormwater, and transit access projects.

Improve the many uncontrolled intersections within the district with proper traffic controls. Also, improved traffic controls on South 27th Street to allow safer access for vehicular traffic, particularly northbound South 27th Street.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values) Infrastructure and service investments that stabilize or improve property values, secure future utility costs, consider maintenance costs, and improve our environmental quality far into the future (i.e. energy efficient) are desirable

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**Parks & Recreational Amenities** – Construct and enhance public facilities that will increase the quality or quantity of parks and recreational activities within the District. This may include, but is not limited to, a recreation center, swimming pool, ice arena, indoor and outdoor park development, and other amenities.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Place Making** (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)

- *A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable*

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

- *Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community*

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**Public Safety** – Construction of Police or Fire facilities within the District, to include necessary furnishings for such facilities.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

- *Public health and safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors*

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**Walking Paths and Trails** – Construct sidewalks, trails and pathways throughout the District with landscaping to ensure the safety of children and all pedestrians, as well as provide access to neighborhoods and services.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Essential Investments** (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

- *The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans*

**Community Fabric** (attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings)

- *Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings*

(SBBURD Urban Renewal Plan Draft)

**School and Community Services** – Assist in funding projects and programs in the District to enhance school playgrounds and athletic fields, health and wellness programs, access to community meeting and activity spaces, and other efforts that improve access to school and community services.

(2016 Growth Policy Guiding Principles)

**Mobility and Access** (transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all)

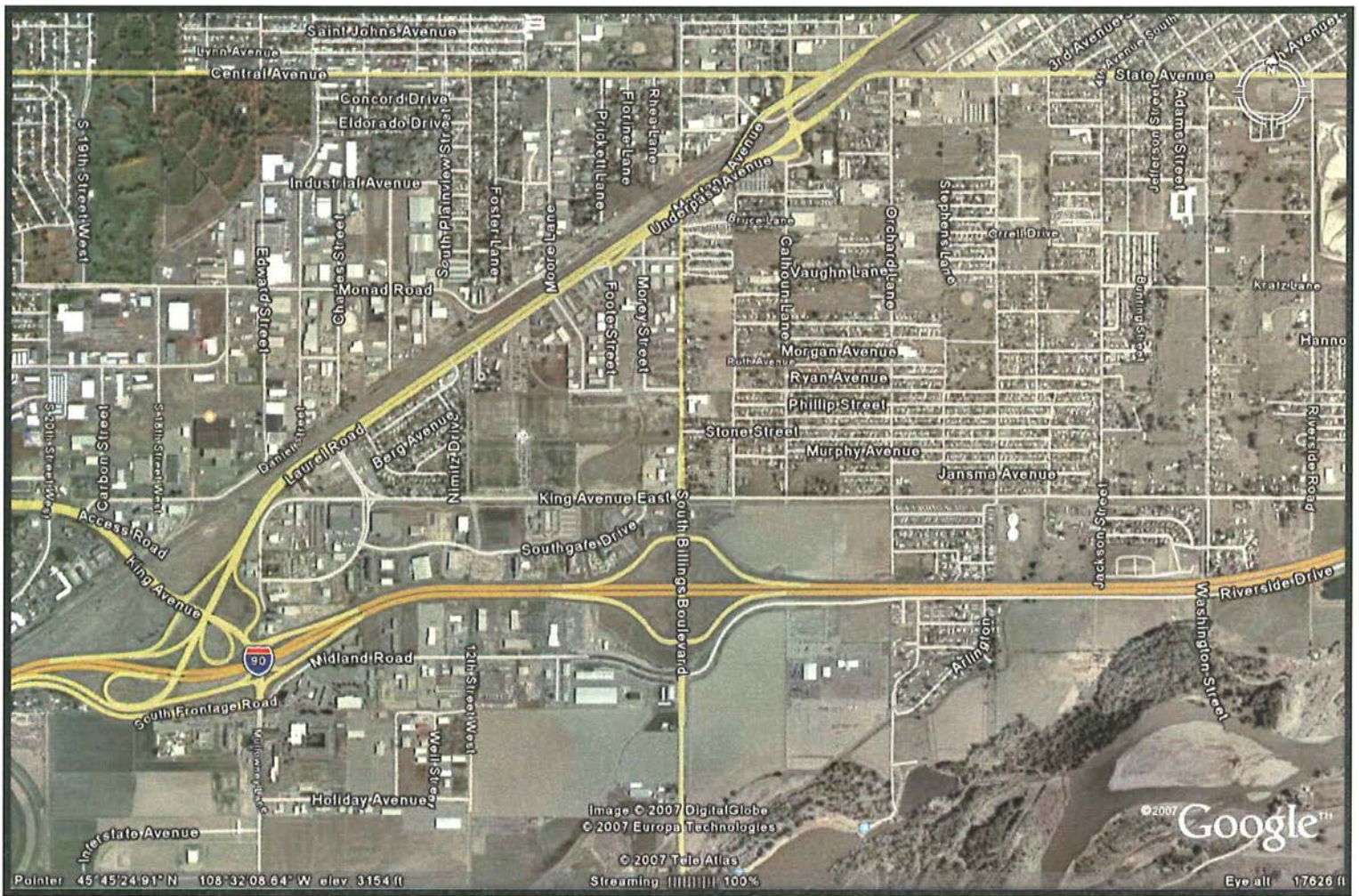
- *“Safe Routes to Schools” promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation*

The Board respectfully submits this recommendation to the City of Billings Mayor and City Council for consideration.

Respectfully Yours,

Roger Gravgaard, President  
Yellowstone County Board of Planning

# Urban Renewal Plan for the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Area



Prepared by the Planning & Community Services Department  
Adopted by the Billings City Council on December 8, 2008  
Amended by the Billings City Council on July 22, 2019

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## Acknowledgements

### 2008 Participants and Stakeholders

#### City of Billings

- Ron Tussing, Mayor

#### City Council Members:

- Richard (Dick) Clark
- Mark Astle
- Peggie Denney Gaghen
- Jim Ronquillo
- Vince Ruegamer
- Chris "Shoots" Veis
- Ed Ulledalen
- Jani McCall
- Denis Pitman
- Lan-y Brewster

#### Planning and Community Services Department

#### Southwest Corridor Task Force Officers

- Tom Ruschkewicz, Chair
- Floyd Martin, Vice Chair
- Alan Pomick, Treasurer
- Debbie Rowe, Secretary

#### Big Sky Economic Development Authority

#### Downtown Billings Partnership

#### Stakeholders

Alene Malloy	Casey Ryan	Edythe Davis
Allen Krenz	Charles Duenow	Eleanor Aukshun
Alta Dean	Cindy Linse	Elissa Linse
Arlene Bierwagen	Cindy Reid	Elsie Arntzen
Barbara Kipp	Clarence Perkins	Floyd Martin
Barbara Prewett	Clifton Burns	Gary Cooper
Barry Willson	Colleen Apps	Gary Tipton
Beth Kirkwood	Connie Wagner	Gene Frank
Betty Hofstad	Connie Wittman	Gerald Apps
Betty Kegley	Cris Ruckman	Gerogia Kembel
Beverly Bennetts	Dale Kiel	Glen Kibbee
Bob Franks	Daryle Young	Gloria Krenz
Brandy Pmter	David Mora	Greg Sennett
Brenda Estill	Dean Haley	Harriet Conklin
Brenda Ryan	Dean Miller	Ida Stuart
Brian Reid	Dennis Randall	Irene Aure
Bruce Burrows	Don Pett	James Lasater
Candice Reinschmidt	Dorothy Plouffe	Jay Hanson
Carl Howard	Doug Toomey	Jean Randall
Carol Atchley	Duane Bender	Jeannine Swoboda

## Stakeholders Continued

Carol Dale	Ed Gabbo	Jed Porter
Jerald Mohr	Kevin Nelson	Mary Ann Kraske
Jerry Driscoll	Lany Estill	Mary Duenow
Jimmie Frasch	Leonard Bierwagen	Maurice Muth
Joan Dosch	Linda Furlong	Mavis Schultz
JoAnne Mollet	Linda Hayworth	Mavis Wilkinson
Joe Morin	Linda Pettengill	Mel Maier
John Hoffmann	Linda Vansky	Michele Johnson
John Hurless	Loren Bice	Michelle Grasswick
Jon Gowan	Louis Plouffe	Mike Kenney
Jon Rupprecht	Lynn Toomey	Mike Vinton
Joyce Kenney	Marc Swoboda	Neal Armfield
Joyce Pirrie	Margaret Schantz	Nelda Reinschmidt
Judy Coles	Margo Allen	Paige Tipton
Judy Mmiin	Margo Smith	Partice Schuman
Julie Bender	Marian Leligdowize	Pat Jensen
Karen Hergett	Mmjorie Bishop	Pat Morin
Katherine Gowan	Marlene Anderson	Pat Newbury
Kathy Doty	Marlis Brodsack	Pat Perkins
Kathy Wilkinson	Marlis Bufford	Patsy Kahler
Kelly Handley	Martha Sheldon	Patty Nordlund
Kerri Tallerico	Marvin Forquer	Paul Hartman
Paul Hendershot	Rebekah Wales	Richard Deis
Richard Ruff	Rick Leuthold	Robbin Ostrum
Robert Neal	Robert Popelka	Robyn Rupprecht
Roger Mollett	RonHergett	Ron Kaneski
Ron Kirkwood	Ronald Schultz	Roy Linse
Sammy Handley	Sandra Fiscus	Shane Keehn
Shanna Fredrickson	Sharon Franks	Sharon Young

## 2019 Participants and Stakeholders

### City of Billings

Mayor Bill Cole

#### City Council Members:

Brent Cromley  
Mike Yakawich  
Frank Ewalt  
Roy Neese  
Denise Joy  
Chris Friedel  
Reg Gibbs

Penny Ronning  
Richard Clark  
Shaun Brown

South Billings Urban Renewal Association

Carolyn Rukstad  
Scott Hanser  
Debbie Keller  
Chuck Barrett  
Sam Hadley  
Mike Mayott  
Jeff Muri

Steve Zeier, Zeier Consulting

City Administration  
City Finance Department  
Planning and Community Services Department  
Billings Police Department

## **Section 1 - Introduction**

On May 12, 2008 the City of Billings adopted an ordinance creating the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) and established a Tax Increment Finance District. As part of this ordinance, an urban renewal plan and the boundaries of the tax increment finance district were adopted. Public participation for preparing the urban renewal plan involved public meetings and participation with the City of Billings, the Southwest Corridor Neighborhood Task Force, residents and property owners, Downtown Billings Partnership, and Big Sky Economic Development Authority.

In October of 2008, the City began a modification of the SBBURD to include three additional properties. Two of these properties were recently annexed and contiguous to the existing SBBURD; therefore, the properties are now eligible to be included within the SBBURD. The third property is contiguous and requested an expansion of the district boundary. The modification of the urban renewal plan will reflect the addition of those properties.

The December 2008 modification of the urban renewal plan:

- Served as a framework for the official urban renewal plan
- Fulfilled Montana state law
- Updated and define district boundaries
- Classified blight
- Set forth the protocol for its authorization, execution, and management
- Illustrated the development opportunities
- Documented baseline taxable property values and potential areas for redevelopment

The July 2019 amendment of the urban renewal plan will:

- Identify future projects and programs
- Ensure the City has the option to bond future projects
- Update to the 2008 Plan to reflect the 2019 amendment process

## **Section 2 - Definitions**

The following terms have the following meanings unless a different meaning is clearly indicated by the context:

1. "Agency" or "urban renewal agency" means a public agency created by Section 7-15-4232 of the Montana Code Annotated.
2. "Blighted area" means an area that is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime; substantially impairs the sound growth of the city or its environs; retards the provision of housing accommodations; or constitutes an economic or social liability or is detrimental or constitutes a menace to the public health, safety, welfare, and morals in its present condition and use, by reason of:
  - a. The substantial physical dilapidation; deterioration; defective construction, material, and arrangement; or age obsolescence of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
  - b. Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;

- c. Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings;
  - d. High density of population and overcrowding;
  - e. Defective or inadequate street layout;
  - f. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
  - g. Excessive landcoverage
  - h. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
  - 1. Deterioration of site;
  - J. Diversity of ownership;
  - k. Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
  - I. Defective or unusual conditions of title;
  - m. Improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
  - n. The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes; or
  - o. Any combination of the factors listed in the subsection (2).
3. "Bonds" means any bonds, notes, or debentures (including refunding obligations) authorized to be issued pursuant to Section 7-15-4300 MCA.
  4. "Clerk" means the clerk or other official of the municipality who is the custodian of the official records of the municipality.
  5. "Local governing body" means the council or other legislative body charged with governing the municipality.
  6. "Mayor" means the chief executive of a city or town.
  7. "Municipality" means any incorporated city or town in the state.
  8. "Redevelopment" may include:
    - a. acquisition of a blighted area or portion of the area;
    - b. demolition and removal of buildings and improvements;
    - c. installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements necessary for carrying out in the area the urban renewal provisions in accordance with the urban renewal plan; and
    - d. making the land available for development or redevelopment by private enterprise or public agencies, including sale, initial leasing, or retention by the municipality itself, at its fair value for uses in accordance with the urban renewal plan. If the property is condemned pursuant to Title 70, chapter 30, the private enterprise or public agencies may not develop the condemned area in a way that is not for a public use.
  9. "Urban renewal area" means a blighted area that the local governing body designates as appropriate for an urban renewal project or projects.
  10. "Urban renewal plan" means a plan for one or more urban renewal areas or for an urban renewal project. The plan:
    - a. must conform to the growth policy if one has been adopted pursuant to Title 76, chapter 1; and;
    - b. must be sufficiently complete to indicate, on a yearly basis or otherwise:
      - i. any land acquisition, demolition, and removal of structures; redevelopment; improvements; and rehabilitation that is proposed to be carried out in the urban renewal area;
      - ii. zoning and planning changes, if any, including changes to the growth policy if one has been adopted pursuant to Title 76, chapter 1;
      - iii. land uses, maximum densities, building requirements; and
      - iv. the plan's relationship to definite local objectives respecting appropriate land uses, improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, and other public improvements.

### **Section 3 - Background**

The South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District lies within city boundaries, is situated between major transportation routes, and stretches from the east side of the King Avenue Overpass east to Washington Street and from State Avenue South to the city limit boundaries. Located within the district is the I-90/94 Interstate and adjacent north is the major railway line through the city. Map 1 shows the boundaries of the SBBURD.

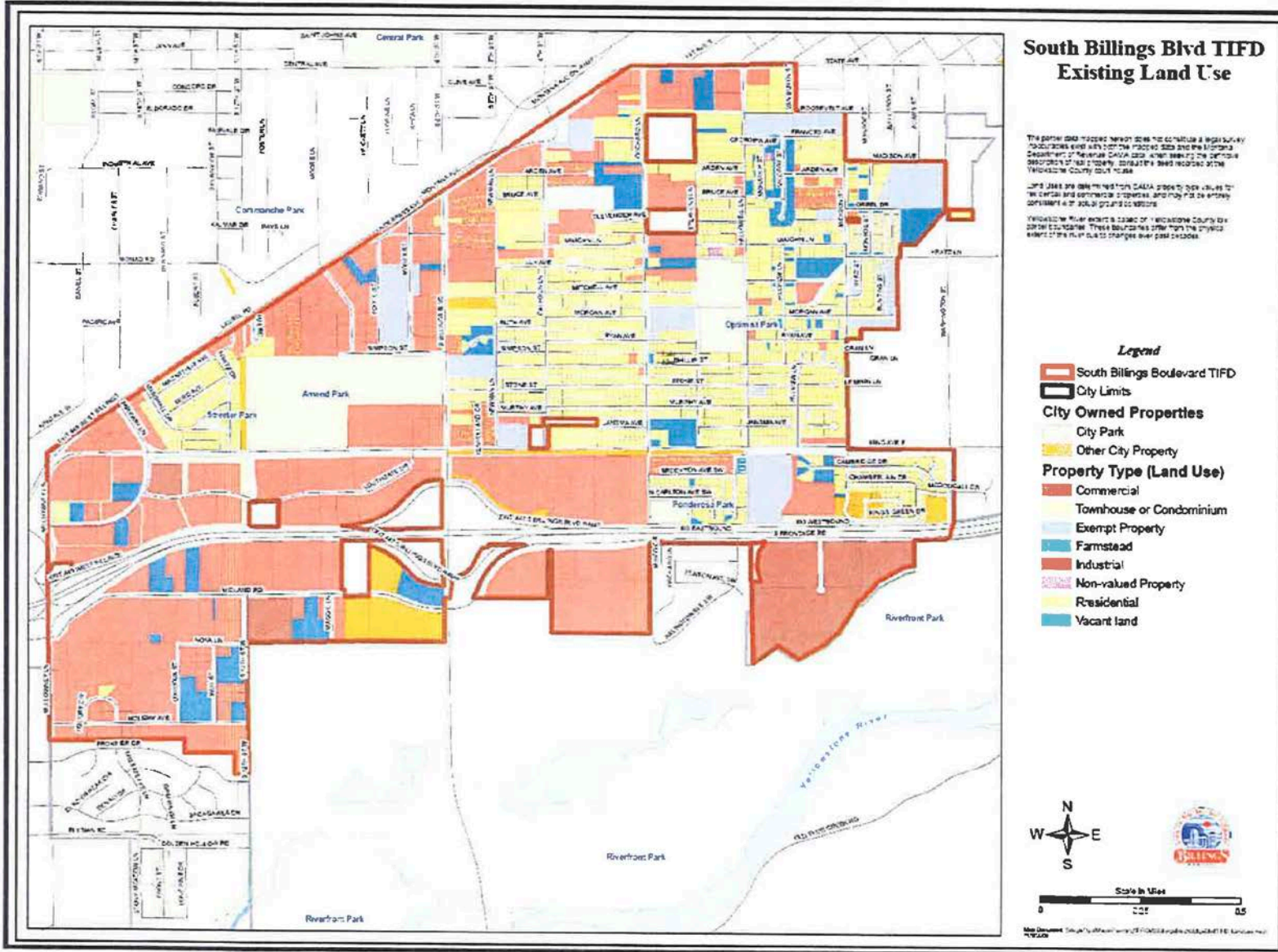
This district lies within the Southwest Corridor Neighborhood Task Force. The task force was created in the early 1990's in response to the growing problem with the roadway interchanges and associated issues. Since that time, the Task Force has become a more diverse body that handles many issues for the Southwest Billings community. Recent neighborhood issues include the re-opening of the Southgate Cop Shop and the development of Amend Park. Existing land uses and current zoning are shown on Maps 2 and 3.

A closer look at this neighborhood shows an established area of mixed residential and commercial uses. This area also includes four schools. Some areas include unimproved streets, no sidewalk, curbs or gutters. In addition, many areas are not served by municipal water and sewer or there is old, inadequate water and sewer infrastructure. Many of the concerns raised by residents within the district center around routes for children to get to school, including bus routes that run on unimproved streets and children walking down the street instead of sidewalks to get to school.

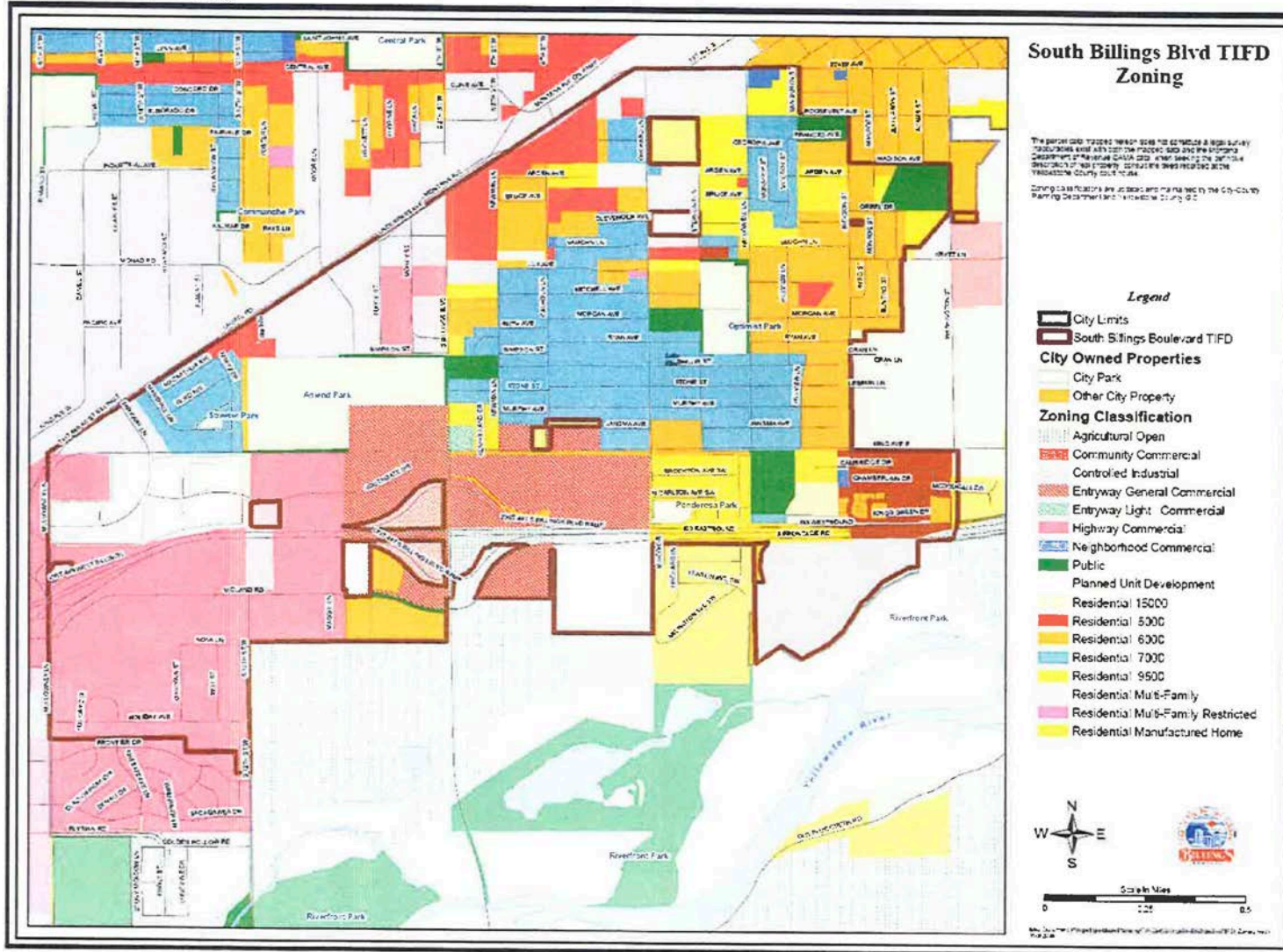
Due to the location, the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District has a tremendous amount of potential to become a major economic force. With the interstate corridor located in this district, the potential exists for this area to become a major destination place for retail, goods and services, manufacturing, and entertainment.



Map 2 – Existing Land Uses



Map 3 – Current Zoning



## **Section 4 - Description of Blight**

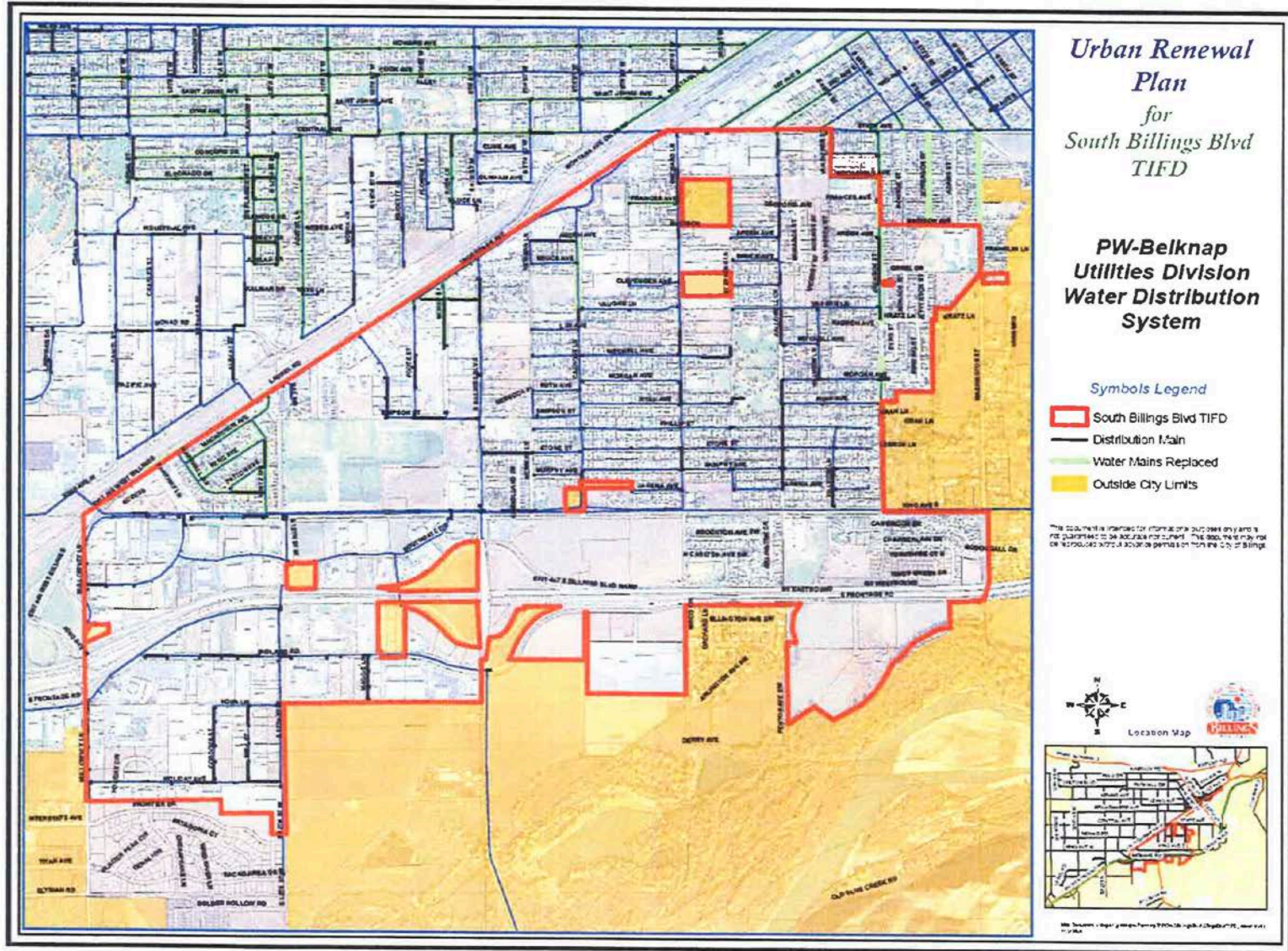
A requirement of Montana Annotated Code 2005 is to justify an urban renewal plan supported through a tax increment finance district through the determination of *blight*. Blight is defined as an area that is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime; substantially impairs the sound growth of the city or its environs; retards the provision of housing accommodation; or constitutes an economic or social liability or is detrimental or constitutes a menace to the public health, safety, welfare, and morals in its present condition and use, by reason of:

- the substantial physical dilapidation; deterioration; defective construction, material, and arrangement; or age obsolescence of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
- inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
- inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings;
- high density of population and overcrowding;
- defective or inadequate street layout;
- faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- excessive land coverage;
- unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- deterioration of site;
- diversity of ownership
- tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- defective or unusual conditions of title;
- improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
- the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes;
- any combination of the factors listed

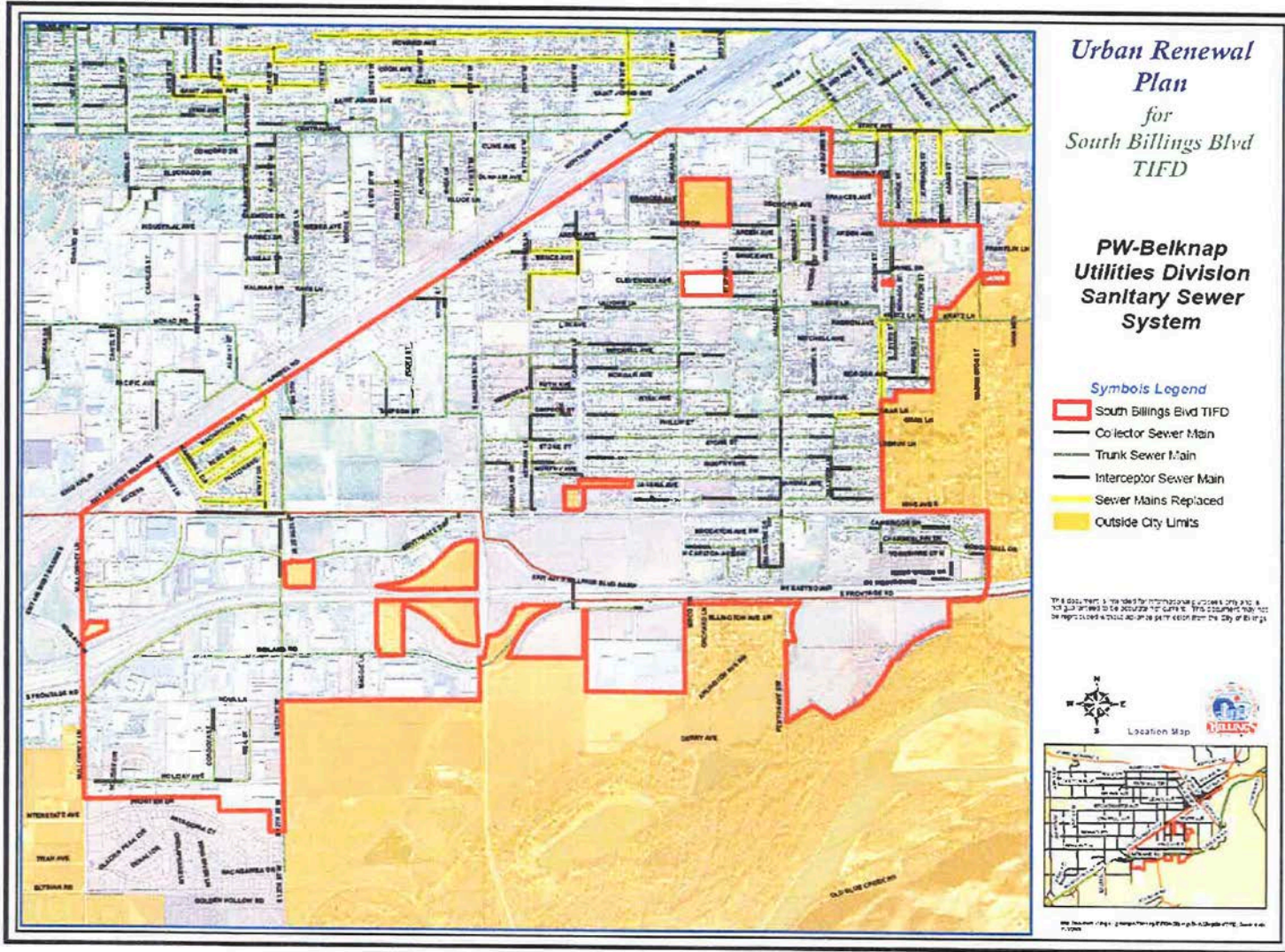
## **Section 5- Summary of Blight**

The area in the proposed district contains a great deal of blight. Within the district there is substantial structural deterioration, long-term land vacancy, and significant infrastructure needs. Several of the commercial buildings in the district are vacant or deteriorated and need demolition. Many of the sidewalks are cracked or nonexistent, alleys are deteriorated, and, in general, much of the area is below city standards. In contrast to the above, there are certain properties within the district in good repair but included in the district to allow for a contiguous block of land within the district; and because pockets of revitalization cannot be sustained if areas of neglect and blight surround them. Over time, without continued managed urban renewal, even these success stories will once again decline in taxable value. Portions of the district fall into the blighted, neglected and under-utilized categories. Maps 4 and 5 show the current infrastructure conditions within the district.

Map 4 – Water Distribution System



Map 5 – Sanitary Sewer System



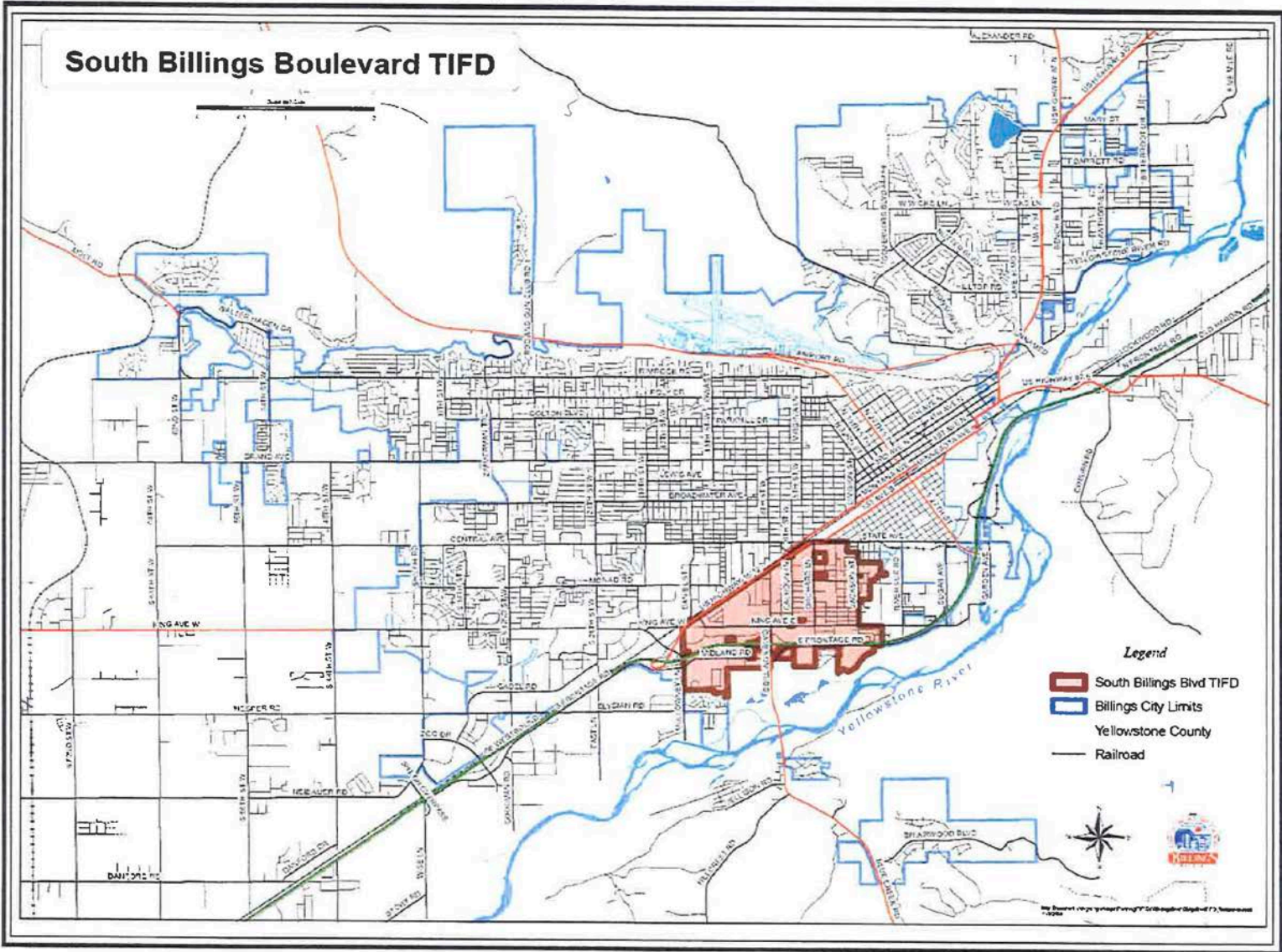
## **Section 6 - The Site and Its Relationship to the City**

The South Billings Boulevard TIFD and Urban Renewal District is located in the south center region of the City of Billings. Bordered by the Interstate Corridor, the main railroad line and principal transportation routes, it is an area where economic development opportunities are numerous. In addition, numerous service, commercial, industrial, parks and recreation and housing choices are located within the district. Map 6 shows the TIFD boundary in relationship to the rest of the city.

## **Section 7 - Description of the District Boundary**

Starting at the intersection of State Avenue and Van Buren Street, extending south down the centerline of Van Buren Street to the intersection of Van Buren Street and Roosevelt Avenue, extending east down the centerline of Roosevelt Avenue to the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and Jackson Street, extending south down the centerline of Jackson Street to the intersection of Jackson Street and Madison Avenue, extending east down the centerline of Madison Avenue to the intersection of Madison Avenue and Washington Street, extending south down the centerline of Washington Street to the intersection of the centerline of Washington Street and the extension of the northern boundary of Lot 7, Willis Subdivision, extending east along said boundary to the eastern boundary of said lot, extending south along said boundary to the southern boundary of said lot, extending westerly along said boundary and its extension to the centerline of Washington Street, extending north to the existing City of Billings city limit boundary, extending southerly and westerly along the existing city limit boundary to the intersection of Jackson Street and King Avenue East, extending east along the centerline of King Avenue East to the intersection of King Avenue East and Washington Street, extending south along the centerline of Washington Street and its projection across the Interstate 90 right-of-way, to its intersection with South Frontage Road, thence in a westerly direction following the south right-of-way boundary of the South Frontage Road to the intersection of an extension of the east boundary of Riverfront Business Park Subdivision, extending south along eastern boundary of said subdivision to the south boundary of said subdivision, extending southerly and westerly along said boundary to the west boundary of said subdivision, extending northerly and easterly along said boundary and its extension to the south right-of-way boundary of South Frontage Road, extending westerly to the northeast corner of Lot 1, Block 1, Willowbrook Subdivision, thence in a southerly and westerly direction following the existing city limit boundary to a point which intersects with the extension of the southern boundary of Tract 1, C/S 2834, then west along said southern boundary of Tract 1, C/S 2834 and southern boundary of Block 4 of Weil Subdivision to the intersection with the centerline of Mullowney Lane, extending north along the centerline of Mullowney Lane and its projection to the centerline of Laurel Road, extending northeast along the centerline of Laurel Road to its intersection with State Avenue, extending northeast and east along the centerline of State Avenue to the ending point at the intersection of State Avenue and Van Buren Street. Excluding all unincorporated land within the boundary.

Map 6 – Tax Increment Finance District in Relationship to City



## **Section 8 - Planning Process**

### **Stakeholder and Community Participation**

The initial concept of developing a Tax Increment Finance District and an Urban Renewal Plan in the South Billings Boulevard area was brought forward by the City of Billings, Big Sky Economic Development Authority and the Downtown Billings Partnership. After discussions and meetings with the Southwest Corridor Task Force, it was determined that a steering committee would be established to move forward with the development of an Urban Renewal Plan for the creation of the South Billings Boulevard TIF District. After discussions with the participating members, it was apparent that direct communication with business owners, landowners and public participation was critical for the project to be a success. Two public meetings were scheduled to open dialogue on the proposed Urban Renewal Plan and TIF District process, and to set goals and objectives of the project. It also became clear that a grass-roots effort conducted and led by the property owners themselves was needed.

In October of 2008, the city began an urban renewal plan modification process to include 3 additional properties to the district pursuant to Montana Code section 7-15-4221. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan modification were notified by mail of the public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held November 24, 2008.

In May 2019 the City in coordination with the South Billings Urban Renewal Association began the process to amend the South Billings Urban Renewal Plan. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan amendment were notified by mail of a public meeting to discuss and receive public comment on the Plan amendment on May 30, 2019. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan amendment were also notified of the public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held July 8, 2019.

### **Urban Renewal Plan**

The Urban Renewal Plan is the tool that governs what public improvements are needed and desired within the district. Through public meetings and meetings at the Southwest Corridor Task Force, neighborhood needs and projects were identified.

With input from property owners and the identification of goals and objectives, the City of Billings moved forward with the completion of the Urban Renewal Plan. A draft was reviewed with the property owners and the Southwest Corridor Task Force prior to review by the City of Billings City Council.

The high level of transparency and frequency of meetings has ensured that a large local constituency has been involved, and as many stakeholders as possible participate and approve of the plan.

### **Eminent Domain**

In no case shall eminent domain be used as a tool in the redevelopment of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District except as a last resort in the case of needed public infrastructure improvements and/or rights-of way.

## **Residential Relocation Plan**

If a residential structure requires relocation as a result of right-of-way acquisition and/or a public infrastructure construction project, that is partially or fully funded with federal assistance (Housing and Urban Development, Federal Highway, etc), the City of Billings shall abide by the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act.

## **Planning, City Administration and Legal Review**

During the many meetings with the local property owners and the Southwest Neighborhood Task Force, it was decided to begin the process of finalizing the urban renewal plan and take it to the city council before the end of 2007. The urban renewal plan was sent to the City Legal Department and City Administration for review and comments. Comments and recommendations from both City Legal and City Administration were taken into account and incorporated into this plan.

The plan was also sent to the Yellowstone County Board of Planning for its review and recommendations regarding the plan's conformity to the 2003 Growth Policy Plan. A recommendation of approval was passed by the Planning Board on October 23, 2007. The plan was then presented at a City Council Work Session on November 5, 2007. The public hearing and first reading of the Ordinance was held by the City Council on November 26, 2007 with the second reading and final adoption on December 10, 2007.

The modification to the SBBURD plan began in October of 2008. On November 10, 2008, the Billings City Council passed a Resolution Declaring Blight, Intent to Modify the District, and Setting a Public Hearing Date. The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council with regard to the plan's conformity with the 2003 Growth Policy on November 12, 2008. The affected property owners were notified of the plan's modification and public hearing notices were published on November 6, 2008 and November 13, 2008 for the first reading and public hearing on the modification of the plan.

The City initiated an amendment to the SBBURD plan in May 2019 to ensure future projects contemplated by the City and also provided by public comments and recommendations would be possible if funded by bonding or directly through tax increment funds generated by the SBBURD. The process to amend the plan has followed the process described in Montana Code as follows: The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council with regard to the plan's conformity with the 2016 Growth Policy on June 25, 2019. The affected property owners were notified by mailed postcard of the plan's modification, and public hearing notices were published on June 28, 2019 and July 5, 2019 for the first reading and public hearing on the plan amendment.

## **Financial Programming**

The City of Billings to ensure a sound and adequate financial program to fund projects has concluded the following: For every \$1 million dollars of increased market value, assuming Class 4 (commercial) property @ 3.01 % taxable rate and a mill levy of\$ .55, it is anticipated that an increment value of \$14,500 will be generated yearly.

## **Modification of SBBURD Plan**

The SBBURD may be modified at any time by the City Council as necessary to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blighted areas, and encourage urban rehabilitation. The process for plan modification shall follow the procedures set forth in 7-15-4212 through 7-15-4219 MCA, with respect to initial adoption of this plan. For purposes of urban renewal district boundary changes only, the notice of public hearing, as described in 7-15-4215 MCA, may only be mailed to those owners whose properties are situated within the area of expansion or contraction of the Urban Renewal District boundaries. In cases where the boundaries are not modified, but the contents of the urban renewal plan are substantially modified, notification shall be mailed to all owners of property within the Urban Renewal District area.

## **Section 9 - Housing (Conservation of existing affordable housing)**

Housing is an important element to the district. Providing the district with housing opportunities is vital to the sustainability of the district. With housing opportunities, individuals and families can live and work within the district. This provides a dual benefit, first the commute to work for individuals will be reduced and second the businesses within the district will have a local work force to draw from.

Current housing in the area consists of single-family, duplex, and multi-family units and include rental units and owner-occupied. Also, manufactured home parks are located within the district. The main concentration of housing is located in the central and eastern portion of the district. During the summer of 2007, the Planning Division developed a map of existing housing conditions within the City of Billings. The information was generated through the Yellowstone County CAMA (Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal) detail system. Properties were queried that were labeled as either unsound, poor, fair or incomplete. This resulted in approximately 2,390 properties within the city limits that met this query. Out of the 2,390, 562 or 24% were located in the SBBURD. Of the 562 residential structures, 7 were rated as unsound, 184 as poor and 371 as fair.

Future housing for the district is encouraged to be developed for the goal of ownership. When rental housing occurs, such facilities shall be developed in connection with mixed-uses and managed by a company that will provide active policy measures to eliminate crime and blight. Approval of multi-family housing will require either a Zone Change or Special Review request that requires approval by the City Council.

Housing in the area shall also be designed to cater to a variety of income demographics as well. All current affordable housing needs in the district shall be accounted for through the development of owned and rental housing that remain within the district. Housing for mid- and higher level income groups shall also be encouraged. To avoid creation of substandard housing or encourage future blight, mixed-use housing developments shall incorporate all income demographics within the same project in a safe and positive way.

## **Section 10 - Transportation and Pedestrian Circulation**

The transportation and circulation situation in the TIF district should be a major focus during redevelopment of the area. Traffic patterns and access issues can affect the function and livability of a community or neighborhood.

During discussions and public meetings, it was apparent the current street conditions and lack of adequate transportation and pedestrian facilities was a high priority for property owners. The majority

of traffic that comes into the district is either pass-through or destination traffic to the major transportation routes located within the district. In addition, the lack of sidewalk and pedestrian routes is a concern with the number of schools and parks located in the district. Safe and attractive pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks, boulevards, crosswalks, improved signage and shelters or benches would greatly enhance pedestrian experiences.

## **Section 11 - Public Services and Facilities**

Currently there are four public schools located within the district; three elementary schools and one middle school. A concern mentioned many times by residents was the lack of sidewalks for school children to get to school. It was observed that many students are walking directly in the street due to a lack of sidewalks. The creation of a Safe Routes to School Plan should be created to address this concern. In addition to schools, there are several developed parks located in the district. Amend Park provides a multi-use facility for soccer and rugby as well as picnic sites and shelters. Optimist Park has a variety of amenities that include basketball courts, jogging trails, playground, softball and baseball fields and picnic areas. Ponderosa Park provides horseshoe courts, playground, softball and baseball fields and soccer and rugby fields. The City of Billings also provides services to the district with MET Transit and the Southgate Cop Shop. Currently two MET routes serve the neighborhood; the Central and the Southside Loop. Both of these routes travel to and from the Stewart Park and Downtown Transfer Centers. The Southgate Cop Shop was reopened in May of 2007 and operates on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4 - 7 p.m. The station is a neighborhood police contact center currently staffed by volunteers. Residents are encouraged to use the Cop Shop to report crimes, suspicious activities or obtain information and assistance.

## **Section 12 - Infrastructure and Utilities**

The district has infrastructure and utilities deficiencies that need to be addressed prior to any large influx of redevelopment or new building construction. Water and sewer conditions need to be addressed due to out of date installations, inadequate lines, or increases in impacts to existing structures.

The storm water drainage situation is particularly troublesome as many areas either have inadequate storm water facilities or none at all.

By upgrading infrastructure and utilities, therein lies the opportunity for more attractive development opportunities.

## **Section 13 - Urban Renewal Projects and Programs**

The Urban Renewal Projects were identified by property owners within the district during the public meetings at the time the Plan was first adopted in 2008 and also during the amendment process in 2019. Information for the 2008 Plan adoption process utilized the Southwest Corridor Task Force meetings and delivery through comments mailed to the Planning Division. For the 2019 amendment process, a public meeting was held at Orchard Elementary School on May 30, 2019 where projects ideas and comments were collected, as well as at the South Billings Urban Renewal Association meeting on June 4, 2019. It is the City's intent to use Tax Increment to finance public improvement projects. In addition to TIF financing, the City may also use Special Improvement District financing as well as grant funding through but not limited to, the Community Development Block Grant Program. By combining funding opportunities, more projects will be able to be completed.

The project and program list below encompasses both items included in the 2008 Plan as well as the new project recommendations for the 2019 Plan amendment. The items are identified by the year:

**2008 Project and Program Recommendations:**

Project: Traffic calming measures on Calhoun and Orchard Streets.

Project: Street improvements on Newman Drive between Simpson and Stone Streets, install curb and gutter.

Project: Pave, curb and gutter on Simpson from Calhoun to Newman.

Project: Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave Calhoun the full length. Project: Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave Orchard the full length. Project: Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave Hallowell the full length.

Project: Widen, curb and gutter and install bike path or sidewalk the full length of King Avenue East from Parkway to Riverside Drive.

Project: Safety to school plan.

Project: Crosswalks within the district (where needed).

Project: Sidewalks within the district (where needed).

Project: Street lights along King Avenue East.

Project: Street widening at Optimist Park.

Project: 4100 Block of Vaughn Street - sidewalk.

Project: 4100 Block of Vaughn - public sewer needed, drainfields failing. Project: Bike/pedestrian routes along King Avenue.

Project: Sewer improvements on South Billings Boulevard from Mitchell north to Underpass Road. Sewer line currently runs east under adjoining residential development.

Project: Repave Morgan Avenue between Hallowell Lane and Jackson Street include sidewalks, street lights.

Project: Install public sewer along Morgan Avenue that includes storm water improvements. Project: More bike trails throughout neighborhood.

Project: Park improvements for Little League and soccer leagues.

Project: Community Resource Officer within the neighborhood to steer kids away from drugs and promote a safe neighborhood.

Project: Pave Newman Lane behind Newman Elementary School.

Project: Storm water improvement at the Northeast corner of Phillip and

Hallowell. Project: Need school zone signage at Newman Elementary School.

Project: Installation and improvement of municipal water and sewer lines within the district. Project: Installation of sidewalks on Jackson Street (where needed).

Project: Stop light at South Billings Boulevard and Midland Road.

Project: Neighborhood wide traffic study for traffic calming strategies.

Project: Assess adequacy of fire hydrants throughout the neighborhood and add fire hydrants as needed.

Project: Traffic light at State Avenue and Hallowell Lane.

Project: Continuation of street lights on Jackson to King Avenue.

In addition to property owner identification of projects for the district, the City of Billings Public Works Department has several ongoing or future infrastructure projects scheduled. These projects include the following:

- Orchard Lane - Replacement of a water main in Orchard Lane from just south of King Avenue East to Underpass Avenue. This project is scheduled for the spring or fall of 2009.
- Calhoun Lane – Replacement of water main in Calhoun Lane from King Avenue East to Underpass Avenue. This project could be scheduled for 2010 or 2011.
- Jackson Street - Jackson Street is split into two phases. The first phase will provide sidewalk and drive approaches on the west side of Jackson Street from King Avenue East to Ryan Avenue. The second phase will provide drive approaches, sidewalk, curb and gutter, and ADA ramps along both sides of Jackson Street from State Avenue to Kratz Lane. These

phases are programmed in the FY 2009 Budget

- Newman Lane and Bruce Avenue - Sanitary sewer rehabilitation work was completed in the TIF district in 2007 at Newman Lane and Bruce Avenue.

### **2019 Project and Program Recommendations:**

**Parks & Recreational Amenities** – Construct and enhance public facilities that will increase the quality or quantity of parks and recreational activities within the District. This may include, but is not limited to, a recreation center, swimming pool, ice arena, indoor and outdoor park development, and other amenities.

**Public Safety** – Construction of Police or Fire facilities within the District, to include necessary furnishings for such facilities.

**Railroad Infrastructure** – Coordinate with BNSF Railway and Montana Rail Link on safety and long-term viability of railroad crossings and corridors in the District and cooperate on projects with the railroads and City of Billings.

**Walking Paths and Trails** – Construct sidewalks, trails and pathways throughout the District with landscaping to ensure the safety of children and all pedestrians, as well as provide access to neighborhoods and services.

**Transportation Corridor Improvements** – Construct and reconstruct transportation infrastructure in the District to include streets, sidewalks, lighting, traffic control, multi-purpose side paths, landscaping, water, sewer, stormwater, and transit access projects.

**School and Community Services** – Assist in funding projects and programs in the District to enhance school playgrounds and athletic fields, health and wellness programs, access to community meeting and activity spaces, and other efforts that improve access to school and community services.

## **Section 14 - Identified Projects and Programs in Relationship to the Goals and Objectives Respective to the 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy**

One of the requirements of Montana's Urban Renewal Law (Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, MCA) is that the urban renewal plan must conform to the community's growth policy. The 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy ("Growth Policy") refers to and promotes economic development and urban renewal in a variety of ways. The preceding list of urban renewal goals listed in Section 13 are relevant to the Growth Guidelines identified in the Growth Policy in the following areas:

### **Growth Guidelines**

#### **Essential Investments (relating public and private expenditures to public values)**

- The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans
- Public transit and commercial air service are critical to ensure access to and around the City

- Planning and construction of safe and affordable interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings.
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors
- Public health and safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors
- Infill development and development near existing City infrastructure may be the most cost effective
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Infrastructure and service investments that stabilize or improve property values, secure future utility costs, consider maintenance costs, and improve our environmental quality far into the future (i.e. energy efficient) are desirable
- A supportive school system that inspires, motivates, and prepares students for meaningful employment is important for ensuring a high quality, competitive community

**Place Making (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)**

- A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable
- Enhancement and maintenance of public spaces and buildings through City stewardship is integral to a vibrant community
- Park master plans and transportation plans are important to facilitate the preservation and improved public access to the Yellowstone River and the Rims
- Public and private partnerships are valuable for creating enhanced entryways into Billings
- Enhancing public buildings and spaces to be more efficient in their uses of energy, money, and space is important to having a vibrant and livable City

**Community Fabric (attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings)**

- Developed landscape areas in commercial areas encourage more pedestrian activity and vibrant commercial activity
- Attractive streetscapes provide a pleasant and calming travel experience in urban and suburban neighborhoods
- Outdoor public spaces provide casual and relaxing gathering areas for people
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings
- Cost-effective landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors

**Strong Neighborhoods (livable, safe, sociable and resilient neighborhoods)**

- Walkable neighborhoods that permit convenient destinations such as neighborhood services, open space, parks, schools and public gathering spaces foster health, good will and social interaction
- Safe and livable neighborhoods can be achieved through subdivision design that focuses on complete streets, pedestrian-scale street lights, street trees and walkable access to public spaces
- Implementation of the Infill Policy is important to encourage development of underutilized properties

**Home Base (healthy, safe and diverse housing options)**

- A mix of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population is important
- Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy and safe
- Homes that are safe and sound support a healthy community

**Mobility and Access (transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all)**

- Connecting people to places with transportation choices is vital to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses and visitors
- Safe and accessible transportation systems benefit everyone's quality of life
- Affordable public transit is much desired
- Development oriented to transit routes will provide more transportation choices and is preferred
- "Safe Routes to Schools" promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- On-street bike facilities promote predictability for all users
- Technology can reduce congestion and facilitate emergency vehicle travel at railroad crossings

**Prosperity (promoting equal opportunity and economic advancement)**

- Predictable, reasonable City taxes and assessments are important to Billings' taxpayers
- Successful businesses that provide local jobs benefit the community
- Community investments that attract and retain a strong, skilled and diverse workforce also attracts businesses
- Retaining and supporting existing businesses helps sustain a healthy economy

## **Section 15 - Neighborhood Planning**

Another tool that is expected to be used in the future to address current conditions within the district and the identification of neighborhood needs will be accomplished through the creation of a Neighborhood Plan. A neighborhood plan may be drafted for this area of Billings in the next three or four years based on available funding. The purpose of the neighborhood plan is to assist residents, governing agencies, planners and developers in making the right choices when determining future growth patterns and development within the neighborhood. The plan also encourages local government, developers and businesses to discuss future land use decisions with neighborhood residents and business owners prior to the proposed land use change. The neighborhood plan is not a regulatory document; instead, it is adopted by the City Council and the Board of County Commissioners as an implementation strategy and is part of the City of Billings and Yellowstone County Growth Policy as an advisory document. The neighborhood plan would be implemented through the City's Capital Improvement Program Planning and by the Southwest Corridor Neighborhood Task Force.

The plan would include general and specific recommendations that reflect the values of the community, encourage sound decision-making, and empower people to take action. The plan also includes realistic implementation strategies that involve both private and public actions, as well as regulatory decisions.

## **Section 16- Conclusion**

The South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District has a tremendous amount of potential to become a viable and reliable economic engine. The district has a great potential to become a destination place where Billings residents, business owners, and visitors will purposefully go to conduct business, have goods and services manufactured and enjoy recreation and leisure activities. At the end of the life of this TIFD program it is the hope of all involved that this area of Billings will be a wonderful place to live, work and play far into the future.

**ORDINANCE 19-5725**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BILLINGS, PROVIDING THAT THE SOUTH BILLINGS BOULEVARD URBAN RENEWAL PLAN FOR THE SOUTH BILLINGS BOULEVARD URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT (SBBURD), FORMED BY THE CITY IN NOVEMBER 2007 AND EXPANDED IN NOVEMBER 2008, BE AMENDED BY REVISING SECTIONS 1, 8, 13 AND 14, PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED AND CONSTRUCTED IN THE FUTURE IN THE SBBURD, AS WELL AS UPDATING THE PLAN TO REFLECT THE AMENDMENT PROCESS.**

WHEREAS, this Council on May 12, 2008, established the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District and adopted the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan under Ordinance 08-5462,

WHEREAS, this Council on December 8, 2008, modified the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District and modified the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan under Ordinance 08-5484,

WHEREAS, opportunities have been presented to the City that make it desirable for the City to amend the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan to enable further development and redevelopment of properties, demolishing blighted structures, improving such properties with, landscaping, utilities, and other similar improvements, assembling such properties, and making the properties so improved available for private redevelopment.

WHEREAS, the City Council has made amendments to the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan as outlined in this Ordinance and as attached as Exhibit A.

WHEREAS, the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Yellowstone County Board of Planning, as evidenced by the Board's letter provided to the City Council and the meeting minutes of June 25, 2019.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BILLINGS, MONTANA:**

Section 1. That Section 1 of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan be amended so that such section shall read as follows:

On May 12, 2008 the City of Billings adopted an ordinance creating the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) and established a Tax Increment Finance District. As part of this ordinance, an urban renewal plan and the boundaries of the tax increment finance district were adopted.

Public participation for preparing the urban renewal plan involved public meetings and participation with the City of Billings, the Southwest Corridor Neighborhood

Task Force, residents and property owners, Downtown Billings Partnership, and Big Sky Economic Development Authority.

In October of 2008, the City began a modification of the SBBURD to include three additional properties. Two of these properties were recently annexed and contiguous to the existing SBBURD; therefore, the properties are now eligible to be included within the SBBURD. The third property is contiguous and requested an expansion of the district boundary. The modification of the urban renewal plan will reflect the addition of those properties.

The [December 2008](#) modification of the urban renewal plan will:

- Served as a framework for the official urban renewal plan
- Fulfilled Montana state law
- Updated and define district boundaries
- Classified blight
- Set forth the protocol for its authorization, execution, and management
- Illustrated the development opportunities
- Documented baseline taxable property values and potential areas for redevelopment

[The July 2019 amendment of the urban renewal plan will:](#)

- [Identify future projects and programs](#)
- [Ensure the City has the option to bond future projects](#)
- [Update to the 2008 Plan to reflect the 2019 amendment process](#)

Section 8. That Section 8 of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan be amended so that such section shall read as follows:

### **Stakeholder and Community Participation**

The initial concept of developing a Tax Increment Finance District and an Urban Renewal Plan in the South Billings Boulevard area was brought forward by the City of Billings, Big Sky Economic Development Authority and the Downtown Billings Partnership. After discussions and meetings with the Southwest Corridor Task Force, it was determined that a steering committee would be established to move forward with the development of an Urban Renewal Plan for the creation of the South Billings Boulevard TIF District. After discussions with the participating members, it was apparent that direct communication with business owners, landowners and public participation was critical for the project to be a success. Two public meetings were scheduled to open dialogue on the proposed Urban Renewal Plan and TIF District

process, and to set goals and objectives of the project. It also became clear that a grass-roots effort conducted and led by the property owners themselves was needed.

In October of 2008, the city began an urban renewal plan modification process to include 3 additional properties to the district pursuant to Montana Code section 7-15-4221. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan modification were notified by mail of the public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held November 24, 2008.

In May 2019 the City in coordination with the South Billings Urban Renewal Association began the process to amend the South Billings Urban Renewal Plan. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan amendment were notified by mail of a public meeting to discuss and receive public comment on the Plan amendment on May 30, 2019. All property owners affected by the urban renewal plan amendment were also notified of the public hearing on the Urban Renewal Plan held July 8, 2019.

### **Planning, City Administration and Legal Review**

During the many meetings with the local property owners and the Southwest Neighborhood Task Force, it was decided to begin the process of finalizing the urban renewal plan and take it to the city council before the end of 2007. The urban renewal plan was sent to the City Legal Department and City Administration for review and comments. Comments and recommendations from both City Legal and City Administration were taken into account and incorporated into this plan.

The plan was also sent to the Yellowstone County Board of Planning for its review and recommendations regarding the plan's conformity to the 2003 Growth Policy Plan. A recommendation of approval was passed by the Planning Board on October 23, 2007. The plan was then presented at a City Council Work Session on November 5, 2007. The public hearing and first reading of the Ordinance was held by the City Council on November 26, 2007 with the second reading and final adoption on December 10, 2007.

The modification to the SBBURD plan began in October of 2008. On November 10, 2008, the Billings City Council passed a Resolution Declaring Blight, Intent to Modify the District, and Setting a Public Hearing Date. The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council with regard to the plan's conformity with the 2003 Growth Policy on November 12, 2008. The affected property owners were notified of the plan's modification and public hearing notices were published on November 6, 2008 and November 13, 2008 for the first reading and public hearing on the modification of the plan.

The City initiated an amendment to the SBBURD plan in May 2019 to ensure future projects contemplated by the City and also provided by public comments and recommendations would be possible if funded by bonding or directly through tax

increment funds generated by the SBBURD. The process to amend the plan has followed the process described in Montana Code as follows: The Yellowstone County Board of Planning reviewed the modified Urban Renewal Plan and made recommendations to the City Council with regard to the plan's conformity with the 2016 Growth Policy on June 25, 2019. The affected property owners were notified by mailed postcard of the plan's modification, and public hearing notices were published on June 28, 2019 and July 5, 2019 for the first reading and public hearing on the plan amendment.

Section 13. That Section 13 of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan be amended so that such section shall read as follows:

### **Section 13 - Urban Renewal Projects and Programs**

The Urban Renewal Projects were identified by property owners within the district during the public meetings at the time the Plan was first adopted in 2008 and also during the amendment process in 2019. Information for the 2008 Plan adoption process utilized the Southwest Corridor Task Force meetings and delivery through comments mailed to the Planning Division. For the 2019 amendment process, a public meeting was held at Orchard Elementary School on May 30, 2019 where projects ideas and comments were collected, as well as at the South Billings Urban Renewal Association meeting on June 4, 2019. It is the City's intent to use Tax Increment to finance public improvement projects. In addition to TIF financing, the City may also use Special Improvement District financing as well as grant funding through but not limited to, the Community Development Block Grant Program. By combining funding opportunities, more projects will be able to be completed.

The project and program list below encompasses both items included in the 2008 Plan as well as the new recommendations for the 2019 Plan amendment. The items are identified by the year:

#### **2008 Project and Program Recommendations:**

Project: Traffic calming measures on Calhoun and Orchard Streets.

Project: Street improvements on Newman Drive between Simpson and Stone Streets, install curb and gutter.

Project: Pave, curb and gutter on Simpson from Calhoun to Newman.

Project: Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave

Calhoun the full length. Project: Widen, curb and gutter (where

needed) and repave Orchard the full length. Project: Widen, curb and gutter (where needed) and repave Hallowell the full length.

Project: Widen, curb and gutter and install bike path or sidewalk the full length of King Avenue East from Parkway to Riverside Drive.

Project: Safety to school plan.

Project: Crosswalks within the district (where needed). Project: Sidewalks within the district (where needed).

Project: Street lights along King Avenue East. Project: Street widening at Optimist Park.

Project: 4100 Block of Vaughn Street - sidewalk.

Project: 4100 Block of Vaughn - public sewer needed, drainfields failing. Project: Bike/pedestrian routes along King Avenue.

Project: Sewer improvements on South Billings Boulevard from Mitchell north to Underpass Road. Sewer line currently runs east under adjoining residential development.

Project: Repave Morgan Avenue between Hallowell Lane and Jackson Street include sidewalks, street lights.

Project: Install public sewer along Morgan Avenue that includes storm water improvements. Project: More bike trails throughout neighborhood.

Project: Park improvements for Little League and soccer leagues.

Project: Community Resource Officer within the neighborhood to steer kids away from drugs and promote a safe neighborhood.

Project: Pave Newman Lane behind Newman Elementary School.

Project: Storm water improvement at the Northeast corner of Phillip and Hallowell. Project: Need school zone signage at Newman Elementary School.

Project: Installation and improvement of municipal water and sewer lines within the district. Project: Installation of sidewalks on Jackson Street (where needed).

Project: Stop light at South Billings Boulevard and Midland Road. Project: Neighborhood wide traffic study for traffic calming strategies.

Project: Assess adequacy of fire hydrants throughout the neighborhood and add fire hydrants as needed.

Project: Traffic light at State Avenue and Hallowell Lane. Project: Continuation of street lights on Jackson to King Avenue.

In addition to property owner identification of projects for the district, the City of Billings Public Works Department has several ongoing or future infrastructure projects scheduled. These projects include the following:

- Orchard Lane - Replacement of a water main in Orchard Lane from just south of King Avenue East to Underpass Avenue. This project is scheduled for the spring or fall of 2009.
- Calhoun Lane – Replacement of water main in Calhoun Lane from King Avenue East to Underpass Avenue. This project could be scheduled for 2010 or 2011.
- Jackson Street - Jackson Street is split into two phases. The first phase will provide sidewalk and drive approaches on the west side of Jackson Street from King Avenue East to Ryan Avenue. The second phase will provide drive approaches, sidewalk, curb and gutter, and ADA ramps along both sides

of Jackson Street from State Avenue to Kratz Lane. These phases are programmed in the FY 2009 Budget

- Newman Lane and Bruce Avenue - Sanitary sewer rehabilitation work was completed in the TIF district in 2007 at Newman Lane and Bruce Avenue.

#### 2019 Project and Program Recommendations:

**Parks & Recreational Amenities** – Construct and enhance public facilities that will increase the quality or quantity of parks and recreational activities within the District. This may include, but is not limited to, a recreation center, swimming pool, ice arena, indoor and outdoor park development, and other amenities.

**Public Safety** – Construction of Police or Fire facilities within the District, to include necessary furnishings for such facilities.

**Railroad Infrastructure** – Coordinate with BNSF Railway and Montana Rail Link on safety and long-term viability of railroad crossings and corridors in the District and cooperate on projects with the railroads and City of Billings.

**Walking Paths and Trails** – Construct sidewalks, trails and pathways throughout the District with landscaping to ensure the safety of children and all pedestrians, as well as provide access to neighborhoods and services.

**Transportation Corridor Improvements** – Construct and reconstruct transportation infrastructure in the District to include streets, sidewalks, lighting, traffic control, multi-purpose side paths, landscaping, water, sewer, stormwater, and transit access projects.

**School and Community Services** – Assist in funding projects and programs in the District to enhance school playgrounds and athletic fields, health and wellness programs, access to community meeting and activity spaces, and other efforts that improve access to school and community services.

Section 14. That Section 14 of the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal Plan be amended so that such section shall read as follows:

#### **Section 14 - Identified Projects and Programs in Relationship to the Goals and Objectives Respective to the 2016 City of Billings-County Growth Policy-Plan**

One of the requirements of Montana's Urban Renewal Law (Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, MCA) is that the urban renewal plan must conform to the community's growth policy. The Yellowstone County and 2016 City of Billings 2003 Growth Policy Plan—"Growth Policy") refers to and promotes economic

development and urban renewal in a variety of ways. The preceding list of urban renewal goals listed in Section 13 are relevant to the goals-Growth Guidelines identified in the Growth Policy in the following elementsareas:

### Growth Guidelines

#### Essential Investments (relating public and private expenditures to public values)

- The safety of all users and the connectivity of the transportation system are important criteria to consider in roadway designs and transportation plans
- Public transit and commercial air service are critical to ensure access to and around the City
- Planning and construction of safe and affordable interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings.
- Developed parks that provide recreation, special amenities (community gardens, dog parks, viewing areas), and active living opportunities are desirable for an attractive and healthy community
- Landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors
- Public health and safety and emergency service response are critical to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses, and visitors
- Infill development and development near existing City infrastructure may be the most cost effective
- The history and heritage of Billings are cornerstones of our community
- Neighborhoods that are safe and attractive and provide essential services are much desired
- Infrastructure and service investments that stabilize or improve property values, secure future utility costs, consider maintenance costs, and improve our environmental quality far into the future (i.e. energy efficient) are desirable
- A supportive school system that inspires, motivates, and prepares students for meaningful employment is important for ensuring a high quality, competitive community

#### Place Making (Enhance, maintain, preserve, and improve existing public places)

- A multi-use community recreation facility is desirable
- Enhancement and maintenance of public spaces and buildings through City stewardship is integral to a vibrant community
- Park master plans and transportation plans are important to facilitate the preservation and improved public access to the Yellowstone River and the Rims
- Public and private partnerships are valuable for creating enhanced entryways into Billings

- Enhancing public buildings and spaces to be more efficient in their uses of energy, money, and space is important to having a vibrant and livable City

Community Fabric (attractive, aesthetically pleasing, uniquely Billings)

- Developed landscape areas in commercial areas encourage more pedestrian activity and vibrant commercial activity
- Attractive streetscapes provide a pleasant and calming travel experience in urban and suburban neighborhoods
- Outdoor public spaces provide casual and relaxing gathering areas for people
- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the livability of Billings
- Cost-effective landscaping of public rights-of-way and entryways makes Billings more visually appealing to residents and visitors

Strong Neighborhoods (livable, safe, sociable and resilient neighborhoods)

- Walkable neighborhoods that permit convenient destinations such as neighborhood services, open space, parks, schools and public gathering spaces foster health, good will and social interaction
- Safe and livable neighborhoods can be achieved through subdivision design that focuses on complete streets, pedestrian-scale street lights, street trees and walkable access to public spaces
- Implementation of the Infill Policy is important to encourage development of underutilized properties

Home Base (healthy, safe and diverse housing options)

- A mix of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population is important
- Common to all types of housing choices is the desire to live in surroundings that are affordable, healthy and safe
- Homes that are safe and sound support a healthy community

Mobility and Access (transportation choices in places where goods and services are accessible to all)

- Connecting people to places with transportation choices is vital to the well-being of Billings' residents, businesses and visitors
- Safe and accessible transportation systems benefit everyone's quality of life
- Affordable public transit is much desired
- Development oriented to transit routes will provide more transportation choices and is preferred
- "Safe Routes to Schools" promotes physical health and reduces vehicle trips, earning parents more time and less costs for transportation

- Planning and construction of interconnected sidewalks and trails are important to the economy and livability of Billings
- On-street bike facilities promote predictability for all users
- Technology can reduce congestion and facilitate emergency vehicle travel at railroad crossings

Prosperity (promoting equal opportunity and economic advancement)

- Predictable, reasonable City taxes and assessments are important to Billings' taxpayers
- Successful businesses that provide local jobs benefit the community
- Community investments that attract and retain a strong, skilled and diverse workforce also attracts businesses
- Retaining and supporting existing businesses helps sustain a healthy economy

PASSED by the City Council on first reading this 8th day of July, 2019.

PASSED, ADOPTED and APPROVED on second reading this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of July, 2019.

CITY OF BILLINGS:



By: William A. Cole  
William A. Cole, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: Denise R. Bohlman  
Denise R. Bohlman, City Clerk

**Date:** 10/14/2025  
**Title:** School District 2 - Board Discussion  
**Presented by:** Wyeth Friday  
**Department:** Planning & Community Services  
**Presentation:**

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### Information

#### RECOMMENDATION

**School District #2 Enrollment Projections & Building Capacities. Gordon Klasna, Billings Public Schools**

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

#### ALTERNATIVES

City Council may:

- Approve; or,
- Not Approve

#### FISCAL EFFECTS

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### Attachments

SD2 Enrollment  
SD2 Capacity

## Demographic Projections and Enrollment

The 2017 Demographic Study for current and future enrollments at all district facilities for the next 10 years are outlined below. Functional and target capacities for each school have been calculated from the 2013 Master Plan and the 2014 redistricting study done by Cropper GIS. Highlighted red cells identify schools with enrollment greater than the **functional capacity**. The Career Center capacities and enrollment projections were not identified in the demographic or redistricting reports.

School Name	Functional Capacity	Target Capacity	School Year										
			2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Alkali Creek ES	394	364	331	336	349	362	363	358	353	350	350	347	345
Arrowhead ES	460	426	434	429	413	414	427	445	455	463	477	490	502
Beartooth ES	416	385	385	392	390	404	422	418	416	413	411	408	407
Bench ES	394	364	385	389	395	390	402	401	396	393	389	382	379
Big Sky ES	394	364	407	409	410	406	397	385	377	373	369	367	365
Bitterroot ES	350	324	369	374	379	392	409	420	416	411	403	396	391
Boulder ES	416	385	428	424	430	432	419	398	388	380	372	366	362
Broadwater ES	400	370	373	369	379	378	368	359	358	357	356	354	355
Burlington ES	263	243	227	225	230	239	248	255	252	248	247	245	242
Central Heights ES	329	304	267	253	221	219	221	221	221	219	220	220	220
Eagle Cliffs ES	460	426	374	375	380	396	389	406	404	400	394	388	384
Highland ES	285	264	292	289	280	278	277	282	282	281	280	278	275
McKinley ES	400	370	263	255	245	239	240	246	244	241	240	239	240
Meadowlark ES	460	426	480	487	505	513	516	508	504	501	498	495	493
Miles Avenue ES	329	304	267	268	259	264	254	250	249	246	244	241	239
Newman ES	263	243	222	218	209	208	204	205	209	210	212	212	214
Orchard ES	438	405	367	350	339	342	339	340	338	333	333	331	332
Poly Drive ES	329	304	342	346	326	320	313	308	308	306	309	310	312
Ponderosa ES	394	364	270	251	244	229	225	229	232	234	237	239	240
Rose Park ES	307	284	256	253	253	252	260	263	265	265	266	263	260
Sandstone ES	460	426	405	399	394	400	407	411	412	411	411	411	412
Washington ES	263	243	296	305	323	344	350	360	356	351	345	339	337
<b>K-5 Totals</b>	8204	7588	7440	7396	7353	7421	7450	7468	7435	7386	7363	7321	7306
Ben Steele MS	715	661	745	811	801	784	778	786	796	795	782	778	782
Castle Rock MS	715	661	584	551	530	504	506	482	502	503	534	538	539
Lewis & Clark MS	743	687	769	800	846	824	824	824	840	833	853	861	859
Medicine Crow MS	715	661	704	724	772	791	744	731	759	832	848	842	835
Riverside MS	604	559	522	524	503	494	466	433	413	402	410	415	417
Will James MS	664	614	524	519	556	550	541	521	526	525	521	521	521
<b>6-8 Totals</b>	4156	3843	3848	3929	4008	3947	3859	3777	3836	3890	3948	3955	3953
Senior HS	1686	1560	1928	1946	1834	1843	1837	1846	1855	1847	1786	1765	1773
Skyview HS	1684	1558	1621	1735	1835	1857	1918	1912	1903	1867	1845	1876	1938
West HS	1731	1601	1821	1847	1890	1961	2041	2118	2110	2104	2099	2087	2107
Career Center (current max enrollment 627)													
<b>9-12 Totals</b>	5101	4719	5370	5528	5559	5661	5796	5876	5868	5818	5730	5728	5818
<b>District Totals</b>			16658	16853	16920	17029	17105	17121	17139	17094	17041	17004	17077

### Billings Public Schools Capacity and Enrollment

School	Functional Capacity	Target Capacity	Current Enrollment
Alkali Creek	394	364	293
Arrowhead	460	426	438
Beartooth	416	385	345
Bench	394	364	329
Big Sky	394	364	363
Bitterroot	350	324	249
Boulder	416	385	490
Broadwater	400	370	373
Burlington	263	243	262
Central Heights	329	304	291
Eagle Cliffs	460	426	436
Highland	285	264	252
McKinley	400	370	317
Meadowlark	460	426	520
Miles Avenue	329	304	351
Newman	263	243	249
Orchard	438	405	305
Poly Drive	329	304	287
Ponderosa	394	364	246
Rose Park	307	284	252
Sandstone	460	426	373
Ben Steele	715	661	745
Castle Rock	715	661	668
Lewis & Clark	743	687	713
Medicine Crow	715	661	567
Riverside	604	559	461
Will James	664	614	636
Senior	1686	1560	1551
Skyview	1684	1558	1548
West	1731	1601	2123
Career Center	627 AM/PM	627 AM/PM	1250-Total
Washington	263	243	107-BECS
Innovation Center			114-BOS