



**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA
CITY OF BILLINGS AND
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY
May 28, 2026
MEETING TIME: 10:30 AM**



316 N. 26th Street, 5th Floor Beartooth Conference Room

Committee Members			
Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator, T.A.C.	1	Katie Potts, FHWA	V
Monica Plecker, Director YC Public Works Dept.	V	Wyeth Friday, Director Planning and Community Services	
Vacant Public Works Director, City of Billings Engineering		Mac Fogelsong, City Engineer, City PW Engineering,	1
Rusty Logan, MET Transit Manger	1	Sarah Graham, MET Transit Planner	1
Samantha Wood, Urban Planning Section, MDT	V	Melissa Henderson, Environmental Health Riverstone Health	1
Kenn Winegar, Urban Planning Section, MDT		Jay D. Anderson Deputy PW Director, YC Public Works	
Kurtis Schnieber, MDT		Emma Belmont, Region 8, FTA	
Zach Kirkemo, MDT		Kyle Shuck, Project Engineer, MDT	1
Mitch Buthod, Urban Planning and Statewide Supervisor, MDT			

Call to Order: Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator, called the meeting to order at 10:34 am

Introduction of Committee Members and staff.

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator; Mike Hayes, Multi-Modal Planner; Brenda Berns, Planning Clerk.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2026

Motion:

Motion by Rusty Logan to approve the April 9, 2026, meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Melissa Henderson. **Motion passed unanimously.**

New Business

a. Recommendation of Adoption of the 21st Street Underpass Study – Presented by Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator

Mac Fogelson, City Engineer, requested an review of the MPO approval process for the project. Ms. Mattox explained that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) serves in an advisory capacity, providing information, analysis, and recommendations for consideration. The committee evaluates available options and identifies those that may represent sound investments. Upon completion of the study, any decisions regarding implementation will be made by the governing officials.

Consultant Presentation

John Ringert, Kittelson & Assoc

A presentation was provided on the transportation study and progress completed to date. The consultants reviewed the purpose and scope of the study, coordination efforts with the railroad and public agencies, stakeholder engagement activities, and analysis conducted over the past year.

Existing conditions were summarized, including vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency service access, crash history, roadway operations, drainage, and structural constraints. Potential challenges related to sight distance, pedestrian accommodations, groundwater, and roadway grades were also discussed.

Several improvement alternatives were presented and evaluated. The alternatives ranged from minor safety and accessibility improvements to more substantial roadway modifications designed to increase vertical clearance beneath the structure. Preliminary planning-level cost estimates were reviewed, along with the benefits and limitations associated with each option.

Public outreach results and stakeholder feedback were summarized. Discussion included public preferences, project costs, and the ability of the alternatives to address long-term transportation and emergency access needs.

Potential funding opportunities were reviewed, including federal grant programs and associated environmental review requirements. The discussion also addressed potential environmental and site constraints that may require additional analysis or mitigation as the project advances.

Motion

Motion by Mac Fogelson to recommend that the Planning Board, City Council, and County Commissioners review and approve the 21st Street Railroad Underpass Study for approval by the Policy Coordinating Committee, with the added requirement that a detailed cost estimate be provided for the Alternative 2 improvements. Second by Rusty Logan.

Discussion

Committee members discussed how the study aligns with the community's long-range transportation planning efforts and capital improvement planning. It was noted that the study provides information and guidance for future decision-making and may assist elected officials in evaluating potential improvements.

Questions were raised regarding how the study relates to other transportation projects in the area and whether recommendations from this effort would impact nearby crossings or roadway improvements. It was noted that previous studies of nearby corridors did not identify related improvements and that the alternatives presented would not directly affect other crossing locations.

Discussion also focused on implementation strategies and whether lower-cost or phased improvements could achieve meaningful safety and operational benefits. Potential measures such as signage, lighting, and other traffic management strategies were considered. It was noted that any improvements would be needed to account for regulatory requirements, maintenance responsibilities, and coordination with the railroad.

Additional discussion addressed the costs associated with drainage, lighting, and other infrastructure improvements. While individual project elements could potentially be implemented separately, it was noted that a comprehensive approach may provide greater overall effectiveness.

Committee members also discussed emergency vehicle access and the importance of balancing project costs with operational needs. Consideration was given to both short-term safety improvements and long-term solutions that would provide additional vertical clearance beneath the structure. The potential use of intelligent transportation systems (ITS), vehicle-height warning systems, and other measures to reduce collisions were also discussed.

Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

a. MET Transit. Updates Presented by Rusty Logan, MET Transit Manager

An update was provided on airport governance and transit-related activities.

The committee was informed that the City Council recently approved a resolution supporting efforts related to airport governance. Staff are compiling information necessary for the redesignation process to an airport authority.

A governance study is underway to evaluate organizational and operational structures. At this time, no recommendations have been made; however, current indications suggest the transit system would continue operating as a standalone department.

Transit operations remain stable, with future ridership and service levels expected to fluctuate based on a variety of factors. A draft report is being prepared and will provide additional analysis and recommendations.

Staff also reported on an ongoing transition involving the transit system's technology provider. While the transition has presented some operational challenges, no impacts are anticipated to public-facing route information or digital mapping services.

MET relayed that in the upcoming UPWP, MET will include plans to update the Transit Development Plan for the West End area. Discussion included the newly adopted expansion of the MPO Planning Boundary.

It was also reported that the transit system is projected to experience a significant reduction in revenue. Potential funding options, including a mill levy to support future improvements and operations, are being explored.

Discussion continued regarding airport governance and regional transportation coordination. It was noted that airport representatives are participating in transportation planning discussions and that efforts are underway to establish an airport authority. The anticipated timeline for completing the transition is approximately one year.

An update was also provided on the MPO redesignation process and draft agreements are currently being reviewed by both city and county legal counsel. Discussion included ongoing efforts to address procedural and governance considerations associated with recent planning and land use changes. Committee members emphasized the importance of maintaining a regional perspective when evaluating transportation, land use, and infrastructure planning initiatives, recognizing the need to consider impacts and opportunities beyond individual jurisdictions.

Future Agenda Items

The committee was informed of an upcoming meeting related to the governance study and development of the Federal Fiscal Year 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Staff also discussed preparations for the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which is scheduled for completion by July 2028. Much of the work is expected to be completed in-house, with planning funds being reserved to support the effort. The update will include analysis of projected transportation needs and impacts through the year 2050.

Committee members discussed the status of the draft UPWP and anticipated distribution of the document for review. Staff indicated that draft materials would be made available as they become finalized.

Adjournment 11:30AM - *Brenda J. Berns, Planning Clerk*