

Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

January 27, 2022

- 1. Annual Comprehensive Financial Report** – The City of Billings has completed its audited financial statements for FY2021. The City of Billings received a clean audit opinion with no findings. The auditors, JCCS P.C. from Great Falls and Helena, will present to City Council at a future work session. The completed Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) can be found online at <https://www.ci.billings.mt.us/475/Budgets-Financial-Reports> .
- 2. Billings Multi-Generational Community Recreation Center (MCRC) Update** - The Parks and Rec. Dept. is beginning the next phase of the MCRC. This effort will produce a design concept for the proposed facility. The purpose of the Design Concept study is to refine and build upon the information developed in the South Billings Aquatic and Recreation Center Master Plan and Feasibility Study (Council approved in December 2021). We will be soliciting public input through public meetings, surveys, and website access. We will collect more data, do additional analysis to determine the building configuration and size, the amenities included, construction budget, operating pro forma and cost recovery, potential donation opportunities, and develop a project timeline. The 2017 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the MCRC as one of the highest priorities.

Like the development of the rec. center master plan, two committees have been set up to guide this phase of the project. There is a Core Team and an Executive Team. The Core Team is a larger group comprised of people representing organizations in the community with a special interest in the recreation center development. They will bring up ideas and test them to recommend the overall direction the recreation center should go. The Executive Team represents key stakeholders who will confirm the recreation center direction, monitor the budget, and make final recommendations to the City Council. This study will require 7 to 8 months to complete.

All meetings will be held in the Library Community Room as follows:

- February 8th 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- March 8th 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- March 31st 11:30 am to 1:00 pm
- May 5th 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
- July 7th 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Additionally, a community meeting will be held midway through the study to gather input, program information and site analysis thoughts from the community. Date, time, and place to be determined. Also, shortly after the community meeting, a presentation will be made to council to provide a project update. Once the committee finishes its work, their recommendations will be presented to the council for your review and consideration.

- 3. 2022 Impact Survey** – Thank you for being one of Big Sky Economic Development’s stakeholders. Your continued support of our work is vital to the mission of economic development in our region. Every two years, the BSED reaches out to you to gather input about how we are doing, how we can improve, how we engage with our stakeholders, and what you think our strategic priorities should be for supporting and enhancing our community’s economic future. The BSED would like the City Council’s feedback. Please participate by taking the 2022 Impact Survey, the results will be part of the strategic planning process. Please take the survey at the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2022BSEDIMPACT>

4. Council Orientation Schedule

- a. Friday January 28 – 9:00 - 12:00 Planning and Community Development, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) overview, Building division, Urban Renewal/Tax Increment Financing with Downtown, East Billings Industrial District and South Billings Urban Renewal District, Miller Building, 2825 3rd Avenue North
- b. Friday, February 4 – 9:00 – 11:30 Finance, City Hall Conference Room
- c. Friday, February 11 – 9:00 – 11:00 Aviation & Transit, Airport Administration Conference Room 217, 1901 Terminal Circle

5. **Questions and Answers Section** – This new section of the Weekly is to compile the questions our staff receives from council members. City staff is including responses to emails received this week, so other city council members have the information.

Questions & Responses from ReCode memo of 1/18 Work session (CM Purinton):

I would like to know how many of those permits issued in 21' have a CO?

Permits issued are not structures completed. A "CO" or certificate of occupancy is only issued after a permitted structure – commercial or residential – is complete and ready for people to safely occupy the building. 714 COs were issued in 2021 for permits issued from 2019 through 2021. 353 of those COs were for permits issued in 2021.

Just because a permit is issued doesn't mean someone is living there now. Completed dwellings is what's going to help our market. In other markets their percentage of completions compared to permits issued is declining cause of costs and supply chain issues. In 2020, 358 COs were issued for buildings permitted in 2020.

We pulled a permit for the YWCA Apt Complex in '21, we haven't even broke ground on it yet. Also, I think several builders submit permit applications at the tail end of the year, so they have a jump start when the ground thaws and they can start putting in foundations. This is true every year. Builders prepare for spring construction by securing permits in November & December.

What was the average cost of the (446) single family homes built? \$289,450

What percentage of those came from McCall? 17.7%

On the apartments how many of those are from Stocks new development off King? @50%

Do they base that off individual units or entire complexes? If we built 668 new apt complexes in 2021, wow! That's a bunch! The number is based on units/building as submitted for permitting.

Another builder asked for the date on the number of vehicle/pedestrian accidents caused by front-loading garage section to justify that reasoning for inserting into code.

- The Police Department was not aware of garage access and pedestrian accidents but stated that trying to extract that data would be very difficult and time consuming. However, there are multiple reasons to limit the number of garages and driveway approaches where pedestrian activity is expected.
- One reason for requiring a rear-load or side load garage opening for Mixed Residential zone districts is to diminish the "crossing conflict" that always occurs when a private driveway crosses a sidewalk. Even places without sidewalks have pedestrians that use the street closest to the edge of pavement to walk to a neighbor's house or down the street or around the block. Multiple driveway crossings increase the possibility of an accident. It would seem counter to ensuring public health and safety if

we only limit vehicle pedestrian conflicts because there is evidence of people having been injured or killed in these situations.

- Planning staff also presented peer – reviewed studies last year during the code update public hearings on the development of walkable spaces in neighborhoods and in commercial areas. These case studies support improving the quality of the walkable space (the sidewalk) by reducing the number of driveway crossing, increasing visibility to/from adjacent buildings (residences or businesses) (See CPTED point below on this). The new zoning code addresses each one of these elements for most zoning districts where walkability is desired. The rear or side load garages or detached garage spaces in the rear of a property, combines many driveway openings into one or two driveway crossings. For example, an 8-unit building all with a single car garage opening could have up to 120 feet in driveway opening along a 250-foot length of street frontage as illustrated here:



- Don't forget that all the Neighborhood district (N1-3) allow front load garages. All the Mixed Residential (NX1-3) require a rear or side load attached garage – OR – a separate detached garage to the rear of the residential structure.
- A second and very critical reason in the larger community perspective is the aspects of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and includes pedestrians. But it addresses “eyes on the street” where our policy and code changes (limited garage frontage, more window and door requirements for buildings facing the street) are consistent with reducing crime, increasing neighborhood safety for all ages of neighbors, and being able to see kids playing in front yards or the sidewalk or street from a front window or door. More activity in a neighborhood, more visibility in a neighborhood and safe ways for kids to walk and play in a neighborhood all bring us closer to a safer environment for everyone.

Question 2 (CM Rupsis):

A constituent and resident of the Twin Pines subdivision on Central west of Shiloh, has been speaking with Commissioner Pitman about getting the speed limit on Central lowered to 35 mph. He feels that traffic is too fast coming into the neighborhood zone and approaching the roundabout. Also, he feels that the higher speed limit encourages high accelerating going west from the roundabout creating dangerous conditions where people are turning in to /out of the neighborhoods. As a resident of the Legends West subdivision, I can say I have seen very dangerous driving patterns here. Commission Pitman told me that he looked into it and this stretch of road is city road (the north side is county and south side is city). Are there any options to

address these concerns? What analysis could be done to determine if a speed reduction or other traffic control measures through that area would be justified?

Question 2 Response:

We can do a speed study in that area. It is a little odd to do a speed study for such a short section (typically it would be for a stretch of road, but the county owns everything beyond Twin Pines (tan section in the map below) but we can look at it and see if it warrants a change. We did a speed study east of Shiloh on Central before it was widened, and it supported the 45-mph speed limit. Also, the rest of the east/west streets west of Shiloh are similar in nature and they have remained at 45-mph. The other factor that may make this difficult is that every road around this area is 45 mph (both sides of Central and Shiloh) so short of concentrated enforcement, posting a sign will have very little impact. These things are not mentioned to say that the study won't show that we should lower the speed limit, just wanted to give you the history/context of the area. We will do an assessment and convey the results to you.



Question 3 (CM Joy):

At the monthly Midtown Community Collaborative Task Force the topic of homelessness came up. They are wanting data in terms of the number of homeless/transients that reside in Billings and more specifically within MCC borders. Secondly, where can information on city resources available for our homeless population be found? What is the city currently doing and what discussions are talking place to try to assist, support, and identify solutions to this issue?

Question 3 Response:

Data is constantly changing with people coming and going. There is no way for us to know if they are within MCC borders unless it's encountering them on a suspicious or trespass call. Their addresses are listed as transient in our systems so we can't track where they might be staying and if that changes, we only know if we encounter them again and it is updated. A resource on finding out the number of homeless would be to go through the Montana Rescue Mission or St. Vincent De Paul. We have a lot of resources for the homeless population like the ones listed above and the Community Crisis Center. There are a lot of people who come

here, a lot of the Native American homeless come here and stay willingly until they might go back to the reservation. Our DBA officers are continually meeting with downtown businesses to try to improve the downtown area and make it safer. Some basic non-scientific information regarding transients that we have heard include, on cold evenings approx. 40 people use the downtown church basement, 20 are added to the crisis center and 10 go to the MRM. The handful to MRM is in addition to their normal population. Kari Boiter with the Continuum of Care is tracking similar information and has been keeping me updated on the data she is tracking.

Question 4 (CM Joy):

Traffic on Rimrock Road has been brought up as a point of concern. Specifically, the high speed at which cars are driving. We realize resources are tight, but we are hoping you might be able to assign a patrol car to monitor the area for a period of time accompanied by one or two radar speed display monitors.

Question 4 Response:

The request for enhancement has been forwarded to the traffic unit so they will increase presence in the area.

Have a good weekend.