



APPENDIX C:
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY



KEY THEMES FROM THE CITY & COUNTY STAFF FOCUS GROUP

TO: STEERING COMMITTEE
FROM: CITY-COUNTY STAFF FOCUS GROUP
DATE: JUNE 29, 2016

1. DESCRIBE HOW FUNDING BICYCLE FACILITIES HAS EVOLVED IN BILLINGS SINCE THE PASSAGE OF THE COMPLETE STREETS POLICY AND THE 2011 BIKE/TRAIL PLAN,

LAND RICH, INFRASTRUCTURE POOR: Developers are providing the land for trail corridors in their new subdivisions through the park land dedication statute or other right-of-way dedications. In the developer's marketing materials and sales, they tell home owners that a "trail is going in." However, developers fail to disclose that the trail will be built by a special improvement district (SID) (a new property tax on the home owner) or if waiting for public dollars, it may be decades before it is installed.

CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS: In May 2004 the City of Billings adopted "Design Standards, Trails & Bikeways." However, it appears that this document has not be readily utilized by the different City Departments as the "design standard" for infrastructure. In addition, County Departments indicated that they did not know that these standards existed, and have developed their own set of "classifications." The standards are different and the result is inconsistent trail, bikeway and sidewalk infrastructure throughout the Billings MPO area.

If a developer is installing the infrastructure, there appears to be a lack of proper construction oversight to ensure that the proper base, concrete or asphalt mix is being applied.

CLASSIFICATION: There is a need for a straight-forward classification system for trails, bikeways and sidewalks.

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY: Participants understood that the policy meant for incremental change, not instant change. They felt that the policy has been successful in the implementation of sidewalks in neighborhoods. Participants indicated that they were generally in favor of the checklist and 30 percent review.

Participants noted that staff usually approaches project with a holistic, long-term view. Their decisions are based on the best possible decisions for the greater community. However, elected officials are very sensitive to single-issue, personal perspectives. Decisions made today for that one person may have a negative effect on the larger vision and community development goals. It is tough for staff to reconcile this in their daily tasks.

TRANSIT INTEGRATION: The new development occurs in area where transit does not serve. However, the expansion towards County subdivisions means that road widths are not suitable for bus pull-offs and the lack of sidewalks hinders people's abilities to get to bus stops when the City transitions to a fixed stop system.

FUNDING: Many of the non-motorized components of road projects are add-ons. This makes them an easy target when funding is tight. Participants recognized that complete streets includes all modes, including

vehicles. “Fifty percent of our streets are paid for by property owners through arterial fees,” not gas tax, “that’s an opportunity for education.”

Billings’ development pattern has not historically been conducive to an “infrastructure-first” development scenario. Billings developers want to sell the lots before the infrastructure is in.

DETAILS: Participants indicated that street trees are important in the urban fabric. Boulevard sidewalks provide a place to pile snow. The boulevards with sidewalks create a comfortable place to walk from both an aesthetic and safety perspective.

2. IS SECURING FUNDING AN ISSUE?

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND: This was the most successful funding source that Billings has used. This was a cooperative effort between Departments. Each area of the community benefited from this bond.

WHO PAYS?: Participants agreed that this would be a great community discussion item. The user? The land owner? The developer? The travelers (gas tax)?

GRANTS: Grants work well for specific-project funding, but grants cannot be relied upon for year after year. Other communities have an extremely strong public support network. Billings does not have as strong of a network than others.

PARKS MAINTENANCE DISTRICT: One-third of the PMD funds go towards maintenance, and that includes trails maintenance.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT/AIR QUALITY (CMAQ): Currently CMAQ dollars are used for road milling. Other communities use these funds solely for non-motorized transportation.

3. DO AGENCIES COORDINATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES?

CITY – COUNTY COORDINATION: Participants indicated a desire for better coordination between the two entities. Confusion exists over some positions in City-County Planning whether or not those positions also serve the County.

AGENCY – BOARDS COORDINATION: The County relies heavily on advisory boards, whose individuals are not directly tied into staff discussions or subdivisions reviews. As a result, there are some missed opportunities at the County level.

INTRA-AGENCY COORDINATION: City departments indicated a desire to coordinate more, however, workloads and priority management often impedes non-project specific collaboration.



KEY THEMES FROM THE COMMUNITY STEWARDS AND ADVISORY BOARDS FOCUS GROUP

TO: STEERING COMMITTEE
FROM: COMMUNITY STEWARDS AND ADVISORY BOARDS FOCUS GROUP
DATE: JUNE 29, 2016

1. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO MOBILITY IN BILLINGS?

CONNECTIVITY: Many of the participants indicated that connectivity is a priority. One indicated that expansion of infrastructure was their organization's priority. As an example, the installation of a new sidewalk now saves the school district over \$40k per year in bus route costs. The Lockwood & Heights to Dover Park is an emerging route with the bypass that should be considered.

SAFETY: Both driver and bicyclist awareness of each other is in order. Fatalities due to crashes between vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists have occurred. When an accident occurs, law enforcement need better training on how to handle the situation. A participant indicated that when they were involved in an accident, the office did not get the bicyclist's side of the story, and only interviewed the driver, as an example.

INFRASTRUCTURE: More trails! The BBWA and Lockwood Irrigation Ditches are opportunities (if the liability issues can be resolved). Community needs more bicycle parking facilities.

DESTINATIONS: City College students rely on walking and bicycling to get to classes and to work.

2. WHAT ARE YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND MEMBERS INDICATING THAT THEY BICYCLE FOR TRANSPORTATION VERSUS RECREATION?

RECREATION: This group felt that most bicyclists are recreationalists. The rim rocks are a draw for recreational mountain biking, there is an opportunity to formalize and expand. Others noted that the bottom of the rim rocks is an opportunity to install a formalized trail.

TRANSPORTATION: There has been more of an effort to get college students to bike to school. The challenge remains providing safe infrastructure to get there. Lewis Avenue has seen a noticeable increase in bicycle use. It was noted that east-west commuter routes have been increasing as well. The north-south linkages at both Shiloh Road and 32nd Street West have increased too. The bicycle lanes have helped with commuters through the medical district (downtown).

WINTER BICYCLING: It was noted that winter bicycling rates seem to be increasing. The availability of "fat tire" bikes has impacted this.

PEDESTRIANS: The installation of a new sidewalk along Highway 87 in Lockwood saw an immediate increase of pedestrian use.

3. WHY WOULD PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED BICYCLE/WALKING FACILITIES?

SAFETY: Crashes are a reality, and everyone knows it. Drivers in Billings are often distracted, driving too fast and do not stop for pedestrians. It was also noted that the bicyclists also do not follow traffic laws always. Intersections are key conflict points.

EDUCATION: Both drivers of vehicles and bicyclists need better education about the rules of the road. This education is being given to children at schools.

PREDICTABILITY: In other communities, drivers know to stop for pedestrians, and law enforcement support that rule. Enforcement of laws needs to be increased to increase compliance with them, for both motorists and bicyclists.

SIDEWALKS: People are unsure if it is legal to ride on the sidewalks. If it is legal, is it desirable?

4. WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU OR OUR ORGANIZATION WOULD DO TO IMPROVE BICYCLE AND WALKING FACILITIES IN THE COMMUNITY?

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY: When the first policy was enacted, things improved consistently every year. The perception of the policy drove positive outcomes. Facilities were made for dedicated modes, and this helped with safety and predictability. The perception that the Montana Department of Transportation only designs for vehicles is present. The North 27th Street project, the Billings Bypass and the I-90 Yellowstone River bridge for pedestrians were cited as examples.

CHANGE PERCEPTIONS: On-street bicyclists have to ride in an “aggressive posture” in order to ride safely in this community. This leads to negative perceptions of bicyclists.

CONNECTIVITY: Connect the east-west corridors to the Shiloh Road trail. Many cited routes that they “zig-zagged” in order to reach their destinations along more comfortable corridors. The routes included on-street riding, sidewalk riding, open fields, etc., all in one trip.

EDUCATION: Many were trying to teach children how to ride safely on the roads. However, safety considerations “forced” them back on the sidewalks.

SAFETY: Consider moving the bike routes off of main arterial roads and move them one block over. However, this could cause additional conflicts with uncontrolled intersections.

DOWNTOWN: Sections of downtown are comfortable for active mode of transportation. However, riding along some corridors entering and leaving downtown are very challenging for bicyclists and pedestrians. Bicyclists riding in downtown often have to ride “aggressively”. Even with the bike lanes, riders are intimidated by the speed of the traffic.

FISCAL CONSTRAINTS: Acknowledging less funds available for alternate modes. Participants encouraged projects or programs that maximize resources. People suggested a shift to educational programs may be in order at this time.

5. DO YOU FEEL THAT STEADY PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE OVER TIME IN BILLINGS?

YES: The integration of complete streets has really increased the number of commuters, other projects have made progress for recreational users. The Rims to Valley Study was good and the Marathon Loop is an

admirable goal. Agency staff deserve credit for making much of that progress. Different departments have also changed their perceptions over time, for the better.

CONNECTIVITY: Incremental steps were wise and practical when considering cost, but it has created a disconnected system. Because of that, people may place a lower value on the outcomes.

FUTURE GROWTH: The Heights suffers from a lack of facilities due to its development in the County prior to becoming part of Billings. There is a perception that County subdivisions on the West End and in Lockwood are suffering the same fate. There is a need for a solid County development plan to integrate these facilities as subdivisions are established now.

6. IS THE MAJORITY OF WALKING AND BICYCLING COMFORTABLE OR UNCOMFORTABLE?

COMFORTABLE: Most trips are comfortable unless one is traveling between Lockwood and Billings or Downtown Billings and the Heights. The Dick Johnston Bridge is challenging for bicyclists/pedestrians.

UNCOMFORTABLE: For the general public, it is stressful to ride in the street. Students need a clear, safe route to get to school.

7. WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES YOU CONSISTENTLY FACE WHEN TRYING TO PROMOTE BICYCLING AND TRAILS IN THE COMMUNITY?

PROPERTY OWNER RIGHTS: Property owners are not convinced at the added value that trails can bring to their property. They are still very afraid of trespassing and crime that comes with trails being installed near their property. Better education about the true impacts of trails is necessary.

FUNDING: Billings and Montana's tax structure creates difficulties in obtaining enough funding for non-motorized projects.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: Creating better access to the Yellowstone River is an opportunity, including the redevelopment of the Corrette Power Plant site.

MARKETING: The Chamber of Commerce involvement in trails has increased the credibility of trail development. However, groups are still speaking individually, and collectively they may have a stronger voice. City Council seems to ignore that bicyclists are constituents too. This reinforces the negative perception that these people are "bike Nazi's."

ENFORCEMENT: There is a lack of understanding of traffic laws by drivers and bicyclists alike. There is a need for increased law enforcement. One community did PSA's on safety issues, and the compliance rate improved.

EDUCATION: Outreach to people via different methods:

- Farmer's Market
- Utility box wraps
- Park benches
- Movies in the park PSA's
- Saturday Live
- Key Clubs/Boy Scouts

- Employers
- Ales for Trails: Traffic laws test challenge

8. ANY ADDITIONAL ADVICE FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND STAFF TO CONSIDER AS THEY DEVELOP THIS PLAN?

CONNECTIVITY: Consider focusing on a route to the Heights and areas around EBURD.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT: Encourage County officials to think about alternate modes in current development.

VISION: Think big when incorporating alternate travel modes in this community. It will poise it for the future.

FISCAL VIABILITY: Collect data that reflects the cost-benefit of incorporating walking and bicycling facilities into the community. Present this to elected officials. Identify local sources of funds to develop these facilities.



KEY THEMES FROM THE EQUITY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOCUS GROUP

TO: STEERING COMMITTEE
FROM: EQUITY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOCUS GROUP
DATE: JUNE 29, 2016

1. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO MOBILITY IN BILLINGS?

ACCESS: Participants indicated that the lack of sidewalks affects people's ability to be mobile. Where sidewalks do exist, the sidewalks are not wide enough due to mailboxes, vegetative clearances and non-ADA compliant curb ramps. They indicated that their constituents have difficulty getting from their homes to the MET Transit route if the route is not on their street.

CONNECTIVITY: The MET Transit schedule makes it difficult for most of their constituents to use it in combination with bicycling or walking. They need to get to work and run errands, which is difficult with work hours that are not the typical 8 to 5 day. Access to destinations has become important with the grocery store, parks and amenities and work places located at the Heights and West End. These places are difficult for their clients to get from their homes (usually located in the Downtown area.)

SAFETY: Safety was discussed in depth with the differences between perceptions that limit opportunity or real safety incidents. Participants indicated that people driving vehicles are generally not looking for bicyclists or pedestrians, and there are significant conflict points throughout the community. People who may bicycle are then using the sidewalks to feel safer. There is significant confusion as to whether riding on sidewalks is legal, and if so, should it be encouraged/discouraged? One participant indicated the need for more crossing guards at schools where children are encouraged to walk. For others, the feeling of isolation along trails is a challenge, from both a potential crime feeling, or if a medical emergency happens, does the person have a way to call for help?

END USE FACILITIES: There is a need for bike racks at schools. Wayfinding, especially in the Downtown area, is needed.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Much of the disfranchised populations reside in the South Side Neighborhood. This neighborhood is an "infrastructure desert." Overall, there are no facilities for the people who would tend to need it the most. At 13th Street West and Grand Avenue, the signal timing for a mobility-impaired individual is not long enough, and many use this route to get to the grocery store and to seek assistance.

Additionally, at the trailheads, there is a perception of a lack of accessible parking. Lighting is another item that would be desirable.

2. DO YOUR CONSTITUENTS BICYCLE FOR COMMUTING OR RECREATION? DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OF YOUR CONSTUENTS BICYCLE FOR TRANSPORTATION VERSUS RECREATION?

TRANSPORTATION: Participants indicated that many of their constituents do not have a driver's license or access to a vehicle. Therefore, alternative modes are critical for daily life. Healthcare appointments are scheduled around the bus schedule, so getting an appointment is a challenge because of the limited times that the busses run. Many are walking from Downtown to Shiloh Road or to the Heights Walmart. Connections to these destinations are important.

RECREATION: Constituents are trying to get to City parks for recreation. Veterans Park held an event for the mobility impaired, but the park itself lacked an accessible area to hold the event. People are walking to Walmart's parking lot, and doing loops around it because of the store's size and because they can use a shopping cart to help with stability.

STATISTICS: In the pre-release centers, about 1/3 of the female population used a bicycle for job searches, work and errands. Employees of some of the organizations are bicycling for commuting, but the lack of secure bike parking and shower facilities limits this. For the homeless teenagers, about 95 percent of them are walking. Bicycles would be used more, but they do not have access to them.

NOT ACTIVE: Many try to get a ride-share first, then bicycle, then walk. Trails are not promoted for people in wheelchairs, and should be more. Electric wheelchairs can break-down on a trail if caught in a rain storm, and more shelters along trails are needed. Seniors could be more active. Senior walking groups have been tried, but the these activities where not very popular, since most of the constituents were mobility impaired. Balance issues are tough for the elderly and pose a barrier to walking/bicycling.

LOGISTICS: The logistics of getting to a destination limits use. Many want to avoid the busy roads and to use a trail, one typically has to drive there.

3. WHY WOULD YOUR CONSTITUENTS BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED BICYCLE/WALKING FACILITIES?

EQUIPMENT: Many indicated access to a bicycle is a deterrent. For homeless teenagers, bicycles are a commodity, therefore, theft is common.

SAFETY: Improved walking routes would be ideal. Consider conflicts at intersections and connectivity. People are aware that bicyclists and pedestrians are involved in crashes, and this makes their constituents weary of walking/bicycling.

DISTANCE: Many routes are long and linear, which is a challenge for the mobility impaired. Community-wide development and the built environment is important.

4. WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU OR OUR ORGANIZATION WOULD DO TO IMPROVE BICYCLE AND WALKING FACILITIES IN THE COMMUNITY?

SIDEWALKS: Sharing of the sidewalks between pedestrians and bicyclists is of concern. The speed of bicyclists on sidewalks causes conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians.

BIKE LANES: Bike lanes provide a safe, predictable space for bicyclists. This eliminates conflicts with other modes.

CONNECTIVITY: There is a desire for additional trails, but the trails should be connected and the routes should link to common destinations. Seek connectivity between Downtown and the West End Neighborhoods. Trails built in isolation are less desirable.

SAFETY: The Heights Trail crosses many busy roads. Make these crossings as safe as possible. Place desired routes one block from the main vehicle routes.

5. SOME CONSTITUENTS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A VEHICLE. HOW WOULD YOUR CONSTITUENTS BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS?

INTEGRATE TRANSIT, WALKING & BICYCLING: There are those who cannot afford a bus pass. However, those that do, use both the bus and bicycle system. The South Side Neighborhood routes often need additional bike-on-bus racks on the buses because the racks are full. The demand for bike-on-bus racks exceeds supply, and people cannot anticipate if there will be space for the bicycle or not. Since busses run only periodically, this poses a real issue.

Have bike lockers available at key destination points. Keep in mind that if one misses their bus, they miss work. The routes should run more often and during other work hours.

One client adds about 3 hours to her work day in order to coordinate her bus and walking routes to work.

6. HOW CAN WE SHAPE THIS PLAN TO BETTER SERVE YOUR CONSTITUENTS? WHAT ARE THE KEY FINDINGS WE SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT TO DEVELOP A NETWORK THAT SERVES THEM?

EDUCATION: Drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians all need better education. Consider establishing a speaker's bureau. Public Service campaigns should be targeted at following the rules of the road for all modes they should not just be for bicyclists. Additionally, people with wheelchairs and walkers should be included to show a range of users. Need more educational outreach: i.e. difference between "share the road" and "bike lanes."

SAFETY: Promote safety, especially no texting and walking. Coordinate the traffic lights to sense bicycles. When this doesn't happen, bicyclists have to get off of the street, ride to the traffic light pole and push the button. Be consistent in the implementation of bicycle signals.

CONNECTIVITY: Identify routes that connect to services. Wayfinding signage is key. Place destinations in minutes versus miles.

PILOT PROJECTS: Make the South Side the example neighborhood. It serves the largest population needing non-motorized transportation options and will draw others to this wonderful neighborhood. Then use this area as a demonstration and teaching tool.

7. ANY ADDITIONAL ADVICE FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND STAFF TO CONSIDER AS THEY DEVELOP THIS PLAN?

INCLUSION: These improvements are for everyone, not just healthy, active people. Frame the discussion in the terms of the broadest audience: students, teenagers, people with disabilities, young, old and the average person.

INTEGRATED NETWORK: These facilities are not amenities, they are necessities for people to be able to live, work and play.

HEALTH BENEFITS: Active transportation contribute to both physical and mental well-being.

EDUCATION: Education is important. Continue to educate in increments.

SAFETY: Identify safer routes for people to use.

MARKETING: Some constituents have a low literacy rate, consider other means than just written words. They often notice information in the following resources:

- Thrifty Nickel
- Chamber of Commerce brochures
- Senior Citizen Newsletter
- TV/Radio
- Ads on buses/bus benches
- Brochures and maps



KEY THEMES FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP

TO: STEERING COMMITTEE
FROM: BUSINESS COMMITTEE FOCUS GROUP
DATE: JUNE 30, 2016

1. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO MOBILITY IN BILLINGS?

ACCESS: Participants indicated that access to bicycle routes in the study area is a challenge. Many indicated that trails are located away from housing developments so you must drive in a vehicle with your bike to access a trail. One participant indicated that Lockwood has a critical lack of bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

CONNECTIVITY: Once a rider chooses to use a bicycle, the routes to destinations are not obvious. Participants frequently cited having to maneuver onto and off-of streets, in combination with trails, to get to their destination. Transit is not well integrated with the non-motorized system. Additionally, because transit does not run in the evening, night nor regularly on the weekends, connections to transit are difficult, especially for low-income workers who rely on the transit network because they do not own a vehicle.

SAFETY: Participants indicated that safety is a major concern while riding. Johnston Bridge was cited as a key challenge in potential route choice. In addition, people noticed bicyclists not wearing helmets. Some sidewalks (curb ramps) in the community are not ADA compliant.

END USE FACILITIES: People indicated a desire to use a bicycle for a mode choice; however, they were concerned about the ability to “freshen up” at their destination for a work day. Participants also indicated that bicycle theft was a problem, and the lack of a secure space for their bicycle was an issue. Travel to a shopping center by bicycle does not occur, due to a lack of means to transport their goods for the ride home.

PROGRESS: Participants indicated appreciation on the progress that the community has made in the past 5-10 years on improving non-motorized facilities.

2. DO YOUR CONSTITUENTS BICYCLE FOR COMMUTING OR RECREATION? DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OF YOUR EMPLOYEES COMMUTE TO WORK VIA BICYCLING, WALKING OR TRANSIT?

RECREATION: Participants indicated a slightly higher use of a bicycle for recreation versus commuting. People again cited SAFETY as a primary issue before businesses encourage bicycle commuting more. Generally, participants agreed that there is a small percentage interested in bicycle commuting if safe facilities were provided.

NO DATA: Many businesses did not know or survey how their employees commute to work.

WORKFORCE: The group was advised that in a survey of college students in Montana, 70 percent of students graduating said they want to live and work in places with recreational opportunities.

ON-CAMPUS USE: One business has over 150 bicycles located on their Billings' company property for internal use.

3. WHY WOULD YOUR EMPLOYEES BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED BICYCLE/TRAIL FACILITIES?

FINANCIAL SAVINGS: People would not have to spend money on gas.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Both mental and physical health benefits were recognized

TIME: Businesses recognized that if they are attracting a work force from out-of-state, that those potential employees are drawn to Billings because of their comparatively short commute times. Even via bicycle, employee commute times are less than what they are in the places we are drawing that workforce from.

SOCIALIZATION: Walking meetings, community-building and out of office areas for employee bonding were perceived as benefits derived from the opportunity to walk or bicycle from the workplace.

EMISSIONS REDUCTION: Participants recognize that less vehicles on the road reduces congestion, and provides additional environmental benefits as well.

4. WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU OR OUR COMPANY WOULD DO TO IMPROVE BICYCLE FACILITIES AND TRAILS IN THE COMMUNITY?

ACCESS: Create secure places for bicycle parking. Implementing a bike share program and making bicycles available at the business would also improve access.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Promote the health and wellness benefits of active transportation. Active transportation is for ALL people, not just fitness-orientated people.

ADVOCATE: Having non-motorized opportunities is a business recruitment tool. Businesses need to be engaged in the conversation. The Chamber Trails Committee has over 135 people. Identify who is not at the table? Encourage more people to be involved to increase active transportation rates in the community.

EDUCATE: Continue to promote safety in the workplace by integrating bicycle safety programs.

FUNDING: Assist with grant funding. Participants were keenly aware that improving bicycling and trail facilities required a financial commitment.

5. COMPANIES ARE IN COMPETITION WITH ONE ANOTHER FOR HIGH QUALITY TALENT. HAVE YOU FOUND THAT EMPLOYEES EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR DIVERSE COMMUTE OPTIONS?

NOT DIRECTLY: Some employees use a vehicle to make multiple trips in a day. (i.e. home-work-errands). Some businesses have issues with having enough employee parking. Employees resolve this by requesting more parking lots and haven't thought about other opportunities.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT TO BILLINGS: Companies looking to locate to Billings are evaluating locations where it is easier to attract employees. Infrastructure is not the only factor companies are evaluating; they are also looking for walkability, connectivity and quality of life items.

EMERGING WORKFORCE: Millennial workers are deciding where they want to live first, then they are looking for a job there. Some employees are willing to take a pay cut to live in a desirable community if the amenities are present.

6. WHEN RECRUITING PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE BILLINGS, DOES YOUR COMPANY PROMOTE THE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE IN BILLINGS, AND SPECIFICALLY, THE TRAIL SYSTEM AND ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS?

YES-RECRUITING: Many recruits specify that outdoor opportunities and a trail systems are attractive. Businesses use the Chamber's relocation guide, which includes a focus on the trail system. [Note some attendees requested the City trail maps to use in their employee recruitment materials.]

YES-RETENTION: It is important to businesses to retain their work force through providing opportunities locally for entertainment during non-work hours. Experience has shown that people who are on career tracks and live in different cities with their companies ask eventually to come back to Billings because it is a desirable place to live. The oil industry workforce has options like Houston or Baton Rouge, which are really congested communities with hot weather. Billings as an oil industry community is highly desirable.

YES-VISITORS: The trails maps are placed in convention bags, and people use them!

YES-FAMILY: It is important to employees that their children can safely get to school. When a safe route exists, the children are using it. There are many obvious benefits from children walking & bicycling to school. The group responded favorably to the trails that were integrated to Medicine Crow Middle School and Alkali Creek Elementary School.

NO: Hotels are utilizing foreign labor, who do not have access to a driver's license or a vehicle. Often the labor is housed at the hotel or nearby. The hotel uses the hotel shuttle to take these people to the mall or grocery store once a week. Hotels have not thought about providing bicycles for these employees. A construction company bought housing next to their business in order to facilitate getting their workers to the company.

7. IF BILLINGS BECAME A MORE BIKE-FRIENDLY CITY, DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD HAVE AN EASIER TIME ATTRACTING TALENT TO YOUR COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION?

COMBINATION: While many cited that becoming more bike-friendly is desirable, they also recognized that it isn't a stand-alone factor. One participant indicated that even those who don't use the trails, still find it aesthetically pleasing to have in the community. One company recruits heavily out of the Denver market. Billings' size is the pre-Denver boom area that people are seeking!

MARKETING: Billings tends to not promote its quality of life enough. Community needs to optimize the good things and celebrate them! Millennials get their information through an on-line app (71%), and Generation X's use of on-line resources is 60 percent.

CULTURE: Participants indicated that the events also add value. Consider more races, bike festivals to make Billings a more bike-friendly community.

8. HOW CAN WE SHAPE THIS PLAN TO BETTER SERVE YOUR EMPLOYEES? WHAT ARE THE KEY FINDINGS WE SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT TO DEVELOP A NETWORK THAT SERVES YOUR COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION?

INTEGRATED NETWORK: Facilities for bicycles and walkers are not an add-on, they are integral parts of the overall network.

CONNECTIVITY: Be visionary. Think beyond the city limits and capture opportunities in Laurel, Lockwood and even as far out as Huntley. Link recreational riding and commuting, so that the facilities can benefit both. The routes need to be safe in Billings and outside of Billings. Those outside of city limits will come into town for work, play and shopping.

EMBRACE OBSTICLES: The Interstate and railroads were built for a purpose, but they now act as a barrier. Be innovative on how you get over, under and around them. Do more with the Yellowstone River and the rims, utilize them to showcase our community's best assets.

INCLUSIVE: Active transportation is for everyone. This is not just for fitness fanatics. Disfranchised populations and those with mobility impairments depend on the ability to access this community without a vehicle. Trails are not just for bicyclists, keep in mind long-boards, roller blades. Don't label the use of the facility with a singular sport (i.e. bike trail).

DESTINATIONS: Make the most important destinations accessible, this includes places of employment for those who may not have a vehicle. Retention is key for businesses. The system has to have good access to places where people work. This means the ability to cross the Yellowstone River and Interstate in a safe manner and access into the neighborhoods.

CULTURE: Do more with what we have. Move the events around the community. Not all bike-related events need to be downtown. Be serious about active transportation, "don't be just a façade."

WAYFINDING: There are trail systems in Billings that do not appear on the maps. This becomes a safety issue in an emergency situations when first responders do not know exactly where a person is along a trail system.

FACILITY DIVERSITY: Multiple types of trails are okay, including dirt trails. It is nice to have options. On street bike lanes are not family-friendly, so other types of dedicated bicycle facilities are also desired.