

Billings City Administration Weekly Report

September 13, 2019

- 1) **Project Re:Code** - Final drafts are coming together into one new City Zoning code in the next **6 – 8 weeks**. Public hearings will be scheduled throughout November with recommendations to the City Council for adoption in **December 2019**. Next week: **Sign Code Working Group** – Wednesday, Sept 18 from 1 pm to 4 pm – 3-hour work session on the Draft Sign Code. Parking Code for the City and finalizing some details in the N districts is under review by the **Urban Issues Working Group** on Thursday, September 19, 2019 from 11:30 am-1 pm. **Landscaping Working Group** will be close to finalizing a new landscaping code for the city at its meeting on Wednesday, Sept 25th at 3:00 pm. All Project Re: Code Working Group Meetings are held at the Miller Building in the 1st Floor Conference Room, 2825 3rd Avenue North. **This week's big number: 40,090** – Number of separate tax parcels within the city limits all zoned. Check out the Project Re:Code info here: <https://project-recode.com/> Website includes an Interactive Map, final drafts of Code Sections, and instant contact messenger to Planning staff. Final drafts of the new and improved Residential Neighborhood and Commercial zone districts are on the website.
- 2) **Billings Bench Water Association (BBWA)** - The City Public Works Department met with BBWA Board members and the company Ditch Rider to discuss the vulnerability of the BBWA as it flows through the City of Billings. The BBWA recently hired a consulting engineering firm to evaluate the irrigation ditch to determine needed improvements to improve operations and possible vulnerable points. The water seepage in the section of the BBWA located above the homes on Vuecrest Drive has been discussed with the homeowners and local governments for many years. The maintenance and operations of the BBWA Irrigation Ditch is solely the responsibility of the BBWA. Earlier this summer the BBWA Board and staff shut down the ditch to line the section above Vuecrest Drive to try to reduce the water seeping from the ditch. From conversations with the BBWA, the seepage under the ditch has continued after the liner work was complete. This would indicate the water seeping under the ditch into the house yards may be coming from a natural source above the ditch. The BBWA Board has contracted with a geotechnical engineering firm to evaluate the possible source of the water seepage and its effect on both the ditch stability and the hillside. The BBWA Board has been very helpful in exchanging information with the City and will let us know what the geotechnical report says when it is complete. Public Works, Fire Department, and Police Department will be meeting to discuss possible responses to a failure with the ditch anywhere within the City of Billings. I will keep you updated, as new information is available.
- 3) **PD1 & PSII Inflation Adjustment** - During the Council Meeting on Monday night, while setting rates and assessments, Andy was asked what the inflation adjusted value of \$8,200,000 is relative to the passage of Public Safety Mill Levy II in 2004. This was approved by voters in 2004 to support Public Safety costs in the City and was limited to \$8.2 million dollars at that time. Using the inflation rates provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, \$8.2 million in 2004 would be equivalent to ~\$11.1 million today. Conversely, \$8.2 million today is equivalent to ~\$6.0 million in 2004. This means that we are covering less of our Public Safety costs today

with this levy than we were able to cover in 2004. Additionally, the same is true for Park District 1. Because the time since inception hasn't been as long, the difference isn't as great. However, the \$2.0 million collected today for Park District 1 is equivalent to ~\$1.8 million in 2011, when the district was created. In order to have similar buying power today, Park District 1 revenue would need to be closer to \$2.3 million.

- 4) **19th/20th and Monad Project** - The FY 20 budget includes the reconstruction of the intersections of 19th and 20th at Monad. We initially included this project in the CIP due to the awkward nature of the intersections and our concern about lack of efficiency of the intersections. After doing a more extensive study of the operation, we are recommending that the project be delayed for a few more years for a couple of reasons. One, the level of service (LOS) of the intersections is higher than initially thought. While we have the tools in-house to evaluate intersections individually, the evaluation of the intersections together required tools that required a consultant. Their study was able to look at the turning movements through both intersections thereby giving us a more accurate picture of the situation. The evaluation shows that the LOS of the intersections will not drop to a level of concern until at least 2035. We have several intersections that are operating at a lower level of service today that we could address sooner if we delayed this project. Also, with the congestion that has historically been experienced at the 4 way stop at Monad and Daniel, we think some vehicles have chosen alternate routes. With the installation of the new signal at that intersection (project currently underway), we think the traffic patterns will change and may cause us to pursue a different solution at the Monad/19th and 20th intersections.

Delaying the project brings up the question of what we could do with the \$3M we have allocated for that project in this fiscal year. Looking at projects that use the same funding source that could move forward from the next few years:

- Intersection improvements - the next one is **36th and King**. From a scheduling and workload perspective, we think we can do this. We would have 3 intersection projects next summer: Grand and Virginia, S. 24th and Overland, and 36th and King. Rimrock and Virginia is neck and neck with 36th and King for priorities so we could do that one instead. We will look at those intersections and determine which is more appropriate for this year but either way, they will both move up a year in the CIP. Approx. \$500k
- **Wicks Lane** - Hawthorne to Main - we believe we can get this designed and bid by June 30. \$800k
- **Songbird** - we believe we can get this designed and bid by June 30. The nice thing about this is that by doing it before we do Mullowney (currently in FY22/23), we would create an alternate way out of the area which would be really nice during construction of Mullowney. \$1.1M
- **Flashing beacons on all roundabouts on Shiloh**. The current project has raised quite a few requests for pedestrian signals on Shiloh. If we do flashing beacons instead of HAWKS, which we now think meet the intent of the regulations, we are looking at about \$400k.
- **Pedestrian crossings**. There is a lot of interest in installing some enhanced crossings (flashing beacons). We could do some in areas that are "low hanging fruit" - meaning there is curb and gutter and we just need beacons. I think we can get about 5 crossings in for around \$100k or less.

Summary: instead of the \$3M for Monad/19th and 20th, do the highlighted projects for about \$2.9M. We will plan on moving forward with this plan unless we hear otherwise.

- 5) **City Website** - Today, Information Technology launched a "Website Feedback Survey" on the main city website. It is highlighted on the main page slideshow, was added to the "News and Announcements", and posted on the City's Facebook and Twitter feeds. The survey provides an opportunity for citizens, visitors, businesses, council members, city staff, etc. to give us valuable feedback on how they use our site, there user experience using our site, what they would like to see, and some demographic information.
- 6) **FieldTurf USA and City of Billings Press Release** – The City of Billings and Amend Park Development Council have been made aware of pending lawsuits against FieldTurf USA for warranty issues relating to turf fields that used Duraspine fiber. Duraspine was supplied to FieldTurf USA from a vendor who FieldTurf USA filed a civil suit against. The court found for FieldTurf USA. The turf system the City Council has approved for Amend Park uses Verts 2" fiber that has met all expectations promised by FieldTurf USA. The turf field comes with an 8 year, 3rd party, pre-paid insured warranty on the artificial grass surface which protects the City and Amend Park. The City of Billings is confident of the product FieldTurf USA will use at Amend Park. It is the same product that has been installed this year at Montana State University Student Association field, the City of Bozeman Parks Department, the University of Alabama, the Detroit Lions, the University of Oregon, the University of Notre Dame, the Portland Timbers and the Seattle Sounders/Seahawks.
- 7) **Billings Senior Center, Inc.** – We had a meeting with the Billings Senior Center, Inc. this week. The group presented the city with a list of items that they purchased or had donated to them that they will be removing from the Community Center. The biggest items of concern include the exercise equipment and appliances.
- 8) **Next Week's Meetings/Task Forces/Presentations etc.**
 - a. Pioneer Park Task Force, Tuesday, September 17th, 7:00 pm, McKinley School, 820 N. 31st North Door Entrance
 - b. West End Task Force, Tuesday, September 17th, 7:00 pm, Faith Evangelical Church, 3145 Sweet Water Drive, Room 130/131
 - c. Southside Task Force, Thursday, September 19th, 6:30 pm, Northern Plaines Resource Council, 220 S. 27th Street
 - d. Terry Park Task Force, Thursday, September 19th, 7:00 pm, Bethlehem Lutheran, 40 10th Street West

Have a great weekend!



PROJECT RE:CODE

GEARING UP FOR ADOPTION

WWW.PROJECT-RECODE.COM

The City Council and Zoning Commissions will be entering the adoption process in November and December 2019. It's important you utilize these resources now!



**INTERACTIVE MAP TO
SEE NEWLY PROPOSED
ZONING MAP!**

Type in your address to see a side-by-side map of your old zoning district and the proposed district.



**NEIGHBORHOOD AND
COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
DRAFTS AVAILABLE
ONLINE NOW!**

As adoption rapidly approaches it's important you are reviewing drafts now. Many drafts have been available for public review since June and will continue to be added as we wrap up the drafting phase.



**LEAVE A COMMENT ON
THE DRAFTS!**

After checking the map out and reading the draft codes be sure to leave us a comment and let us know what you think.

<https://project-recode.com/code-outline>