



Bike Walk Montana, Inc.

PO Box 584

Helena, MT 59624

406-449-2787

Suggestions for the Montana Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee – September 11, 2020

Purpose

Bicycle/Pedestrian advisory committees are common throughout our country. In our region, committees, under various names, are representing the public in Utah, Idaho, North Dakota, Iowa and Washington State. This is the primary purpose of most citizen committees, to expand the options, opportunities, and success of the entity they are concerned with and bring expertise and representation in the area of focus.

For the Montana Department of Transportation, the primary directives include the provisions of law in MCA 60-3-301 through 309, commonly called the Shared Use Path (SUP) law from the 2017 legislative session. The second base is the 2019 Montana Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. For the committee, and in consideration of the many applicable laws, plans, policies and regulations, application of the SUP laws and Bike/Ped plan should be their primary activity. They can provide input, engage in robust discussion, share and be provided information and ultimately celebrate progress and spread understanding of funding and other limitations.

Membership

A citizen working group was formed during the course of the 2020 SUP interim study representing the active transportation community (list attached). As in this case, members should have a knowledge and experience in bicycle/pedestrian issues. There should be geographic representation from each MDT District. There should be representation of our Montana Tribal, low-income and disability populations which are most dependent on multi-modal transportation. We suggest strong representation of the business side of walking and bicycling; for the interim working group we had a bike shop owner and representative of a state and nation wide bicycle touring organization.

The advocacy representatives should come from both large and small communities across Montana primarily from organizations that promote and understand bicycling and walking as a transportation issue, not exclusively recreational. Function advocates connected with entities such as community bicycle shops such as Recycle in Missoula should have a seat at the table. Local government should be represented, with good connections to both cities, towns and counties.

A representative of the Transportation Commission should sit on the committee as well as several legislators. Agencies represented, in addition to MDOT, should be the Parks Division of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of Commerce, Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Federal Highways Works administration. Each of these have information, expertise and responsibility for areas connected to active transportation.

We commend MDOT for both filling the bike/ped coordinator position and supporting formation of a advisory committee. This will provide a desired and needed forum for public involvement and improve relationships with and support for the agency. We look forward to continue working together.



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Montana Legislative Interim Transportation Committee working group

Ben Weiss, Missoula, is the Bicycle/Pedestrian Program Manager for the City of Missoula and is the current chair of the Bike Walk Montana Board of Directors. He holds an MS in Geography with an emphasis in Community and Environmental Planning from the University of Montana. Working with a wide variety of people, from engineers and planners to community organizers and business leaders, Ben has gained significant experience with all the E's of transportation (engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation, and equity) throughout his career.

Michelle McNamee, Helena is the Recreational Trails Program Manager at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The Recreational Trails Program provides about \$1.5 million to trail projects throughout the state annually. She also leads the State Trails Advisory Committee and Montana State Parks E-Bikes Working Group.

Alan Woodmansey, Helena, is a civil engineer with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Montana Division office in Helena. He is the FHWA bike/ped coordinator for the state and an active bicyclist and runner. Some of his work is with MDT for their administration of the FHWA federally funded Transportation Alternatives program (~\$4.5M per year). FHWA also funds the MT FWP Recreational Trails program (~\$1.5M per year). Federal funding is from the Highway Bill called the FAST ACT which expires in September 2020. The US DOT policy statement on bicycles and pedestrian can be found here:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/policy_accom.cfm The policy statement is not a mandate, but it encourages agencies to consider bicycles and pedestrians as equals with other transportation modes.

Marilee Brown, Bozeman, is a non-cyclist herself and mother of a professional cyclist, she seeks to improve safety for both active and non-active transportation. Marilee serves as an officer on the Pedestrian Traffic Safety Committee which is an advisory group on all ground transportation issues for the City of Bozeman, Gallatin County and the Bozeman School District. She is also the Chair of Galla10 Alliance for Pathways (GAP) which is actively promoting the construction of a multi-use separated pathway between Bozeman and Belgrade. Over the last few years, she has testified on non-motorized safety issues at City advisory board meetings, City Commission meetings, County Commission meetings, State Transportation Commission meetings, and State Legislative Committees.

Jean Belangie-Nye, Missoula, is chair of the Bitterroot Trail Preservation Alliance and one of the founding members. Although, she is not an avid cyclist, she is a strong advocate for multi-use shared trails. Her dream is to see a shared use pathway that runs from Glacier Park to Yellowstone Park through the Bitterroot. Eventually she would like to see a Trail that runs from the Trail of the Coeur d' Alene's to North Dakota and connects all of Montana's shared use pathways.

Jean has been involved with the Trail for over thirty-five years. She chaired the Highway 93 South Pathway Focus Group and was the Missoula County and Lolo representative on the



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Citizens Advisory Committee for Highway 93 South. Jean was the chair of the Missoula2Lolo Shared Use Committee for the pathway section between Missoula and Lolo. She was a member of Team Tiger which resulted in the TIGER Grant for the Missoula2Lolo section of the Bitterroot Trail. Jean was a member of the Bike Walk Missoula Board for seven years and chair for two years.

Virginia “Ginny” Sullivan, Missoula, is the Director of Advocacy at Adventure Cycling Association, North America’s only organization dedicated to bicycle tourism and travel. Ginny's team works with state and local partners to officially designate interstate bicycle routes into the U.S. Bicycle Route System; co-leads the Amtrak Bicycle Task Force; works with the National Park Service and State Park systems on bicycle tourism amenities, safety, and accommodations; and advocates for bicycle friendly infrastructure improvements on rural and state highways, better rumble strip policies, safe passing and distracted driving laws, and equitable enforcement of bike laws. Advocacy efforts protect and improve Adventure Cycling’s 48,629-miles of cultivated and mapped bicycle routes and U.S. Bike Routes. Ginny’s work is partner focused and her efforts are driven by the Adventure Cycling mission to inspire, empower and connect people to travel by bicycle.

Jim Barnes, Helena has lived in Montana and cycled here for 43 years. I have kept abreast of changing roads, road shoulders, and bike paths over those years. I have been in the bicycle business all that time, first in Missoula during College and then as a bike business owner in Helena for the last 33 years. Interacting with thousands of cyclist over the years keeps me informed about how things are going from a rider’s perspective. I also have the business perspective, which is tied to safe places to ride. Being a small business owner, the economics and reality of a budget are familiar.

Kristi Drake, Billings, has served as Billings TrailNet’s executive director since 2012. Under her leadership, membership at Billings TrailNet has grown from 12 members to more than 1,270 members in 2019, has raised a few hundred thousand dollars for trail development, forged relationships with government organizations critical in trail building, and she has helped to raise public awareness of the organization, its mission and the trail system. Kristi has enjoyed commuting on her bike to work for nearly 20 years and recently became certified as a cycling instructor from the League of American Bicyclists. She is the vice chair of the City of Billings' Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, is past board chair of the Billings Chamber of Commerce's Trails Committee and is a member of the Billings Downtown Rotary. Kristi served on Billings TrailNet's board of directors from 2009-2011 and was the Ales for Trails coordinator in 2010. To see Billings TrailNet develop further, Kristi used her insider’s knowledge of the organization as a focus for her final project on all-volunteer organizations when she graduated with her master’s degree in public relations from MSU-B.

Scott Graham, Ronan. I am a retired school teacher and longtime bike advocate. I am a 30 year member of Adventure Cycle and bicycle tourist participant on several of their designated routes throughout the country. I ran several “Bike Rodeos” while teaching for elementary children covering basic cycling and safety.



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