



2017 Billings Area Bikeways and Trails Master Plan Fact Sheet

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Purpose and Goals

The 2017 Billings Area Bikeways and Trails Master Plan aims to enhance mobility and recreation opportunities by creating a network of bike routes and trails. The plan is typically updated every 5-6 years and is currently being updated as the Billings Areas Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The primary goals of the 2017 plan are to improve safety, increase connectivity, and promote walking and biking. The plan envisions a network accessible to people of all ages and abilities, enhancing the economic and physical health of the community.

Summary of Findings

The plan identifies significant opportunities for expanding the existing bikeway and trail network. Key findings of the plan include:

- need for improved connectivity between current trails
- importance of developing on-street bikeways to accommodate transportation-based bicycling trips
- the necessity of leveraging existing roadway maintenance and future private developments to implement these improvements
- importance of creating safe and attractive routes for both recreational and commuter riders.

Methodology and Strategies

The development of the 2017 Master Plan involved extensive data collection, public engagement, and technical analysis. Strategies include prioritizing projects that fill key network gaps, enhance safety, and integrate bikeway and trail facilities into all levels of government planning. The plan also recommends the adoption of complete streets principles and standards established by national guidelines to ensure a consistent and high-quality network. An update, started in 2023, is expected to be completed in Fall of 2024.

How this Topic Impacts Community Health

Improving bikeways and trails positively impacts community health by promoting physical activity, reducing transportation-related injuries, reducing vehicle emissions, and enhancing air quality. Safe and accessible routes encourage walking and biking, contributing to overall well-being and reducing the risk of chronic diseases. The plan supports initiatives like Safe Routes to School, which fosters healthy habits in children, and emphasizes the importance of infrastructure that caters to all ages and abilities.

Community Engagement

Community engagement was a cornerstone of the planning process, with input gathered through a public open house, focus group meetings, online public input map, and an online survey. This feedback shaped the plan's goals, strategies, and project recommendations, ensuring they reflect the community's needs and priorities. Ongoing engagement will be essential during the implementation phase to maintain public support and adapt to evolving needs.

Implementation Timeline Summary

The implementation is divided into short-term (1-5 years), mid-term (6-10 years), and long-term (10+ years) phases. Short-term projects focus on critical connections and cost-effective improvements, while mid and long-term projects aim to expand the network and address more complex challenges. Regular reviews and updates will keep the plan responsive to new opportunities and funding sources.

Results and Next Steps

The plan outlines a path toward a more connected and active community, with expected outcomes including increased bicycle and pedestrian usage, reduced traffic congestion, and enhanced public health. Next steps involve securing funding, detailed project planning, and starting construction on prioritized projects. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will ensure the plan's effectiveness, with adjustments made as necessary. Collaboration with local agencies, businesses, and community members will be crucial for successful implementation.

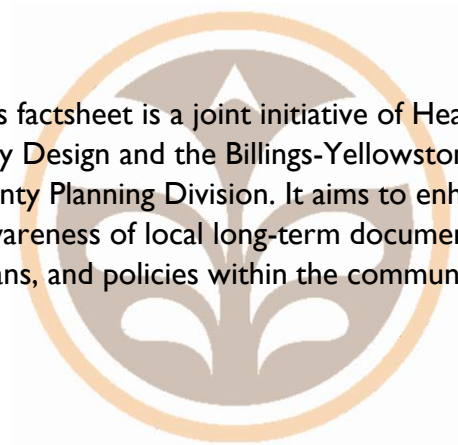
Proposed Project Types

1. **Safety Improvements:** Projects aimed at increasing the safety of bikers and pedestrians through enhanced infrastructure.
2. **Connectivity Enhancements:** Projects designed to connect existing trails and bikeways to create a more integrated network.
3. **Bicycle Boulevards (now locally called neighborhood bikeways):** Streets with low motorized traffic volumes and speeds, designed to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian travel.
4. **Bike Lane Additions:** Projects involving the addition of bike lanes to existing roadways.
5. **Shared Use Paths:** Paths designed for use by both bicyclists and pedestrians.
6. **Wayfinding and Signage:** Installation of signs to assist with navigation and increase awareness of bikeways.

For more detailed information about proposed plan projects, please visit the [full document here](#).



Bannister shared path (pg. 13 of original document)



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.