

Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

April 7, 2023

1. **Parks, Recreation & Public Land Director** – The first round of six (6) Zoom interviews for the Parks, Recreation & Public Lands Director were held yesterday. Finalist interviews will take place later this month.
2. **City Retreat Notes** – see the enclosed document from Kaleidoscope summarizing last weekend's city council and leadership team retreat. Our next conversation is scheduled for our April 17th work session.
3. **SD2 Superintendent** – Thank you SD2 for including the city in the superintendent selection process. Mayor Cole and I attended the meet & greet activities for the three (3) finalists.
4. **Balanced Budget** – We are very close to having the FY2024 proposed budget balanced. We will make final adjustments next week in preparation for our first set of presentations to the Budget & Finance Committee next week.
5. **Next Week's Meeting/Task Forces**
 - a. Local Affairs Committee, Monday, April 10th 4:30 pm City Hall Conference Room
 - b. Budget & Finance Committee, Wednesday, April 12th 9:00 am City Hall Conference Room
 - c. Legislative Committee, Wednesday, April 12th 4:00 pm City Hall Conference Room
 - d. Billings Chamber Legislative Videoconference, Thursday, April 13th 12:00 pm MSU Billings Liberal Arts Building, Room 208

6. From the PIO Desk:

DEA drug take back scheduled for April 22 in Billings
<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2465>

Building a safer Billings: City council and leadership identify biggest community challenges
<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2466>

City charter

Billings charter up for review in 2024

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/billings-charter-up-for-review-in-2024/article_68b921b4-d002-11ed-9678-531d105bc83c.html

PRPL

This website reimagines cities as foraging utopias

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/falling-fruit-urban-foraging-map> (Parks gleaning project is mentioned in 12th paragraph)

More about Billings Parkland fruit gleaning project -

<https://www.billingsparks.org/support/outreach/parkland-gleaning-project/>

BPD

Photo: Police investigate North 24 stabbing

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/photo-police-investigate-north-24th-stabbing/article_76d8a214-d283-11ed-a07d-5bdbbc2e9cbd.html

Police investigate North Billings stabbing

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/crime-watch/police-investigating-north-billings-stabbing>

BPL

Tolkien film festival Saturday, April 22 at Billings Public Library

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/tolkien-film-festival-saturday-april-22-at-billings-public-library/article_fea29f6-d22f-11ed-9638-af0a7e17b256.html

In other news...

School board votes for new blood, selects Erwin Garcia as next SD2 superintendent

https://billingsgazette.com/news/school-board-votes-for-new-blood-selects-erwin-garcia-as-next-sd2-superintendent/article_43176c26-d3f0-11ed-ac29-d3a8c5a0eea8.html

Judge moves trial date for water district case

Yellowstone County News – April 7 – page 9

Changes to transportation plan get approved

Yellowstone County News – April 7 – page 9

St. Vincent pursues advanced trauma care

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/st-vincent-pursues-advanced-trauma-care/article_4e224602-d311-11ed-91c2-6ffe7d954942.html

Billings Clinic confirms pay cuts, pauses employer matched benefits

https://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/billings-clinic-confirms-pay-cuts-pauses-employer-matched-benefits/article_2f739364-d25d-11ed-aebf-dff002ff55c9.html

Rail authority applies for federal grant for passenger rail service

<https://www.yellowstonecountynews.com/202303311037/rail-authority-applies-for-federal-grant-for-passenger-rail-service/>

Rimrock Foundation in Billings announces new CEO

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/rimrock-foundation-in-billings-announces-new-ceo/article_2a908694-d22c-11ed-8d99-87b97873e993.html



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City of Billings Retreat Notes

Outcomes of City of Billings 2023 Retreat

Kaleidoscope Group was hired by the City of Billings to design and facilitate two sessions for the following outcomes:

- < Outstanding decisions on what the capital “asks” should be to voters in 2023 regarding Investments in Parks, Trails and Cultural Amenities.
- < An agreed upon strategy for Improving the Safety of Billings ready for approval on April 17th 2023.
- < Increased alignment and consensus on action plans for both strategic priorities: investing in Parks, Trails and Cultural Amenities and Improving the Safety of Billings.

The City of Billings staff and Council members achieved all three outcomes which are captured in the notes below.

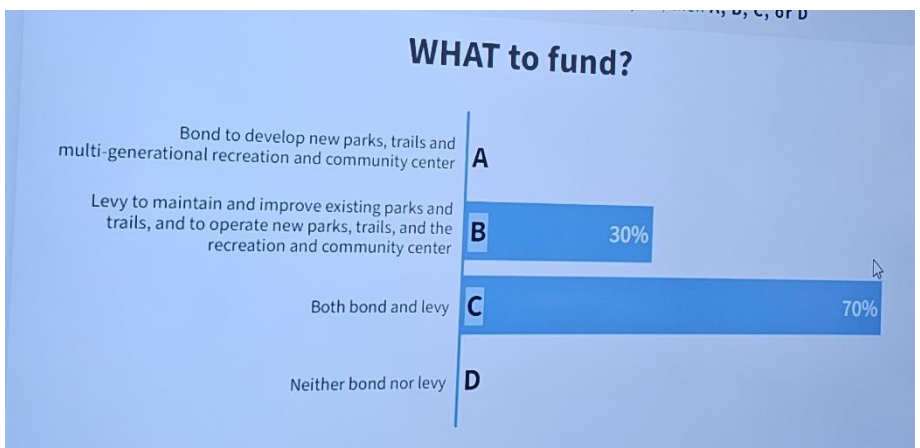
Outstanding decisions on Parks, Trails and Cultural Amenities:

- < 7 Council Members want to invest in both the Levy and the Bond and put this to voters in 2023
- < 3 Council Members want to invest in just the Levy and put this to the voters in 2023
- < 1 Council Member, Ed Gulick, was unable to attend and still needs to weigh in
- < The Net Amount to pose to voters was decided to be somewhere between \$150–175

Additional insights:

The projects that would be included in both/either levy and/or bond still need to be determined as there was a lot of concern over what was and wasn't in the recommendation from the working committee.

Participants wanting just the Levy believed it was an easier ask as it appeared to be the more popular choice based on the survey conducted by The Chamber. The projects within the Levy also were among those more aligned with what the community stated were “important” in the survey. Finally, it was stated that asking for both the Levy and the Bond would kill both.



Participants wanting to put both the Levy and the Bond indicated it's motivational for the public to see projects being built rather than just updates, maintenance and operations. They also thought our community needs both to fund projects within each.



Strategy for Improving the Safety of Billings:

After much dialogue, the following 5 areas of focus cover the areas Council and Staff determined with either large barriers to Billings being a safe and healthy community or new territory the city should enter and attacked our crime challenge from immediate, urgent, important, short and long game approaches.

Crime Prevention Areas of Focus:

- < Lack of Stick (a full jail results in no consequences for criminal behavior)
- < Domestic/Family Violence
- < Investments in Parks and Recreational Activity (Levy and Bond)
- < Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Scores)
- < Segregation of the Native American Community

Crime Prevention Strategy:

Lack of Stick:

- < What: Take the role of organizer to bring different partners together to help strategize how we can partner with Yellowstone County to conduct a study to determine jail capacity needed.
- < When: As soon as possible
- < How: We (Legislative Committee) will partner with The Billings Chamber, Big Sky Economic Development, the Business Community, etc. to have conversations with Yellowstone County.
- < Why: Decrease repeat offenders, decrease failures to appear in court, decrease state prison population, decrease OFC and increase retention of police force/staff

Domestic/Family Violence:

- < What: Awareness of impact to community. Awareness of a baseline to set a measurable improvement percentage. City provides/invests in funding to double resources for Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)
- < When:
- < How: Tie City and District Court. Extend education for those involved and Awareness of Healthy Relationships

- < Why: NFP lowers domestic violence by 60% for those involved and decreasing domestic violence also supports lower ACE scores in our children.

Investments in Parks and Recreational Activities (Levy and Bond)

- < What: Hawthorne/Highland Traveling Road Show
- < When: Pilot 2023, June through August
- < How: 20K, partnerships with SD2, Lunch Programs, Substance Abuse Connect, Local Business, and all city departments.
- < Why: Improve the safety in Billings and enhance prevention.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- < What: Lower Billings youth ACE scores for 1st graders less than 2, 18-year-olds less than 4
- < When: 3 years after baseline has been established. Measure every 3 years
- < How: Leadership creates ACE policy and City of Billings ACE training for all employees. Partners will be SD2, Riverstone Health, Healthy by Design and Professional Trainers.
- < Why: High ACE scores are associated with higher substance abuse, criminal behavior. To improve the health and safety of Billings

Segregation of the Native American Community:

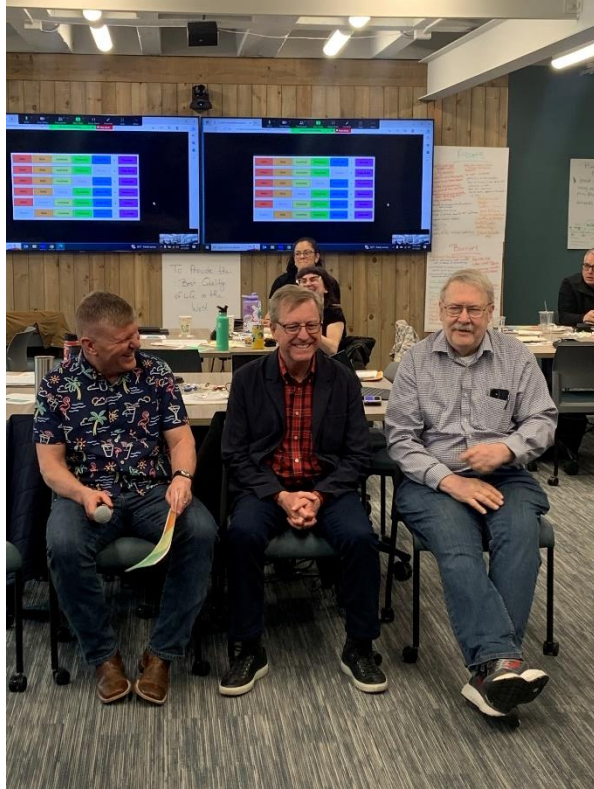
- < What: Crime Prevention through engagement and partnership with communities with the Native American population
- < When: One year to education ourselves
- < How: Council Local Issues subcommittee takes the lead in reaching out to the communities and partners
- < Why: Building relationships and trust to engage the Native American Community to improve the Health and Safety for all.



Additional insights:
It was discussed that Domestic/Family Violence and ACEs areas of focus could work together to support movement within both. The current goal/"what" for Investments in Parks and Recreational Activity could be more aggressive.

Increased alignment and consensus for both Strategic Priorities (Safety and Parks/Rec):

While there is still work to be done and final decisions to be made, participants made good strides in reaching greater consensus on both strategic priorities. A majority was reached to



pose both the Levy and Bond on the 2023 ballot and to put the Net Amount somewhere between \$150–175. 5 areas of focus were mined for Improving the Safety of Billings from a crime preventative approach: Lack of Stick, Domestic/Family Violence, Investments in Parks and Recreational Activities (Levy and Bond), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and Segregation of the Native American Community.

Overall, the City of Billings embraced Improving the Safety of Billings from a Crime Preventative Strategy and will have additional conversation to affirm what (Bond and Levy or just Levy) they will put on the ballot to Increase Investments in Parks, Trails, Recreational Activities and Cultural Amenities.

Additional Meaningful Insights/Notes:

Session 1 kicked off with an “Assets and Barriers” battle. The Barriers Team selected “Lack of capacity in criminal justice system” as the largest barrier Billings faces when it comes to being a Healthy and Safe Community. It took “Education System,” “Great Place to Raise a Family,” “High Quality of Life,” and “a Lot of Non-Profits” to tackle “Lack of capacity in criminal justice system.” The second largest barrier was “Only Property Tax [as a means to fund efforts].” The assets that went up against this barrier were: “A Great Place to Raise a Family,” “High Quality of Life,” “Good Retail and Commerce,” and “1 Persona can Make a Difference.” The third and final largest barrier was “Segregation of the Native American Community.” The assets that, combined, impacted this barrier were: “Pride of Place,” “Innovative Leadership,” and “Strong Leadership.”

During the debrief conversation of “Assets and Barriers,” comments included: The barriers were much easier to defend and it was easy to just say “no, that isn’t enough/won’t work,” to the assets’ arguments. All three of the largest barriers were layered and require additional

partners and resources to overcome. We needed to utilize more than one asset to battle a barrier. It often took 3-4. More long-term solutions were discussed, not just what will help immediately. We can do some of the solutions but we need the entire city to help. Two barriers, lack of capacity in criminal justice system and segregation of the Native American community were addressed and included in the crime prevention strategy to improve the safety of Billings.



Session 2 focused on creating a crime prevention strategy to improve the safety of Billings. Council and COB staff were asked to create “Headlines” within 6 areas of focus:

- < Lack of Stick (a full jail results in no consequences for criminal behavior)
- < Domestic/Family Violence
- < Investments in Parks and Recreational Activity (Levy)
- < Investments in Parks and Recreational Activity (Bond)
- < Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Scores)
- < Segregation of the Native American Community

The Headlines needed to be a “win” with a measurable outcome within their area of focus. These are “goals” and were presented to “Council” (made up of crime prevention experts). “Council” included Mayor Greg Upham, Zack Terakedis, Karen Sylvester, Jennifer Owen, Tom Rupis, John Felton, Lenette Kosovich, Judge Harada, Jude Kolar, Chief St. John, and Melissa Henderson.

The group asked questions of each group to ensure their headline/goal was achievable, relevant, and timely.



The headlines were:

- < Yellowstone County breaks ground on 400 bed jail expansion
- < Reduce those who have experienced family violence from 23.5% to 20% in three years/City provides/invests in funding to double resources for Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)
- < Increase number of high-risk children in rec. programs by X% and expand the scope of the programs to include: life skills, mentorship, etc.
- < Invest in infrastructure using evidence-based design principles to create safe, accessible, and active public spaces.
- < Lower Billings youth ACE scores for 1st graders to less than 2 and for 18-year-olds to less than 4.
- < Better engage and build partnership with Native American Community
 - o Meet people where they are (physically)
 - o MOU with Native American Development Corporation (NADC)

