

Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

June 18, 2020

1. COVID-19 Information:

- Governor Bullock Announces \$8.7 Million in Emergency Grants to Education Entities

2. The Planning Division has several Transportation Planning Projects underway currently. Here is a brief overview of the three current projects:

Inner Belt Loop Corridor Study – This study is currently being reviewed by the City-County Planning Board, Board of County Commissioner and the Billings City Council with the intent to have the governing bodies to make a recommendation of approval to the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC). Council received an overview of the Corridor Study on Monday, June 15 at the work session. Staff is asking Council to recommend approval of the Study to the PCC at the July 13 council business meeting. The intent of the study is to provide a vision for the corridor that balances the inevitable new development that will occur around the new roadway while ensuring a safe connection between the Heights and Billings West End. The link to the Executive Summary and full study can be found here under What's New. Contact Scott Walker, walkers@billingsmt.gov with any questions.

5th Avenue North Corridor Study – The 5th Avenue North Corridor Feasibility Study is a study to analyze opportunities to develop transportation connections to, from, and within the corridor for non-traditional motorized and non-motorized facilities and identify connectivity opportunities to the existing transportation system in the area. This project is located in downtown Billings along the 5th Avenue North Corridor between North 32nd Street and Main Street (approximately 2 miles), including the railroad spur at North 23rd extending southeast to Montana Avenue. Sanderson Stewart is under contract to complete this study and plans a kick-off meeting with the Steering Committee the week of June 22. As the project progresses, updates will be provided to the City Council. Contact Scott Walker, walkers@billingsmt.gov with any questions.

Bike and Scooter Share Feasibility Study - Alta Planning + Design was chosen as the consultant to complete the feasibility study. With a bike and/or scooter share system, residents and visitors can conveniently rent bikes or scooters for a few minutes or hours. The study will determine how to make bike/scooter share successful in Billings and how to best organize the program. Planning staff anticipate committee meetings to begin at the end of June. Contact monate@billingsmt.gov with questions.

3. The Move – Finally, after 18 months of our family being divided between Billings and Bozeman the move is complete. Yesterday, we said goodbye to Bozeman for the last time and are so happy to call Billings home. This morning King Transfer unloaded the house and we'll be unpacking boxes for days to come.

Have a great weekend.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

Steve Bullock
GOVERNOR



Mike Cooney
LT. GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, June 12, 2020

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Governor Bullock Announces \$8.7 Million in Emergency Grants to Education Entities

Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund will provide grants to education related entities impacted by COVID-19

MONTANA – Governor Steve Bullock today announced \$8.7 million in federal grants will be distributed to education entities across the state to ramp up remote learning opportunities, technology infrastructure, and workforce training opportunities.

“Our teachers and professors across the state have remained committed to providing Montana students with a high quality education during these challenging times and this funding will provide schools and educators with the resources they need to continue doing so this fall,” Governor Bullock said. **“Emergency grants will immediately address needs for students who may have fallen behind, upgrade critical technology infrastructure, and ensure students have access to remote learning opportunities.”**

The U.S. Department of Education created the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund and gave governors the authority to distribute the funds to local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other education related entities with emergency assistance to respond to COVID-19. Montana's allocation from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund is \$8,764,495. This funding is separate from the \$1.25 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund.

The Montana University System received \$6.5 million in funding that will be used for the One-Two-Free program to offer free dual enrollment courses to high school students, fund technology upgrades, and offer workforce training.

The Montana Digital Academy received \$230,000 to expand enrollment opportunities for students, extend remote proctoring services for credit recovery students, identify and address mathematics gains and barriers to prepare students for the fall, and provide EdReady Montana support for the ACT test.

Several colleges received funding for remote learning and technology upgrades. Carroll College received \$500,000, Rocky Mountain College received \$60,000, and the University of Providence received \$30,000.

The Montana State Library received \$500,000 to expand its mobile hotspot and mobile device lending programs.

Grants were evaluated based on need and criteria considered included if entities experienced revenues declines, if they already received other forms of assistance, and if funds would assist in ensuring students have equitable access to learning.

K-12 schools in Montana have already been allocated \$41 million through the federal Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund. The remaining \$944,495 will be reserved until the fall to address other potential issues that arise.

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