



TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
CITY OF BILLINGS AND
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA



JUNE 11, 2026 MEETING TIME: 10:30 a.m.
Beartooth Meeting Room, 5th Floor
316 N 26th St, Billings MT

1. **Call to Order: Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator**
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes: May 28, 2026**
3. **New Business**
 - a. Recommendation for Approval of the 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
 - b. MET Transit Governance Study Presentation - Bill Troe, SRF Consulting
4. **Other Business**
 - a. MET Transit Update
5. **Future Agenda Items**
6. **Adjournment**

Date: 06/11/2026
Title:
Presented by:
Department: Planning & Community Services
Presentation:

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of Meeting Minutes: May 28, 2026

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

ALTERNATIVES

City Council may:

- Approve; or,
- Not Approve

FISCAL EFFECTS

Attachments

Minutes of May 28, 2026



**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*

Date: 06/11/2026
Title: FFY27 Billings MPO Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
Presented by: Lora Mattox
Department: Planning & Community Services
Presentation: Yes

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) review and direct staff to move forward with a request to approve the 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) from the Yellowstone County Board of Planning, Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners, and City Council for local approval and forward that recommendation to the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC). Final local review and action will be held by the PCC on July 21, 2026.

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

The Billings MPO (MPO) is presenting the Draft 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for review and recommendation to the governing bodies. The UPWP is primarily for programming federal funds that Billings receives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for transportation planning and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for transit (MET) planning. These funds are passed through the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). All transportation planning activities are included in the UPWP to represent a comprehensive document for the urban transportation planning program. This UPWP proposes planning activities for Federal Fiscal Year 2027, running from October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027, and corresponds directly with the Planning Division's annual work plan.

This year the total PL allocation is \$1,035,870, which the Planning Division proposes providing local matching funds which are required at a certain percentage per element (a total breakdown of funding is located in Table I Funding Summary on page 52 of the attached UPWP). On page 53, Table 3 provides a 5-year PL funding allocation projection. By outlining the proposed future PL funding that the Billings MPO could receive, it allows for future project planning and ensures that the MPO will have funding available for the required documents the MPO is required to complete. For the Billings MPO, this includes the Long Range Transportation Plan that will be required to be updated by July of 2028. Table 4 on page 53 outlines the percentage breakdown per element (note that some transportation planning elements are 100% PL funded). The Planning Division matches these funds through the Planning Mill Levy and fees generated through city and county planning applications and processes. This year, with the allocation for staffing and transportation planning activities, the MPO is proposing using up to \$981,500 in PL funding. The local match is \$720,500. This amount includes \$695,569 from the County Planning Mil Levy, \$170,000 in County Planning fees, and \$274,000 in City Planning fees. The un-programmed PL funds in the amount of \$54,371 will not be lost to the MPO, PL funds are carried over and re-allocated to the MPO in a two-year time frame.

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

Under Element 300 – Transportation System Data – 100% PL

- Replacement and upgrade to traffic and trail counters. The total cost budgeted for this is \$20,000. Proposed by the MPO.

Under Element 301 – Transportation Plan – 100% PL

- In FFY27, Billings MPO staff will begin internal development of the 2028 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) through a two-year effort focused on public engagement and technical preparation. Initial activities will include public meetings, stakeholder coordination, digital outreach, an interactive mapping platform, and a public survey to identify transportation needs, safety concerns, mobility issues, and investment priorities across the region, with portions of the outreach and survey work supported by consultant services. Concurrently, the MPO will initiate updates to the regional TransCAD travel demand model using current demographic, land use, and network data, with consultant assistance for model calibration and technical analysis as needed. These efforts will provide a strong, data-driven, and publicly informed foundation for continued LRTP development in future program years. MPO staff has already begun reviewing the 2023 LRTP and outlining steps for the 2028 update, with \$100,000 allocated for first-year technical support, including \$24,141 dedicated to Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options.

STAKEHOLDERS

The local review of the UPWP involves work sessions and regular business meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), City Council (Council), Yellowstone County Board of Commissioners (BOCC), and Yellowstone County Board of Planning (Planning Board). The Planning Board also conducts a legally advertised public hearing at its meeting to review the UPWP. The public can provide comments or questions at the Council, BOCC, and Planning Board meetings, as well as formal public testimony at the Planning Board. Below is a list of outreach associated with the development of the FY27 UPWP:

- May 20, MPO staff met with the County Public Works staff. Discussion included a discussion on the types of projects the MPO can assist with. One area of interest is conducting intersection or corridor studies at predetermined locations.
- MPO staff will discuss development of the UPWP with the Technical Advisory Committee on June 11.
- On June 17, the MPO will meet with the Legislative and Local Affairs Committee members of the City Council. This opportunity will provide a discussion with council representatives on MPO activities for the upcoming year.
- MPO staff will attend the July 2 Board of County Commissioners Discussion Meeting to discuss the meeting with County Public Works, discuss proposed MPO projects and continue a dialogue with the Commissioners.
- Other scheduled meetings include a City Council Work session on July 6. If needed, additional work sessions will be scheduled to continue discussions.

ALTERNATIVES

TAC may:

1. Direct MPO staff to move forward with the UPWP as drafted and support the FFY27 UPWP.
2. Direct MPO staff to make adjustments to the program document and either move forward with the UPWP with changes, or return to TAC for further review.

FISCAL EFFECTS

Approval of the 2027 UPWP allows the MPO to access federal funds for transportation planning in the community. Federal and local funds are combined to provide most of the planning work done by the Planning Division for the City and the County. If the UPWP is not approved, there would be a significant loss of resources for community planning, and the community's ability to manage transportation planning projects and programs would be severely limited. The estimated breakdown of funding sources for the FY 2027 UPWP is as follows:

- \$274,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (City of Billings)
- \$170,000 Planning Dept. Fee Revenue (Yellowstone County)
- \$695,569 Yellowstone County Planning Levy
- \$1,035,871 Federal Planning (PL) Allocation

Total Local and Federal Program Funding (UPWP): \$2,175,440

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the TAC review and direct MPO staff move forward with the 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and request approval from the Planning Board, BOCC, and City Council to forward this approval to the Policy Coordinating Committee. Approval of the UPWP grants access to federal funds for transportation planning, combining federal and local funds to support most planning work. Without approval, community planning resources would be significantly reduced, limiting the management of transportation projects.

Attachments

Draft FFY27 UPWP



Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Federal Fiscal Year 2027

(October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027)

Prepared by:

Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization

In cooperation with:

City of Billings, Montana

Yellowstone County, Montana

Yellowstone County Board of Planning

Montana Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

Federal Transit Administration

Approved by:

Yellowstone County: July 2, 2026

City of Billings: July 13, 2026

Yellowstone County Board of Planning: July 14, 2026

Policy Coordinating Committee: July 21, 2026

MDT:

FHWA/FTA:

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

DRAFT

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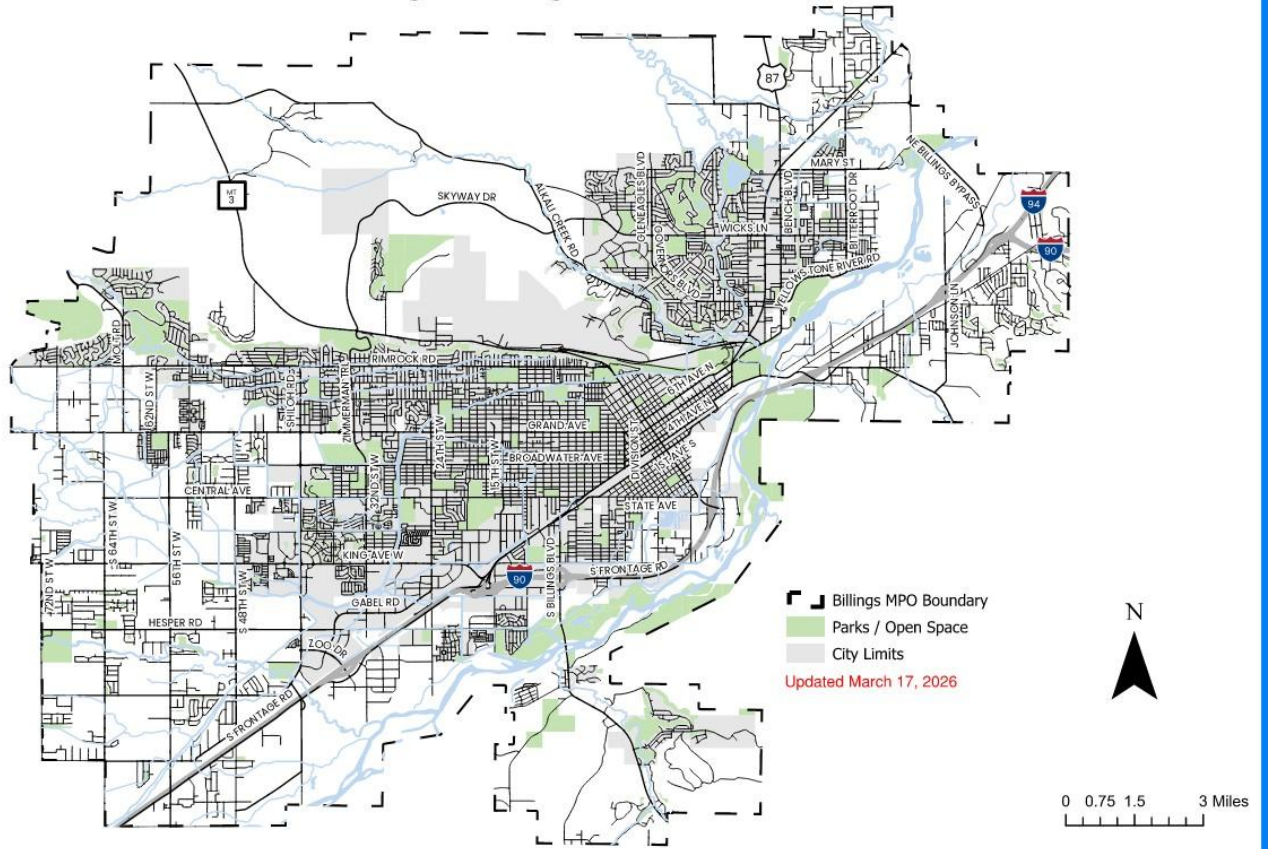
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Billings Area MPO Boundary

Billings Planning Area



CHAPTER 1 – HIGHWAY
SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS USED IN THE WORK PROGRAM

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

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

THE UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM AND ITS PURPOSE

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

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

FEDERAL GUIDANCE

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) approved by Congress on November 15, 2021, authorized funding for Federal transportation programs for federal fiscal years 2022-2026. The IIJA effectively replaced the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

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

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

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

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS (SATO)

IJA/BIL requires an annual 2.5 percent of an MPO's PL allocation to be set aside for safe and accessible transportation options (SATO). The FY 27 set-aside is projected at \$24,141. The MPO will program expenditures of the required set-aside in this year's projects. Those projects will be noted in the Work Program Elements. Note: PCC as a governing body has not adopted a Complete Street Policy, any reference to Complete Streets in this document refers to the City of Billings only.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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

- County Public Works Staff: May 20, 2026
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): June 11, 2026
- UPWP Posted on MPO Website: June 15, 2026
- City Council Legislative & Local Affairs Committee: June 17, 2026
- County Commissioner Discussion: July 2, 2026
- City Council Work Session: July 6, 2026
- Billings City Council: July 13, 2026
- Yellowstone County Planning Board: July 14, 2026
- Yellowstone County Commissioners: July 14, 2026

Final action on the FFY 2027 UPWP occurred during the PCC meeting on July 21, 2026.

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

SECTION 2 – WORK PROGRAM

PROGRAM SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

100 Program Administration

Objectives

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

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

Conformance with federal, state, and local administrative and regulatory requirements, as well as maintenance of planning operations was achieved for FY26.

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

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

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

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

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

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

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

The MPO will work with federal, state and local agencies to improve current performance tracking methods.

With the refilling of the Planner 1 positions, senior staff has had the ability to undertake a few neighborhood planning efforts. The West Billings and Heights Neighborhood Plans are expected

to be completed by the end of FFY26, as will Billings 2045 (City Comprehensive Plan). The land use plan for the newly opened Skyway Drive area is upcoming. These projects have been identified with local funding.

PL Eligible Activities

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

In addition, the MPO will:

- As per the MPO's public participation plan and ongoing public outreach efforts, the planning staff will make available the documents and guidelines for transportation planning activities to the community, as well as keep abreast of federal and state requirements as they relate to the overall planning processes. These activities may include distribution of the current Billings Area Tour Map for bicycle and pedestrian users and visitors, distribution and explanation of the latest Billings Urbanized Area Traffic Count Map and Bicycle Count Map, explanation and distribution of the MPO's public participation plan to groups involved or interested in transportation planning processes in the community, and explanation and information dissemination of the TA or other grant programs to possible project applicants in the community.
- Staff will monitor the PL & Memorandum of Agreement as necessary to meet the requirements of the IJA or any new legislation that may be approved in the upcoming fiscal year.
- Quarterly progress and expenditure reports will be prepared and transmitted to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) in order to maintain federal funding support.
- The FY 2027 UPWP will be continually appraised and monitored in terms of content and budget allocations and will be revised when deemed necessary.
- The Fiscal Year 2028 UPWP will be developed under this work element.
- The Board of Planning, Board of County Commissioners and City Council will be kept informed of the activities of the staff and their progress in completing the approved UPWP.
- All planning staff will participate in recognized and approved training programs in order to improve staff skills and capabilities. Planning expertise will be maintained through enrollment in appropriate planning and transportation-related courses at area colleges, workshops, seminars, webinars and conferences.

- Staff will adapt software programs to effectively utilize traffic data and continue computer-training programs.
- The use of PL funds for out-of-state travel and/or registration fees for the above or other purposes will continue to be subject to prior approval of MDT.
- The MPO TA Program administration will be funded through this work element.
- Planning activities pertaining to Bicycle-Pedestrian in this work element will include:
 - Work field inspections, handle complaints and investigate problem areas of the Bike/Pedestrian system.
 - Presentations as needed.

Locally Funded Activities

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

STAFFING

20 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

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

PRODUCT

- An ongoing administrative program focused primarily on effective and expeditious implementation of this UPWP.
- The continual enhancement of the Planning Division staff skills and knowledge.

- Maintenance of a coordinated, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process that is endorsed and supported by the local community.
- The development of the FY27 UPWP.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$220,000.00	\$180,000.00	\$400,000.00
TOTAL	\$220,000.00	\$180,000.00	\$400,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	55	45	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$138,500.00	\$138,500.00	\$277,000.00
TOTAL	\$138,500.00	\$138,500.00	\$277,000.00

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

** Four computer replacements - \$6,000, if this estimate exceeds \$10,000, full procurement process will be implemented.

101 Service

Objectives

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

The planning staff engaged in a diverse range of service tasks. Their responsibilities included delivering presentations concerning roadways and alternative transportation, addressing citizen inquiries and complaints about streets, subdivision layouts, sight distances, zoning requests, and ensuring alignment with the 2023 Transportation Plan, the 2017 Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, the City of Billings 2016 Growth Policy, the Lockwood Growth Policy, and various neighborhood and community plans.

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

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

PL Eligible Activities

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

Locally Funded Activities

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

STAFFING

7 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

As Assigned.

PRODUCT

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

FUNDING SCHEDULE - SERVICE

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$34,000.00	\$34,000.00	\$68,000.00
TOTAL	\$34,000.00	\$34,000.00	\$68,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	40	60	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$20,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$50,000.00
TOTAL	\$20,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$50,000.00

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

102 Citizen Involvement

Objectives

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

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

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

PL Eligible Activities

- Outreach to the public and all affected jurisdictions for ongoing transportation projects, including projects that will be completed and initiated this upcoming year, this includes the start of the update to the Billings 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).
- The staff will continue to support the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Committee is responsible for forwarding recommendations to the Planning Board and governing bodies on bicycle safety, bike lanes, pedestrian safety and access, and other matters. When funding is available, the group will be involved in the nomination and review of TA Program eligible projects, bicycle and pedestrian signing and safety projects, grant applications for non-motorized transportation projects, and community education and outreach on bicycle and pedestrian safety within the MPO.
- The MPO will be initiating the update to the 2023 LRTP and is planning several continuous efforts to engage the public in these transportation planning efforts, staff will be actively engaged with City and County Departments and partnering organizations to push information and public participation opportunities to the community.
- TAC and PCC meetings will be held, and meeting information disseminated as necessary.
- Staff will continue to update and maintain the MPO's website to provide the most current up to date information for the community.
- Staff will utilize web-based GIS and web mapping software for assistance in transportation planning.

- The main project being undertaken in FFY27 will be the start of the update to the 2023 LRTP and will involve community. This project will include extensive public participation and solicitation.

Locally Funded Activities

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

STAFFING

9.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

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

FUNDING SCHEDULE - CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$90,000.00
TOTAL	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$90,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	40	60	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$36,000.00	\$54,000.00	\$90,000.00
TOTAL	\$36,000.00	\$54,000.00	\$90,000.00

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

200 Community Planning

Objectives

The planning staff is responsible for maintaining accurate records and projections related to population, dwelling units, land use, employment data, and financial reports. They provide up-to-date information on the quantity of residential, commercial, industrial, and public land within the MPO and across the County. Staff analyze and summarize development trends, offering visual data and insights to the City Council, County Commission, Planning Board, and the public to support informed transportation and land-use decision-making. Additionally, they recommend implementing the goals, policies, and strategies outlined in the Billings 2045 Comprehensive Plan and Lockwood Growth Policies and facilitate the implementation of the 2023 Long-Range Transportation Plan and related planning studies.

Ten Planning Factors Incorporated into the UPWP:

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

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

Staff reviewed and analyzed the most current release of the 2020-2024 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data. Current ACS data is updated and placed in various databases as it has become available. Data gathered and updated included annual information related to population estimates for cities and counties within the State of Montana. This annual information is used by the public and public agencies for planning purposes. The ACS is accessed for review and dissemination, and updated information released by the US Census Bureau in regard to commuting patterns. Other data gathered includes:

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

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

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

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

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

While not a part of PL funds, the City of Billings was awarded a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant from the US DOT. The Transportation Planner is dedicating a significant amount of time to managing this grant, including coordinating a public education campaign about Safe Routes to School and helping to provide management for the implementation of Safe Routes to School projects. The public outreach portion of the education campaign has wrapped up, and the consultants are now moving into campaign development which will include TV public service announcements, social media posts, and activities at a select number of pilot schools.

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

PL Eligible Activities

- The Planning Division will continue implementing a staffing and funding strategy that strengthens long-range and neighborhood planning capacity within the MPO. Building on the FY25 addition of an employee to the PL formula, the Division is reestablishing dedicated long-range planning expertise that was lost during the 2008 recession. This effort responds directly to community priorities and City Council goals by ensuring the capacity to complete neighborhood, subarea, and comprehensive long-range plans. To sustain this position, the Division will maintain a collaborative funding model, with 30 percent of costs supported through PL funds and 70 percent through local funding sources. This structure ensures both alignment with regional transportation planning objectives and responsiveness to local needs.

With the successful hiring of the Neighborhood Planner in 2025, the Division will continue to leverage this role to expand long-range planning efforts and integrate them more effectively with MPO activities. The position will support ongoing work by leading community engagement efforts, strengthening data collection and analysis practices, and contributing to the development and refinement of transportation plans. Through this

approach, the Planning Division will enhance its ability to deliver coordinated, forward-looking planning initiatives that reflect both local priorities and regional goals.

- The web-based GIS software is compatible with available datasets and utilizes the existing data sets more effectively. The GIS software will be utilized to develop a series of maps, including existing and proposed pedestrian trail routes and projects in the community, maps to implement the Long-Range Transportation Plan, updates to a preferred growth area map in conjunction with the City's Limits of Annexation Map, mapping of focus areas for implementation of the City's Infill Development Policy, and others. This ability of the GIS program allows for anticipating and planning for the transportation network in areas of annexation and infill. This will assist in the implementation of our LRTP and project planning for future plans and studies.
- The planning staff, under the direction of the Board of Planning, will continue to work on long-range planning projects according to the priorities established by both the City of Billings and Yellowstone County. In particular, the continuing implementation of the 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, and to implement the 2017 Bikeway and Trails Master Plan.

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

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

Locally Funded Activities

- The Neighborhood Planner will be undertaking development of a variety of long-range land use plans in the upcoming years that will all include significant public involvement and engagement including as mentioned earlier.
- The Planner I's will continue to undertake the review of:
 - Zoning applications. The development and adoption of Project Re:Code now ties land uses and land patterns to the road and street network.
 - Site development plans to address clear vision and controlled and shared access points.
 - Site development plans address newly implemented build to zones which prevent traffic flow in front of buildings.
 - Site orientations that allow for internal traffic and other services, for example, drive through locations.
- Staff also will continue to work with the Big Sky Economic Development (BSED) to implement the Master Plan for the East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD), the Hospitality Corridor Planning Study, the Exposition Gateway Concept Plan and the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBBURD) Master Plan. The plans include

detailed analysis of the transportation and land use connections in the area and promote sustainable development projects.

- Staff plans to work with the City, County, BSED, and neighborhood groups to identify planning needs in various parts of the urbanized area.
- Continued maintenance and update of socio-economic and land use data for both transportation and comprehensive planning activities will continue in FFY27, with 2020 Decennial Census data and the 2020-2024 American Community Survey data.
- Various GIS databases and layers will continue to be developed and centrally maintained, including information on neighborhoods, community assets, route planning, trail systems and transportation plans.
- The new web-based system tracking and managing projects will include application information on zoning and subdivision applications.
- Neighborhood planning activities will be initiated to identify local issues and strategies to assist neighborhood groups and organizations with neighborhood sustainability, equity, and safety.

STAFFING

21.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

- Various reports, files, and projections of socio-economic data necessary for current transportation and comprehensive planning activities, as well as support of City/County economic development activities.
- An ongoing GIS database/mapping system for the City of Billings and Yellowstone County.
- Ongoing updates to the preferred growth areas mapping and analysis for the City, implementation of the City Infill Development Policy, SBURD Master Plan, the 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, 2018 Public Participation Plan, Wayfinding Sign Plan, and the Heritage Trail Tour Map.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – COMMUNITY PLANNING

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$120,000.00	\$280,000.00	\$400,000.00
TOTAL	\$120,000.00	\$280,000.00	\$400,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	30	70	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$100,500.00	\$234,500.00	\$335,000.00
TOTAL	\$100,500.00	\$234,500.00	\$335,000.00

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

204 Zoning Administration

Objectives

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

Staff continues to process a high volume of land use applications, including zone changes, special reviews, variances, and planned developments, reflecting ongoing growth and development pressures in the community. Reports and recommendations are prepared for each case and presented to the appropriate boards, commissions, and governing bodies. As part of ongoing process improvements, digital photos are incorporated into all zoning reports, and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations are used to clearly communicate project details and recommendations during public meetings.

In alignment with the Billings 2045 Comprehensive Plan, staff is refining how land use applications are evaluated and administered. Greater emphasis is being placed on consistency with the Future Land Use Map, ensuring that development proposals support the community's long-term vision for growth, land use patterns, and infrastructure coordination. This has resulted in more comprehensive analysis during application review and clearer connections between policy direction and regulatory decisions.

Staff also conducts special zoning studies and prepares ordinance updates as directed by governing bodies. Recent efforts include a series of zoning code amendments to ensure compliance with changes in State law and to address evolving community priorities identified through the comprehensive planning process. These updates, along with procedural refinements, are helping modernize the administration of land use regulations and improve overall efficiency and consistency.

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

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

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

PL Eligible Activities

- Zoning, Special Review, and Variance applications will be reviewed for land use compatibility, traffic, access, and overall site design.
- Staff will continue to maintain its zoning maps and land use information so that it is applicable to long-range transportation planning efforts in the Billings MPO. This information is regularly applied to a variety of MPO functions, including corridor analysis efforts like those involved in the Billings Bypass project, specific road projects, TA program applications and non-motorized grant applications.
- Staff will continue implementing the Zoning Code. Staff continues to review and troubleshoot inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the code with the intent to make any needed amendments. As stated earlier, the Zoning Code places a higher emphasis on the transportation system, including road classification; safety and connectivity is vital to how the adjacent land uses for residential and commercial development are built. The road system emphasizes location and setting of any structures.
- Planner I's allow senior staff to take a more active role in long range planning. It is anticipated that Planner I's will undertake the review of:
 - Zoning applications. Project Re:Code now ties land uses and land patterns to the road and street network.
 - Site development plans to address clear vision and controlled and shared access points.
 - Site development plans to address newly implemented build-to zones which prevent traffic flow in front of buildings.
 - Site orientations that allow for internal traffic and other services, for example, drive through locations.

Locally Funded Activities

- Carrying out the day-to-day activities required to effectively administer the zoning regulations as well as ensure that land use information is current and available for all long-range transportation planning efforts, including Transportation Plan updates, specific road projects, corridor studies and the North Bypass project.
- Activity in 2027 will include ordinance updates as required by State law or requested by the public or governing bodies.
- All land use applications will be reviewed for compliance with local plans.
- Staff will continue the update to the Zoning Code based on fulfilling policy goals set by the local governing body including Growth Policy, Neighborhood Plans, and by increasing safe and accessible transportation planning options Streets and Infill Policies.

STAFFING

15.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

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

FUNDING SCHEDULE – ZONING ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$30,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$150,000.00
TOTAL	\$30,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$150,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	20	80	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$24,000.00	\$96,000.00	\$120,000.00
TOTAL	\$24,000.00	\$96,000.00	\$120,000.00

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

205 Subdivision Administration

Objectives

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

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

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

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

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

PL Eligible Activities

- Staff will review all subdivisions for compliance with the 2023 Billings Area Long Range Transportation Plan, and for conformity with the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, Lockwood Transportation Plan, Blue Creek Transportation Plan, and other neighborhood and community transportation plans as applicable.
- Staff also will continue to collect information on the details of each new subdivision as an integral data source for long-range transportation planning efforts undertaken by the MPO. The MPO expects to use this data in 2027 for a variety of projects, including the implementation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Bikeway and Trail Master Plan and continued analysis for the North Bypass.
- In the last couple of years with the addition of the new Planner I to the UPWP, the Division has additional assistance in reviewing subdivision applications for compliance with the various transportation and planning documents overseeing land use within the MPO and Planning jurisdictional area.

Locally Funded Activities

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

STAFFING

17 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

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

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

FUNDING SCHEDULE – SUBDIVISION ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$55,500.00	\$129,500.00	\$185,000.00
TOTAL	\$55,500.00	\$129,500.00	\$185,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	30	70	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$29,000.00	\$116,000.00	\$145,000.00
TOTAL	\$29,000.00	\$116,000.00	\$145,000.00

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

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	20	80	100

300 Transportation System Data

Objectives

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

The traffic, trail and bike lane count programs for FY 2026 was completed. Travel times/delay/speed studies were completed, calculations computed, and level-of-service values determined. This data was used for various planning and engineering projects throughout the year. In addition, the public commonly requests this data for land use planning.

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

The MPO, working with City Public Works, officially moved the Traffic Technician into the Planning Division as an employee of the Planning Division. Realigning this position within the MPO ensures compliance with Federal regulations and demonstrates a commitment to addressing FHWA and MDT recommendations. Importantly, this change does not reduce or restrict the availability of the Traffic Technician to City Public Works for traffic studies and related needs. Rather, it formally establishes the position within Planning to strengthen MPO capacity and advance data-driven transportation planning.

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

PL Eligible Activities

- The traffic count program for the Billings Urban Area as well as the Yellowstone County influence area will be conducted and the appropriate data recorded during FFY2027. All traffic count data will be submitted to the MDT by February 1, 2027.
- Staff will update, where appropriate, the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- Staff will collect and maintain bike/pedestrian information through use of the trail-bike/pedestrian scanners. The information from the bike/pedestrian counts links directly to the development of the LRTP and the MPO's non-motorized planning studies. These counts also contribute to other planning projects such as the City of Billings Complete Streets Progress Report. This activity is in conjunction with MPO region wide planning.
- The traffic count data archive will be maintained and accessible for other agencies and the public.
- Data will also be used during proposed FY27 Planning Studies as needed.
- The Bicycle-Pedestrian activities will continue. Duties will include but are not limited to:
 - Maintain Bike/pedestrian databases in conjunction with MPO region wide planning purposes.
 - Maintain database for easement acquisition.

Proposed Special Activities or Projects

Replacement and Upgrades to Traffic and Trail Counters

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

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

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

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

The MPO is proposing allocating \$20,000 towards the completion of this project.

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

STAFFING

20.0 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning/MDT

PRODUCT

- Documentation as necessary, support of transportation grant programs, transportation system modeling, updated Traffic Count Program, and research and integration of traffic information into planning projects and development review activities.
- Current traffic count data. Traffic counts are vital for any long-range planning efforts and during development of commercial and residential projects. Traffic counts also directly relate to the development of projects in the LRTP and ultimately for programming in the TIP.
- Current bike/pedestrian counts. MPO uses these counts for the development of the non-motorized network. This information is used for the development of the Bikeway and Trails Master Plan as well as for applications for various grants.
- To comply with Federal Guidelines for reporting Performance Measures under the BUILD Grant, the MPO will contract to develop the following performance measure components: Crash rates by type and severity, average daily traffic, and bike and pedestrian count/trips. This information is required at various time frames including a baseline, year 1, year 2, and final report in year 3.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DATA

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$350,000.00	\$0.00	\$325,000.00
TOTAL	\$350,000.00	\$0.00	\$325,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$220,000.00	\$0.00	\$220,000.00
TOTAL	\$220,000.00	\$0.00	\$220,000.00

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%. **This Includes - \$20,000 for Traffic/Trail Counters

301 Transportation Plan

Objectives

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

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

Due to the complexity of redeveloping the project list, the MPO carried this project over into the FFY26 UPWP to allow sufficient time for completion and to meet FHWA requirements for fiscal constraint. No additional PL funding was used in FFY26. The project was originally budgeted at \$50,000 in FFY25; approximately \$45,000 was expended in FFY25, with the remaining \$5,000 expended in the first quarter of FFY26.

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

Proposed Special Activities or Projects

2028 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update

In FFY27, the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will initiate the update of the 2028 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This effort will focus on early-stage planning activities, including robust public outreach to identify transportation needs, concerns, and priorities across the planning area. The MPO will conduct initial engagement through a combination of public meetings, stakeholder coordination, and digital outreach tools. The MPO will program this project over a two-year cycle.

To enhance accessibility and participation, the MPO will deploy an interactive mapping platform that allows community members to identify specific locations of concern and provide geographically referenced feedback. In addition, a public input survey will be administered to gather input on transportation system performance, safety, mobility, and future investment priorities. The MPO anticipates that portions of these outreach efforts, including development of engagement tools and survey design, will be supported through some level of consultant services.

Concurrent with public outreach efforts, the MPO will begin technical updates to support the LRTP development process. This will include initiating updates to the regional travel demand model using TransCAD, incorporating the most recent demographic, land use, and network data. Consultant assistance may also be utilized to support model development, calibration, and analysis to ensure technical accuracy and efficiency.

These activities will establish a strong foundation for the continued development of the 2028 LRTP in subsequent program years, ensuring a data-driven and publicly informed planning process.

MPO staff has already begun the review of the 2023 LRTP and has developed an outline of steps to undertake in the development of the 2028 LRTP. For technical support for this first year, the MPO has allocated \$100,000. For this project, the MPO will set \$24,141 towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options.

Public Participation Plan Update

Public Participation Plan Update – FFY27 UPWP Task

In FFY27, the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will undertake an update to its Public Participation Plan (PPP) to ensure continued compliance with federal requirements and to reflect current best practices in public engagement. This effort will include a comprehensive

review of existing participation strategies, outreach methods, and documentation procedures to identify opportunities for improvement and increased effectiveness.

The update will incorporate enhancements to public involvement techniques, with an emphasis on expanding accessibility, transparency, and meaningful engagement across diverse populations within the planning area. Particular attention will be given to integrating digital tools, refining notification procedures, and ensuring consistency with Title VI and Environmental Justice considerations.

This task will be completed in-house by MPO staff, utilizing existing resources and expertise. Conducting the update internally will allow the MPO to efficiently tailor the plan to local needs while maintaining flexibility throughout the process. The updated PPP will provide a strong framework to guide future outreach activities, including those associated with the 2028 LRTP update and other MPO planning efforts.

PL Eligible Activities

- MPO Staff to begin an update to the 2028 LRTP.
- Update to the Billings MPO Public Participation Plan.
- Projects will continue to be reviewed for future implementation in the City's CIP and the MPO's TIP.

STAFFING

12.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning/MDT

PRODUCT

- Initial start on the 2028 LRTP.
- An updated Public Participation Plan.
- Implementation of transportation projects identified in the Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan, the Transportation Improvements Program, Transportation Plan and the Capital Improvements Program.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$155,000.00	\$0.00	\$190,000.00
TOTAL	\$155,000.00	\$0.00	\$190,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$300,000.00	\$0.00	\$305,000.00
TOTAL	\$300,000.00	\$0.00	\$305,000.00

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%. **This Includes - \$100,000 for initiation of the 2028 LRTP (includes \$24,141 in Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options)

302 Planning Studies

Objectives

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

Accomplishments – Fiscal Year 2026

The 21st Street Underpass Study was initiated to evaluate improvements to this area including safety, multi-modal, and roadway. This project will go through the review and adoption process and will likely be adopted at the July 2026 PCC meeting. It provides four options for decision makers on how to proceed with the 21st St. Underpass.

In addition, the Complete Streets Economic Analysis was completed and will go through the review and adoption process and will likely be adopted at the August 2026 PCC meeting. It looked at four case studies in Billings and considered the impact of Complete Streets elements on several different indicators including economic, safety, and quality of life. A Complete Streets Progress report is also being completed internally by staff without any PL funds.

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

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

Feasibility and Planning Studies: Alkali Creek Trail Connection, Downtown to Billings Heights Trail Connection, and the Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road Trail Connection– Feasibility and Planning Study

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has identified several shared use path projects through coordination with the City of Billings' Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the 2016 Bikeways and Trail Master Plan. Many of these projects are currently conceptual in nature and require additional feasibility analysis, scope definition, and other planning-level work to position them for future funding opportunities. While grant opportunities are available on an annual basis, the limited application window makes it difficult to prepare competitive

submissions without prior groundwork. To address this, the MPO is advancing a coordinated package of feasibility and planning studies for key trail connections. These projects are consultant-led with MPO staff support and are currently in progress at the time of this document's creation, with completion anticipated by September 30, 2026.

This effort includes three priority projects: the Alkali Creek Trail Connection, the Downtown to Billings Heights Non-Motorized Connection, and the Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road Trail Connection. Each project is intended to improve safety, connectivity, and accessibility for non-motorized users while advancing the City's broader transportation and livability goals.

The Alkali Creek Trail Connection will link two existing segments of shared use path that are currently disconnected. The proposed route would generally run parallel to Airport Road, with portions likely located on private property. At present, the only connection between these segments is a sidewalk adjacent to fast-moving traffic, creating an uncomfortable and potentially unsafe experience for users. This project will begin with outreach to property owners to assess feasibility, followed by development of a planning-level design and cost estimate that accounts for terrain challenges near Alkali Creek while identifying a cost-effective alignment.

The Downtown to Billings Heights Non-Motorized Connection aims to establish a safer and more direct route linking downtown Billings to the Heights, including connections to the Jim Dutcher Trail, Coulson Park, and nearby campgrounds. Currently, the Jim Dutcher Trail serves as the only separated non-motorized route between these areas until the future Stagecoach Trail is constructed. Development of this connection will require coordination with local businesses and potentially the railroad; early discussions with key stakeholders, including Phillips 66, have been encouraging.

The Aronson Avenue to Annandale Road Trail Connection focuses on evaluating a new non-motorized route within the Billings Heights, as requested by the Billings City Council. This study will identify the most feasible and safe alignment for pedestrians and bicyclists, improving access to neighborhoods, parks, and schools. It will also support broader goals of enhancing system connectivity, promoting active transportation, and guiding future infrastructure investments in a rapidly growing area.

Across all three projects, the MPO is developing feasibility assessments, planning-level designs, and cost estimates to move these concepts toward implementation readiness. In addition, funding support from Billings TrailNet provides flexible resources that may be used for activities such as easement acquisition and advancing design beyond the planning level. Advancing these

projects to a more “shovel-ready” stage will improve their competitiveness for funding programs such as the Recreational Trails Program, Montana Trail Stewardship Grant, Transportation Alternatives, and other emerging grant opportunities.

Collectively, these projects represent a strategic investment in advancing priority trail connections, improving safety and accessibility for non-motorized users, and positioning the City of Billings to successfully compete for future funding opportunities.

Proposed Activities - Fiscal Year 2027

PL Eligible Activities

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

The Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consulted with the Billings City Council on developing transportation planning projects that would benefit the city in advancing desired capital transportation projects. Staff recommended additional evaluation and public input on certain Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects identified in two SRTS Studies. The City Council approved this request and is recommending two areas of evaluation. The first is the St. Francis Catholic School and Poly Drive SRTS project and the second is the Medicine Crow Middle School. Consultant Kimley-Horn was selected to lead this project. The project involves two rounds of public engagement on each corridor as well as additional technical analysis. The study considers improvements to Colton Boulevard which could include enhanced crossings, bike facilities, and lighting. Near Medicine Crow Middle School, the study considers a possible crossing of Main Street as well as sidewalks and a possible trail connection connecting students to the school. While the majority of the work for this project is expected to be completed in FFY26, the MPO is carrying over \$10,000 of this project to be completed in FFY27. The MPO expects that all major public outreach will be completed in FFY26, and work in FFY27 will mainly include compilation of the report and taking the study through the adoption process.

The MPO allocated a budget of \$75,000 to the completion of this evaluation and public outreach, \$10,000 of which would be allocated towards Safe and Accessible Transportation Planning Options. The MPO expects most of the funds, about \$65,000, to be expended in FFY26 and is budgeting the remaining \$10,000 in FFY27.

STAFFING

14.0 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning/MDT

PRODUCT

- Tracking future transportation planning projects.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – PLANNING STUDIES

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE			
AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$283,800.00	\$189,200.00	\$473,000.00
TOTAL	\$283,800.00	\$189,200.00	\$473,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	60	40	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$75,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$125,000.00
TOTAL	\$75,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$125,000.00

*The matching ratio is Federal PL--86.58% and State match-13.42%. This includes \$10,000 for the completion of the Safe Routes to School Feasibility Study and \$10,000 this project is carried over from the FFY26 UPWP.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

500 Transportation Improvement Program

Objectives

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2026

MPO staff completed a TIP Amendment for the FFY2024-2028. This amendment included the addition of projects including two Transportation Alternative Program projects and several MDT projects. This amendment was approved on May 19, 2026, by the Policy Coordinating Committee.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2027

PL Eligible Activities

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be evaluated and updated as needed. A certification statement will be included, as appropriate, to conform to the planning regulations. Based on the Transportation Plan, projects will be evaluated and ranked in accordance with the Priority Ranking Procedures, and in accordance with consistency/conformity procedures.

STAFFING

2.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

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

FUNDING SCHEDULE - TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00
TOTAL	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
TOTAL	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00

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

SPECIAL PROJECTS

600 Environmental Considerations

Objectives

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2026

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

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

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

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2027

PL Eligible Activities

- Continue to collaborate with MDT on the Carbon Reduction Plan.
- The planning staff will continue to utilize the SEE effects guidelines to evaluate all major development proposals in terms of transportation systems. This would include the CMAQ program.
- Work will continue to maintain the Billings air quality designation.

STAFFING

1.5 Staff Months – City/County Planning

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City/County Planning

PRODUCT

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

FUNDING SCHEDULE - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00
TOTAL	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
TOTAL	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00

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

OTHER ACTIVITIES

700 Un-Programmed Funds

Objectives

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2026

N/A

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2027

PL Eligible Activities

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

STAFFING

N/A

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

N/A

PRODUCT

N/A

FUNDING SCHEDULE - CONTINGENCY

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$42,524.00	\$134,300.00	\$176,824.00
TOTAL	\$42,524.00	\$134,300.00	\$176,824.00

DISBURSEMENT PERCENTAGE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	100	0	100

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
MPO	\$47,871.00	\$420,569.00	\$468,440.00
TOTAL	\$47,871.00	\$420,569.00	\$468,440.00

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

SECTION 3 – FUNDING

TABLE I FUNDING SUMMARY FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2027

Work Element	PL	Local	Est. Cost
100	\$138,500.00	\$138,500.00	\$277,000.00
101	\$20,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$50,000.00
102	\$36,000.00	\$54,000.00	\$90,000.00
200	\$100,500.00	\$234,500.00	\$335,000.00
204	\$24,000.00	\$96,000.00	\$120,000.00
205	\$29,000.00	\$116,000.00	\$145,000.00
300	\$220,000.00	\$0.00	\$220,000.00
301	\$305,000.00	\$0.00	\$305,000.00
302	\$75,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$125,000.00
500	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
600	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
700	\$47,871.00	\$420,569.00	\$468,440.00
Totals	\$1,035,871.00	\$1,139,569.00	\$2,175,440.00

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

TABLE II FUNDING COMPARISONS

WORK ELEMENT	FY 2027 ESTIMATED COST	FY 2026 ESTIMATED COST
100 Administration	\$277,000.00	\$400,000.00
101 Service	\$50,000.00	\$68,000.00
102 Citizen Involvement	\$90,000.00	\$90,000.00
200 Community Planning	\$335,000.00	\$400,000.00
204 Zoning	\$120,000.00	\$150,000.00
205 Subdivision	\$145,000.00	\$185,000.00
300 Transportation System	\$220,000.00	\$325,000.00
301 Transportation Plan	\$305,000.00	\$190,000.00
302 Planning Studies	\$125,000.00	\$473,000.00
500 T.I.P.	\$20,000.00	\$25,000.00
600 Environmental	\$20,000.00	\$25,000.00
700 Un-Programmed Funds	\$468,440.00	\$176,824.00
TOTAL	\$2,175,440.00	\$2,507,824.00

**TABLE III
PL 5-YEAR PL ALLOCATION PROJECTIONS**

		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Allocation		\$965,648	\$975,304	\$985,058	\$994,908	\$1,004,857
Carryover, Adjustments		\$180,222	\$47,871	\$912,076	\$1,784,924	\$2,666,500
Minus State Allocation		(\$109,999)	(\$111,099)	(\$112,210)	(\$113,332)	(\$114,465)
Total for annual UPWP		\$1,035,871	\$912,076	\$1,784,924	\$2,666,500	\$3,556,892
100. Program Administration and Coordination						
	100 Administration	\$138,500				
	101 Service	\$20,000				
	102 Citizens Involvement	\$36,000				
200. Public/Stakeholder Participation & Education						
	200 Community Planning	\$100,500				
	204 Zoning	\$24,000				
	205 Subdivision	\$29,000				
300. Transportation System Data and Plans						
	300 Transportation System	\$220,000				
	301 Transportation Plan	\$305,000				
	302 Planning Studies	\$75,000.00				
500. Metropolitan Transportation Plan						
	500 TIP	\$20,000				
600. Environmental Considerations						
	600 Environmental	\$20,000.00				
Balance						
		\$988,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Amounts shown in total dollars						
	Carryover	\$47,871	\$912,076	\$1,784,924	\$2,666,500	\$3,556,892

**TABLE IV
FUNDING PERCENTAGES FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2027**

WORK ELEMENT	RECIPIENT	PL	LOCAL	TOTAL
100 Administration	MPO	50	50	100
101 Service	MPO	40	60	100
102 Citizen Involvement	MPO	40	60	100
200 Community Planning	MPO	30	70	100
204 Zoning	MPO	20	80	100
205 Subdivision	MPO	20	80	100
300 Transportation System	MPO	100	0	100
301 Transportation Plan	MPO	100	0	100
302 Planning Studies	MPO	60	40	100
500 T.I.P.	MPO	100	0	100
600 Environmental	MPO	100	0	100
700 Un-Programmed Funds	MPO	100	0	100

**TABLE V
STAFF MONTHS BY WORK ELEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2027**

Work Element	Director-Friday	MPO Coord.-Mattox-Planner II	Planner I-Vacant	Planning Manager-Vickers	Planner II (Trans)-Monat	Clerk-Berns	Planner II-Green	Planner I-Vacant	Planner I-Kelly	Zoning Coord.Planner II-Husman	Planner I (Multi-Modal)-Hayes	Planner II (LRP)-Johnson	Traffic Technician-Bargsten	Total M.M.
100	7	1.5	0.5	6	0.5	2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	20
101	0.5	0	2	0	0	1.5	0.5	2	1	1	0	0.5	0	7
102	0.5	0	2	0.5	0.5	1.5	1	2	0.5	0	0.5	2	0	9.5
200	1.5	0	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	5	0	21.5
204	0	0	2	0.5	0	1	0.5	2	3	6	0	0.5	0	15.5
205	0	0	1.5	0.5	0	1	6.5	1.5	3	1	0	0.5	0	17
300	0	3	0	0.5	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	3	0	11	20
301	0.5	3	1	0.5	3	0.5	1	1	1	1	3	2	0	12.5
302	0.5	1.5	0	0.5	3	0.5	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	14
500	0.5	1	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5
600	0	1	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5
Total	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	143

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

WORK ELEMENT	FY 2027 ELIGIBLE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS PLANNING ACTIVITY ESTIMATE COST
300 Transportation System Data	
301 Transportation Plan	\$ 24,141.00
302 Planning Studies	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 24,141.00
<p>The 2.5% PL Funding set-aside for Alternative Modes Planning activities have an FFY 2022 match ratio of 86.58% Federal Share/13.42% State Share and are eligible for 100% Federal Share in FFY2027</p>	

SECTION 4 – INDIRECT COST PLAN

Introduction

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

Identification of Costs

The costs are delineated below by type:

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

Allocation of Costs

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

An indirect cost rate of **11%** of the City and County's direct salaries and wages is proposed. The **11%** rate will be applied to the direct wages and salaries of each line item within the work program to cover all indirect expenses.

Benefits will be calculated at a rate of **75%** of the City and County's direct salaries and wages charged to each line item.

Funding Sources

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

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

Planning Dept. Fees (City of Billings)	\$274,000
Planning Dept. Fees (Yellowstone Co.)	\$170,000
Yellowstone County (Mill)	\$695,569
PL*	\$1,035,871
TOTAL	\$2,175,440

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

Summary

The indirect cost rate is a predetermined fixed rate which is not subject to adjustment. The base period used in determining the rate is the period from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. The calculated rate is applicable to the grant period, which is October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027.

CHAPTER 2 – TRANSIT DIVISION

SECTION 1 – UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM ELEMENTS

44.21.00 PROGRAM SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2026

Staff remained informed of Federal and State requirements concerning all federal funding sources including, but not limited to, Sections 5303, 5307, 5310, and 5339. Transit Planner programmed, managed, revised, and closed grants from state and federal sources, while also submitting quarterly progress and expenditure reports to MDT to maintain federal and state funding support.

Staff attended training opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills, including the Spring Montana Transit Association conference focused on operations and compliance, Community Transportation Association of America Legislative Fly-In, and on-site training include CivicPlus website, ADA paratransit eligibility, and CDL third-party testing site training.

Staff maintained and updated the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan, City of Billings' Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP) and Technology Replacement Plan (TRP) with upcoming and in- process capital projects, as well as fleet and facility metrics to ensure accurate capital and asset planning.

Updated the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan for MET Transit for the required annual review; this included additional training program development for operator and dispatch staff including focuses on transit employee assaults and de-escalation training.

Staff managed FTA Section 5303 grant activities and prepared the transit aspect of Unified Planning Work Program, along with completing quarterly narrative and drawdown reimbursement requests.

Staff continued to coordinate transportation services among 5310 transit providers, social service agencies, and the public to provide an overall strategy to enhance transportation access,

minimize duplication of services and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible within available resources. This also included outreach and engagement to improve and advance the coordination plan, as well as to improve community relations.

Completed Transit specific data for a TIP/STIP update for Amendments 2 and 3 of the five-year document, including programming for selected capital programs and attended all governing body approval meetings to ensure compliance.

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

Updated and began complete redesign of agency website to increase ease of use, as well as gain compliance with WCAG 2.1 ADA requirements. Continued to develop and implement an improved social media presence for public engagement, including campaigns about the AVL system, designated bus stops, hiring events, and route updates.

Staff reviewed ridership data in analysis of system functioning and passenger miles travelled metrics, assessed ridership trends, evaluated ADA lift use at bus stops, bike rack utilization, and prepared other information on system functioning, as requested.

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

Members of the transit division updated projections of future revenues and expenses and directed annual budget and financial resources analysis, including multi-year forecasts in response to changes to mill levy structure and funding sources and prepared FY27 Transit Division Operating and Capital Budget.

Transit members attended and participated in a diverse range of transit-related and general community meetings including the Billings Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), City of Billings Transportation Team meetings, City of Billings Annexation Committees, Commuter Challenge, Aviation and Transit Board, MT 3 Billings Corridor Study, Age Friendly Billings, and Safe Routes to Schools in an effort to solicit partner and public feedback on current system usage, demands, successes, and shortfalls. As lead agency on the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Committee, staff also provided guidance and updates to the plan.

Successfully completed Federal Transit Administration Triennial Compliance Review with only two deficiency findings; in preparation for review, staff completed extensive policy and procedural updates.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2027

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

- Complete development of a five-year Transit Development Plan including both short term and long-term transit goals and in-depth fixed-route system analysis in pursuit of additional service hours, additional routes to address growth projections, and more efficient and effective use of existing and new resources.
- Organizational structure analysis in support of Transit Development Plan.
- Develop and compile information on operating and capital projects for which MET Transit plans to utilize grant assistance, thus requiring inclusion in the TIP and STIP; included in this assessment is evaluating ongoing and future capital and operating requirements based upon projected demand and growth and continuing to assess financial and infrastructure requirements.
- Update the Division's TAM, CIP, ERP, TRP, and other plans as required.
- Quarterly progress and expenditure reports will be prepared and transmitted to the Montana Department of Transportation, Urban Planning Division to maintain funding requirements.
- The FY2027 UPWP will be monitored and revised as necessary, and transit activities for the FY2028 UPWP will also be developed within this element.
- Publish RFQ for architectural and engineering services for new five-year span.
- Staff will execute grant administrative functions including required monthly and annual reporting to the National Transit Database; staff will continue research and development regarding the utilization of FTA funding, including furthering innovative funding practices and partnerships.
- Procurement and implementation of further technology enhancements, including updated automatic passenger counters that will require certification, to gather fixed-route fleet data, improve efficiency, and further customer conveniences.
- Update Benchmarking Plan and maintain certification of automatic passenger counters when new equipment is received.
- Staff will continue to evaluate each bus stop for ADA compliance and suggest improvements based on priority of needs and funding availability, including programming awarded funds from FY25 Section 5310 for bus stop improvements.
- Maintenance of coordination agreements with 5310 providers and, as lead agency, complete updates to the Billings Area Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan.
- Participate with the TAC, Safe Routes to School, MPO Quarterly meetings, citizen advisory boards and other committees throughout the community, as needed.

- Staff will continue to update and implement the required Public Transit Agency Safety Plan, including annual updates to the PTASP and Safety Management System Reports, as well as further research and development of best practices.
- Continue research on feasibility of, and make recommendations for additional technology conveniences for passengers, including amenities at transfer centers and bus stops.
- Facilitation of public meetings to support system improvements, as well as specialized services for seniors and disabled.
- Using information collected from the Governance and Sustainability Study, perform additional analysis of fare structure, including comparisons to similar systems and populations to ensure equitable and sustainable fare generation.
- Analyze, develop, and recommend opportunities for MPO and Transit collaboration on projects eligible for multiple funding sources, including flex funding, to support integration of transit and overall surface transportation structure.
- Enhance development and implementation of education and outreach strategies to guide market research, promote public awareness, and engagement to increase ridership.

STAFFING

541.00 Asst. Transit Director Staff Hours

1079.00 Transit Planner Staff Hours

204.00 Transit Operations Coordinator

239.94 Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Staff Hours

2063.94 Total Staff Hours

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

PRODUCT

- Transit Development Plan compiled by staff with data from public survey and outreach to guide future transit planning.
- Administrative oversight and execution of transit planning and development functions, including federally required plans.
- Enhancement of transit division skills and knowledge.
- Proper maintenance and administration of grant related activities.

FUNDING SCHEDULE - ADMINISTRATION

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$10,973	\$43,893	\$54,866
TOTAL	\$10,973	\$43,893	\$54,866

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$44,269	\$177,075	\$221,344
TOTAL	\$44,269	\$177,075	\$221,344

44.24.00 SHORT RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

OBJECTIVE

To improve service, ridership, and effectiveness of the existing transit system, while ensuring citizens will have acceptable and improved public transportation alternatives in the future.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2026

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

Staff updated several fixed routes and bus stops in response to needed and requested changes.

Together with SRF Consulting, Inc., staff completed and received approval from governing bodies for the Transit Financial Sustainability and Governance Study.

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

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES - FISCAL YEAR 2027

Functions necessary in support of future transit planning and development will be performed under this work element, including continuation of activities undertaken in FY2026. These activities necessitate the ongoing cloud-based software costs and run-cutting module, for route development and planning, the cost of which is included in this element.

Activities are as follows:

- Continue investigating the feasibility of expanding service beyond existing city limits and engage county stakeholders in discussion regarding potential for service to outlying areas.
- Assess the feasibility of adding additional transfer locations, specifically in growing areas of the City, including the Heights and near the West End Reservoir locations.
- Assess feasibility of a rapid transit line to directly connect Heights, Downtown, and West End to decrease passenger travel time.
- Continue to analyze and evaluate current City and other area government practices for right of way requirements regarding future bus stop locations.

- Continue to develop and implement criteria for bus stop amenities and other required items and make changes to stop amenities as needed; make recommendations on funding priorities to support bus stops with high usage and infrastructure needs.
- Perform a community-wide survey regarding transit use, support, and feedback, as part of the Transit Development Plan, including public engagement and meetings.

FUNCTIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

City of Billings Transit Division – MET Transit

PRODUCT

- Annual subscription to planning and scheduling software.
- Direct costs associated with Transit Development Plan outreach and public engagement, including survey software subscription and public meeting materials.

FUNDING SCHEDULE – SHORT RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET	\$31,282	\$125,127	\$156,409
TOTAL	\$31,282	\$125,127	\$156,409

**The 2026 amounts figure above includes \$45,000 for planning software and \$111,409 budgeted for staff hours.

FUNDS PROGRAMMED - FISCAL YEAR 2027

FUNDING SOURCE

AGENCY	LOCAL	FTA	TOTAL
MET (DIRECT COSTS FOR TDP)	\$360	\$1,440	\$1,800
MET (PLANNING SOFTWARE)	\$9,640	\$38,560	\$48,200
TOTAL	\$10,000	\$40,000	\$50,000

*All staff hours are now included in Program Support Administration.

SECTION 2 – FUNDING SUMMARY

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2027

WORK ELEMENT	FUNDING SOURCES FY 2027			STAFF HOURS
	LOCAL	FTA	EST.COST	
44.21.00 Program Support Administration				
Staff Hours	\$44,269	\$177,075	\$221,344	2,063.94
44.24.00 Short Range Transportation Planning				
Direct Costs for TDP	\$360	\$1,440	\$1,800	
Planning Software	\$9,640	\$38,560	\$48,200	
TOTAL	\$54,269	\$217,075	\$271,344	2,063.94

ALLOCATION OF COSTS

Expenditures identified include direct costs, benefits at the rate of 75% of direct salary or wages, and indirect costs at the rate of 11% of direct salary or wages.

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

Date: 06/11/2026
Title:
Presented by:
Department: Planning & Community Services
Presentation:

RECOMMENDATION

MET Transit Governance Study Presentation - Bill Troe, SRF Consulting

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

ALTERNATIVES

City Council may:

- Approve; or,
- Not Approve

FISCAL EFFECTS

Attachments

MET Governance Presentation



Billings MET Transit Funding Sustainability and Governance Study – Summary of Findings

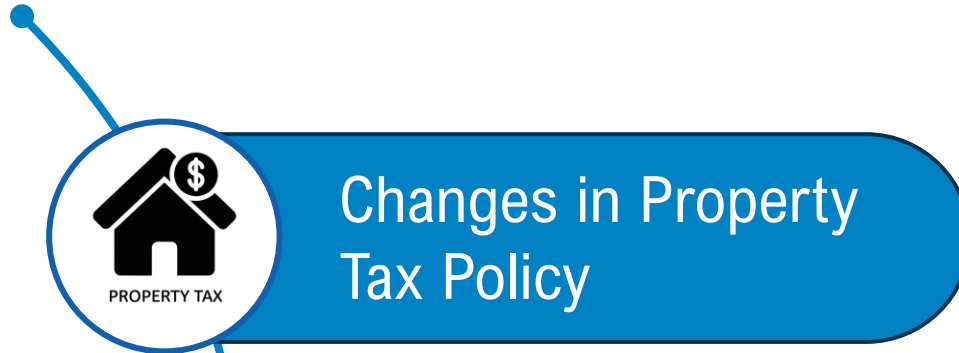
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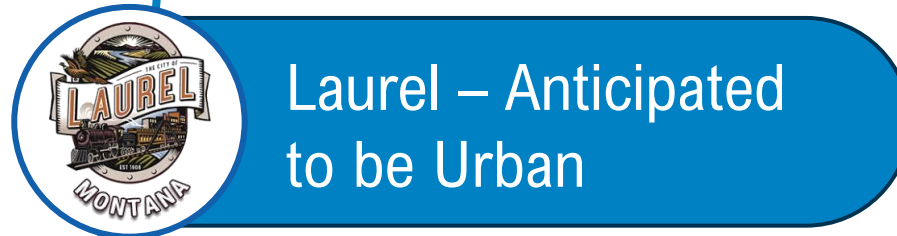
Agenda

- Purpose of the Study
- Draft Document in Review
- Review of Key Results and Findings
 - Governance Alternatives Analysis
 - Funding Alternatives Analysis
 - Fare Analysis
 - Return on Investment into Transit
- Wrap-up

Study Focus Areas



PROPERTY TAX



Impacts:

- Adding Service Improvements in Billings more Difficult
- Addressing Wage Inflation more Difficult
- Fleet replacement more difficult

What are:

- Alternative Funding Sources?

Impacts Federal Funding:

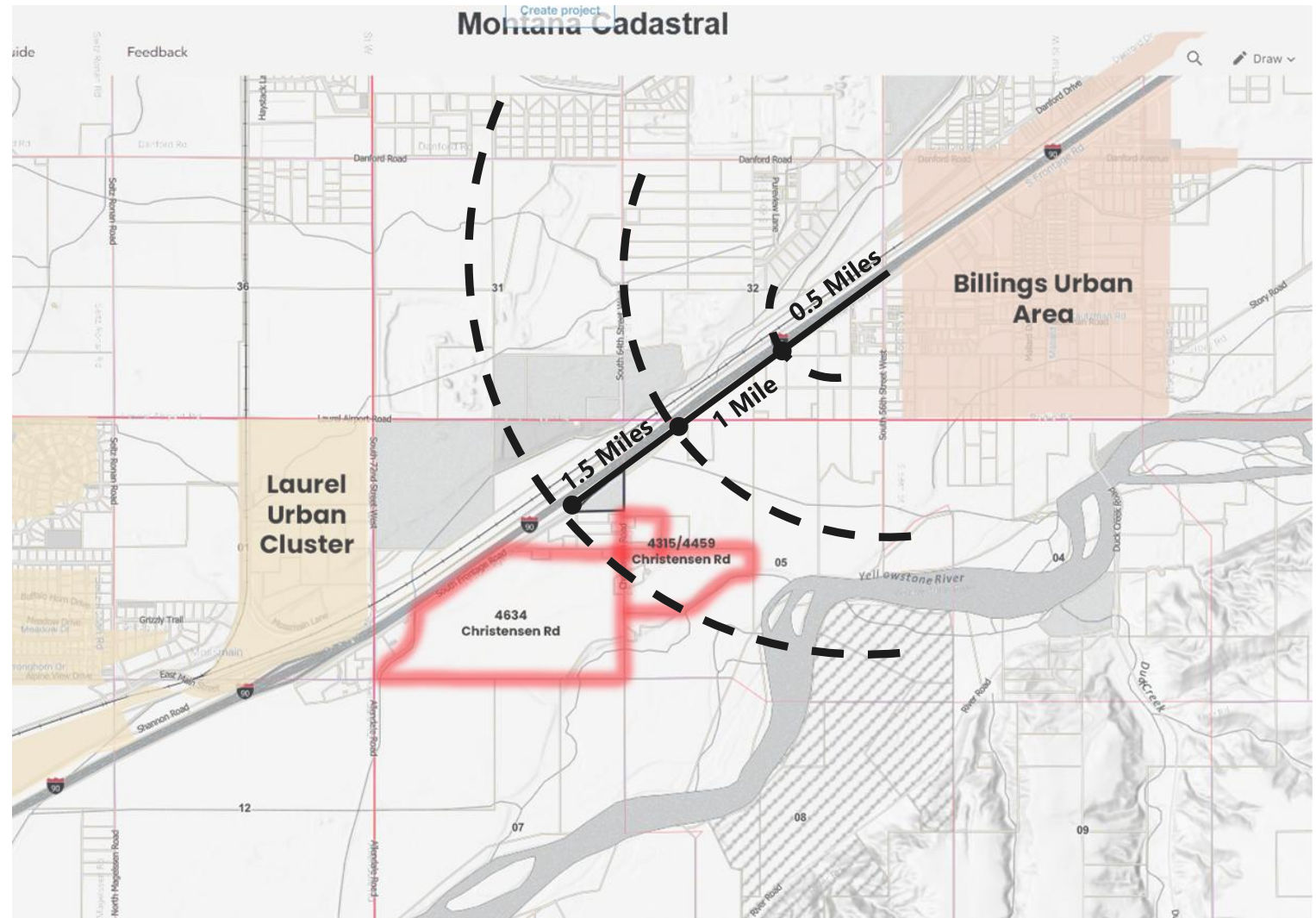
- Program Used for Service
- Regional Allocation of Federal Funds Needed

What are:


- Funding Needs?
- Local Cost Share Sources?

Urbanized Area – Encompassing Laurel - When?

- Max “Jump” Across Low Density Area: 1.5 Miles (Down from 2.5 Miles)
- Current Billings to Laurel: ~2 Miles
- Development Points to Future of Laurel Becoming Part to Billings Urbanized Area
- 1,000+ Commuters Destinations Fill Jump
- Laurel is likely to be included in the Billings Urbanized area after 2030 or 2040



Study Focus Areas



Lockwood – Desires Service



Options for Efficient Governance



Return on Investment

Review:

- Cost of Options (from TDP)
- Funding Impacts

What are the options for the region?:

- City Department
- Standalone Transit District
- Authority

Transit is a Good Investment into the Community – Let's Calculate the Numbers

Governance/Funding Document

■ Governance and Funding Document Content



- 1 Introduction – Includes Findings Summary
- 2 Current Conditions/Alternatives Analysis
 - Current Service Summary
 - Governance Alternatives Evaluation
 - Funding Alternatives Evaluation
 - Regional Service Considerations in MET Decisions
- 3 Economic Return on Investment
- 4 Stakeholder Input
- 5 Conclusions - Implementation



GOVERNANCE

Governance Alternatives and Evaluation Criteria

Concept/Alternative

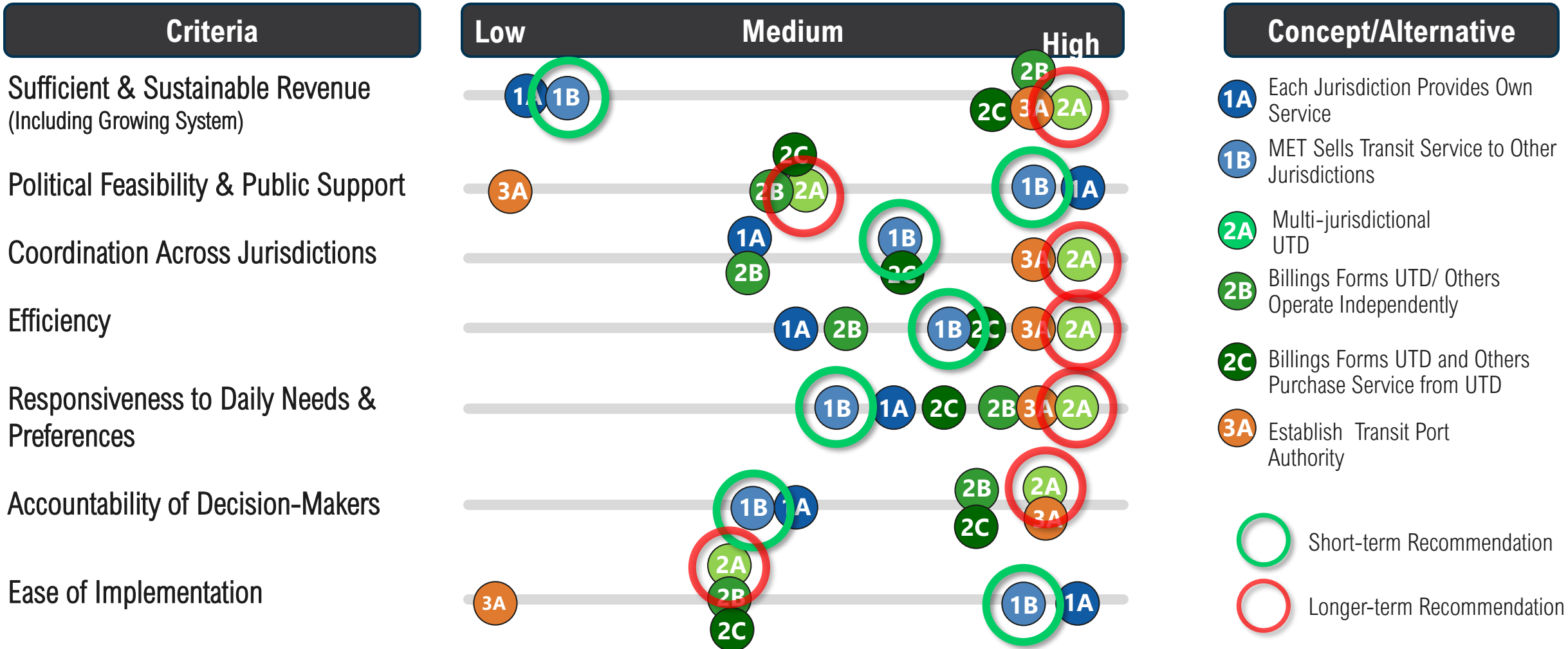
- 1A Each Jurisdiction Provides Own Service
- 1B MET Contracts Transit Service to Other Jurisdictions
- 2A Multi-jurisdictional UTD
- 2B Billings Forms UTD/ Others Operate Independently
- 2C Billings Forms UTD and Contracts Service to Other Communities
- 3A Establish Transit Port Authority



Evaluation Criteria

- Sufficient and Sustainable Revenue (Including Growing System)
- Political Feasibility & Public Support
- Coordination Across Jurisdictions
- Efficiency
- Responsiveness to Daily Needs & Preferences
- Accountability of Decision-Makers
- Ease of Implementation

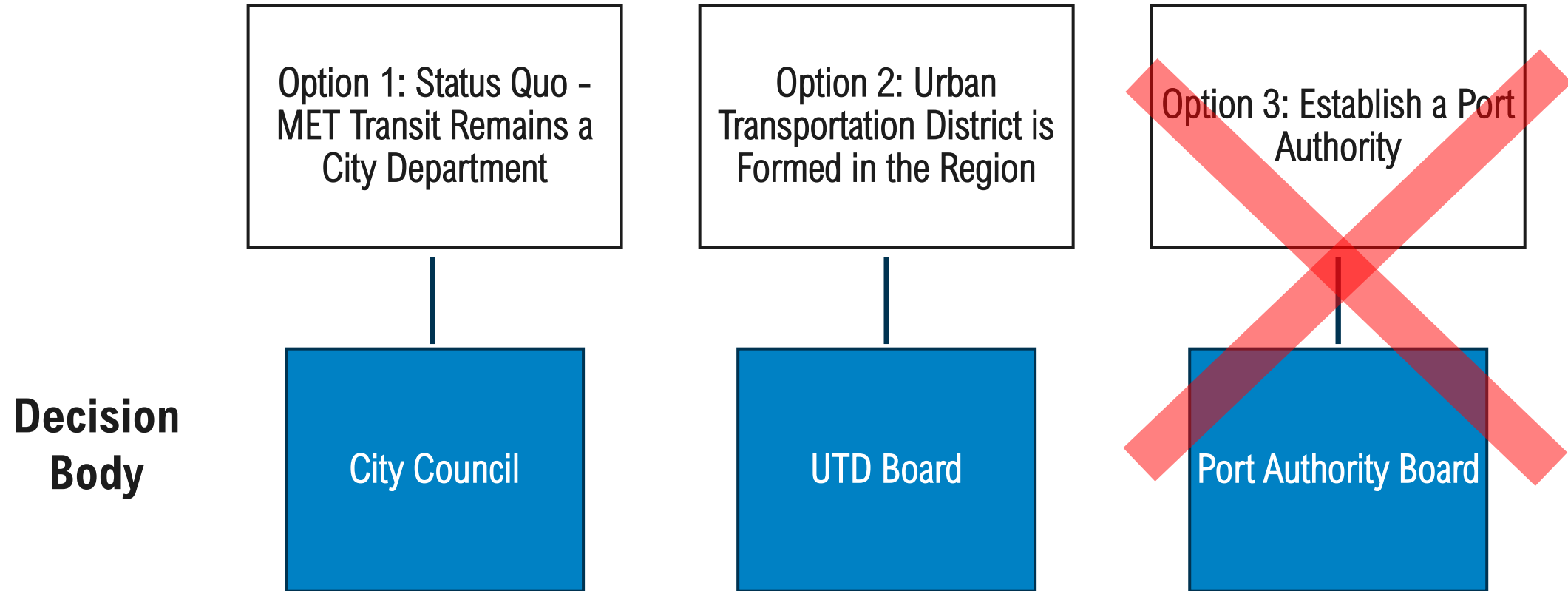
Governance Alternatives Evaluation

Degree of Alternative Achieving the Goal



-  Short-term Recommendation
-  Longer-term Recommendation

Governance Findings – Format of Providing Service



Short-term Service Provision

1a



1b



Governance Recommendations – Long Term

2a



2b



2c



Establish an Urban Transportation District

Option 2: Urban Transportation District is Formed in the Region

UTD Board

Advantages

- Predictable Dedicated Funding
- Flexible Boundaries
- Continuity
- Accountability
- Flexible Financial Mix:
 - Coverage
 - Funding
 - Lockwood/Laurel could buy service (not join)

Affords Opportunity for Funding Adjustment

Risks

- Complex Formation Relative to Status Quo (Next Slides)
- Must Balance Boundaries/Service
- Levy Revenue Cap
- New Political Subdivision – Admin Duplication
- Administrative Inefficiencies if Not All Jurisdictions Participate

Recommended Approach

- Pursue most feasible alternatives in the short-term
- Work toward regional growth in the long-term

Short Term

- MET Partners with Laurel and Lockwood for Service as Stand Alone City Department

Long Term

- Establish a Multi-jurisdictional UTD Including Billings, Laurel and Lockwood



FUNDING

Alternative Funding Sources Review

Funding Options	Notes
System-generated revenue	System may increase fares, or seek additional advertising (which is already robust)/ partnership opportunities
Property taxes	May “flat lined” due to state action; pass additional mill levy.
Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Funds	Approx. \$1.7 Million/Year. Historically used for Billings Bypass
Urban Transportation District	Created by county, approved through ballot measure. Funded through dedicated mill levy.
Parking Fees/Parking Benefit District	Dedicate a part of parking revenue to transit operations. Increase fees to provide a transit allocation?



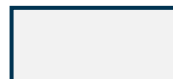
Short-term Recommendation



Longer-term Recommendation

Alternative Funding Sources Review

Funding Options	Notes
Marijuana Excise Taxes	Dedicate part of city's share of excise taxes to transit operations (3% on all sales – Part of City -- \$425,000 annually)
Transportation Utility Fees	Fees paid by property owners. Currently dedicated to street maintenance but may be able to be used for transit.
Wheelage tax	No wheelage fee in MT. Many communities around the country include a “wheelage fee” on motor vehicle registrations to help fund local transportation. Requires change in legislation.
Franchise Fees	Fee added to utility bills by municipalities.
Resort Tax	A resort tax is MT’s version of a local options sales tax, levied only on hotels, restaurants, bars and resorts in resort communities. Billings does not meet the definition.

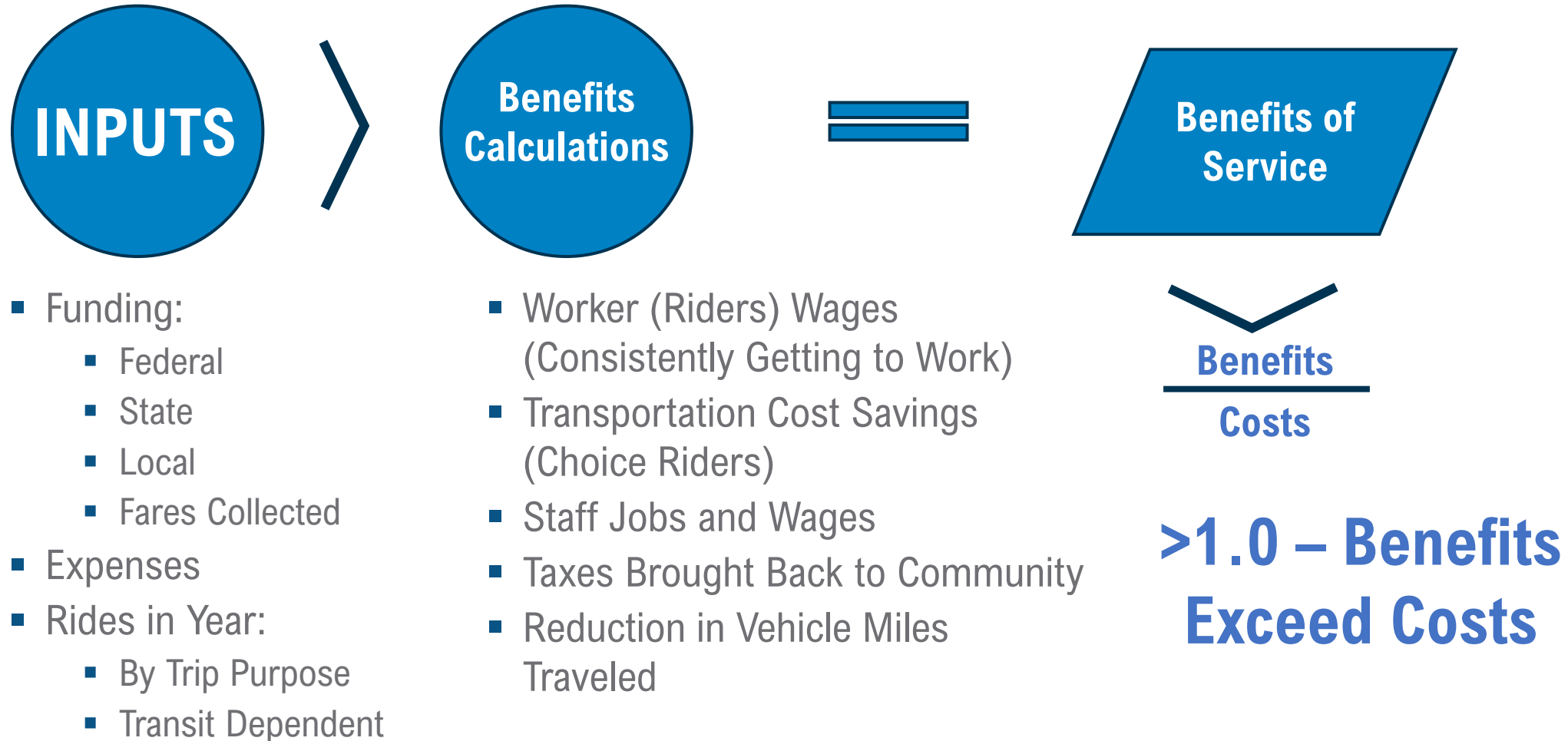


- Eliminated alternatives



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Benefit-Cost Analysis Methodology



ROI Assumptions

Trip Purpose	Weighted Total Annual Trips	% Forgone	Value per Trip	Value per Year
Government or social service agency	9,448	-	\$0	\$0
Medical	27,115	20%	\$609	\$3,302,617
Personal/recreational/social activity	23,405	-	\$0	\$0
School (K-12)	45,756	-	\$0	\$0
Shopping or errands	77,791	-	\$0	\$0
Work	201,866	5%	\$60	\$605,599

Sources: SRF Analysis of Billings MET Community Survey (2023) and Billings MET ridership data (2024-2025)

Benefit-Cost Analysis Results

ROI
For Every
LOCAL \$...
\$3.24
in **RETURN**

- Value of most trips is estimated conservatively; true ROI may be higher
- Federal dollars are a value multiplier for local dollars

Cost Input	Benefit	Cost	Benefit/Cost Ratio
Total Operating Budget (Bus Only) 2024	\$3,908,216	\$5,099,731	0.77
Local Funding (All Modes) 2024	\$3,908,216	\$1,205,889	3.24



FARES

Topics Explored

- MET's fare revenue and operating cost context
- Fare structure comparisons, including base fares, pass pricing, and fare media
- Farebox recovery and cost per passenger comparisons
- Variations in local funding approaches

Peer Agency Fare Comparison

- Single-ride fare is above average
- MET Transit offers stronger quantity discounts relative to peers, particularly with low monthly pass costs

Agency	Location	Single Ride	Day Pass	Monthly Pass
Mountain Line*	Missoula, MT	-	-	-
Great Falls Transit District	Great Falls, MT	\$1.00	\$4.00	\$30.00
Streamline*	Gallatin Valley/Bozeman, MT	-	-	-
Bis-Man Transit	Bismarck-Mandan, ND	\$1.50	\$6.00	\$36.00
Sioux Area Metro	Sioux Falls, SD	\$1.50	\$3.00	\$30.00
Citilink	Fort Wayne, IN	\$1.50	\$3.75	\$54.00
MET Transit	Billings, MT	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$28.00

*Agency is zero-fare.

Fare Media Comparison

- Total fare revenues may increase when it is easier to purchase fares through multiple methods
- MET Transit offers strong access to fare payment options relative to peers

Agency	Location	Cash	Paper Passes	Smart Card	Mobile Ticketing
Mountain Line*	Missoula, MT	-	-	-	-
Great Falls Transit District	Great Falls, MT	✓	✓	-	✓
Streamline*	Gallatin Valley/Bozeman, MT	-	-	-	-
Bis-Man Transit	Bismarck-Mandan, ND	✓	✓	-	✓
Sioux Area Metro	Sioux Falls, SD	✓	✓	-	✓
Citilink	Fort Wayne, IN	✓	✓	✓	✓
MET Transit	Billings, MT	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Agency is zero-fare.

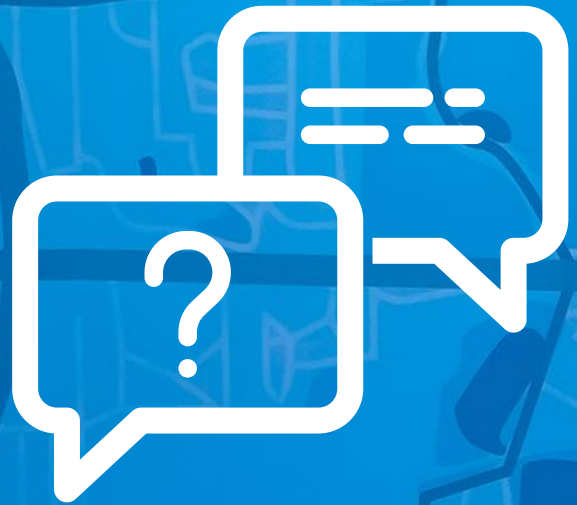
Fare Revenue and Farebox Recovery

Agency	Location	Total Operating Expense	Fare Revenue	Farebox Recovery
Mountain Line*	Missoula, MT	\$14,114,272	-	0.0%
Great Falls Transit District	Great Falls, MT	\$4,835,839	\$320,858	6.6%
Streamline*	Gallatin Valley/Bozeman, MT	\$2,761,060	\$7,393	0.3%
Bis-Man Transit	Bismarck-Mandan, ND	\$5,049,602	\$338,153	6.7%
Sioux Area Metro	Sioux Falls, SD	\$11,481,319	\$418,433	3.6%
Citilink	Fort Wayne, IN	\$18,170,345	\$1,543,659	8.5%
MET Transit	Billings, MT	\$6,785,076	\$602,121	8.9%

*Agency is zero-fare.

Source: 2024 National Transit Database (NTD) Data

Open Discussion/ Questions





Billings MET Transit Funding Sustainability and Governance Study – Summary of Findings

JUNE 2026

