

# HJ 45: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

## WORK SESSION OVERVIEW

Both bicycling and walking play an integral role in Montana’s transportation system. House Joint Resolution No. 45 is an interim study, assigned to the Transportation Interim Committee, to explore how bicycle and pedestrian paths are used in Montana and safety implications. The study also includes a review of existing and future funding opportunities.

Representative Denley Loge, the sponsor of HJ 45, invited bicycle and pedestrian path stakeholders to meet and discuss HJ 45. Rep. Loge held the work session on Dec. 10 in Helena. Introduced attendees included: Rep. Dave Fern; Ben Weiss, Missoula Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager; Alan Woodmansy, Helena civil engineer Federal Highway Administration; Jean Belangie-Nie, Missoula chair Bitterroot Trail Preservation Alliance; Virginia Sullivan, Missoula Director of Advocacy at Adventure Cycling Association; Juniper Davis, Missoula Parks and Trails Coordinator; Shane Stack, Missoula Public Works Director; Doug Habermann, Bike Walk Montana; Scott Graham, Ronan bike advocate; Ed Banderob of Butte; Robert Rasmussen, Helena bike advocate; Shyla Patera, Cascade County transportation/independent living advocate; Mark Sanders, Cascade County; Jim Barnes, Helena bicycle business owner; Sheila Ludlow, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT); Carol Strizich, MDT; Lynn Zanto, MDT; Tom Reilly, Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP); and Sarah Garcia, Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division. Additional stakeholders were in the audience.

Sheila Ludlow with MDT provided an overview on Montana’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which was developed in 2018 and published in 2019. The 20-year plan is built on five goals: reducing pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities; educating, encouraging, and promoting safe and responsible travel; preserving and maintaining bike and pedestrian systems; improving mobility and accessibility for all; and supporting walking and biking as important transportation modes. The presentation by MDT is available [here](#).

Sheila Ludlow with MDT provided an overview of funding for bicycle and pedestrian paths in Montana. The presentation by MDT is available [here](#). Sources of funding for bicycle and pedestrian paths include: Transportation Alternatives (TA) programs; the Surface Transportation Program; and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. There are non-MDT administered programs as well, including, the Federal Land

Access Program, the Recreational Trails Program, the trails and recreational facilities grant program administered by FWP (SB 24, 2019), and discretionary grant programs. “Funding has historically been, and is likely to continue to be, a challenge for developing and maintaining walking and bicycling facilities. No agency alone has sufficient funding or resources to implement and maintain transportation networks to the levels desired,” according to the MDT Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

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House Bill No. 604, passed and approved by the 2015 Legislature, required MDT to compile an inventory of all multiuse trails or other paths within state-maintained federal-aid highway rights-of-way and develop a plan for maintaining and repairing the trails and other paths. The plan inventoried 203.4 miles of shared use paths within MDT right-of-way. That study found that current maintenance needs to restore paths to excellent condition totals about \$363,000, a one-time cost. Other activities are essential for maintenance, such as snow removal, sweeping, and mowing, in addition to ongoing pavement preservation activities like pavement seals and pavement overlays, according to MDT. The annual costs for general maintenance activities was about \$945,000 in 2018, which is mostly snow removal costs. While local agencies have maintenance responsibility through agreements with MDT to maintain some shared use paths, many jurisdictions have trouble meeting their maintenance obligations due to lack of funding, limited personnel, and insufficient equipment. There was also discussion about the execution of memorandums of understanding for maintenance.

In 2017, the Legislature passed House Bill No. 225. The bill modified distribution requirements to include provisions that MDT recommends construction and maintenance standards for shared use paths and provides a uniform system for signing shared use paths. The law (60-3-304, MCA) provides for revenue from a \$5 optional fee on motor vehicle registrations that is allocated by MDT for maintaining, repairing, and establishing shared use paths, as well as safety education. Since fee collection began, (July 2017-Dec. 2) about \$49,200 has been collected. Until \$50,000 in administrative costs are recovered, no funding is available for maintenance or safety activities. Fees collected are currently averaging around \$1,700 a month.

Stakeholders also discussed health foundation funds, tax options, and potential uses of gas tax funding.

Sheila Ludlow with MDT provided a presentation on safety and rules of the road. The presentation is available [here](#). MDT highlighted federal, state, and local laws. Montana is one of five states that allows bicycles on all public roads. MDT included a discussion of Montana’s Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan and safety statistics. Nonmotorized users make up about 7% of all fatal/serious injuries in Montana crashes. MDT also offered background on its Share the Road Program.

Stakeholders provided additional materials and comments, which are posted on the website. All materials are posted under the HJ 45 tab on the TIC webpage at <https://www.leg.mt.gov/committees/interim/2019tric/>.

