

# The Billings Heights Neighborhood Plan



## *Heights Vision Statement*

*The Heights: promoting growth and opportunities for the neighborhood of a lifetime.*

## *Heights Mission Statement*

*The Heights is an extensive suburban Billings neighborhood offering diverse housing and quality schools with high quality of life amenities. To achieve our vision, Heights residents will explore, encourage and foster the planning and coordination of Heights resources through effective transportation routes, encouraging small business development and expanding community facilities with sensible land use planning and infrastructure development to make the Heights a premier community to live, recreate and work.*



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# Acknowledgments

## Billings Heights Neighborhood Steering Committee

Jolene Rieck – Chair  
Chris Allard – Co-Chair  
Chuck Strum – Secretary  
Stan Newton – Member  
Kim Gillan – Member  
Angela Cimmino – Member  
Wanda Grinde – Member  
Jerry Zitir - Member

Joe Burst - Member  
Judie Mates - Member  
Denis Pitman - Member  
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Peggie Denney Gaghen  
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Dave Brown  
Larry Brewster  
Donald W. Jones

Chris “Shoots” Veis  
Vince Reugamer  
Nancy Boyer  
Ed Ulledalen  
Richard (Dick) Clark

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Donna Forbes  
Carol Gibson  
Sue Tombrink  
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Rich Whitney

Cary Brown  
Mick Ohnstad  
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James Coons  
Al Littler

## City Administration

Kristoff Bauer – City Administrator  
Tina Volek – Assistant City Administrator

## Planning Division

Ramona Mattix – Director  
Candi Beaudry – Planning Division Manager  
Lora Mattox – Neighborhood Planner  
Wyeth Friday – Planner I  
Juliet Spalding – Subdivision Coordinator  
Nicole Cromwell – Zoning Coordinator  
Scott Walker – Transportation Planner  
Aura Lindstrand – Planner II  
Don Vegge – City Code Enforcement Officer  
Colleen Schell-Berg – County Code Enforcement Officer  
Karen Miller – Planning Associate  
Tammy Deines – Planning Clerk

## Participating Organizations

Skyview High School Key Club  
Castle Rock Middle School

# **Introduction**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the neighborhood plan is to assist the governing agencies, planners, developers and residents make the right choices when determining future growth patterns and development in the Heights. The neighborhood plan is not a regulatory document, instead, it is adopted as part of the City of Billings and Yellowstone County Growth Policy as an advisory document.

The plan includes general and specific recommendations that reflect the values of the community, encourages sound decision-making, and empowers people to take action. The plan also includes realistic implementation strategies that involve both private and public actions, as well as regulatory decisions.

## **Planning Area**

Several factors are reviewed when determining planning boundaries. These factors include natural boundaries, design boundaries (streets etc), census tracts, existing plans and planning issues related to the area. The Heights Neighborhood Planning area shown on Map 1.

## **Community Background**

The Heights Neighborhood was identified by the Planning Department and the City Council as the first neighborhood to complete a plan per implementation of the 2003 City/County Growth Policy.

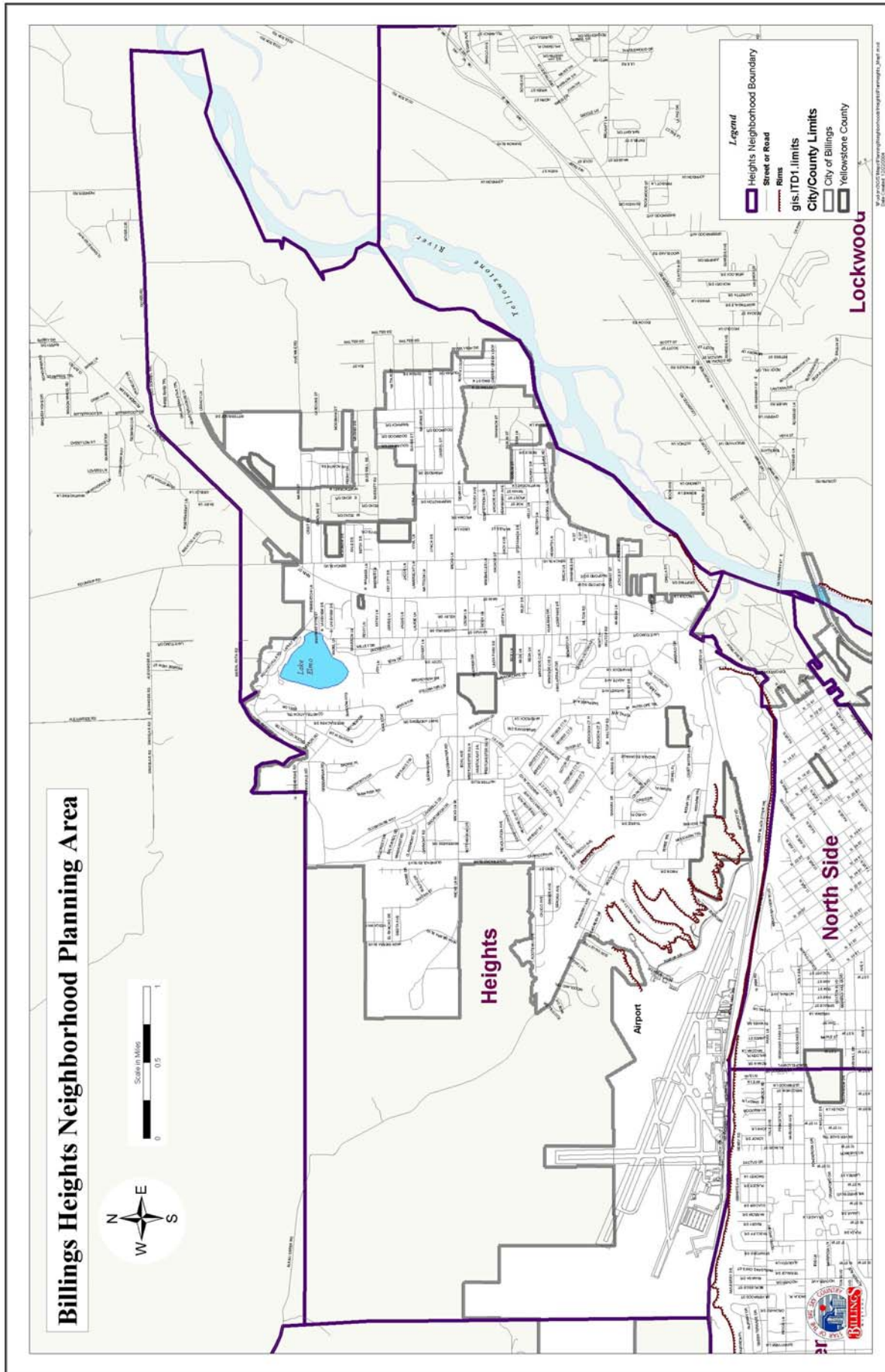
The Heights area was annexed into the City of Billings in the 1980's. Prior to the annexation, the Heights was considered part of Yellowstone County and was part of Census Tract 7. During the ten-year period between 1970 and 1980 Billings Heights gained almost 10,000 people. The Heights again had the greatest amount of growth in Yellowstone County between 1980 and 1990. At the time of the 1990 census, Census Tract 7 was divided into four separate census tracts. The total population of the Heights in 1990 was 17,883. In 2000 the population of the Heights was 19,713.

Since annexation, the Heights has experienced growth residentially and commercially with numerous businesses along Main Street.

The Heights is also home to Lake Elmo, a state park which encompasses 122 acres and is a day-use park. Lake Elmo attracts visitors to swim, sailboat, windsurf, and fish.



Map 1



## **Introduction**

The following discussion on physical conditions and census data is vital to understanding how the neighborhood has developed in the past and gives clues on how the neighborhood will develop in the future.

## **Land Use**

The Heights planning area is unique in its zoning due to the variety of zoning districts. Most of the neighborhood planning area consists of a limited amount of zoning districts (usually residential with some neighborhood commercial); however, almost all of the different zoning districts the city has classified can be identified in the Heights planning area. These zoning districts include low density single family such as Residential 15000 (one unit per 15,000 square feet) to high density multi-family areas. The Heights also contains all three commercial zones, Highway Commercial along Main Street, Community Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial. There are no industrial zonings in the Heights. Appendix 2 shows a current zoning map of the Heights.

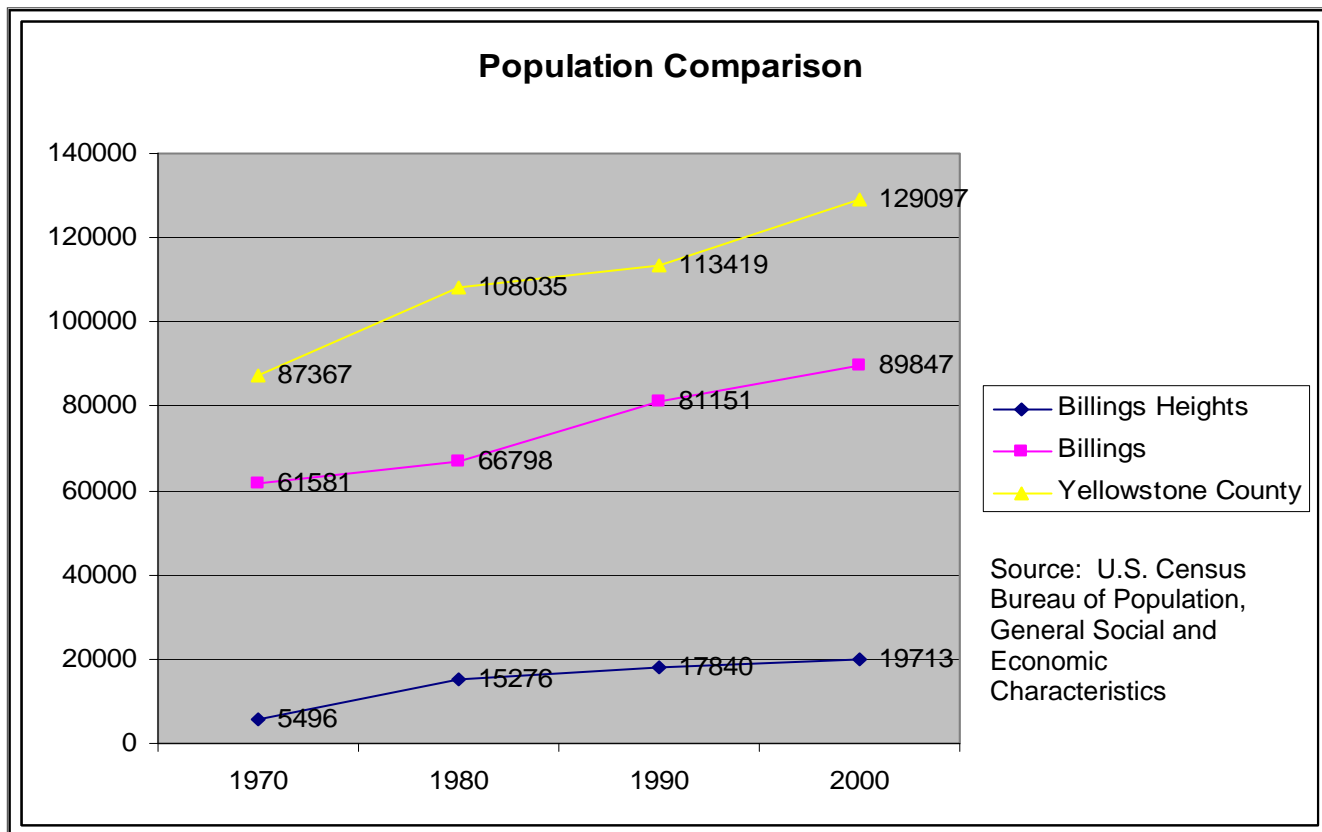
## **Population**

Demographic information is provided to show trends in population, age distribution, race characteristics, education attainment, and population projections.

Prior to its annexation in the 1980's, the Heights area saw the most population growth in Yellowstone County with a gain of 10,000 people between 1970 and 1980. Chart 1 shows a population comparison between the Heights, Billings, and Yellowstone County.

According to the census data, in 1970 prior to annexation, the Heights had a population of 5,496. In 1980, that number increased to 15,276. That is an increase of 177 percent. Between 1980 and 2000 the Heights has seen a 29 percent increase in population. Billings as a whole saw a 34.5 percent increase in population in the same time period.

Chart 1: Population Comparison – Billings Heights, Billings and Yellowstone County



### Age Distribution

Age characteristics in Billings Heights shadow a similar trend for Yellowstone County where there has been a shift in the median age. In 1990 the median age of persons in the Heights was 33.7 years. The 2000 Census shows that the median age has risen to 36.8 years. This increase in median age is a reflection of an aging population nationwide. Table 1 looks at the age characteristics for the Heights.

Table 1: Age Characteristics – Billings Heights

Age	1990	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total	Percent Change 1990-2000
Under 5	1,474	8.3%	1,382	7.0%	-6.2%
5 to 9	1,707	9.6%	1,372	7.0%	-19.6%
10 to 14	1,632	9.1%	1,766	9.0%	8.2%
15 to 19	1,443	8.0%	1,578	8.0%	9.4%
20 to 24	930	5.2%	1,310	6.7%	41%
25 to 34	3,102	17.4%	2,372	12.0%	-23.5%
35 to 44	3,368	18.9%	3,230	16.4%	-4.0%
45 to 54	1,919	10.8%	3,215	16.3%	68%
55 to 64	1,116	6.3%	1,723	8.7%	54%
65 to 74	747	4.2%	931	4.7%	25%
75+	402	2.2%	834	4.2%	107%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,840</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,713</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10.50%</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>33.7</b>		<b>36.8</b>		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics

## Race

The racial diversity of the Heights has not significantly changed over the last ten years. In 1990, 96.4 percent of the Heights population was white and in 2000, the all-white population dropped to 94 percent. Overall, the census data shows that there was not a significant change in racial diversity.

Table 2: Racial Characteristics – Billings Heights

<b>Race</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
White	17,209	96.4%	18,442	94%
Black/ African American	37	.02%	75	.03%
American Indian Alaska Native	370	2.0%	524	2.7%
Asian or Pacific Islander	103	.05%	146	.07%
Other Race	121	.07%	526	2.7%
Hispanic Origin (of any race)	346	1.9%	555	2.8%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>17,840</b>		<b>19,713</b>	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics				

## Education

Since 1990, the median years of education completed among persons 25 years old and older has increased. The percentage of the population in that age group that has completed a four-year college degree and/or graduate or professional degree has continued to increase as well.

In 1990, the percentage of people in the Heights who had completed high school was 84.63 percent and the percentage of people who had complete four or more years of college was 22.62 percent. According to the 2000 census, the percentage of those who graduated high school rose to 90.23% and increased to 25.54 percent for those who completed four or more years of college.

Table 3: Education Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older – Billings Heights

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	495	462
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (No Diploma)	923	739
High School Graduate (including GED)	3,344	3,734
Some College (No degree)	2,804	3,346
A.A.	731	881
B.A.	1,886	2,277
Graduate or Professional Degree	525	866
Total Population 25 Years and Older	10,654	12,305
Percent High School Graduates	84.63%	90.23%

Table 3 Continued

Percent Four or More Years of College/Bachelor's Degree or Higher	22.62%	25.54%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics		

### **Population Projections**

The Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC), a department within the Montana Department of Commerce, released population projections for counties up to the year 2025. Yellowstone County is expected to grow an average of 1 percent per year. At this rate, the County population will reach approximately 137,990 by 2005; 145,880 by 2010; and 162,410 by 2020.

The City of Billings is anticipating a growth rate of approximately 1.5 percent to 2.0 percent per year. Using the formula of 1.5 percent, we get the following population estimates for the Heights.

Table 4: Population Projections

Year	Heights Population Projection
1990	17,840
2000	19,713
2005	21,237
2010	22,878
2015	24,646
2020	26,551
2025	28,692
This is only a projection, many factors known and unknown can determine actual population numbers	

### **Housing**

The following section discusses the household composition, or the characteristics of the residents of the Heights. The information in this section describes the number of people living in households, their income and the trends in household distribution. An inventory of existing housing units is presented along with information on the number and type of units and whether they are rented or owner-occupied.

Table 5 illustrates a comparison of varying housing characteristics between Billings Heights, City of Billings and Yellowstone County.

There are 2 significant statistics to review on this table; the first is the significant decrease in vacant housing units in all 3 areas (Heights, Billings and Yellowstone County). The second is the decrease in average household size.

Table 5: Housing Characteristics – Billings Heights, Billings and Yellowstone County

	Billings Heights		% Change	Billings		% Change	Yellowstone County		% Change
Year	1990	2000		1990	2000		1990	2000	
Housing Units	6,866	7,646	11.36%	35,964	39,293	9.26%	48,781	54,563	11.85%
Median Year Built	1976	1978		1966	1970		1970	1973	

Table 5 Continued

Occupied Units	6,391	7,376	15.41%	33,181	37,525	13.12%	44,689	52,084	16.55%
Vacant Units	475	270	<b>43.16%</b>	2,783	1,768	<b>36.47%</b>	4,092	2,479	<b>65.07%</b>
Owner-Occupied	4,341	5,286	21.77%	20,297	24,025	18.37%	29,371	36,026	22.66%
Renter Occupied	2,050	2,090	1.95%	12,884	13,500	4.8%	15,318	16,058	4.83%
Median Household Income	\$32,853	\$44,970	36.88%	\$31,906	\$35,147	37.08%	\$25,942	\$36,727	41.57%
Average Household Size	2.85	2.70	<b>5.26%</b>	2.39	2.32	<b>2.92%</b>	2.49	2.43	<b>2.40%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau of Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics

The following 3 charts provide information on average and median home sale prices for the Heights. Graph 3 shows a comparison of median sales prices for housing in and around the Billings area. This information was provided by Howard Sumner Real Estate.

Chart 2: Single Family Home Price Trends Heights East of Main

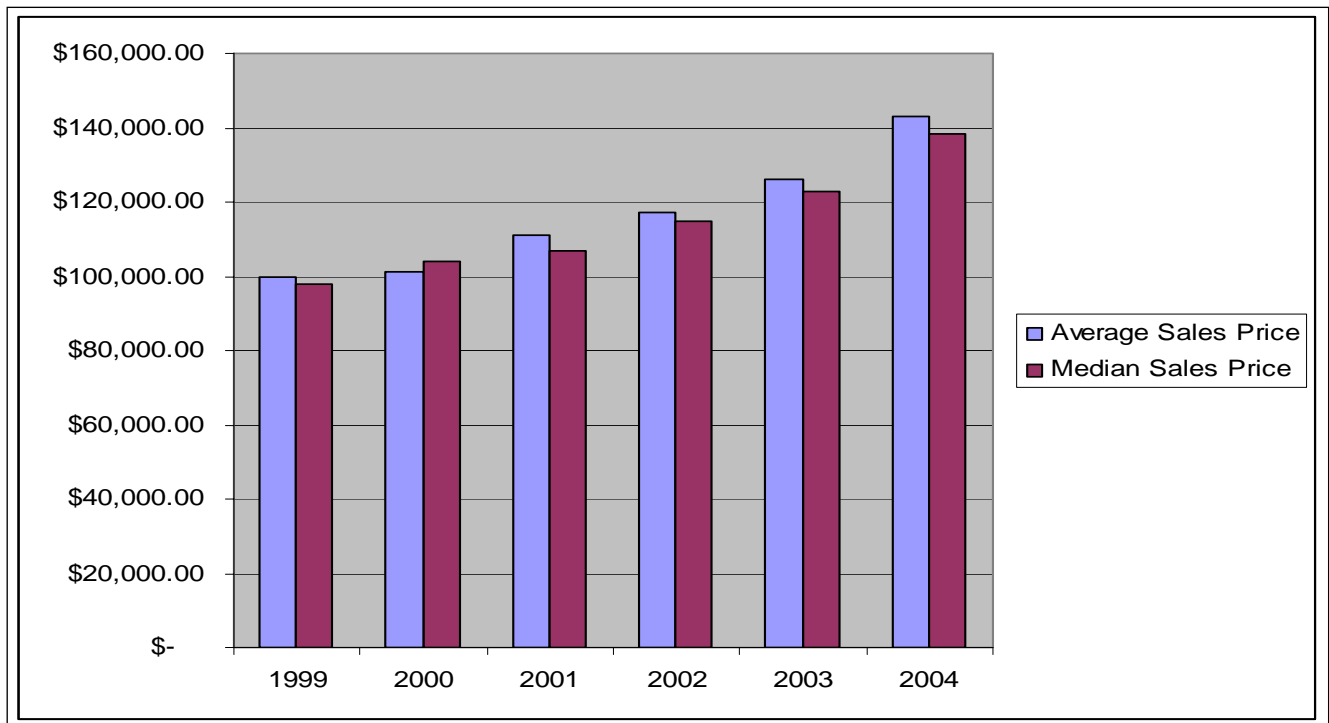




Chart 3: Single Family Home Price Trends Heights West of Main

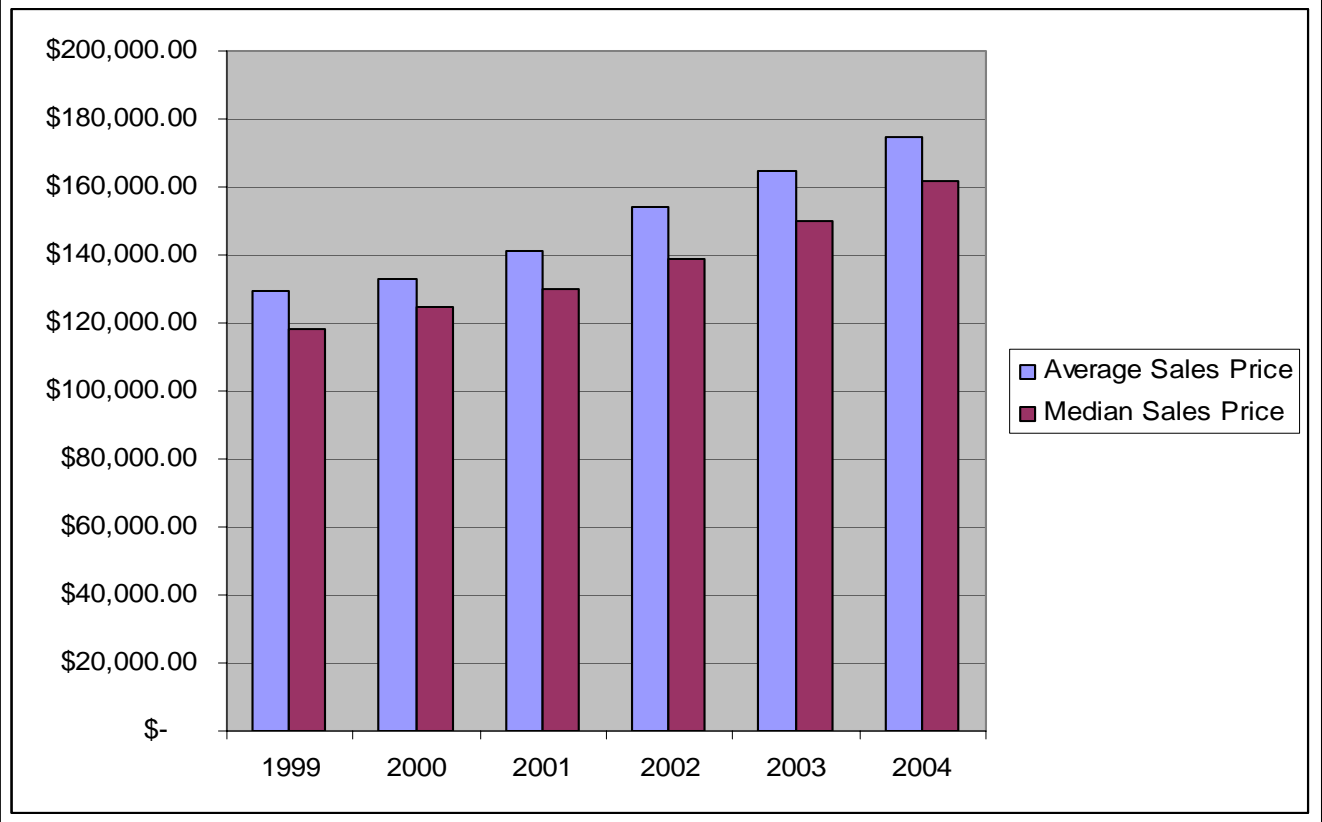
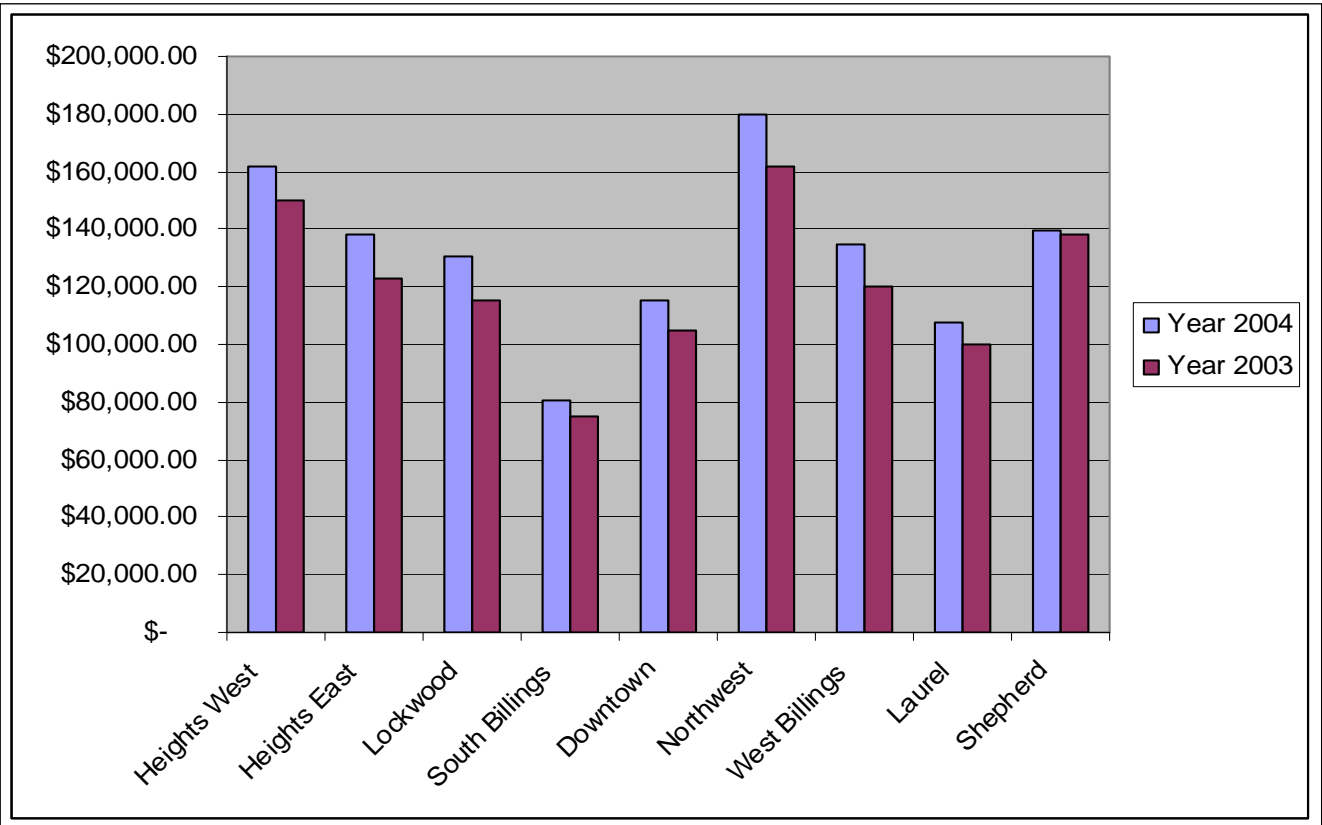


Chart 4: Median Sales Price by Area of Town



## Planning Process

In December 2003, the Billings City Council directed the Planning and Community Services Department to identify areas for the development and implementation of neighborhood plans. The selection process included reviewing natural boundaries, design boundaries (roads, etc.), and planning issues related to the proposed planning area. Census data, existing neighborhood plans, and future development plans were also reviewed. The Heights was the first neighborhood designated by the City Council to complete a neighborhood plan.

On May 18, 2004, the Planning and Community Services Department hosted a Heights Neighborhood Planning Kickoff Meeting. Approximately 27 residents attended this meeting. Two days later, residents were invited back to establish a volunteer resident steering committee to work and prepare the plan. At this meeting a Chair, Co-chair, and secretary were appointed.

The steering committee began holding monthly meetings to discuss neighborhood planning and the process for completing the neighborhood plan. The steering committee also worked with city staff to develop a Heights web site to provide information on neighborhood planning as well as upcoming events.

In the fall of 2004, a resident survey was released to ask residents their opinions on nine focus areas identified by the steering committee. These focus areas include: transportation, parks and recreation, public safety, housing, community facilities, economic development, utilities and infrastructure, schools and education, and land use and neighborhood character. The results of that survey can be found in the appendix.

On January 18, 2005, the Heights Steering Committee hosted a community meeting to discuss the 9 focus areas at an open meeting. Thirty-four residents attended this meeting which included a presentation on survey results and what planning the steering committee had done to date. After that presentation, residents were asked to visit 9 different areas of the room which was set up to discuss a separate focus area. After about 45-minutes a representative from each group gave a brief presentation on what each group discussed.



The information from the survey and the community meeting will directly assist the steering committee and city staff in the development of the neighborhood plan.

## Neighborhood Issues, Goals and Actions

### Public Safety

The Billings Heights is served by the City of Billings Police and Fire Departments. The Billings Police Department has recently restructured their district in order to better provide public safety services for the community. They have divided the city into two districts commanded by a lieutenant and staffed by twelve sergeants and approximately 60 officers who are assigned for a full year. The district concept is designed to ease the communication and mutual problem solving strategies so often found in community policing philosophy. The Heights is located in the East District.

The City of Billings Fire Department is staffed with 97 shift personnel (4 Battalion Chiefs, 27 captains, 27 Engineers, and 39 Firefighters), one Fire Chief, one Assistant Fire Chief, one Fire Marshall, one Assistant Fire Marshall, three Deputy Fire Marshals, one Training Officer, one Fire Maintenance Officer, two administrative personnel, and thirty-three Communications Center personnel.

Department fire suppression equipment consists of six engines, one truck, three grass/wild land units, two water tenders, one hazardous materials response vehicle, one rescue vehicle, one breathing air van, one Battalion Chief/Incident Command vehicle and three reserve engines.

The Department has a contractual agreement with the Billing Urban Fire Service Area (BUFSA) to provide the services. The Department also contracts equipment and manpower to the State Department of Natural Recourses for wildfire suppression in times of need.

The Department also has mutual aid agreements with Cenex Refinery, Conoco Philips Refinery, Exxon Mobile Refinery, Lockwood Fire Department, Billings Logan International Airport Aircraft Rescue Firefighting, and the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department.



Fire Station #6 - Heights

The Heights is also served by the Yellowstone County Disaster and Emergency Services Department. Disaster and Emergency Services (D.E.S.) or Emergency Management is an integrated effort to prevent or minimize the seriousness of emergencies and disasters; and to plan and coordinate the community's response to them should they occur. It requires establishing partnerships among professional emergency management personnel to prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters. Coordination is a key factor in establishing an emergency management program, and continual improvement saves lives and reduces losses from disasters.

Public safety issues were discussed through steering committee meetings and during the community wide meetings.

***Issue: Access to new developments for Emergency Service***

**Goal:** Provide safety for residents and development as it occurs. To lower emergency response times by providing easy access to emergency vehicles.

**Objectives:** Require through the subdivision process that new developments have sufficient access to and from the development.

There is mounting concern as growth continues in the Heights that subdivision developments do not have multiple accesses for emergency purposes. As long cul-de-sacs continue to be a trend for development, multiple emergency accesses need to be required to ensure public safety. These cul-de-sacs and second accesses need to be constructed to accommodate the turning radius of large emergency vehicles.

**Actions:** Update subdivision regulations to require second access. Evaluate the use of green easements to connect cul-de-sacs.

***Issue: Non-motorized transportation facilities***

**Goal:** Provide safe routes for pedestrians to travel between schools, parks, neighborhoods and other community facilities.

**Objectives:** Safe walk-to-school routes.

There is a perception that there are inadequate sidewalks and trails to allow for pedestrian walking and biking trails to school, parks and other community facilities. There is a need for trail corridors that allow access to schools, parks and other neighborhood by avoiding primary and secondary streets. These routes should provide a safe connection to schools and parks for children.

**Actions:** Establish and periodically review safe walk-to-school routes. Ensure connectivity between developing subdivisions.

***Issue: Storm water drainage is inadequate in some locations of the Heights.***

**Goal:** Safer streets by preventing large standing puddles or fast moving water.

In areas where storm water drainage is unavailable or inadequate, large standing puddles or areas that tend to have fast flowing water need to be addressed to prevent a child from drowning, being injured or causing property damage. This also causes problems for cars, trucks and emergency vehicles and personnel.

**Objectives:** To inventory and develop a list of areas where standing water and runoff is a problem. Develop a storm water plan and a process to mitigate this hazard.

**Actions:**

1. Work with City Engineer's Office to help develop a process for identifying and working a solution to these problem areas. This may be able to be accomplished through the completion of the Storm Water Drainage Plan that is being completed for the west side of the Heights.
2. Encourage the city to complete an updated Storm Water Plan for the east Heights.
3. Working through the Capital Improvement Plan process, identify time line to program improvements.
4. Promote the use of new technology to address storm water runoff and retention.

**Issue:** *Some areas in the Heights do not have adequate street lighting.*

**Goal:** Safer streets by providing adequate lighting.

**Objectives:** To ensure proper street lighting in areas where lighting is deficient.

**Actions:**

1. Review codes that pertain to street lighting. Work with the appropriate city departments to evaluate the current street lighting situation at key intersections or trouble areas of the Heights.
2. Through the establishment of a subcommittee of the Heights Task Force or Planning Steering Committee, complete a lighting survey through assistance from the city.
3. Promote architectural lighting and cut off lighting.

## Transportation

Transportation in the Heights can be a challenging experience for residents and visitors. Traffic issues are a large concern of the residents that live in the Heights and according to the survey completed by the steering committee, the two main traffic concerns in the Heights is traveling to and from the Heights, and local traffic and congestion within the Heights.

A review of the City of Billings Capital Improvement Plan for year 2006 to 2011 includes several important transportation elements that will significantly address Heights congestion. Below is a chart that explains each transportation element.

Project	Description	Year	Amount
Bench Blvd Connection (6 <sup>th</sup> /Main to Lake Elmo Road)	Estimated increase in construction and administration of project	2006 2007	\$420,000 \$5,333,774
Bench Boulevard Corridor (Lake Elmo Road to Hilltop)	Project also includes \$410,000 of sanitary sewer funding	2006 2007	\$840,000 \$1,148,173
Alkali Creek Road Improvements	Additional Storm Sewer Funding	2006	\$892,500
W. Wicks Lane and Governors/Gleneagles Intersection Improvements	Design and Construction of intersection based on recommended intersection control	2006	\$325,500
Lake Elmo Improvements	Hansen Lane to Wicks Lane	2006 2007 2008	\$228,375 \$210,000 \$2,264,050
Yellowstone River Road/Hawthorne Improvements		2006	\$310,215
Aronson Avenue Extension	Estimated increase in construction and administration of project and moved to 2006 with MDT's reconstruction of Highway 312	2010 2011	\$570,000 \$3,499,500
Sierra Grande Blvd. Gleneagles to Amigo Dr.	New street construction and new utility improvements	2010 2011	\$63,000 \$393,750
Alkali Creek Multi Use Trail – Metra to Senator		2011	\$336,250
Lake Elmo Improvements	Construct curb, gutter, sidewalks, bike lanes and storm drain features and street reconstruction between Hansen Lane and Wicks Lane	2006 2008	\$210,000 \$2,264,050
Annadale Road	River Oak to Gleneagle	2007	\$500,00
Airport Road	Reconstruction	2006/2007	\$18,000,000
Highway 312	Reconstruction – Hwy 87 to Dover Road	2005	\$4,000,000
Inner Belt Loop Study	Feasibility Study	2005	\$35,000
North By-Pass	Location/Environmental Study	Ongoing	\$3,500,000
Swords Park	Bike/Pedestrian Path	2005	\$900,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$46,244,137</b>

Source: City Of Billings Capital Improvement Plan – FY 2006 to FY 2011



### ***Issue: Congestion***

**Goal:** Efficient, free-flowing arterial streets to improve mobility in the Heights.

**Objectives:** Improved operating conditions (level of service) through efficient traffic signal operations. Reduced travel times on arterial facilities. Reduced fuel consumption, fuel omissions and pollution. Improve safety.

**Actions:** Review signal operations, stripping, bicycle path stripping and parking and adjust where needed to ensure efficient flow of traffic.

### ***Issue: Route Connectivity***

**Goal:** Improve continuity of arterial routes within the Heights and between the Heights and other areas of the city.

**Objectives:** Pursue implementation of arterial routes to connect the Heights to the remainder of the city. Plan to ensure connecting routes are not precluded by poorly planned development.

**Actions:** Implement the Billings Urban Area Transportation Plan. Complete planning studies and other necessary studies prior to construction on the Inner Belt Loop, North Bypass, Aronson Avenue and Bench Boulevard.

### ***Issue: Non-motorized transportation facilities***

**Goal:** Increase extent and quality of non-motorized transportation facilities.

**Objectives:** Pursue implementation of Heritage Trail in developed areas. Ensure development of Heritage Trail facilities in developing areas. Require adequate non-motorized circulation facilities with all new development and redevelopment. Establish and periodically review safe walk-to-school routes. Ensure public and impacted residents involvement during trail planning.

**Actions:** Implement projects identified in the Heritage Trail Plan. Update subdivision regulations that encourage development of trails for connectivity.

### ***Issue: Safety***

**Goal:** Improve safety for motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities.

**Objectives:** Identify existing safety concerns and review on a regular basis. Develop solution alternatives for safety problems. Prioritize implementation solutions.

**Actions:** Complete transportation projects planned for the Heights. Implement the Heritage Trail Plan. Update subdivision regulations to include neighborhood connectivity through trails and pedestrian walk ways.

### ***Issue: Planning for the future***

**Goal:** Employ sufficient development oversight to ensure feasibility of future transportation facility plans.

**Objectives:** Reservation of necessary rights of way for future transportation facilities. Control access to ensure functionality and capacity of future arterial and collector streets.

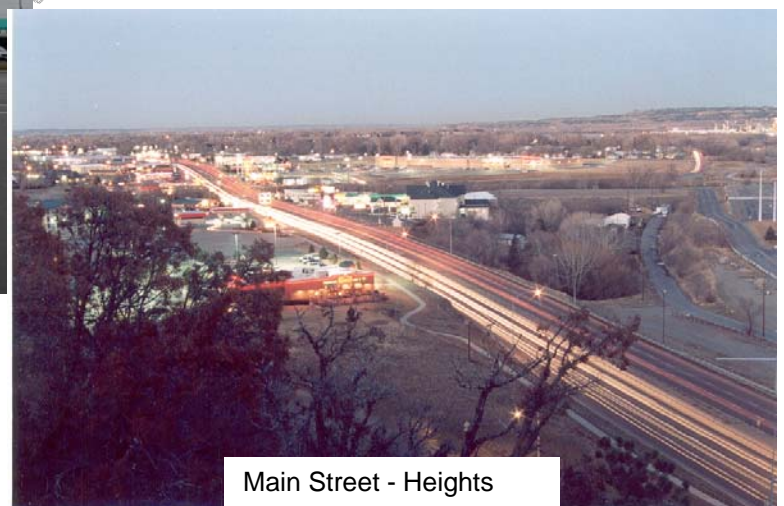
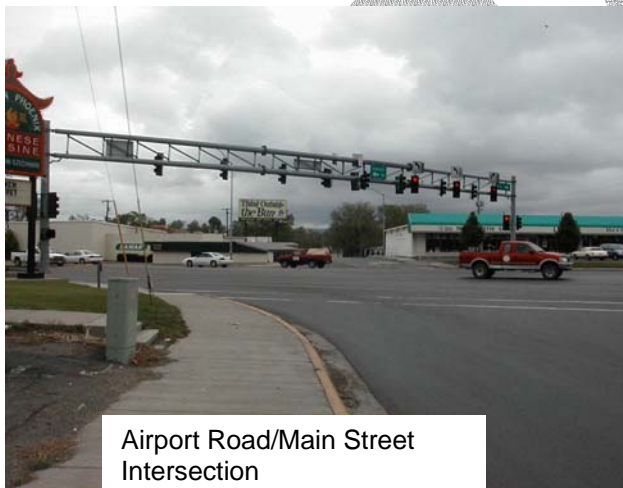
**Actions:** Implement long-range projects identified in the Billings Urban Area Transportation Plan.

### ***Issue: Traffic Planning***

**Goal:** To encourage traffic analysis as high density housing or large commercial development occurs. Employ sufficient development oversight to ensure feasibility of future transportation facility plans.

**Objectives:** To ensure that development does not add to the existing traffic and transportation problems that the Heights experiences.

**Actions:** Require Traffic Accessibility Studies for major subdivision developments (more than fifty lots).



## **Land Use**

As discussed earlier, the Heights includes many of the city zoning classifications. From low density single family to high density multi-family, and commercial development, the Heights provides a variety of housing and shopping options.

As part of the land use discussion, residents were asked at the community meeting to identify what they felt was the appropriate type of development, whether it be residential or commercial and at what intensity. They were also asked at meetings and through the survey what was their idea of appropriate land use. The majority of these residents answered that they would prefer a balanced community that offers a mix of housing, jobs, commerce, recreation, culture, and open space.

A current and a preferred future land use/zoning map are included in appendix \_\_.

### ***Issue: Heights Commercial Nodes***

**Goal:** Prohibit high intensity commercial development in residential areas. Provide less intensive commercial development on arterial intersections within residential neighborhoods.

**Objectives:** Maintain residential neighborhoods without the increased traffic associated with intense commercial development. Encourage light commercial development to provide services such as residential professional and neighborhood commercial at arterial intersections.

**Actions:** Implement the preferred future land use map for the Heights Neighborhood Plan to guide development through zoning requests.

### ***Issue: Planning for the future***

**Goal:** To develop a land use plan along the main existing and future transportation corridors. Identify, prior to construction, the appropriate land use pattern for properties adjoining these routes.

**Objectives:** To plan for the appropriate land use along main transportation routes. To establish development guidelines for potential residential, commercial and industrial developments.

**Actions:** Complete a long range land use plan in conjunction with the development of future main transportation routes.

### ***Issue: Residential Development***

**Goal:** To provide safe, good quality and affordable housing in the Heights. Develop housing patterns that are compatible with existing neighborhoods. Encourage high density multi-family development along arterial routes. Maintain similar housing in established neighborhoods.

**Objectives:** To encourage infill development and housing development that meets residents' desire to have similar housing within their neighborhood.

**Actions:** Develop an incentive program to developers that will encourage infill development consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. Work with the Community Development Division to identify grants to develop a housing infill program.

***Issue: Main Street Corridor Revitalization***

**Goal:** To revitalize Main Street to increase and retain the commercial core of the Heights. Encourage improvements such as access redesign, signage, and landscaping to functionally and aesthetically improve Main Street. Incorporate safe pedestrian walkways along Main Street.

**Objectives:** To encourage economic development through improvements to Main Street.

**Actions:** Update the sign code regulations to reduce the size, height, direct lighting and clutter of signage. During future reconstruction plans for Main Street, incorporate safe pedestrian routes and implement landscaping requirements.

***Issue: County Islands***

**Goal:** To annex county property that is wholly surrounded by City services to provide city services to residents.

**Objectives:** To encourage the annexation of county parcels into the City of Billings.

**Actions:** Identify county parcels within the Heights and implement a program and timeline to annex county properties.



Manufactured Home Development



West Heights Housing Development

## **Community Facilities & Neighborhood Character**

According to the survey and community meetings, residents feel that the Heights does not have adequate community facilities. The residents state that there are not many facilities for community meetings, after school programs, receptions, social clubs, etc.

Although residents generally feel that health care and senior services are adequately available in the Heights, there is expressed need for additional activities for seniors in the Heights. These activities included recreation, a centralized senior community center, and travel assistance.

Respondents to the survey felt that youth were not adequately served. Residents feel that the youth of the Heights needed more recreational, entertainment and after school program opportunities in the Heights.

When reviewing results of the survey, one question asked of residents was what the characteristics of a well-planned neighborhood are, the top 3 answers were that retail and commercial development have well designed architectural styles and landscape enhancements, offer pedestrian walkways and trails, and that housing developments have well designed architectural styles and landscape enhancements.

### ***Issue: Library Facilities***

**Goal:** Provide a branch of the Billings Parmly Library in the Heights.

**Objectives:** To provide community service facility for residents of the Heights.

**Actions:** Establish a committee to work with the Parmly Billings Library to complete a feasibility study for establishing a branch library in the Heights.

### ***Issue: Community Center***

**Goal:** Construct or acquire a community facility for activities and events in the Heights.

**Objectives:** To provide all residents a facility to hold special events, activities, and meeting space.

**Actions:** Establish a committee to work with the Billings Community Center and Friendship House to identify organizational and funding mechanisms. Establish communication with the Heights Fraternal Organizations, schools and medical facilities to potentially partner to establish a community center. Look to develop a partnership between public and private agencies.

## Housing

Between 1996 and 2003, there were approximately 942 new houses constructed in the Heights. That averages to approximately 135 per year. Recently, the Community Services Department completed an update to the Housing Needs Analysis for Billings. They identified and discussed 3 areas of housing needs:

1. Homeownership Needs – the prevailing concerns related to homeownership and the current housing stock are:
  - Affordability and other financial barriers to homeownership
  - Difficulty of paying for needed repairs
  - Increasing cost of construction and infrastructure
2. Rental Needs – The critical concerns related to rental housing identified were:
  - Affordability
  - Condition
  - Rental deposits and application fees
3. Special Needs – Special needs populations include the elderly, disabled, and homeless populations.
  - Mail survey respondents cited the elderly as one of the top four groups of people in the community with the greatest unmet housing need.
  - Overall community members and respondent indicated that accessible housing for persons with a disability were well met. However, the low income status of these households make affordability a critical issue.
  - The agency serving persons with HIV/AIDS indicated that quality, affordable housing is not available for this group. Many are low income, have poor credit, and must deal with the stigma of the disease and the resulting discrimination.
  - According to HRDC (Housing Resource Development Council) case managers, from June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004, 728 homeless persons were served. This included 157 individuals, and 190 families made up of 264 adults, and 307 children. Finding shelter for the homeless is a growing problem. There are many nights that all the emergency shelter beds are full. In order to find shelter, case managers must often physically visit the shelters and convince them to take another person.

It is interesting to note that results from the Billings Heights Survey indicate that 92 percent of respondents strongly or moderately agreed that a variety of housing types, prices and densities should be provided in the Heights. However, 58 percent of respondents indicated that they would prefer to see development of similar housing types, prices and densities in their own neighborhood.



### ***Issue: Urban Sprawl***

**Goal:** Encourage infill housing.

**Objectives:** To preserve and conserve resources and curb urban sprawl.

**Actions:** Develop an incentive program to developers that will encourage infill development. Work with the Community Development Division to identify grants to develop a housing infill program. Work with the City of Billings Public Utility Department to develop incentives to create affordable infill housing.

### ***Issue: Future Housing Planning***

**Goal:** To provide housing and commercial development compatible with existing development. To meet residents preferred vision of the Heights.

**Objectives:** Identify areas of vacant areas where infill development could occur. Identify appropriate types and densities of development.

**Actions:** Complete a future land use map. Adopt the Heights Neighborhood Plan as part of the City/County Growth Policy



Good new housing development



Unattractive housing development

## **Parks & Recreation**

Billings has 47 developed parks that total 595 acres and another 2001 acres of undeveloped, natural park areas. Many of the parks have facilities such as playgrounds, horseshoe pits, basketball courts, athletic fields, spraygrounds, covered shelter areas and much more.

In the Heights there are approximately 12 parks. Below is a list of those parks with their individual amenities.

Arrowhead—Crow Lane & Blackfoot Street. Little League field, horseshoe courts, playground, irrigated, picnic sites, shelter, softball and baseball field. A multiple-use park situated in a high density residential area. 3 acres.

Castle Rock—Wicks Lane & Nutter Blvd. Multi-use play field area, soccer, football, 3 open ball fields, playground, 4 tennis courts, restrooms, picnic area. 25 acres.

Clevenger—Bench Blvd. & Radford Lane. Semi-developed Little League Park. Softball/baseball fields. 8 acres.

Edgerton—Norris Court in Kimberly Heights. Basketball Court, playground, picnic shelter, horseshoe pits. 6 acres.

Frances Park—Burning Tree Drive. Playground.

Hawthorne—Janie St. & Columbine Drive. Picnic sites, shelter, restrooms, playground, soccer/football/rugby field and wading pool. 3.7 acres.

High Sierra—West End of Wicks Lane. Softball/baseball fields. 24 acres.

Lake Elmo—183.4 acre State Park.

Meadowlark Heights Park—Cody & Covert. Natural Wet Lands.

Pow Wow Park—Judicial Lane. Natural Park.

Primrose—Reece & Galaway Drive. Picnic area, playground, ballfield. 3.5 acres

Swords/Black Otter Trail—Airport Road. Natural park

The City of Billings prepares a Capital Improvement Plan and program to identify future Capital Improvements and identify future capital improvements. Capital improvements are divided into several categories including Administration/Finance, Airport, Fire, Library, Parking, Parks, Planning, Public Works Engineering, Public Works Solid Waste, Public Works Street Traffic, Public Works Utility, Transit, Equipment Replacement Program, and Technology Replacement Program.

A list of the capital improvements identified for parks in the Heights is listed below.

<b>Proposed CIP Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount</b>
ADA Compliance – Edgerton & Sacajawea Park	Remodel existing building and restrooms to meet ADA accessibility requirements	2006	\$50,000
Playground – Primrose Park	Year 6 project to renovate the playground to meet all current safety guidelines and ADA accessibility requirements. It will add to the minimal playground equipment in the park and replace unserviceable pieces	2007	\$75,000
Playground Safety Surfacing Compliance – Castle Rock	Install proper playground safety surfacing to complete the playgrounds	2009	\$140,000 (includes 7 parks total)
Castle Rock Park 3 Season Picnic Facility	Add large group 3 season picnic facility in the ease end adjacent to the parking lot	2009	\$205,000
Castle Rock Park Spraypad	Install spray pad for Billings Heights	2006	\$218,000
Swords Park/Black Otter Trail Development	Complete the development and restoration of Swords/Black Otter Trail as outlined in the recently adopted Master Plan	2007	\$1,600,000
Heights Aquatic Facility	Construction of seasonal family aquatic center	2007	\$4,750,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$7,038,000</b>



Undeveloped Park Land



Developed Park – Arrowhead Park - Heights

***Issue: Trail Connections***

**Goal:** To create pedestrian/bike trails to link parks and recreational facilities together.



**Objectives:** Identify needed trail links and identify priority and funding mechanisms.

**Actions:** Implement Heritage Trail Plan.

***Issue: Park Amenities***

**Goal:** To provide a picnic shelter for park visitors for activities and events.

**Objectives:** Construct a picnic shelter in Castle Rock prior to 2009. Provide amenities that target a variety of age groups.

**Actions:** Work with Parks, Recreation and Public Lands (PRPL) to identify actions to move the picnic shelter project up in the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) timeline.

***Issue: Park Safety***

**Goal:** To ensure parks are adequately signed for pedestrian safety.

**Objectives:** Identify park areas that are signed to evaluate the need for identification or speed signage.

**Actions:** Review current park signage protocol. Implement a park directional sign system.

***Issue: Lack of Recreational Facilities***

**Goal:** To provide a variety of recreational activities and facilities to Heights residents.

**Objectives:** Develop facilities which could be multi-functional for a variety of sports, i.e. baseball, softball, football, and soccer.

**Actions:** Develop a multi-use recreational complex, i.e. baseball, softball, soccer and football fields. Establish this facility in relationship to an existing school site such as Castle Rock Middle School or Skyview High School.

***Issue: Pool Additions and Improvements***

**Goals:** To provide recreational activities to all Billings residents and visitors.



**Objectives:** Improve existing pool facilities. Construct a family aquatic center in the Heights.

**Actions:** Implement the construction of a Heights Aquatic Center identified in the adopted FY2006 – FY20011 Capital Improvement Plan.



## **Schools & Education**

The Billings public school district is two separate and distinct school districts operating under a unified board of trustees. The elementary district serves students in grades preschool through eighth grade. It is organized into 24 elementary (K-6) schools and four middle schools (7-8). In addition, it is organized into three comprehensive four year high schools, one career center and one adult education center. The first school opened in Billings on September 17, 1883 with an enrollment of fifty six pupils. Since then, the school system has increased in enrollment many times with current enrollment at more than 16,000 students.

In the Heights there are 5 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school. When Beartooth Elementary School closed in 2003, it became home to Young Families Early Head Start. This program offers teen parents an opportunity to stay in school and provides quality daycare for infants and toddlers. Below is a listing of the schools and their location.

<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Address</b>
Alkali Creek	681 Alkali Creek Road
Bench	505 Milton Road
Bitterroot	1801 Bench Boulevard
Eagle Cliffs	1201 Kootenai
Sandstone	1440 Nutter Boulevard
Independent	2907 Roundup Road
<b>Middle School</b>	
Castle Rock	1441 Governor's Boulevard
<b>High School</b>	
Skyview High	1775 High Sierra Boulevard
<b>Head Start</b>	
Beartooth	1345 Elaine

Residents were asked in the citizen survey what they believe is the number one issue facing schools in the Heights. The respondents felt that the school districts' inability to respond to the needs of changing demographics was the number one issue. Other issues that received a high response rate by residents included the inadequate funding for new buildings and renovation of existing buildings, and overcrowding.

### ***Issue: Communication***

**Goal:** To educate and inform Heights residents on projects, future plans and discussions held by School District #2. To inform the School District on concerns, questions and recommendations residents have concerning education in the Heights.

**Objectives:** To keep an open line of communication between Heights residents and School District #2.

**Actions:** The Heights Neighborhood Task Force during their monthly meetings request an update and report from a School Board Representative to inform and educate residents at the Task Force's regular monthly meetings.



***Issue: Overcrowding***

**Goal:** To ensure adequate facilities meet regulated education standards for students.

**Objectives:** Develop a long range facilities plan for updating and repairing existing educational facilities. This plan should address the additional growth in the Heights and the impact on elementary schools.

**Actions:** Encourage School District #2 hire and maintain a facilities planner. Encourage the school district to actively participate in the planning process.

***Issue: Education***

**Goal:** To offer students smaller learning centers and vocational opportunities.

**Objectives:** Create “School within a School Program”. Develop learning centers similar to the Lincoln Center for freshman. Expand the career center to assist those students who do not have the desire or means to attend college to receive career training in the vocational field.

**Actions:** Develop a Freshman Academy and a Career Center in the Heights.

***Issue: Un-maintained Vacant School District Property***

**Goal:** To maintain vacant school district property.

**Objectives:** To eliminate noxious weeds and insect infestation promoted by un-maintained vacant school district property.

**Actions:** Develop a maintenance program for vacant property.



Castle Rock Middle School

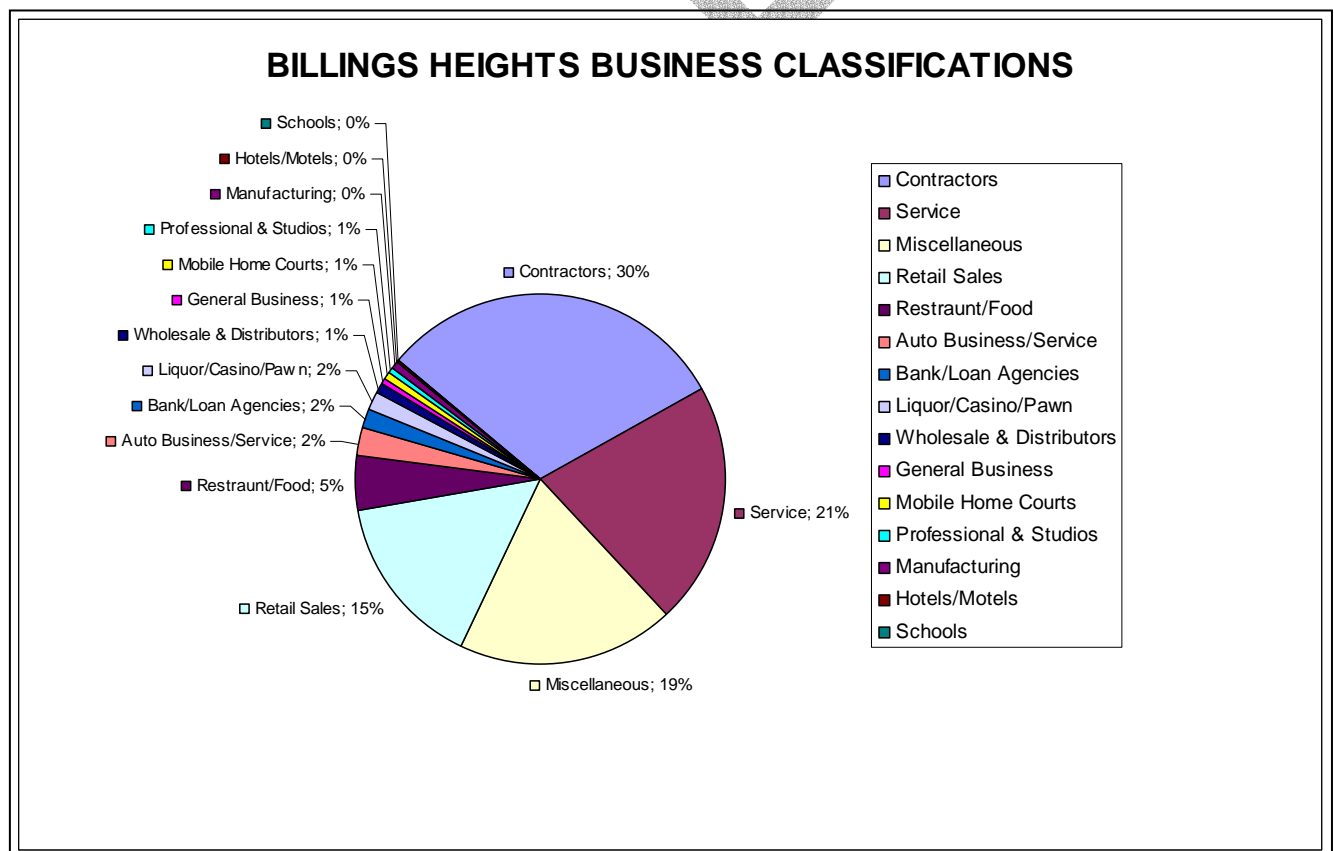
## Economic Development

As stated earlier, the Heights includes all classes of commercial zoning. These zoning classification include low intensity Residential Professional to high intensity Highway Commercial. Currently there are no industrial zones in the Heights.

According to the citizen survey completed, 51 percent of resident state that they cannot shop for most of their retail purchases in the Heights. Eighty-eight percent of residents state that there are not adequate entertainment or restaurant options in the Heights. When comments were reviewed, most residents expressed a desire for more family restaurant options and a movie theater.

When residents were asked if they would like to work in the Heights, 77 percent agreed they would like to work in the Heights.

An examination of the types of businesses located in the Heights is represented in the chart below. As shown on the chart, general contractors make up 33 percent of the business classifications.



***Issue: Lack of Organized Marketing of Business to the Heights***

**Goal:** Form a Heights Business Group

**Objectives:** To inform Heights residents on what businesses exist in the Heights. Provide business owners an opportunity to voice concerns in issues affecting their future, i.e. proactive vs. reactive. To lessen the impact on existing businesses by future business development.

**Actions:** Develop a list of businesses in the Heights in order to maintain a contact list or potentially a Business District Directory. Develop a survey of these businesses to gauge interest in developing Heights Business Group. Contact the local business groups located in the Heights to assist in the development of this Heights Business Group.

***Issue: Fiber Optic/Infrastructure Improvements***

**Goal:** Attract new businesses and corporations.

**Objectives:** Provide the necessary technology and infrastructure to new businesses and corporations. Upgrade existing fiber optic, communications and infrastructure.

**Actions:** Contact the existing companies that oversee current fiber optic, communications and infrastructure and promote future upgrades or plans for new lines.

***Issue: Lack of Financial Incentives to Attract New Business***

**Goal:** Attract new businesses and corporations.

**Objectives:** Provide financial incentives such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to attract new businesses and corporations. The area north of Wicks Lane is a prime development corridor that could provide essential services to the Heights. Increase business opportunities for the Heights as future bypass connections are constructed. Encourage high quality development guidelines to ensure organized growth and development of businesses. Occupy and redevelop vacant buildings.

**Actions:** Request the City Council for a study of the feasibility of developing a TIF district in the Heights.

***Issue: Access to Business in the Heights***

**Goal:** Provide residents/visitors easier physical access to businesses and services in the Heights.

**Objectives:** Provide easier access to existing businesses on Main Street. Provide alternate routes for traffic that will lessen the intensity of the existing traffic on Main Street allowing smoother traffic operations to gain access to businesses. Create jobs and contribute to the economy of the Heights as the North Bypass corridor develops. This corridor will spur new business development looking for access to the bypass.

**Actions:** Review the access study completed by the Montana Department of Transportation for Main Street. Review recommendations and determine if the recommendations are feasible to implement.

***Issue: Lack of Small and Medium Business***

**Goal:** To attract small and medium businesses to the Heights. To promote “life to work” concept where people work close to or within walking distance of their homes.

**Objectives:** To develop an active marketing campaign targeting small and medium businesses to establish or invest in a Heights location. To encourage the construction of attractive office buildings with the infrastructure to support starter businesses and small and medium established businesses.

**Actions:** Inventory vacant commercial buildings or potential commercial lots for infill development. Develop a brochure to distribute to the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Realtors to market the Heights for business opportunities that gives a variety of information such as economic census data, availability of buildings or lots and site development.

***Issue: Main Street Aesthetics***

**Goal:** To provide aesthetically appealing business and streetscape development in the Heights.

**Objectives:** Create aesthetically appealing business and commercial corridors.

**Actions:** Review and update the city site development code for landscaping. Update the city sign code. Encourage more streetscape design during reconstruction projects on the main transportation routes.



Vacant Kmart Site

## **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure development is a critical piece in determining how and where development can occur. The main source for water in the Heights is through the City of Billings Public Utilities Department (PUD). The Billings Heights Water District purchases water from the city for distribution within areas of the Heights. Heights wastewater is treated through the City of Billings. There are several county islands within the Heights which have onsite water and septic systems. The city also provides storm drainage services to the Heights.

### ***Issue: Public Health, Safety and Welfare***

**Goal:** To prohibit dead-end water and sewer service lines.

**Objectives:** To promote resident health, safety and welfare.

**Actions:** Where feasible require development to install water and sewer lines that create connectivity to new and existing developments.

### ***Issue: Infill Development***

**Goal:** To utilize existing infrastructure services.

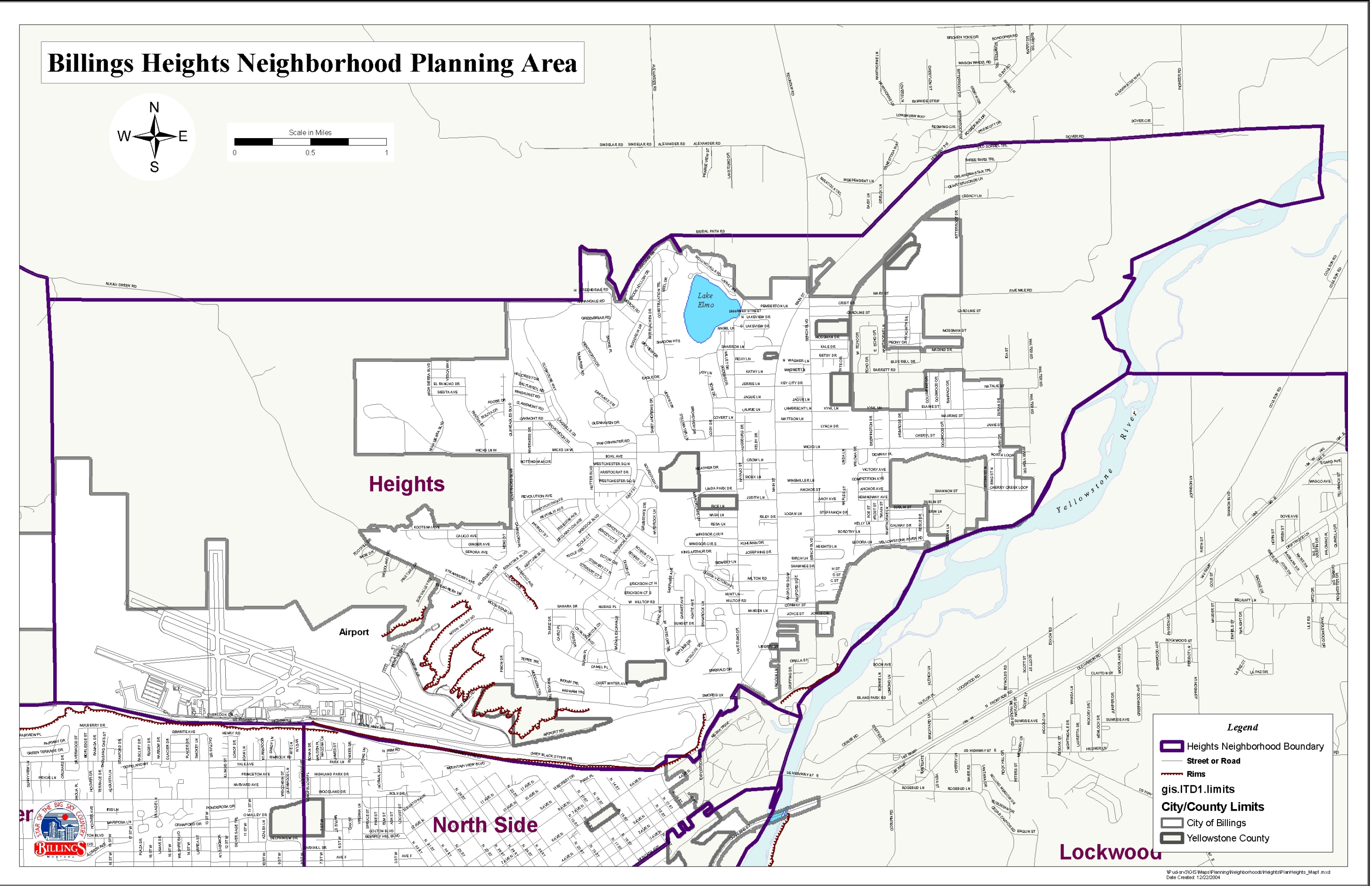
**Objectives:** Encourage infill development to access existing infrastructure development.

**Actions:** Develop an incentive program to developers to encourage infill development.

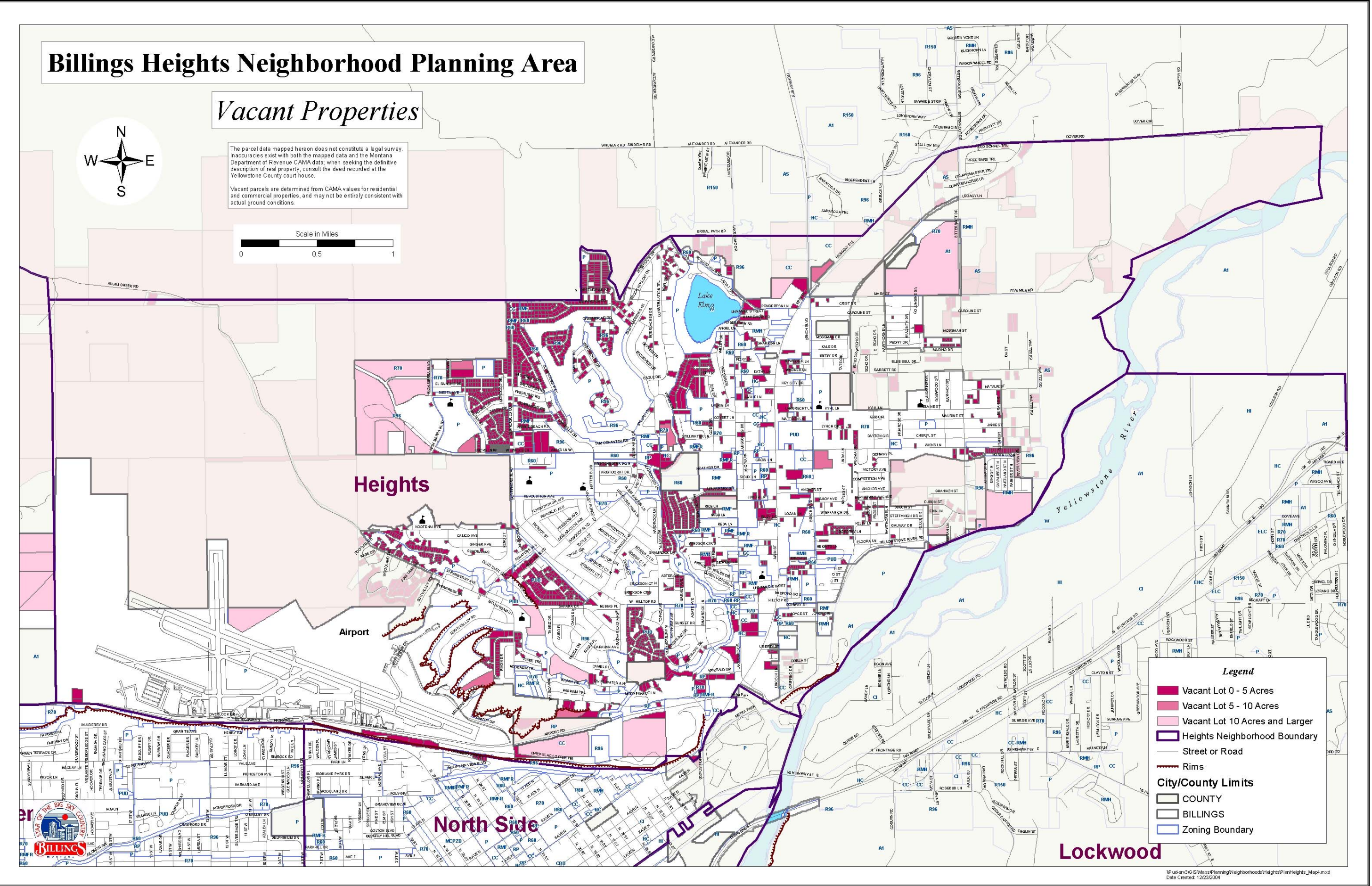


Heights Water District Office

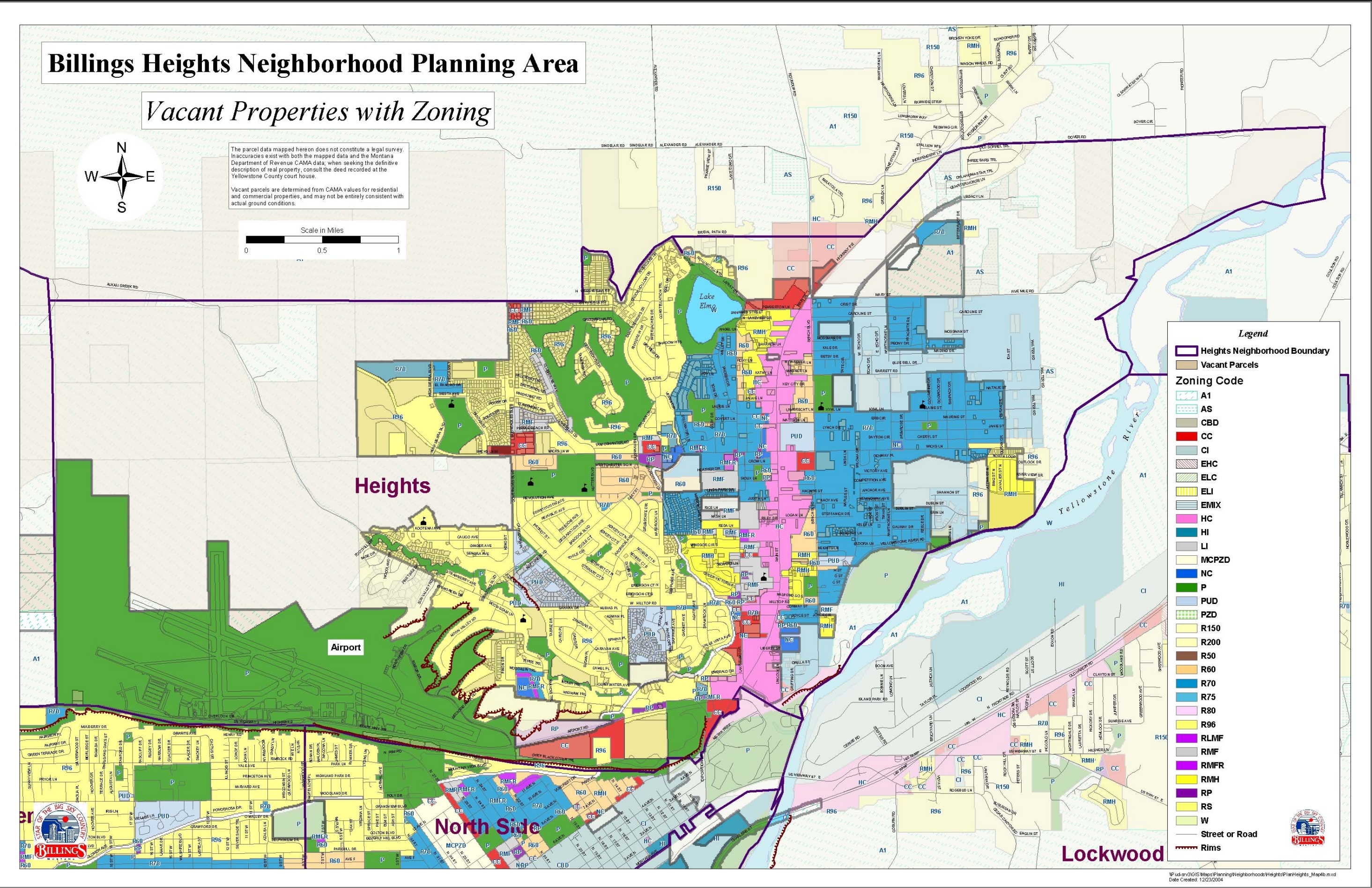




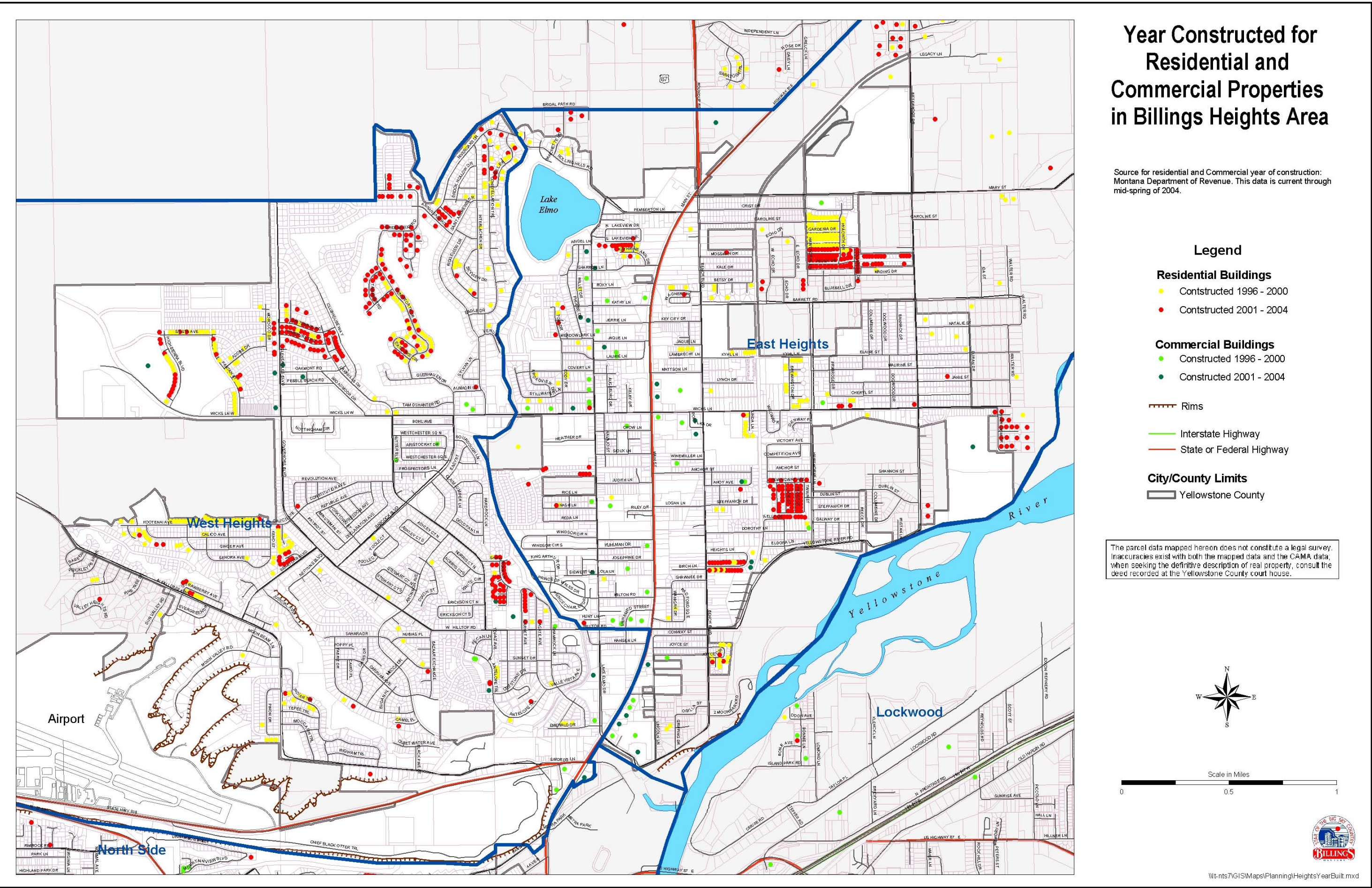




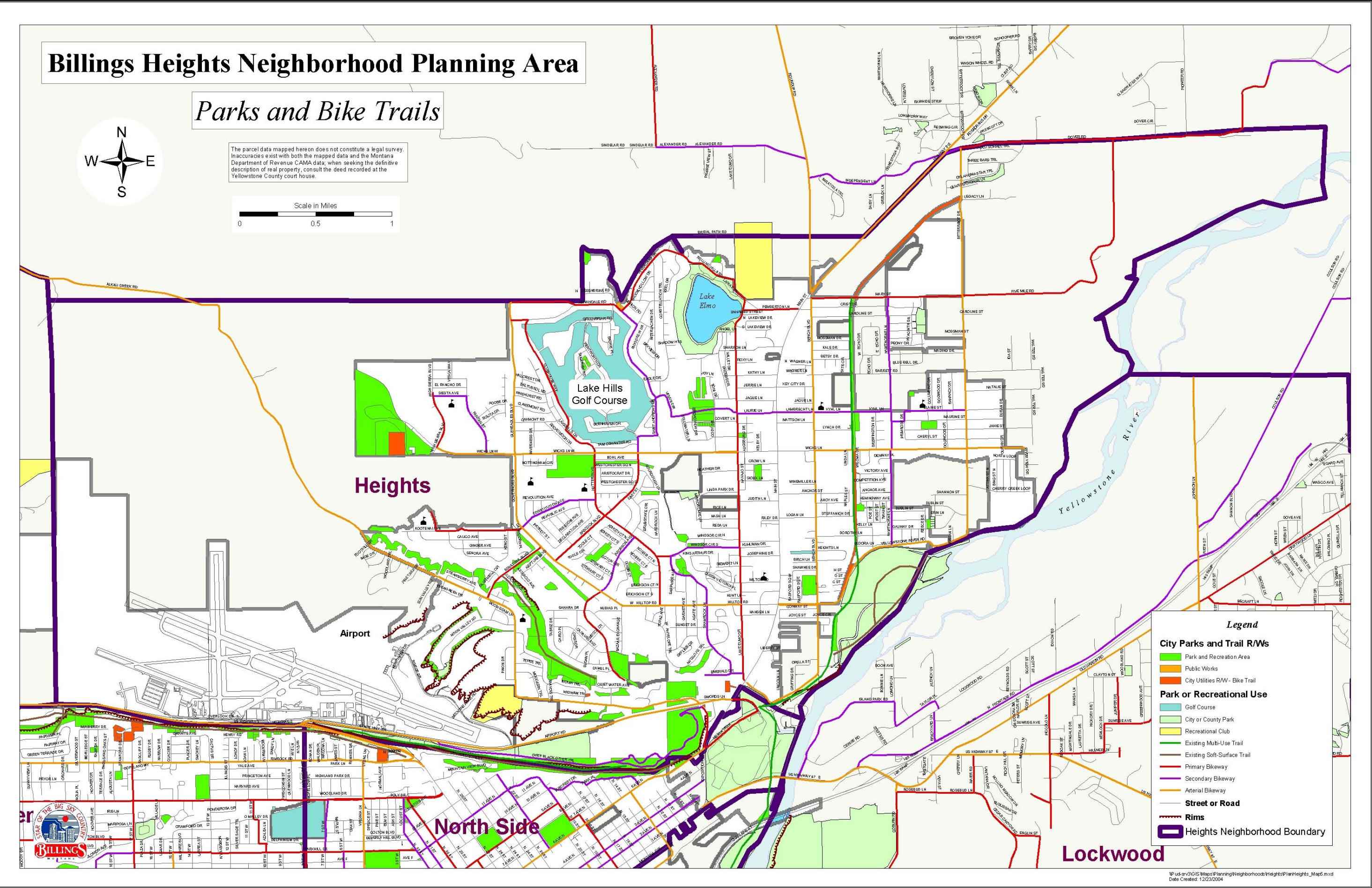




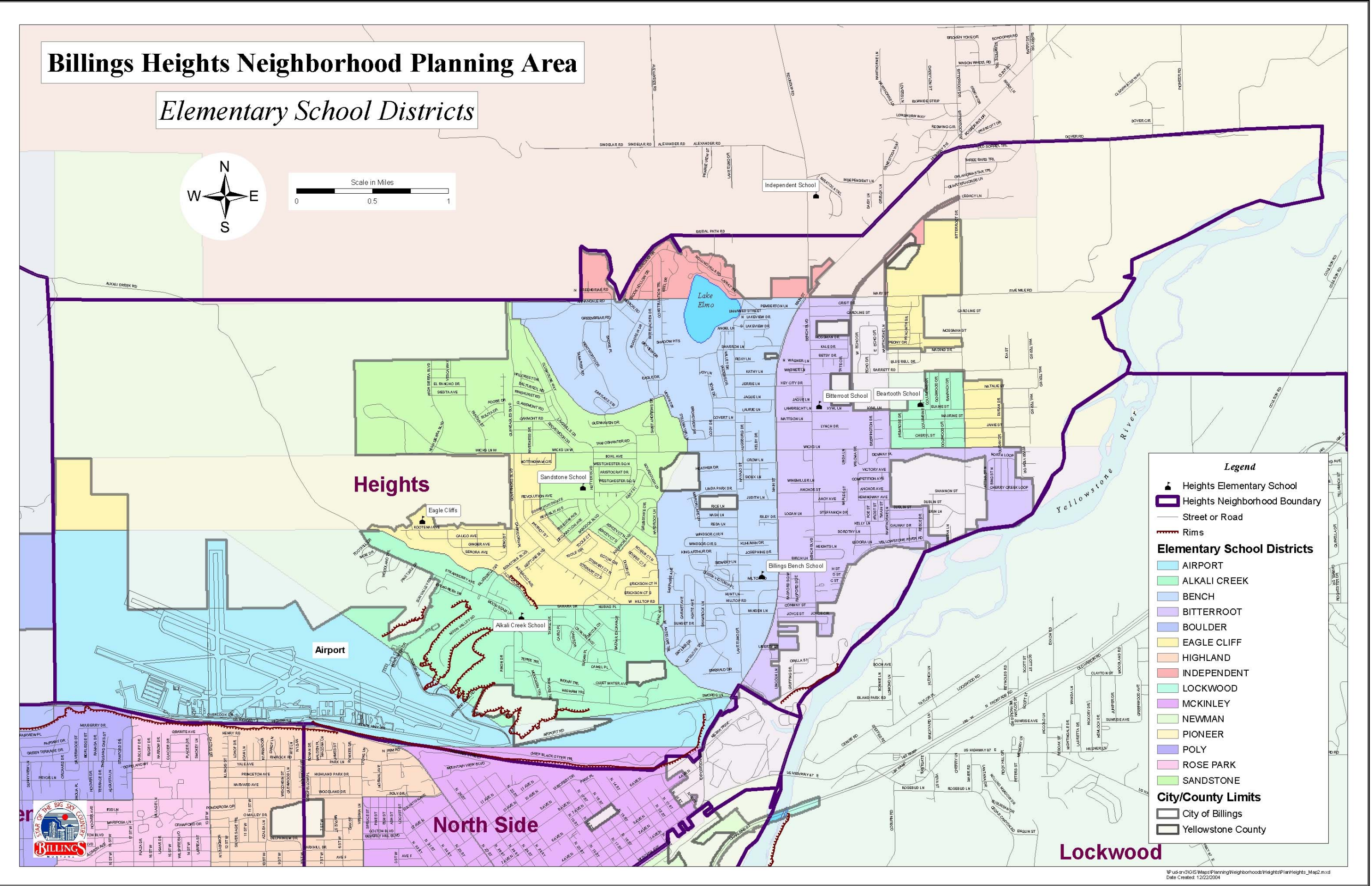




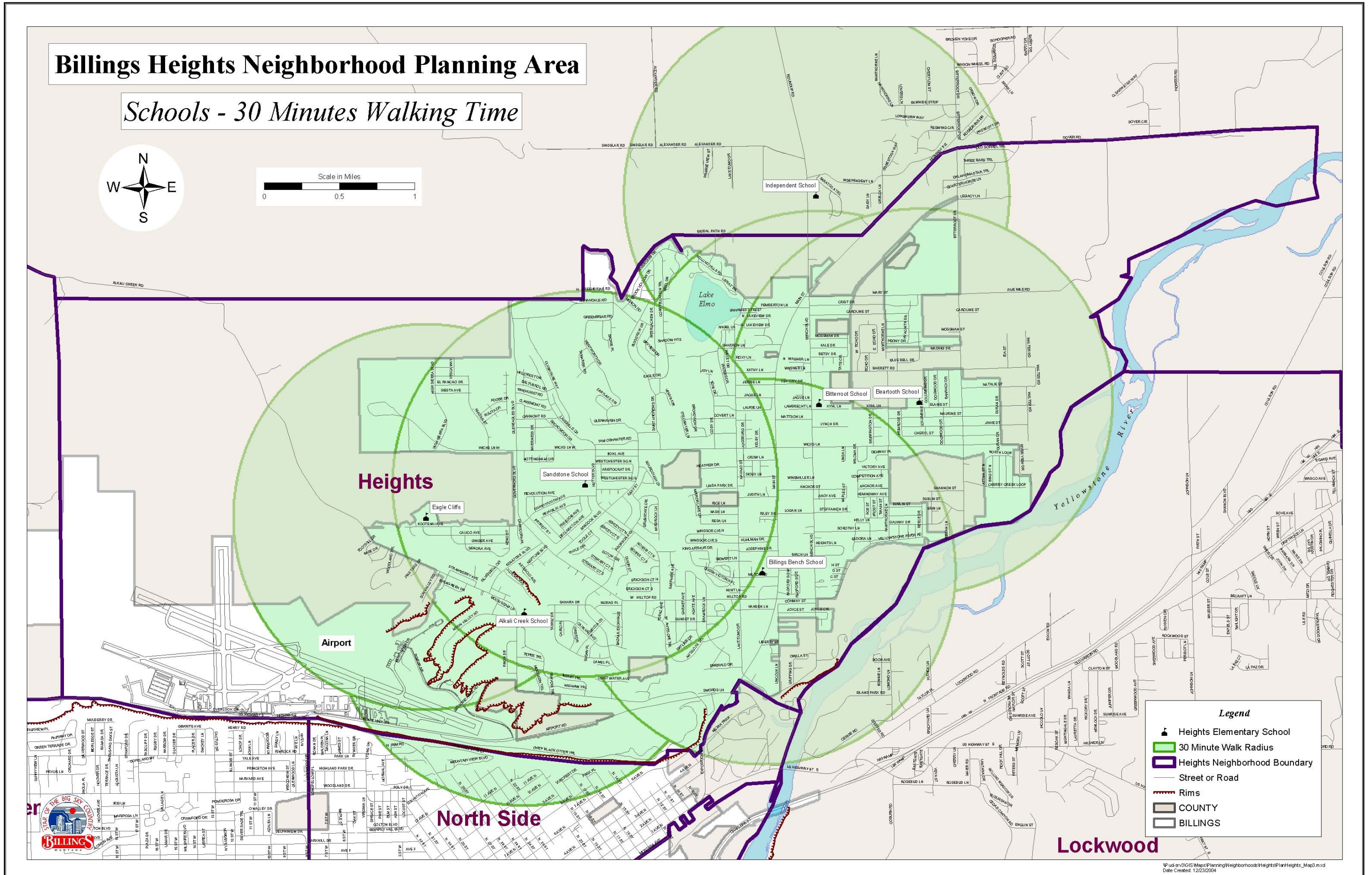




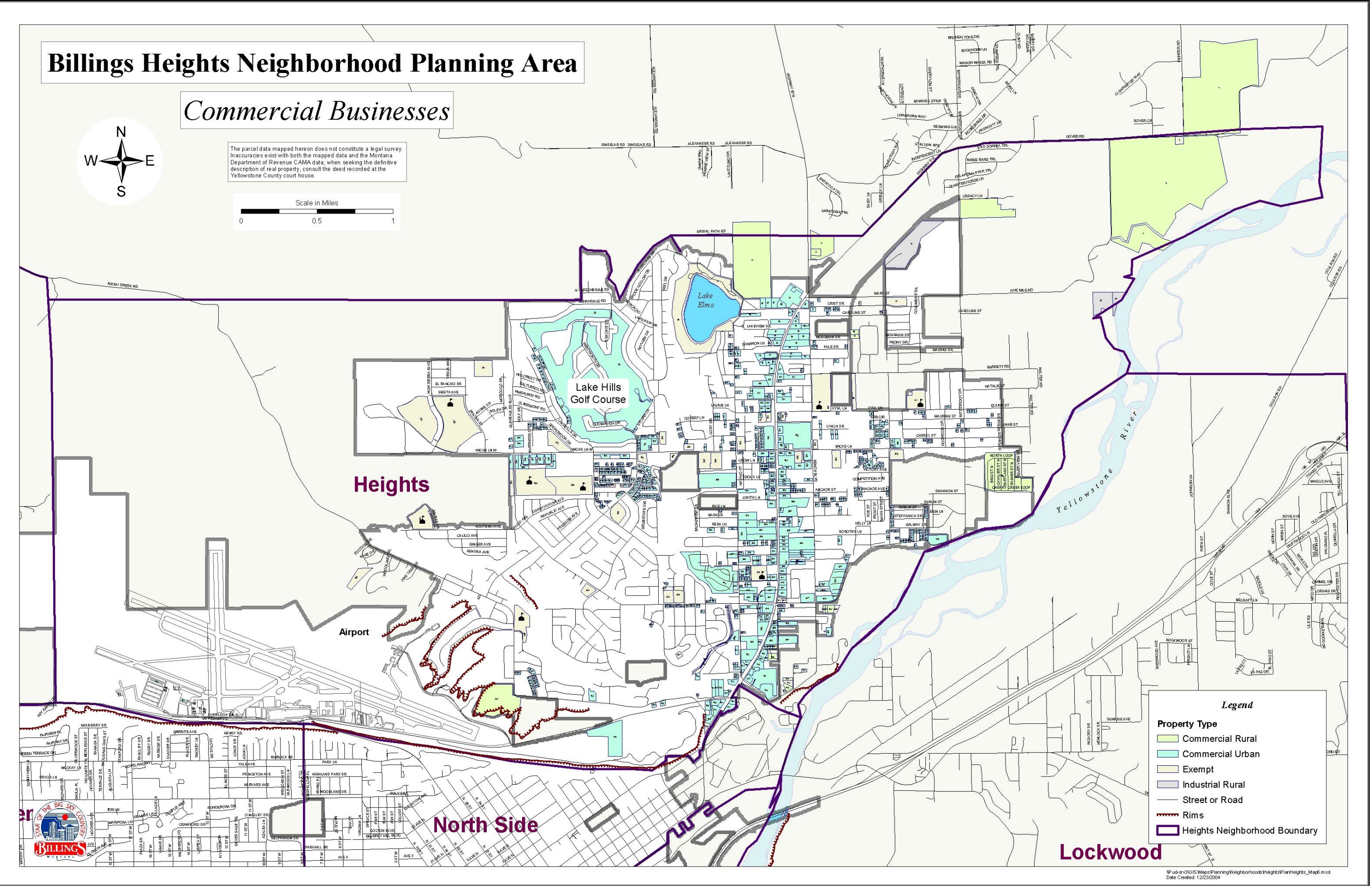












## **BILLINGS HEIGHTS – RESIDENT/BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS**

### **LAND USE**

1. Select one choice below that would best describe your vision about what the Heights should be in the future: **157**
  - ☐ A balanced community that offers a mix of housing, jobs, commerce, recreation, culture and open space **146 or 93%**
  - ☐ A center of employment that offers jobs to local residents and surrounding region **5 or 3%**
  - ☐ A center of recreational opportunities **4 or 2%**
  - ☐ A center of activities for my family and me **0**
  - ☐ Other (describe in your own words) **4 or 2% See comment sheet**
2. What type of growth should be planned for the Heights? **153**
  - ☐ Residential (housing) **8 or 5%**
  - ☐ Commercial (business and retail services) **23 or 15%**
  - ☐ Industrial (technology/business centers and manufacturing) **2 or 1%**
  - ☐ Combination of all of the above **120 or 78%**
3. Where should growth occur in the Heights area? **157**
  - ☐ Anywhere without consideration of infrastructure or environmental impacts **7 or 4%**
  - ☐ Anywhere with consideration of infrastructure or environmental impacts **126 or 80%**
  - ☐ Directly adjacent or within existing development (infill) **23 or 15%**
  - ☐ No growth should occur **1 or 1%**

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

1. Describe your perceptions about the City/County's ability to provide the following infrastructure systems to the Heights: (one answer for each system)
  - Water: **162**
    - ☐ Good, reliable, adequate **105 or 65%**
    - ☐ Needs some improvement **36 or 22%**
    - ☐ Major deficiencies **11 or 7%**
    - ☐ No opinion **10 or 6%**
  - Sewer: **159**
    - ☐ Good, reliable, adequate **102 or 64%**
    - ☐ Needs some improvement **36 or 23%**
    - ☐ Major deficiencies **7 or 4%**
    - ☐ No opinion **14 or 9%**
  - Storm Drainage: **162**
    - ☐ Good, reliable, adequate **38 or 23%**
    - ☐ Needs some improvement **86 or 53%**
    - ☐ Major deficiencies **27 or 17%**
    - ☐ No opinion **11 or 7%**



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. Would you use a branch library in the Heights? **158**
  - ☐ Yes **102 or 65%**
  - ☐ No **56 or 35%**
2. Would you use a community center in the Heights? **157**
  - ☐ Yes **102 or 65%**
  - ☐ No **55 or 35%**
3. I believe that the Heights has adequate health care facilities. **161**
  - ☐ Strongly agree **56 or 35%**
  - ☐ Moderately agree **88 or 55%**
  - ☐ Moderately disagree **12 or 7%**
  - ☐ Strongly disagree **2 or 1%**
  - ☐ No opinion **3 or 2%**
4. Are senior services adequate in the Heights? **161**
  - ☐ Yes, senior services are adequate **25 or 15%**
  - ☐ No. If not, what are the programs and facilities most needed by Heights' seniors? **64 or 40%**  
**112 choices made, percentages based on number of choices made**
    - ☐ Activities and recreation **22 or 20%**
    - ☐ A centralized senior community center **41 or 36%**
    - ☐ Assisted resident care **25 or 22%**
    - ☐ Travel assistance **22 or 20%**
    - ☐ Other (please name) **2 or 2% See comment sheet**
  - ☐ No opinion **72 or 45%**
5. Are the Heights' youth adequately served? **161**
  - ☐ Yes, youth are adequately served **12 or 7%**
  - ☐ No. If not, what programs and facilities are most needed by Heights' youth? **123 or 76%**  
**322 choices made, percentages based on number of choices made**
    - ☐ Entertainment **91 or 28%**
    - ☐ Recreation **94 or 29%**
    - ☐ Day-care **19 or 6%**
    - ☐ Before/After school programs **59 or 18%**
    - ☐ Service/volunteer **27 or 8%**
    - ☐ Substance abuse resistance education **23 or 7%**
    - ☐ Other (please name) **9 or 3% See comment sheet**
  - ☐ No opinion **26 or 16%**

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

1. What are the characteristics of a well-planned development? Select all that apply. **158**  
**551 choices made, percentages based on the number of choices made**
  - ☐ Housing design (architectural styles and landscape enhancements) **101 or 18%**
  - ☐ Retail/commercial design (architectural styles and landscape enhancements) **113 or 20%**
  - ☐ Pedestrian-oriented commercial centers **71 or 13%**
  - ☐ Mixes of housing types and densities **70 or 13%**

- ☐ Pedestrian walkways and trails **107 or 19%**
  - ☐ Availability of schools **80 or 15%**
  - ☐ Other (please describe) **9 or 2% See comment sheet**
- 
2. I believe that the Heights should have consistent standards and development policies. **158**
    - ☐ Strongly agree **80 or 51%**
    - ☐ Moderately agree **66 or 42%**
    - ☐ Moderately disagree **5 or 3%**
    - ☐ Strongly disagree **1 or <1%**
    - ☐ No opinion **6 or 4%**
  3. I believe that those standards and development policies should be set: **152**
    - ☐ Higher than what is currently in use **86 or 57%**
    - ☐ Same as what is currently in use **56 or 37%**
    - ☐ Lower than what is currently in use **10 or 6%**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. I can shop for most retail purchases in the Heights. **159**
  - ☐ Strongly agree **11 or 7%**
  - ☐ Moderately agree **65 or 41%**
  - ☐ Moderately disagree **45 or 28%**
  - ☐ Strongly disagree **37 or 23%**
  - ☐ No opinion **1 or 1%**
2. I believe that there are adequate entertainment/restaurant options for the Heights. **160**
  - ☐ Strongly agree **2 or 1%**
  - ☐ Moderately agree **17 or 11%**
  - ☐ Moderately disagree **57 or 36%**
  - ☐ Strongly disagree **83 or 52%**
  - ☐ No opinion **1 or <1%**
3. I would like to work in the Heights. **160**
  - ☐ Strongly agree **76 or 48%**
  - ☐ Moderately agree **46 or 29%**
  - ☐ Moderately disagree **6 or 4%**
  - ☐ Strongly disagree **4 or 2%**
  - ☐ No opinion **28 or 17%**

## **SCHOOLS/EDUCATION**

1. I believe the number one issue facing schools in the Heights is: **157**
  - ☐ Overcrowding **32 or 20%**
  - ☐ Inability to respond to needs of changing demographics **42 or 27%**
  - ☐ Busing **8 or 5%**
  - ☐ Inadequate funding for new buildings and renovation **37 or 23%**
  - ☐ Inadequate funding for educational programs **6 or 4%**

- ☐ Location of elementary schools **6 or 4%**
- ☐ Other (please name) **26 or 17% See comment sheet**

## HOUSING

1. I believe that a variety of housing types should be provided in the Heights as a whole, offering opportunities for families, singles, and the young and old at a range of housing prices and densities. **159**
  - ☐ Strongly agree **93 or 58%**
  - ☐ Moderately agree **54 or 34%**
  - ☐ Moderately disagree **8 or 5%**
  - ☐ Strongly disagree **2 or 1%**
  - ☐ No opinion **2 or 1%**
2. Within my immediate neighborhood, I prefer to see: **158**
  - ☐ Development of similar housing types, sizes and price ranges **91 or 58%**
  - ☐ Development of different housing types, sizes and price ranges **13 or 8%**
  - ☐ Development of mixed housing types, sizes and price ranges **31 or 19%**
  - ☐ No opinion **23 or 15%**

## PUBLIC SAFETY

1. I believe that the Heights is adequately served by its Law Enforcement Departments. **159**
  - ☐ Agree **74 or 47%**
  - ☐ Disagree, improvements are needed **61 or 38%**
  - ☐ Don't know **24 or 15%**
2. I believe that the Heights is adequately served by its Fire Department. **154**
  - ☐ Agree **103 or 67%**
  - ☐ Disagree, improvements are needed **24 or 16%**
  - ☐ Don't know **27 or 17%**

## PARKS & RECREATION

1. I would like to see multi-purpose parks developed and integrated with public school facilities for both students and the surrounding neighborhood. **159**
  - ☐ Strongly agree **79 or 50%**
  - ☐ Moderately agree **63 or 40%**
  - ☐ Moderately disagree **9 or 6%**
  - ☐ Strongly disagree **4 or 2%**
  - ☐ No opinion **4 or 2%**
2. The three most important facilities needed at parks in the Heights are: **158**  
**442 choices made, percentages based on the number of choices made**
  - ☐ Passive green areas **62 or 14%**
  - ☐ Athletic fields and courts **50 or 11%**
  - ☐ Swimming pools **100 or 23%**
  - ☐ Sprayground/wading pools **57 or 13%**
  - ☐ Playground equipment **19 or 4%**
  - ☐ Multi-purpose indoor facilities **65 or 15%**
  - ☐ Picnic facilities **46 or 10%**
  - ☐ Golf facilities **1 or <1%**

- ☐ Nature observation **19 or 4%**
  - ☐ Equestrian facilities **7 or 2%**
  - ☐ Outdoor gathering spaces (i.e. Amphitheater) **16 or 4%**
3. I would prefer: **153**
- ☐ More small neighborhood parks **30 or 20%**
  - ☐ Larger community parks **29 or 19%**
  - ☐ Both **78 or 51%**
  - ☐ No opinion **16 or 10%**

## TRANSPORTATION

1. The two most significant transportation issues in the Heights are: **156**  
**277 choices made, percentages based on the number of choices made**
  - ☐ Local traffic and congestion for travel within the Heights **97 or 35%**
  - ☐ Traveling to and from the Heights **132 or 48%**
  - ☐ Inner Heights connections **17 or 6%**
  - ☐ Lack of public transit options **11 or 4%**
  - ☐ Lack of non-motorized access areas **13 or 4%**
  - ☐ Other (please specify) **7 or 3% See comment sheet**
2. Do you use MET Transit? **157**
  - ☐ Yes, I use it regularly **5 or 3%**
  - ☐ Yes, I use it but it needs improvement **2 or 1%**
  - ☐ No, I use other transportation **150 or 96%**
3. Rank your priorities for the following transportation projects.
  - a. Aronson Avenue extension (to Alkali Creek Road) **149**
    - ☐ High Priority **54 or 36%**
    - ☐ Low Priority **95 or 64%**
  - b. Bench Boulevard extension to 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Avenues North **149**
    - ☐ High Priority **108 or 72%**
    - ☐ Low Priority **41 or 28%**
  - c. Inner Belt Loop (Wicks Lane extension to Montana Highway 3) **160**
    - ☐ High Priority **96 or 60%**
    - ☐ Low Priority **64 or 40%**
  - d. North Bypass (Main Street to Montana Highway 3 connection) **155**
    - ☐ High Priority **81 or 52%**
    - ☐ Low Priority **74 or 48%**
  - e. Northeast Bypass (Main Street to I-90 connection) **148**
    - ☐ High Priority **114 or 77%**
    - ☐ Low Priority **34 or 23%**
  - f. Annadale Road and Sierra Granda Boulevard extensions (alternate access to Sky View High School) **148**
    - ☐ High Priority **80 or 54%**

☐ Low Priority **68 or 46%**

g. Other **8 or 5% See comment sheet**

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## MISCELLANEOUS

1. What kind of neighborhood do you live in? **161**

☐ Single-family **128 or 80%**

☐ Condo/duplex/town home **9 or 6%**

☐ Apartment **6 or 3%**

☐ Mobile Home **3 or 2%**

☐ Other (please identify) **15 or 9% See comment sheet**

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2. Please tell us about yourself. (Select all that apply) **157**

**206 choices made, percentages based on the number of choices made**

☐ I am a resident of the Heights and own my home **121 or 59%**

☐ I am a resident of the Heights and rent my home **10 or 5%**

☐ I own a business in the Heights **29 or 14%**

☐ I work in the Heights area, but do not live here **9 or 4%**

☐ I work and live in the Heights **37 or 18%**

3. Please tell us how long you have lived in the Heights area: **162**

☐ Less than one year **9 or 5%**

☐ 1 – 5 years **30 or 19%**

☐ 6 – 10 years **32 or 20%**

☐ More than 10 years **91 or 56%**

4. What age group do you belong to? **160**

☐ 18 – 29 **14 or 9%**

☐ 30 – 39 **31 or 19%**

☐ 40 – 49 **43 or 27%**

☐ 50 – 59 **43 or 27%**

☐ 60+ **29 or 18%**

## Heights Neighborhood Survey Comments

### Land Use:

Land Use: Vision – all of the above

Land Use #2: Mostly retail – restaurants

Land Use #2: Residential and commercial areas separated – no gas stations on every corner

Land Use #1: Need more retail (clothing/grocery)

Land Use #3: You let Wal Mart in

Land Use #1: Other – all of the above, more family style restaurants and a movie theater

### Infrastructure

#### Community Facilities

Community Services: Youth/other – Movie Theater, Bowling Alley

Community Facilities #3: Need same day or out patient surgery center

Community Facilities #5: Other – Community Center

Community Facilities #5: No/Other – Swimming Pool

Community Facilities #5: Other – Movie theaters that does not show R-rated movies. Public pool

Community Facilities #5: Other – need more R-rated movies at Skyview

Community Facilities #4: Other – senior housing facilities (like on West end)

Community Facilities #4: Other – no opinion, what do the seniors say?

Community Facilities #5: Other – movie theater, bowling alley

Community Facilities #5: Other – so many of our youth are into computers. Lets do something to curb vandalism

Community Facilities #5: Other – Movie Theater

Community Facilities #5: Other – a pool facility is BADLY needed in the Heights

Community Facilities #5: Other - Library, shopping

Community Facility #5: Other – Need a YMCA branch and a movie theater

### Neighborhood Character

Neighborhood Character: Easy access medical facilities/clinics and a restaurant offering breakfast for those of us who enjoy going out for breakfast after church or on other occasions.



Neighborhood Character: Do not like mailbox post in the middle of the sidewalk (on Lake Elmo Road – Stupid!)

Neighborhood Character: Recreation facilities (something besides casinos).

Neighborhood Character: Billings does not have consistent policies

Neighborhood Character: Not familiar with current policies

Neighborhood Character #1: More eating establishments

Neighborhood Character #1: We need to clean up lots that are full of junk all over the Heights.

Neighborhood Character #1: No apartments and trailers

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Affordability

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Limits of speed in areas (need to review on regular basis), lower limits and enforce. Example: Main Street, 35 mph, everyone drives 45-50, plus 1 death, how many OWI's etc.

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Clear community development with clear housing districts

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Easy access medical facilities/clinics and restaurants

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Traffic management

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Bike trails

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Bicycle or light rail

Neighborhood Character #1: Other – Plenty of schools, let's keep them open!!

## **Economic Development**

Economic Development #2: Need family type restaurant

Economic Development: We need restaurants, other than casinos and fast food

Economic Development #1: Wal Mart killed our local business

Economic Development #1: No clothing places

Economic Development #2: Quality buffet with meeting rooms needed

Economic Development #2: Need family restaurant, IHOP/Perkins

## **Schools/Education**

Schools: Don't know.

Schools: We have good schools.

Schools: Very dissatisfied with trustees in School District #2.

Schools: Why travel to Daylis Stadium when Skyview has a football field already?

Education: I think the Heights needs its own district

Education: Should re-open Beartooth school

School: Internal bureaucracy

Schools: Too top heavy for schools

Education: Other – nothing

Education: Other – Transportation (i.e. Roads and public transportation in and out of the Heights)

Education: Other – Traffic

Education: Other – Are we thinking ahead so problems facing other area now, won't affect us in the future?

Schools: Need morals/conduct code for all educators. Educator accountability/parental notification/written permission for any R-rated material shown in class. Always offer alternatives – no penalty

Schools: Other – Lack of moral leadership on school board and administration

School: Other – Skyview staff is an unhealthy system (a closed system) that is harmful to the students

Education: Other – X-rated movies, nudity movies, immoral teachers in High School

Schools: Other – Safety, have you ever stood at the corner of Governors?

Schools: Other – Future expansion plans. Boards lack of sensible funding, not enough on schools, too much on administration. We need to return to the neighborhood school program, no bussing, a waste of tax payers money.

Schools: Other – Combination of the above

Schools: Other – No comment

Schools: Other – No opinion

Schools: Other – closing elementary schools was a big mistake

## **Housing**

Housing #2: Other – We need more high quality patio housing (single-level). Smaller lots/condo style grounds care, for older couples down sizing from large family homes

## **Public Safety**

### **Parks and Recreation**

Parks: Develop existing parks (x2)

Parks #3: Have enough parks, do better job of maintaining them, more picnic tables and kids swings, etc.

Parks #2: And just develop them, there are designated areas set up for parks already but not followed up on.

Parks #1: Conflicts arise during hours of school operation

Parks #3: 1 major park in the Heights that is fully developed

Parks #2: Other – Integrated multi-purpose trail network adequately take care of whatever.

Parks #2: Other – Dog Park

Parks #2: Other – Allow dogs

Parks #2: Other – Playgrounds which include more than swings, paved walkway for stroller, disabled etc.

## **Transportation**

Transportation: Need better roads to enter and exit the Heights.

Transportation #3: Lake Elmo to Wicks to Main

Transportation: Connection, Hilltop, Yellowstone River Road to I-90 near old Wongs Café. (x2)

Transportation #3: Need Main Street to tie into I-90 at the south end. New interchange between Lockwood and 27<sup>th</sup> Street

Transportation #1: By-pass so as through north traffic doesn't enter Heights

Transportation #1: In 10 years Heights traffic problems will be a disaster – if the current traffic routes are not addressed and changed. It will take serious thought and superb planning with lots of money to solve this problem.

Transportation: #3 Other – Metra to Main Street to Wicks to Nutter to Governors to Wicks to Main to Metra

Transportation #3: Other – Yellowstone River Road to Lockwood

Transportation #1: Other – Main Street speeds at this rate is just going to get more people killed

Transportation #1: Need alternate route for Main

Transportation #3: Other – stop light at intersection of 312 and Roundup Road

Transportation #1: Other – Wicks connection to Zimmerman Trail

Transportation #3: Other – improve/widen Bench from Wicks to extension to 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North

Transportation #1: Other – Increase in and ease of transportation for seniors

Transportation #1: Other – No bike trails on Main

Transportation #1: Other – The traffic to and from is HORRIBLE!

Transportation #1: Other – MET needs to meet the hours of work

Transportation #3: Other – Airport Road, widen to 4 lanes and intersection improvements at Airport Road and 27<sup>th</sup>

Transportation #3: Other – Bypass loop has been put on hold since May, this needs to be addressed

Transportation #3: Other – Castle Rock school congestion, stop light at Wicks and Governors for Skyview kids

## **Miscellaneous**

Miscellaneous #1: Mixed, single-family, apartments, trailers.

Miscellaneous #1: Rural setting (x2)

Miscellaneous: I think the Heights needs some nice restaurants, more retail (technology or lumber yards) and traffic relief on Main Street

Miscellaneous #1: Live in single-family but have all in neighborhood

Miscellaneous #1: Single-family with some duplexes mixed in

Miscellaneous #1: Other – Mixed commercial/residential, established quiet single-family units

Miscellaneous #1: Other – Don't live in Heights

Miscellaneous #3: Moved from west end where we lived 23 years

Miscellaneous #1: Other – Single family and duplex

Miscellaneous #1: Other – mixed

Miscellaneous #1: Other – Rural subdivision

Miscellaneous #1: Other – Please do not call, email or contact me