

CHAPTER 1: VISION, GOALS + OBJECTIVES



BILLINGS BIKEWAY + TRAILS MASTER PLAN UPDATE VISION

The Billings community envisions a safe, convenient, and connected active transportation network consisting of streets, trails, sidewalks, and on-street bicycle facilities that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities for trips of all purposes and improve the economic and physical health of the community and its citizens.

1.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



1. Complete Streets: *Improve, expand and consider active transportation and recreation facilities within the Billings Urban Area.*

- Continuously implement a complete network of separated and conventional bike lanes, low-stress bicycle boulevards, and complimentary bike route signage, which serves all bicycle user groups, including both recreational and commuter riders.
- Continuously implement an accessible network of pedestrian supportive infrastructure, including boulevard sidewalks, curb ramps, roadway crossing improvements, and trails to facilitate all types of pedestrian trips.
- Provide a bicycle, pedestrian, and trail network that is safe and attractive and meets the needs of all ages and abilities.
- Prioritize the implementation of bike facilities based on the recommended projects in this Plan when performing street resurfacing or restriping projects.
- Include priority active transportation projects within the 5-year Capital Improvement Program.
- Prioritize the closure of gaps in the bicycle network, as identified in this Plan, to improve connectivity between destinations.
- Require new private development projects to finance and install bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and multi-use trails where recommended in the Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan, as part of on-site improvements and off-site mitigation measures as appropriate. Such requirements should be addressed through updates to the Subdivision Regulations and the Site Development Ordinance.
- Adopt and adhere to existing and future standards established by manuals including, but not limited to the National Association for City Transportation Officials (NACTO) *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) *Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide*, the American Association of State of Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*.
- Adopt roadway design standards that support Complete Streets principles.
- Continue to implement the 2016 City of Billings Complete Streets Policy.



2. Implementation: Consider the implementation of active transportation facilities at all levels of government and through all related policies, processes, and standards that encourage and enhance walking, bicycling, and other trail-related activities in the Billings area.

- Adopt and implement the Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan Update.
- Continue to fund a dedicated staff member of the City of Billings/Yellowstone County for the coordination of non-motorized transportation.
- Expand sources for funding construction and maintenance of trails and bikeways beyond Billings TrailNet, G.O. Bond, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Lockwood Pedestrian Safety District tax levy.
- Create a sustainable, dedicated source of bikeway funding within the annual City and County budgets.
- Continue to encourage bikeway and trail advocates, business leaders, health professionals, and other interested citizens to serve on government boards and committees.
- Pursue public-private partnerships in the planning and implementation of bikeway and trail projects.
- Prioritize the preservation of potential pathway corridors for future use including rail corridors, canals/ditches, utility rights-of-way, and natural corridors identified in this Plan.
- Continue to advance the Chamber of Commerce's and MPO plans to construct the 26-mile "marathon" loop trail that would surround the Billings urban area.
- Review this plan to ensure consistency with other planning efforts, such as the Billings Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Growth Policy, and Safe Routes to School Study and local neighborhood plans as they are updated.



3. Evaluation: Monitor the implementation of the Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan

- Continue and expand annual trail scanner counts, ensuring that the same locations are counted at the same time annually, so that accurate comparisons can be drawn. Continue to perform manual counts to monitor on-street bicycle use both on existing bikeways and as before/after data collection on future on-street bikeways.
- Present bicycle and pedestrian data annually to the City Council and County Commissioners to highlight trends and emphasize the importance of improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Monitor bicycle and pedestrian collision data annually to identify safety issue hot spots. Seek the continuous reduction in bicycle and pedestrian collision rates by making improvements at these locations.
- Track public opinion about walking and bicycling through surveys such as the National Citizens Survey, and surveys conducted annually by the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator.
- Continue to update the Billings Complete Streets Benchmarking Report on a three-year cycle. Cycles will continue in 2019, 2022, etc.



4. Transit Integration: Integrate bicycling and walking into the Metropolitan Transit System (MET)

- Provide access and bicycle support facilities to transit through the development of bikeways that serve transit stations and transit hubs.
- Continue to accommodate bicycles on all transit vehicles.
- Provide safe end-of-trip facilities (bike parking, etc.) at all transfer stations.
- Partner with MET Transit when developing educational and outreach programs.



5. Maintenance: *Ensure bicycle and trail facilities are clean, safe, and accessible.*

- Continue to incorporate bicycle network repair and maintenance needs into the regular roadway maintenance regime as appropriate, paying particular attention to sweeping, snow removal, and pothole repair on priority bicycle facilities.
- Continue to implement policies and guidelines for people bicycling and walking during construction. This policy should address pedestrian and bicyclist safety during construction and maintenance activities by providing safe, convenient, and accessible routes for bicyclists and pedestrians through construction zones.
- Implement an “Adopt-a-Trail” or “Adopt-a-Mile” program as a way to assist the City and County with maintaining trails.
- Establish routine maintenance program that encourages citizens to report maintenance issues through the City website that impact bicyclist and trail safety. Consider contracting with a vendor who provides an application where maintenance issues can be submitted wirelessly.
- Institute a sustainable funding stream for maintenance activities that is sufficient to keep both existing and future bikeway and trail facilities in good condition. Continue to fund the Lockwood Pedestrian Safety District tax levy for construction and maintenance.
- Continue to use the Complete Streets Policy as a guide, prioritize interdepartmental and interjurisdictional cooperation with regard to bikeway and trail maintenance to maximize efficiency.



6. Education and Encouragement Programs: *Implement comprehensive education and encouragement programs targeted at all ages and abilities.*

- Continue education programs, such as Kids in Motion, Take the Hi Road, and Lights On!, to inform the general public on bicycle and walking safety issues and encourage non-motorized transportation with programs that target pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.
- Install wayfinding signage along on-street bikeways and trails to improve wayfinding and to increase awareness of bicyclists and other trail users.
- Continue to support Safe Routes to School and other efforts, including educational and incentive programs to encourage more students to bicycle or walk to school, through a partnership with the school districts, residents, and other interested parties.
- Encourage employers to provide incentives and support facilities for employees that commute by bicycle, such as the national Bicycle Benefits program.
- Continue to partner with trail and bicycling advocacy groups, the medical and health community, MET transit, bike shops, businesses, museums, and outlying communities on education and encouragement programs.
- Promote bicycling and walking through City-sponsored events.
- Educate professional drivers (transit drivers, delivery drivers, etc.) on bicyclist rights and safe motoring behavior around bicyclists.
- Encourage large employers, colleges and universities, activity centers, and major transit stops to provide secure bicycle storage facilities and racks and promote their efforts.
- Require bicycle parking and other end-of-trip facilities within new commercial development and retrofit public facilities with bicycle parking where it is absent.
- Continue to increase participation in Bike to Work Month annually, and organize other events that



promote bicycling in the community. Examples of such events are Slow Roll and Tour de Fleur.

7. Enforcement: Increase enforcement on City/County streets, trails and bikeways to make interactions between motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians safer.

- Increase attention by law enforcement officers to bicycle-related violations by both motorists and bicyclists. Law enforcement officers should be recruited to participate in educational programs in schools.
- Institutionalize the positive reinforcement of safe bicycling behavior by rewarding bicyclists with coupons or other incentives to continue practicing safe riding habits (“caught being good” program).
- Continue code enforcement efforts to prevent the obstruction of dedicated bikeways and walkways, especially during construction projects.
- Reduce aggressive and/or negligent behavior among drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Ensure that all bicycle or pedestrian collisions are accurately recorded into a collision database for future analysis and monitoring. Review this crash data annually, and make improvements to reduce crash occurrences.
- Reinstate volunteer patrols on trails and continue the Downtown Resource Officers program, who



8. Health and Safety: Encourage healthy activities through increased access and safe infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians.

- Continue to collaborate with Billings’ medical community to develop programs that promote the health and wellness benefits associated with walking and bicycling, such as Kids in Motion and Trails Rx.
- Continue Safe Routes to Schools efforts in all Billings Area School Districts to encourage healthy walking and bicycling habits and education at an early age.
- Provide events and encouragement activities to provide opportunities for residents to increase physical activity that promotes social interaction, safe use of facilities and overall wellbeing.
- Reduce the numbers of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians by at least 30 percent by 2021, from 62 in 2016 to 43 by 2012.
- Increase helmet use among bicyclists.
- Increase the use of reflective clothing for both bicyclists and pedestrians during low light hours.
- Increase access for the mobility impaired.
- Continue updating curb ramps for compliance with Public Rights-of-Way Guidelines (PROWAG) and the ADA.



Intersection crossing treatments, such as the Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons and the pedestrian refuge island that have been installed where the Lillis Park Trail crosses Broadwater Ave., provide a comfortable crossing experience for a wide range of non-motorized users. Prioritizing the implementation of crossing treatments like this and dedicated facilities will help to increase rates of bicycling and trail use in the community.