

Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

September 15, 2022

1. **Landfill Update** - The east end of the drop off facility should be opened by the first part of November (pending material delivery). The west end sustained significantly more damage and will be under repairs all winter. We hope to get the entire building opened by late spring. Also at the landfill, the question about checking whether drop offs are from the city or county has come up. The scale house staff is asking people if they are city or county. If they say "city", we ask for a driver's license, water bill, or anything that shows their address. If they say "county", we don't require proof. We recognize this is not foolproof, but it will get the vast majority accounted for correctly. And, on a related note, we want to offer councilmembers an opportunity to do ride alongs with our Solid Waste employees. Staff is developing options for the solid waste program which we will bring to City Council this winter. It may be beneficial for councilmembers to see the operation firsthand. Please let me know if you are interested in doing this and we can get it set up. You have the option to do one type of collection or multiple and you can spend as few as a couple hours up to an entire day.
2. **POLCO National Citizen Survey Results** - The city has received our survey results from Polco and they can be viewed at the following link: https://public.tableau.com/views/TheNCSReport-BillingsMT2022/About?:language=en-US&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link

The link allows you to go directly to specific areas of the report (quality of life, governance, economy, etc.) to see how our community ranked city services and aspects of our city.

A total of 909 residents responded to the survey, with 385 submissions from randomly selected households, and 524 responses during open participation.

While the number 909 seems relatively small compared to our population of roughly 117,000, the responses are weighted to make sure they are reflective of the larger population of the community. The report goes into further details and explanation.

The charts you will see use the terms "lower," "similar," or "higher" to let us know how we rank compared to the national benchmark. Those terms only take into account responses that were marked as "excellent" or "good," and do not include the "fair" responses, which, if you visit the "complete data" tab, you will be able to see the exact percentage of excellent/good/fair/poor responses.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to take the survey and efforts to encourage members of our community to respond.

3. **Franchise Fee Mediation** – Unfortunately, today's mediation did not result in a settlement. We will provide a full update during our next confidential litigation update session. Thank you, Mayor Cole, Deputy Mayor Boyett, Gina Dahl, Andy Zoeller and Jennifer Duray for all of your time and expertise.

4. **Community Development Annual Report** – Please see the attached Community Development Annual Report.

5. **From the PIO Desk:**

Repurposing a Ponderosa Pine; One tree's journey from a park to a trail

<https://ci.billings.mt.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2379>

First Miracle League game played at Landon's Miracle Field

<https://ci.billings.mt.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2378>

Billings businesses encouraged to sign up for enforcement program to deter trespassing

<https://ci.billings.mt.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2377>

Billings in the news

New apartments and business space planned for vacant building in downtown Billings

https://www.kulr8.com/news/new-apartments-and-business-space-planned-for-vacant-building-in-downtown-billings/article_0ba13c68-33aa-11ed-b209-b3eaab9963d5.html

Long empty hardware building in downtown Billings to become apartments

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/long-empty-hardware-building-in-downtown-billings-to-become-apartments/article_31911e14-32e9-11ed-b0d3-9301d7220ece.html#tncms-source=login

City of Billings working on solution for traffic issues in Billings Heights after concern from residents

<https://www.ktvq.com/homepage-showcase/city-of-billings-working-on-solution-for-traffic-issues-in-billings-heights-after-concern-from-residents>

New task force will focus on Billings' problem properties

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/new-task-force-will-focus-on-billings-problem-properties/article_1791f25e-346f-11ed-a1fd-43e0cd9c3fe7.html#tncms-source=login

Feuding teenage groups connected to multiple recent Billings shootings

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/crime-watch/feuding-teenage-groups-connected-to-multiple-recent-billings-shootings>

Justice delayed? Inside look at Billings violent crime investigations

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/crime-watch/first-look-justice-delayed>

Billings mother recounts drive-by shooting, not first time her home has been hit

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-mother-recounts-drive-by-shooting-not-first-time-her-home-has-been-hit>

Billings businesses encouraged to apply for trespass enforcement program

<https://971kissfm.com/billings-businesses-encouraged-to-apply-for-trespass-enforcement-program/>

Enforcement program helping Billings businesses

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/local-news-2/enforcement-program-helping-billings-businesses/>

Photo: Water tower has new look

https://billingsgazette.com/photo-water-tower-has-a-new-look/article_468e19f6-3209-11ed-809c-3b62d248a917.html#tracking-source=home-top-story

Billings has ribbon cutting for new connecting trail

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/local-news-2/billings-has-ribbon-cutting-for-new-connecting-trail/>

New trail in Billings open for public use

https://www.kulr8.com/news/new-trail-in-billings-open-for-public-use/article_29c7e142-30ad-11ed-868a-2b4e7532d7e3.html

The first ever Miracle League game held in Billings at Landon's Miracle Field

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/the-first-ever-miracle-league-game-held-in-billings-at-landons-miracle-field>

Billings landfill plans to turn human poo into perfect topsoil

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-landfill-plans-to-turn-human-poo-into-perfect-topsoil>

City of Billings works to locate unmarked graves at Mountview Cemetery

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/city-of-billings-works-to-locate-unmarked-graves-at-mountview-cemetery>

MSU Billings class help identify unmarked graves at Mountview Cemetery

https://www.kulr8.com/news/msu-billings-class-help-identify-unmarked-graves-at-mountview-cemetery/article_e2874f40-348d-11ed-bc90-2347171b98c4.html

Board & Commission Annual Report to City Council

Purpose: The annual report is to make a written report of a board or commission activity to the mayor and city council as authorized by majority vote of the entire membership of the board or commission.

Name of Board or Commission: Community Development Board

Name of Presiding Officer: Rebecca Noell

Name of Person or Persons filling out report: Community Development Board Members during September 6, 2022 meeting

Meeting Schedule: First Tuesday of each month

Major Board or Commission accomplishments of the preceding year

1. Maintaining a proactive, engaged, and highly effective Community Development Board *(Name, Neighborhood Representation, Board Appointment Year).*

Katrina Kruger, North Elevation, 2011:

- Title Officer, First Montana Title for 10 years; worked in real estate and title insurance in Yellowstone County for 30+ years
- Lived in Billings, Montana, since 1990; married for 32 years and raised two wonderful children
- Volunteer with Community Crisis Center, Tumbleweed and CASA of Yellowstone County, giving her an understanding of the debilitating effects of poverty and mental health issues and just how tenuous living situations can be
- Hobbies include cooking, reading, camping and home improvement projects and is looking forward to building her own log cabin next spring, with the help of family and friends

Bret Rutherford, At Large, formerly resided in the Southwest Corridor, 2015:

- Yellowstone County Election Administrator
- BSBA in Management from the University of Montana
- Graduated from Billings West High School
- Married to Rochelle and they have two small children

Joe Stockburger, South Side, 2014:

- Business Owner / Carpentry
- Born and raised in Billings; a 12-year resident of the South Side
- Started taping sheetrock in 2001; switched trades in 2008 and worked as a carpenter for Myers Custom Homes for 10 years
- Started Stocky's Custom Carpentry LLC in 2018 and the business is located on South 27th Street

Jim Corson, Central-Terry, 2016:

- Attended colleges in Boston, MA, Lexington, KY, and Cincinnati, Ohio
- Moved to Montana in 1970 as a VISTA volunteer and served on the Crow Reservation; has lived in Billings since 1971
- Worked in the social service industry for over a decade (Yellowstone Council on Aging, now Adult Resource Alliance); worked in the offices of Senators Max Baucus and Senator John Walsh for over 15 years
- Elected and served two terms with the Billings School Board; currently serves on the Montana Board of Dentistry, Mental Health Center Governing board, and the Big Sky Senior Services Board of Directors

Rebecca Noell, At Large, 2017:

- Billings native – grew up in the Heights, Skyview graduate
- Degree in Cell & Molecular Biology from University of Montana
- Homeowner and parent living in midtown
- Advocate for children and families in the community through work serving on various PTA boards, the CD Board and as a Yellowstone Art Museum docent

Jessica Schmidt, At Large, formerly resided in the North Park neighborhood, 2019:

- Masters Degree in Public Relations, Emphasis in Health Communications
- Moved to Billings in 2009; served as a Billings Metro VISTA Project AmeriCorps VISTA from 2009-2010 for the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness and Social Enterprise projects
- Employed at Billings Clinic as a Coding Resources Coordinator, supervising 27 Medical Coders that focus on Physician, Radiology, Diagnostic, Infusion, Radiology Oncology, Interventional Radiology, Pathology and Lab; previously employed as a Coding Resources Advisor and Coder
- Member of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council at Billings Clinic
- AAPC Cardiology Coder Certification, AAPC Certified Professional Coder
- Fosters dogs and newborn puppies for Help for Homeless Pets

Hannah Olson, Southwest Corridor, 2020:

- Masters Degree in Public Relations
- Resident of the south side for nine years
- Ran for State House office in 2020
- Employed and volunteered at various nonprofits including: Big Brothers Big Sisters, YWCA, & CASA, and on the board of the Junior League
- President of the MSUB Alumni Association
- Experience as a consultant with DOWL, civil engineering firm, working in public involvement for multiple community planning efforts in infrastructure, planning studies, transportation, utilities, etc.

Shane Noble, West End, 2020:

- Attended MSU-Billings
- Born and raised by a single mother in Billings with four siblings; raised two daughters here
- Vast volunteer experience in homeless services, the Library, Community Crisis Center, etc.
- Employment background primarily in IT, safety, and security in the workplace

Kathleen Candelaria, South Side, 2011-2018 and 2022:

- Realtor for over 15 years in Billings, Meridian Real Estate (locally-owned brokerage), specializing in first time home buyers and veterans
- Has lived on the South Side for over 17 years; home is over 100 years old! She has the original paperwork from the railroad to build the home
- Served on the Alternatives Board for over 10 years and in varying capacity on the South Side Task Force
- Married to her husband for 40 years and they have two children, five grandchildren, and two dogs (Rigby and Clover)

2. Outcomes

- Twenty-seven families were able to use City assistance to purchase their first home. This is an astonishing accomplishment, given housing pricing / availability challenges.
- Coronavirus activities assisted 2,248 people with access to literacy and education, mental health care, food, diapers, Wi-Fi for employment services, etc.
- The Billings Metro VISTA Program's members helped provide services to 448 individuals, including education, housing, and health care. VISTA members served at organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yellowstone County, Gratitude In Action, Dog Tag Buddies, and the City of Billings Community Development Division for coronavirus prevention, preparation, and response.

3. Facilitated three application processes for CDBG-CV and CDBG funding to prepare for, prevent, and respond to the coronavirus. Allocation processes assisted the City in committing significant home buyer / repair repayment revenues.

June 28, 2021

- **The Salvation Army:** \$55,000 - Food delivery, food boxes, etc.
- **Downtown Billings Business Improvement District:** \$117,715 - New public handwashing station / restroom downtown.

December 20, 2021

- **North Park, 6th Avenue N & N 19th Street:** \$551,000 - An adult exercise area and equipment, North Park Center accessibility and HVAC improvements, new four-room accessible restroom with touchless features, 12-month touchless water fountain, new shelter near playground and adult exercise area, and concrete path bulb-out to eliminate tripping hazards.
- **Pioneer Park, 3rd Street West & Parkhill Drive:** \$184,000 - Zimmerman Center accessibility enhancements, restroom repair / upgrades, and Heritage Park Trail improvements.
- **Comanche Park, South Plainview Street:** \$240,000 - Replace insufficient playground, ADA accessible parking spots and a walkway to the playground.
- **Fast-Track Application Process Approval:** Nonprofit organizations allowed to submit an abbreviated application packet for up to \$15,000 beginning in January 2022. Staff would review the packet for eligibility and compliance, and an awardee agreement would be forwarded to the City Administrator for approval. Services could begin in January and / or February. Subsequent awards are as follows:
 - **Chinook Horses:** \$15,000 - Mental health equestrian therapy for low-income residents.
 - **Head Start Explorers Academy:** \$15,000 - Information technology software and support to facilitate distance learning for children.
 - **Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools:** \$12,000 - Childhood literacy programming and backpack meals for children.
 - **Gratitude in Action:** \$10,000 - Housing subsistence payments for low-income individuals and Wi-Fi access to facilitate employment services for low-income families.
 - **Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley:** \$15,000 - Emergency diaper assistance for homeless families.
 - **Alternatives, Inc.:** \$15,000 - Improved access to mental health services through information technology development.

April 25, 2022

- **Boys & Girls Club of Yellowstone County:** \$140,000 - Renovate an insufficient front reception area for social distancing.
- **School District 2:** \$313,300 - Replace an insufficient HVAC system at Washington Elementary School to improve indoor air quality and ventilation to improve public health and prevent spread of coronavirus.
- **Alternatives, Inc:** \$47,000 - Strengthen information technology and app development to provide distance mental health treatment options.

Major Board or Commission challenges of the preceding year

- HUD allocates special funding awards, like CDBG-CV and HOME-ARP, and waits many months to publish rules. They often take a year (or more) to develop training and guidance for jurisdictional staff.
- Significant CDBG and HOME repayment revenues were received from home buyer / repair and housing development loans, prompting CD Board and staff action in autumn 2021. Funds were awarded to parks projects and other programs through the FY2022-2023 Annual Action Plan allocation process.
- HAB Development cancelled a \$450,000 CDBG award to rehabilitate the former Western Hotel in April 2022, which impacted the City’s ability to meet an expenditure timeliness deadline in May 2022. If the City does not meet the expenditure timeliness deadline in May 2023, HUD will require the City to submit a workout plan and risks forfeiture of CDBG funding.
- The Parks Wi-Fi project was cancelled, releasing \$48,000 CDBG-CV that had to be re-allocated through the Annual Action Plan process in April 2022.
- Higher housing prices, lack of housing inventory, building supply chain / pricing, and workforce and contractor shortages have impacted the Foreclosure Acquisition / Rehabilitation program and limited bid responses for reconstruction of a home on Steffanich Drive in the Billings Heights neighborhood.

Major Board or Commission goals for the upcoming year

- Maintaining HUD compliance for CDBG, CDBG-CV, HOME, HOME-ARP, etc.
- Monitoring awardees and implementation of projects / activities to ensure compliance.
- Facilitating the development of one affordable housing unit on the Foreclosure program’s Steffanich Drive property in the Billings Heights.
- Carrying out a comprehensive needs assessment for HOME-ARP, establishing funding priorities, developing programs, writing procedures, designing and launching an application process in 2023.

Requests for staff or City Council

Additional funding allocations for Affordable Housing Development would assist the Division in attracting housing developers. The City Council awarded a total of \$877,964 in this program, although CDBG and HOME funding cannot be utilized for the same activities:

CDBG: \$387,553	HOME: \$490,411
Acquisition, rehabilitation, reconstruction, infrastructure improvements to support housing developments	Acquisition (<i>construction must start within 12 months</i>), new housing construction, reconstruction

According to HUD, the development of one housing unit costs \$250,000. The total Affordable Housing Development allocation would fund 3.5 housing units.

The City Council previously supported the Community Development Division’s housing programs by dedicating \$250,000 in non-federal funds in 2013. In 2015, the City Council dedicated an additional \$195,321 in non-federal funding to further the City’s housing programs.

Changes to city ordinance or state law affecting the board or commission that should be considered

No changes noted.

Anything else that board, commission or presiding officer want to comment on

Although outcomes can be viewed as having a small impact, 27 families stepped into a home they actually own! In a typical year, over 60 families would have been assisted through the First Time Home Buyer program.



The family, a couple with a child, who purchased this property were living with her parents to try and get on their feet. They worked to repair credit issues that were preventing them from getting approved for a mortgage - and succeeded! They also needed to save up some money to purchase a home. It would have taken them a very long time to save up enough to pay what the City's loan program covered, so they were able to get into their own home this year.

Properties selling for just under \$100,000, two summers ago, are now approaching the \$200,000 mark. A single mother of three children was able to purchase this home. She not only needed the City's loan program to purchase the home but used Home\$start and the Montana Board of Housing special set-aside interest rate program to get the mortgage to an affordable monthly payment.

