

**From:** [Gary Buchanan](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Parks and Trails  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 12:13:01 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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To Mayor and City Council:

First, Mayor Cole, I want to thank you for your civil, inclusive, and effective leadership these past years. Your council meeting management and treatment of citizens in general should be a template for future leadership.

I have been in business downtown for almost 50 years. As Montana's first Director of Commerce and an early member of the Board of Big Sky Economic Development I have been a part of the great economic development debates in Billings.

I intended to be at your meeting tonight to speak up for trails. I am really alarmed at the negative, almost hostile attack on trails. Council member Aspenleider, who represents my ward, appears to be angry and projects a real negative image for outdoor activities in Billings. Aspenleider and I disagreed in person when a small park fund was raided for new cops last year. Where are the cops?

Many other cities in Montana and outside Montana invest heavily in trails and parks. In Billings, it is absolutely one of our best economic development tools. I have served on both of our large hospital Board of Directors and heard many times over from medical recruits that Billings needs more parks and trails. Our city needs to focus on being appealing for all of our recruiting efforts. Parks and Trails are vital for a thriving city. Dropping Trails from the CIP and ignoring parks and recreation staff is a real step backwards in economic development for Billings.

Thank you all for your public service. I think we can all agree that we want to see Billings thrive. Investing in our parks and trails could be our future in making Billings a better place to work and raise a family.

Gary Buchanan

Buchanan Capital Inc.  
490 N 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 240  
Billings, MT 59101  
[gary@buchanancapitalinc.com](mailto:gary@buchanancapitalinc.com) | 406.294.3000

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**From:** [Nathan Sonnenschein](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Yellowjacket Trail in the CIP  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 9:16:03 AM

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Members of City Council,

Please keep the **Yellowjacket Trail** in the **CIP**. This is not a trails issue; this is a public safety issue.

People already walk along North 27th going up and down the Rims—on the actual roadway, and on the treacherous dirtpath alongside the guardrail, and up the ancient rock-carved stairs behind Alterowitz Gym. Considering that this is a stretch of state highway connecting essential city services (the airport, the university, and the hospitals), safe pedestrian infrastructure is sorely needed.

Sincerely,

Nathan Sonnenschein  
437 Terry Ave.

**From:** [Keehner, Toni](#)  
**To:** [MayorAndCouncil](#); [Leadership Team](#); [Vickers, Anna](#); [R. Rogers](#); [Tim Harrington](#); [lindseyn@comm7tv.com](mailto:lindseyn@comm7tv.com); [Jonathan](#)  
**Subject:** 12/15/25 Council Packet  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 12:59:17 PM

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Good afternoon,

The City Council Agenda Packet for the upcoming Regular Business meeting has been published and posted to the City's website at the following link:

[December 15, 2025 Regular Council Meeting](#)

Thank you,



Toni Keehner  
Deputy City Clerk  
[keehnert@billingsmt.gov](mailto:keehnert@billingsmt.gov)

[billingsmt.gov](http://billingsmt.gov)

**316 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street**

P.O. Box 1178 • Billings, MT 59103  
P 406.247.8605 F 406.657.8390

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**From:** [Anna O'Donnell](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter in support for maintaining and advancing trails  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 1:29:34 PM  
**Attachments:** [Pioneer Park Task Force Letter 2025.docx](#)

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Hello,

Please find a letter to support and advance trails from the Pioneer Park Task Force. We voted on our last meeting to write in support of this as trails are valuable asset to our community in many ways, not only for schools, safety, and physical health but also mental health.

Thank you for your time.

Anna O'Donnell  
Pioneer Park Task Force Chairperson

**Pioneer Park Task Force**

Billings, Montana

December 3, 2025

Billings City Council  
220 North 27th Street  
Billings, MT 59101

**RE: Support for Maintaining TA Trail Eligibility & Advancing Yellowjacket Trail**

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

The Pioneer Park Task Force urges the Council to maintain trail eligibility under Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding and to keep the Yellowjacket Trail in the Capital Improvement Plan.

We fully support Safe Routes to School. Safe routes include sidewalks, crossings, and off-street multiuse trails—all recognized under federal guidance. This should not be an either/or decision. Billings can advance Safe Routes to School and communitywide safety projects together.

TA funds are not limited to Safe Routes to School; federal law explicitly includes multiuse paths, trail connectors, and bicycle/pedestrian safety improvements. Restricting TA funds, even for five years, would unnecessarily limit one of the few funding sources available for trails.

The Yellowjacket Trail is not a new amenity—it addresses an existing safety problem. An informal trail already exists along the corridor and is used daily by MSUB students, hospital workers, downtown employees, and neighborhood residents. Formalizing this connection will make users safer by separating them from high-speed traffic.

Trails also benefit Billings workforce and economy. Communities that invest in connected trail systems are more successful at attracting healthcare, education, and professional workers areas where Billings faces significant shortages.

Finally, restricting TA funding to a single project category will slow progress citywide. Allowing staff flexibility ensures projects move forward as they become ready, improving efficiency and public safety.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the Council to keep trail projects eligible for TA funding and to continue advancing the Yellowjacket Trail. This balanced approach supports children, workers, seniors, students, and the long-term vitality of our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna O Donnell

**Chair Person, Pioneer Park Task Force**

**From:** [Zoeller, Andy](#)  
**To:** [Aspenlieder, Scott](#); [Kukulski, Chris](#)  
**Cc:** [Council](#); [Friday, Wyeth](#); [Meling, Debi](#); [Woltjer, Gavin](#)  
**Subject:** RE: CIP Modifications from Work Session  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 9:11:13 AM

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CM Aspenlieder,

The CIP has a section titled “Future Projects List” beginning on page 176. This is a new list of projects in the CIP, which came from the discussions we had at Budget & Finance Committee. My belief was that this list contains the “Out Years” projects that you mentioned. If that is not the case, please let me know, as I misunderstood what was desired.

For Yellowjacket Trail and 25<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge there was never a vote taken on either of those projects. I did go back and watch both work session meetings to make sure I didn’t miss anything. I have noted that the following votes were taken:

Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> Work Session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG1IMsD6No4&t=130s>  
1:30 – Vote to remove 21<sup>st</sup> Street underpass - passed  
1:46 – Vote to change funding source on Evidence Facility Lot - passed  
2:03 – Vote to add Cottonwood Park funding into CIP at Phase 1 estimates – did not pass  
2:37 – Vote to remove 5<sup>th</sup> ave corridor – passed

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> Work Session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-xoG8trDwI>  
1:33 – Vote to add 5<sup>th</sup> Ave Corridor and 21<sup>st</sup> Street Underpass to the “Future Projects List” - passed

For the Evidence Center Lot Expansion as proposed the funding will come from the Public Safety Fund, as this is a Police Department project. If there is a desire to change the funding source, that is fine, but I don’t have a different recommendation other than the South TIF.

As the CIP is currently presented, I believe it captures all of the changes that were directed during both work sessions. Please let me know if I’m missing anything though.

Thanks,

Andy

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**From:** Aspenlieder, Scott <AspenliederS@billingsmt.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 7, 2025 2:11 PM  
**To:** Kukulski, Chris <kukulskic@billingsmt.gov>; Zoeller, Andy <zoellera@billingsmt.gov>  
**Cc:** Council <Council@billingsmt.gov>; Friday, Wyeth <FridayW@billingsmt.gov>; Meling, Debi <melingd@billingsmt.gov>; Woltjer, Gavin <woltjerg@billingsmt.gov>

**Subject:** CIP Modifications from Work Session

Chris

It appears that none of the changes have been made to the CIP that were made in the first Work Session. That would include the following as just the ones I noticed:

- “Out Years” Column does not appear to be added with any of the projects we talked about shifting adjusted. My understanding was that this was the compromise position to allow projects to be identified in the CIP but put outside the 5-year plan without any funding source identified or obligated.
- Yellowjacket Trail is still shown in 2030 with CMAQ/TA/Urban funds. That was supposed to be moved to the “out years” with the funding sources stripped.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge similarly is still shown and not located in the “out years.”
- It appears that the evidence lot expansion project got it’s proposed funding source shifted from SBURA which we agreed on that night but looks like it’s switched to “public safety mill levy” for funding which I didn’t remember or understand where that was coming from.
- It looks like the downtown underpass study and corresponding project were removed which is the only one that got pulled from our initial motions it appears.

With the document presented are we supposed to make all these motions to move/remove all over again or what happened?

**Scott Aspenlieder, PE | City of Billings Councilman Ward 4 |**

Email: [aspenlieders@billingsmt.gov](mailto:aspenlieders@billingsmt.gov) |

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**From:** [Cole, Bill](#)  
**To:** [Kukulski, Chris](#); [Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Friday, Wyeth](#); [Meling, Debi](#); [Woltjer, Gavin](#); [Zoeller, Andy](#)  
**Subject:** Re: CIP Modifications from Work Session  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 1:56:56 PM

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Council Members:

I'm concerned about the "preamble language" at the beginning of the "Future CIP Projects List." The third sentence says: "***It should be assume that projects included on this list are not priorities, and as a result, are not being focused on by the City staff at the current time.***"

Presumably that sentence is intended to provide protection for city staff when city council members or the public wants staff to allocate significant time or money to projects that are on the future projects list but not on the CIP 5-year list. Okay. Makes sense. I understand that.

However, as currently written, this sentence suggest that the future projects are not priorities at all. If so, then why have the list? I think the reality is that these other projects are priorities, but they just don't rank as high as the ones on the 5-year list.

Tonight my intent is to see if there is agreement on this issue (or make a motion for a vote if there is not), with the goal of having staff insert "***the highest***" so the sentence would instead read:

***"It should be assumed that projects included on this list are not **the highest** priorities, and, as a result, are not being focused on by City staff at the current time."***

Bill

**Bill Cole**, Mayor  
City of Billings, Montana  
[coleb@billingsmt.gov](mailto:coleb@billingsmt.gov)  
**406-294-5700**

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**From:** Zoeller, Andy <[zoellera@billingsmt.gov](mailto:zoellera@billingsmt.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 8, 2025 9:11 AM  
**To:** Aspenlieder, Scott <[AspenliederS@billingsmt.gov](mailto:AspenliederS@billingsmt.gov)>; Kukulski, Chris <[kukulskic@billingsmt.gov](mailto:kukulskic@billingsmt.gov)>  
**Cc:** Council <[council@billingsmt.gov](mailto:council@billingsmt.gov)>; Friday, Wyeth <[FridayW@billingsmt.gov](mailto:FridayW@billingsmt.gov)>; Meling, Debi <[melingd@billingsmt.gov](mailto:melingd@billingsmt.gov)>; Woltjer, Gavin <[woltjerg@billingsmt.gov](mailto:woltjerg@billingsmt.gov)>  
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**Scott Aspenlieder, PE** | City of Billings Councilman Ward 4 |

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**From:** [Rimrock Neighborhoods Task Force](#)  
**To:** [Leslie Cooke](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Rimrock Neighborhood Task Force - December 2025 Newsletter  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 3:19:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [RNTF 2025--12 newsletter.pdf](#)

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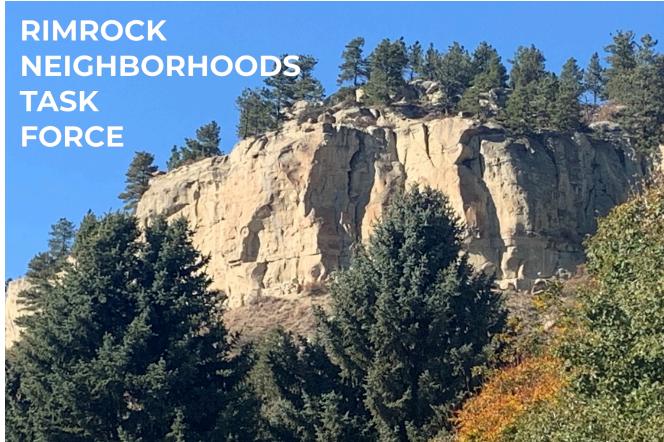


Hello Rimrock neighbors -  
Here is the link to our December newsletter: [RNTF December 2025 Newsletter Link](#)  
(A pdf version is also attached, though be forewarned, the spacing on the pdf is a bit funky!)

Enjoy this season!

Sincerely,  
Your RNTF Board,  
Dave, Kevin, Holly, Simon, Leslie

**RIMROCK  
NEIGHBORHOODS  
TASK  
FORCE**



**Rimrock  
Neighborhoods  
Task Force**

**December  
2025  
Newsletter**

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**Hello Rimrock area neighbors,**

**Please mark your calendar with our 2026 RNTF meeting dates. Due to postage costs we aren't able to send postcards as often as we used to.**

**All meetings are at 7pm on the 3rd Wednesday of odd-numbered months, and held at the Mayflower Church building (corner of Rehberg & Poly)**

**If there's ever a change in the meeting schedule or location, we will notify everyone on the email list, post to social media and to our RNTF page on the City's website: [Link to RNTF page on City website](#)**

<b>January 21, 2026</b>	<b>March 18, 2026</b>	<b>May 20, 2026</b>
<b>July 15, 2026</b>	<b>September 16, 2026</b>	<b>November 18, 2026</b>

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**Please join me in welcoming our newest board member elected in November - Simon Harper will serve as RNTF Vice Chair. With all of the attention on Hwy 3, we are excited to have a board member who lives north of Highway 3.**

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**Summary of neighborhood issues that your RNTF board has been keeping an eye on throughout 2025:**

- Highway 3 Corridor Study - state project - public meetings held in June and November - awaiting final report. It is likely that the state will expand Hwy 3 to the north, adding a center turn lane, some right hand turn lanes and roundabouts. Decisions aren't final yet, and there is no construction scheduled at this time.
- Transportation Corridor Plan - city project, still in progress - particularly we are hoping the results of the study can help us

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advocate for safety improvements on Rimrock, Zimmerman, Hwy 3 and other corridors within and near our task force area.

- Safe Routes to School initiatives - both educational and infrastructure - We celebrate the new school zone at Rimrock/Arvin, and we've recently pushed for safety improvements at Rimrock/38th.
- West End Neighborhood Plan and West Rimrock Road street project - though outside of our task force area, we are keeping this area on the radar as increased Rimrock traffic west of Shiloh impacts safety on all of Rimrock Rd.
- Parks - The City's plan for the possible sale of some undeveloped park land.
- Skyway Drive land use - city/county planning - NOTE: a bit of good news! We had learned that School District 2 was considering a land parcel on Skyway for a large school bus facility. I've confirmed with the school district that they are now looking for a different location. This is good news for Skyway Drive, Hwy 3 & Zimmerman safety.
- Trails - city and other organizations - this includes current safety concerns with Skyline Trail, and neighborhood impacts in the Durland and Wilshire areas with the probable installation of Stagecoach Trail.
- Crime trends - Sgt Glenn Gunther is our liaison with the police department. We will soon have access to a monthly on-line version of our taskforce area crime report. As of this afternoon, the site is undergoing maintenance. Once the site is fully working and the latest report is loaded, I'll be sure to let everyone know. In another crime-related matter, we are looking into concerns surrounding a couple of "sober living homes", more to follow.
- Urban turkeys - Impacts to safety & property damage - FWP

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- Disruptive aircraft noise within our neighborhoods - see more info below

***As always, if you have input on these or other issues, please reach out by email, and make sure to include your phone number in case we need to speak with you***

***Sincerely, Leslie Cooke, RNTF Chair***

***rimrocktaskforce@gmail.com***

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## **DISRUPTIVE AIRCRAFT NOISE**



Those of us in the RNTF area live near the airport, we expect aircraft noise. However, when that noise becomes ***disruptive***, you might wonder who to call.

The RNTF is collecting disruptive aircraft noise issues.

If you have concerns about disruptive aircraft noise that you haven't shared with us yet - please do so at:

[\*\*RNTF Survey - disruptive aircraft noise\*\*](#)

We will collect all the survey responses and share with the FAA

**You can also report disruptive noise problems to the following:**

<b><u>Billings Flying Service</u></b> (private helicopter business operating near airport) 3655 AJ Way, Billings MT 59106 (406) 252-6937	<b><u>Montana National Guard</u></b> (military helicopter operation just west of the airport)  Major Ryan Finnegan Public Affairs Officer (406) 324-3009 <a href="mailto:ryan.j.finnegan.mil@army.mil">ryan.j.finnegan.mil@army.mil</a>  Or	<b><u>Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)</u></b>  Aviation Noise Ombudsman, AEE-2 800 Independence Ave, S.W. Washington, DC 20591 Email: <a href="mailto:9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman@faa.gov">9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman@faa.gov</a> (206) 231-4202
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MSGT Michael Touchette  
Public Affairs Specialist  
(406) 324-3007  
michael.a.touchette2.mil@army.mil

Billings Air Traffic Control  
Manager  
(406) 255-2751



## HOLIDAY CRIME PREVENTION

Package Pickup Announcement



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## Want to make sure your holiday gifts are safe from porch pirates?

The Billings Police & the Downtown Billings Association (DBA) have the place for you!

When placing orders for delivery, just use **102 N 29th St, Billings MT 59101** as the “ship-to” address instead of using your home address.

Your packages will be received and secured until you can pick them up. Pick-ups are available through Dec 31, 9am-4pm Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9am-6pm Wednesdays.

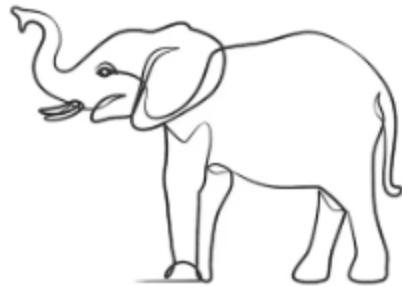
DBA will be closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and Christmas Day

When picking up, bring an ID that matches the recipient's name or the tracking receipt for the package.

**If you have questions, contact Sgt Stovall at (406) 208-5726**

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## Rimrock Corridor Safety Committee (RCSC)



**We could use the help of a few Rimrock Road area residents**

If you are interested in helping the RCSC as we prioritize the safety issues along Rimrock Road - please join us Tuesday, January 13, 6:00 pm at the Billings Library (upstairs conference room).

**EVERY safety concern along Rimrock Road matters, but we know you have to eat an elephant one bite at a time! So we'll work to identify the most critical which will be presented to the City.**

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## COMMUNITY HEALTH CORNER

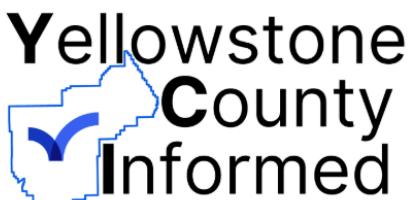
Nicotine in new forms:  
The dangers of vaping and Zyn  
By Kori Anderson: Prevention Health  
Specialist, RiverStone Health

Vaping continues to become increasingly popular among teens. Many believe it's safer than smoking, but the long-term effects are mostly unknown. Most vaping products contain high levels of nicotine, an addictive stimulant linked to higher rates of anxiety and depression that also disrupts brain development among teens. Dangerous chemicals like formaldehyde and heavy metals like lead have also been found in these products.

Nicotine pouches, such as Zyn, are now gaining traction among teens and adults.

These products are marketed as safe alternatives to smokeless tobacco, but they still deliver high levels of nicotine which carries the same risks for addiction and can increase the likelihood of cancer. The growing popularity of these products shows that while cigarette smoking is declining, nicotine use is far from disappearing—it is simply changing form.

Whether it's cigarettes, vapes, or pouches, quitting nicotine is one of the best things you can do for your health. You do not have to do it alone. "Quit Now Montana" offers free, confidential support from trained coaches who work with you to create a personalized quit plan and provide tools to make quitting easier. Call today at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit [QuitNowMontana.com](http://QuitNowMontana.com) to start your quit journey today.



**Did you know that the County & City use "Everbridge" to provide emergency alerts & other notifications?**

**We are exploring ways to use Everbridge to keep neighbors informed about task force meetings.**

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If you'd like to participate in a trial of the Everbridge system for RNTF meeting alerts, please email us at [rimrocktaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:rimrocktaskforce@gmail.com)

Or to learn more & sign up for alerts: [Everbridge Info & sign-up](#)

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**NOTE: we will revamp this regular section of the newsletter with our next edition to include contact info for the newly elected council members who all begin service in January.**



**City Council -**

Our Task Force area includes parts of both Ward 4 & Ward 1.

Ward map to determine your representative -> [Click for City Ward Map](#)

**City Council Contact Info:** EMAIL: [Council@billingsmt.gov](mailto:Council@billingsmt.gov)  
P O Box 1178, Billings MT 59103 (406) 657-8433

**Link to City Calendar which includes council meetings:**



<https://www.billingsmt.gov/calendar.aspx>

**Ward 4:**

Scott Aspenlieder (406) 461-8392 [aspenlieders@billingsmt.gov](mailto:aspenlieders@billingsmt.gov)  
Dan Tidswell (406) 690-4534 [tidswelld@billingsmt.gov](mailto:tidswelld@billingsmt.gov)

**Ward 1**

Kendra Shaw (406) 670-7772 [shawk@billingsmt.gov](mailto:shawk@billingsmt.gov)  
Ed Gulick (406) 698-2747 [gulicke@billingsmt.gov](mailto:gulicke@billingsmt.gov)

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Rimrock Neighborhoods Task Force does not politically endorse current office holders or candidates.

We extend an open invitation to all elected officials and candidates for attendance and participation in our task force meetings.

We appreciate those who attend and help with neighborhood issues.

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**TASK FORCE SCHEDULE:**

**Meetings**

**Newsletters**

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**In-person meetings -**  
**3rd Wednesday of odd-numbered months**  
**Mayflower Church building (Rehberg/Poly)**

**January, March,  
May, July  
September, November**

**To keep neighbors updated between  
meetings, we email our newsletter during  
even-numbered months**

**February, April,  
June, August,  
October, December**

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