

2016 City of Billings Growth Policy Fact Sheet

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Purpose and Goals

The 2016 City of Billings Growth Policy aims to manage the city's growth over the next 20 years. The main goals are to encourage development within and near the existing city limits, prioritize areas with available infrastructure, and consider increased tax revenue from development. The policy also focuses on creating strong, unique neighborhoods that are clean, and safe, and offer a variety of housing and transportation options. As part of SB 382, this policy is required to be updated every 5 years.

Summary of Findings

Since the last update in 2008, Billings had grown by over 6,000 people and expanded by 1.5 square miles. This growth has increased the demand for public services and infrastructure. The policy found that encouraging infill development and growth in areas with existing infrastructure is the most cost-effective way to develop. The plan emphasizes the importance of strong neighborhoods with unique characters and a mix of housing and transportation options.

TABLE I.1. COMPARISON OF GROWTH METRICS 2010 AND 2014

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

Methodology and Strategies

The growth policy was developed using public input, scenario planning, and data analysis. Strategies include prioritizing infill development, enhancing public safety, improving infrastructure, and promoting economic growth. The plan uses goals and objectives to guide decisions and measure progress. It also includes guidelines to help city officials make informed decisions on land use and infrastructure projects.

How the Topic Impacts Community Health

Managing growth impacts community health by ensuring safe, accessible neighborhoods with clean air and water. Walkable mixed-use neighborhoods provide residents with access to goods and services without being required to use a car which facilitates more interactions among neighbors and lowers greenhouse gas emissions. The plan promotes active transportation options like walking and biking, which can reduce traffic congestion and improve physical health. Safe and well-maintained parks and public spaces encourage outdoor activities, contributing to overall well-being. Proper infrastructure planning also helps prevent issues like flooding and pollution.

Community Engagement

Community engagement was crucial in developing the growth policy. The planning process included over 35 public meetings and received more than 1,200 comments from residents. This feedback helped shape the vision, goals, and strategies of the policy. Ongoing engagement will be essential to ensure the plan remains responsive to community needs and priorities.

Implementation Timeline Summary

The implementation of the growth policy is divided into short-term (1-5 years), mid-term (6-10 years), and long-term (11-20 years) phases. Short-term projects focus on critical infrastructure and safety improvements, while mid and long-term projects aim to support sustainable growth and development. Regular reviews and updates will keep the policy-relevant and effective.

Results and Next Steps

The growth policy aims to create a prosperous, well-managed city with strong neighborhoods and a high quality of life. The next steps include securing funding, detailed planning, and starting construction on prioritized projects. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will track progress and guide necessary adjustments. Collaboration with local agencies, businesses, and residents will be key to successful implementation.



Photo courtesy of Billings Growth Policy report

Short-Term Projects (1-5 Years)

1. **Infill Development:** Encourage development within and adjacent to the existing city limits to make efficient use of existing infrastructure.
2. **Public Safety Improvements:** Enhance public safety measures, including police and fire services, to ensure community well-being.
3. **Sidewalk and Trail Connections:** Plan and construct interconnected sidewalks and trails to improve walkability and accessibility throughout the city.
4. **Parks and Recreation Enhancements:** Develop parks with special amenities like community gardens, dog parks, and viewing areas to enhance community livability.

For mid and long-term goals, please visit the [full document here](#).

This factsheet is a joint initiative of Healthy By Design and the Billings-Yellowstone County Planning Division. It aims to enhance awareness of local long-term documents, plans, and policies within the community.

