

A photograph of a public involvement meeting in a modern room with a wood-paneled wall. In the center, a woman in a grey vest and pink sleeves is talking to a man in a blue jacket and an older man in a blue sweater. To the left, two women are seated at a table. In the background, another man stands near a table with many water bottles. The text 'PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN' is overlaid in large white letters.

# **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**





# 2023 BILLINGS URBAN AREA LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



## Public Involvement Plan



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# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

## Introduction

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to outline the objectives, purpose, and approach to facilitate productive stakeholder and public involvement in the 2023 Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) process.

## Background

In 2018, the Billings-Yellowstone County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) adopted a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that serves as the guiding framework for the development and implementation of a multimodal transportation system. The planning process:

- Included a comprehensive update of the goals and objectives
- Assessed 2017 land use and transportation conditions and forecasts for the target year of 2040
- Developed a preferred funding scenario for a balanced multi-modal transportation system

For urbanized areas exceeding a population of 50,000, the existence of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is necessary to meet federal requirements for obtaining and expending federal transportation funds.

The LRTP update will have 2045 as the target horizon year. The adopted plan must be fiscally constrained and implementable by the appropriate local and state transportation agencies. The LRTP will improve on long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

The 2045 LRTP update will continue to be multimodal in nature including transit, pedestrian facilities, bikeways and highway/street transportation, and other transportation systems including truck and rail.

## Involvement Objectives

Effective and open communication is a vital component to the success of the LRTP, as it relates to public and stakeholder understanding and participation. Local members of the team will lead our public involvement and stakeholder engagement efforts for this project. Our approach will be in accordance with the Yellowstone County Board of Planning Public Participation Plan and industry best practices, along with lessons learned through adapting to the new hybrid world.

The public outreach effort, survey, and final LRTP document will all be based on the following priorities:

- Facilitate open communication regarding community desires, needs, and challenges
- Meet the stakeholders and public where they're comfortable
- Solicit relevant engagement through educational and informative messaging

## Communication Purpose

The MPO encourages meaningful and inclusive public engagement and participation in the LRTP. We will strive to both engage and educate members of the public and stakeholders about the LRTP and the transportation system as a whole.

The goal of the involvement effort outlined in this PIP is to provide members of the public with opportunities to engage in the LRTP process and by encouraging participation in the engagement opportunities facilitated by the project team.

The team's public engagement goals are to:

- Provide useful, timely information to the public throughout the development and implementation of the LRTP
- Proactively seek public comment and involvement in the planning process and plan development through survey input
- Provide educational opportunities for the public about the LRTP and facilitate open discussions about the goals, process, and purpose
- Respond to comments and suggestions

## Public Involvement Approach

The MPO is committed to the concept that planning is a community-based effort; our public involvement strategies are intended to support that effort. Together with the MPO and the consultant team, we will complete the following activities to engage stakeholders and the public throughout the development of the LRTP.

Our team understands the unique challenges offered by the LRTP and will engage with stakeholders and the public throughout the development of the LRTP. We will develop communications content and materials specific to the community and the goals of the LRTP.

We will plan and implement public involvement strategies to the general public that are accessible to underrepresented and disadvantage populations. The following involvement activities will be deployed to support the LRTP effort:

Timeframe	LRTP Phase	PI Activity
May to August 2022	Project visioning Data collection	Project Brand Public Involvement Plan Project Website SC Meeting #1 and #2
June to October 2022	Existing conditions Travel demand model update	SC Meeting #3 and #4 Public Open House #1 (in-person and virtual) Survey #1 Elected Officials Workshop Stakeholder Outreach
September 2022 to January 2023	Future conditions Travel demand model update Project list	SC Meeting #5, #6, #7 Stakeholder Outreach
December 2022 to February 2023	Financial plan	SC Meeting #8, #9 Stakeholder Outreach
February to May 2023	Draft LRTP Final LRTP Executive Summary	Public Open House #2 (in-person and virtual) Survey #2 SC Meeting #10, #11, #12 Stakeholder Outreach
June to July 2023	Plan Adoption	

The project team will coordinate project public outreach activities with City of Billings Public Information Officer Victoria Hill throughout the project duration.

## Target Audiences

Audience	Communication Purpose
<p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Billings</li> <li>• Yellowstone County</li> <li>• Law Enforcement</li> <li>• School District</li> <li>• Neighborhood Task Forces</li> <li>• Special Interest Organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve them in the development of the LRTP</li> <li>• Learn about organization's needs and concerns</li> <li>• Proactively engage by presenting at local meetings</li> <li>• Establish open lines of communication with liason from each identified stakeholder group and its leadership</li> <li>• Educate on policy and process of LRTP</li> <li>• Facilitate open discussions</li> <li>• Garner support toward ultimate Plan adoption</li> </ul>
<p>General Public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve them in the development of the LRTP</li> <li>• Learn about needs of the community</li> <li>• Proactively engage by hosting inclusive public involvement events and meetings</li> <li>• Establish open lines of communication</li> <li>• Educate on policy and process of LRTP</li> <li>• Facilitate open discussions</li> <li>• Garner support</li> <li>• Encourage safe travel behaviors</li> </ul>