

# Comments on Red Lodge ATP

## Red Lodge Parks, Trees and Recreation Board

### September 26, 2016

#### Summary Comments

**Need to state the purpose of the ATP in the document. The purpose should address:**

1. Why is the Plan being written?

Purpose:

The process of the 2015 Comprehensive Parks Plan displayed a strong desire of Red Lodge residents to expedite City goals of improved walkability and trail corridors. The Building Active Communities Initiative (BACI) was viewed as the most effective organization to help Red Lodge further their goals of improved walkability and trail corridor expansion. BACI selects five communities a year to participate in a conference that teaches communities how to make action plans which help communities improve issues such as walkability, bike riding and connectivity. The Red Lodge Community Development Department, with support of the City Council, successfully applied to participate in the 2015 BACI Conference and created a Steering Committee of six members. After attending the conference, the Steering Committee realized that Red Lodge was deficient in many facets of Active Transportation and sought to create an Active Transportation Plan that would be more expansive and current than the 2006 Trails Plan.

- a. The 2015 Comprehensive Parks Plan online polls showed enormous support for the expansion of trails. 75% of responders indicated that they would like more linear parks, trail corridors and pathways which was a higher percentage of support than any other type of park.
  - b. 58% of respondents felt connecting parks with trails is the most important policy for park planning which was the highest percentage of the 16 listed categories. Red Lodge Parks Comprehensive Plan – 2015
  - c. Walking for pleasure is the most common outdoor activity for Red Lodge residents. Red Lodge Comprehensive Parks Plan - 2015
2. Does the plan replace/update the 2006 City Trails Plan? That was the intent of providing City Parks Board funding.
- a. The desire and importance of extending trails to nearby/adjacent public lands that are outside of the City limits remains a high priority. The ATP can only focus on projects within the City limits, but the goals of the 2006 Trails Plan which seek to connect City trails with those outside of the City limits remains a priority. Cooperation with appropriate Federal, State and County agencies will be necessary in order to further connect public lands outside of Red Lodge.
3. How often the Plan should be revised. Should revision be based on a number of years or based on completion of certain milestone projects? *Preferably every 5 years, does not need to be specified in the ATP*
4. The spatial scope of the Plan. Is it the City limits of Red Lodge, within a certain vicinity of Red Lodge or Rock Creek valley and surrounding mountains? *Clarified in 2. a.*

5. That the Plan is a resource document that identifies potential active transportation programs and projects, but does not mandate or obligate the City to implement specific programs or projects.
  - a. Add 5 to new section “purpose” which would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the plan

From the perspective of the Parks, Trees and Recreation Board, the purpose should be:

1. To encourage the development and use of public recreation on City lands and trails.
2. Identify needs for and ways to implement active transportation connections to City lands and other public lands. *Too many variables/details for each project, beyond the scope of the ATP*

**For the most part, the ATP does not address anything beyond the City limits.**

The 2006 Comprehensive Trails Plan looks beyond the city limits and expresses citizens’ desires for non-motorized connections to nearby/adjacent public lands and open spaces. Trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc. In town are desired, but short loops around the block and a safe route to the post office, city park or school are only the beginning. Red Lodge needs connections to nearby public lands and open space, even if that connection is just a bike/ped lane painted on a county road. The ATP should include examination and identification of potential connections to USFS, BLM, State of Montana, and private ranch lands. These lands and the amenities they provide are a key attraction for tourists and a major contributor to the quality of life residents enjoy. Minimally, the ATP should incorporate the 2006 Trails Plan’s connections to public lands and open space areas outside City limits. Ideally, the ATP should re-examine those connections in the 2006 plan and augment them according to current needs/desires. *We don’t have to eliminate the 2006 Trails Plan. New language under “purpose” addresses the desire to expand trails to nearby public lands*

**The cover photo shows active transportation, but appears to be active transportation outside the City.**

Again, if the scope is limited to the City, maybe we need a bike or jogger on a city trail or street. *New photo was provided*

**Provide a summation of the completed public involvement and planning process**

This will help to emphasize the Plan’s legitimacy.

- a. Planning Board and Parks Board meeting. Public outreach at Regis, The Beartooth Community Front Forum, online outreach through facebook etc.

**Include a list of steering committee members.** *provided*

**Include a list of the consultants/staff involved and qualifications/experience.**

**Specific Section Comments**

**Pages 2 to 5, Action Plan**

Describe the process for choosing a leadership option. Is the City expected to approve one or can that choice be made as part of the ATP planning process?

- a. too much minutia at the beginning of the document, put in as appendix.

**Page 6, Wayfinding**

Include in the introductory paragraph or the goal that “City-owned lands and trails” are a high priority.

a. please add

### **Page 6, Vehicle Wayfinding Guide Signs**

Put in the document the web link to the MUTCD guidance specific to signs. *A link does exist*

### **Page 7, Parking Area Guide Signs**

What is the diagram at the bottom of the page supposed to represent? This needs an explanatory caption or people could mistake it for a UPC symbol/barcode. The current caption "The Montana Department of Transportation will need to be involved in any signage placement along Highways 212, 78 and 308. Special restrictions apply" should be incorporated into the text of this section and probably also for the Vehicle Wayfinding Guide Signs section.

### **Page 10, Mobile Applications**

Should mention the use of GPS navigation apps, including Google Maps. Google search "GPS based tour guides" and there are numerous options. Local USFS offices has used this one for some USFS trail guides/driving tours: <https://izi.travel/en>

### **Page 11, Policy Recommendations**

Trail/active transportation connections need to extend into the county and/or Federal/State lands. The ATP should examine relevant existing County/State/Federal policies. The ATP should provide recommendations for changes or new County/State/Federal policies should be made. Such recommendations would help direct the City and local citizens as to how to engage in County/State/Federal planning processes, such as county growth policies and State/Federal land management planning. For example, should the County give up an existing right-of-way across private lands if that right-of-way could provide active transportation opportunities that connect to City or Federal/State lands?

a. The Parks Board should investigate the use of unused right-of-ways for the use of trails.

### **Page 11, Policy Recommendations**

When the Peaks to Plains presented to the Parks Board, we specifically asked that the ATP evaluate use of undeveloped right-of-ways in the City as active transportation connections. This is not mentioned in the ATP. The Parks Board has funds programmed for survey of these public rights-of-way. Include a statement as to the existing State and City legal requirements and policies related to right-of-ways, including if there are compliance and enforcement issues associated with right of ways and if these need to be changed. There are instances, such as garages in the right-of-way along Rock Creek downstream of Finn Park that should be called out and identified as needing to be addressed. *Unfortunately this task is too detailed and each project will have different needs. Too much work for the scope.*

### **Page 13, Crosswalk Standards**

Note that ADA compliance is a legal requirement as the language in the document says "should" that could be interpreted as "nice thing to do." *We have plenty of documents/ordinances that cover this*

### **Page 13, Existing Red Lodge Municipal Code**

Include a mention of Ordinance 918, Parks, Trees and Recreation Board, that includes the authority and responsibilities of the Parks Board. Cite the responsibility of the Parks Board for the review and update of the Trails Plan. Is there anything in this ordinance that needs changed? *The steering committee*

*decided that they wanted to keep the document from duplicating many other documents for easier reading and the difficulty of updating multiple documents when an ordinance changes.*

Include a mention of Ordinance 922, Trails Regulations, that identifies City trails and prohibits motorized use on City trails. Is there anything in this ordinance that needs changed?

- a. Motorized vehicles are prohibited on City trails.

#### **Page 14, Sidewalks**

Remove the recommendation to modify 8-2-20 to define that the owner or tenant is required to maintain sidewalks clear of overhanging vegetation, as this is required in 8-5-10.

- a. Remove bullet point

#### **Page 15, Subdivision Regulations**

Please clarify the statement about watercourse setback from Rock Creek. Does this refer to the setback of buildings from the stream or does it include sidewalks, fences, decks, etc.?

- a. Remove bullet point

#### **Pages 16-19, Infrastructure Plan**

Do all identified sidewalk and trails projects have adequate right-of-way to construct these in the identified locations? Places with adequate space should probably be given higher priority, as land acquisition costs or legal fees wouldn't be part of the price tag. *Beyond the scope of ATP*

Mountain View Elementary School Area Sidewalk Infill (CIP #7) – It is noted this project includes the infill of over 20 sidewalk segments. Identify these in the narrative or on the map. *Shown on page 20*

Multi-Use Trail To Top of Brewery Hill (CIP #16A) – this paragraph mentions that “Negotiations with the property owners for easements, dedicated right-of-way or a recreational license agreement would need to commence prior to construction.” Who would conduct these negotiations? What are the associated legal tenets? When the Peaks to Plains presented to the Parks Board, we specifically asked that the consultant provide recommendations and/or examples of how to proceed with such negotiations. This is not included in the ATP. *Too site specific*

Recreation Trail From West Bench to Downtown (CIP #22) – Note the option of one-way single-track trails. Narrower and separated uphill and downhill trails may be less expensive to construct than to maintain than an eight-foot wide multi-use path on a steep slope. A steeper trail segment could be built for downhill trails and would provide a great in-town mountain biking opportunity. Flatter connections could be built for uphill trails. A larger quantity of narrower trails would also spread use and allow for connections into individual parts of the city currently not served with trail connections.

- a. Add to Page 17: Narrower and separated uphill and downhill single-track trails may be less expensive to construct than to maintain than an eight-foot wide multi-use path on a steep slope. A steeper trail segment could be built for downhill trails and would provide a great in-town mountain biking opportunity. Flatter connections could be built for uphill trails. A larger quantity of narrower trails would also spread use and allow for connections into individual parts of the city currently not served with trail connections.

Recreation Trail From Wildlife Sanctuary to Two-Mile Road (CIP #13) – Verify that the end of the existing trail is at the Wildlife Sanctuary border as noted or is it at the end of City land? Verify that the cost estimate includes a pedestrian bridge across Rock Creek at the pipeline. Note the availability of existing City land near Two-Mile Road for the trail as that land was purchased for sewer spray irrigation disposal, but has been documented in a preliminary engineering report for the sewer plant to not be feasible for disposal. *How we connect is too detailed for ATP*

Haggin Avenue Corridor New Sidewalk Extension (CIP #1) – Rather than put in a sidewalk, recommend a multi-use path along the west border of the newly dedicated Coal Miners park. A path in a park would receive more use by more users and could also connect into the Beartooth Lane corridor to Rock Creek, the existing highway 212 multi-use trail and other existing trails in Coal Miners Park. *Steering committee disagreed with this concept.*

High School Area Sidewalk Infill (CIP #4) - Rather than put in a sidewalk, recommend a multi-use path that utilizes existing street right-of-way. One path on one side of the street is probably less expensive than sidewalk on two sides. *We can look at this in more detail at a later date*

Golf Course Neighborhood On-Street Striping (CIP #2) - Specify which side of the street would be striped or if both sides would be striped. Striping should be connected to the existing highway 78 multiuse trails. Striping should extend into the City lights/Diamond C links subdivisions to allow for connection of striped areas to planned trails in ROW/parklands on the edge of the West bench. *Too site specific for ATP*

Rotary Park Neighborhood Sidewalks (CIP #11) – Based on plat maps and recent survey work completed in this neighborhood, there is a substantial amount of undeveloped right-of-way on the east sides of Park and Kainu Avenue. This provides options for constructing a multi-use path/trail that is separated from the streets. Could either move the streets to the east and put a path/trail along the Rotary Park side or just construct a path/trail in the undeveloped right-of-way. Due to the narrow nature of Rotary Park, it would be preferable to locate a path/trail or sidewalks in right-of-way and not in dedicated park lands. *Too site specific for ATP*

#### **Page 20, Proposed Improvements Map**

This map should be a larger foldout, as it is hard to read. Identify Beartooth Lane from Highway 212 to Rock Creek as a proposed trail or part of a proposed trail (it is noted on the map, probably as an existing trail but it is not a trail but a road). *Larger maps will be provided*

#### **Page 21, Bike Lanes**

Note if it is acceptable to paint a two-way traffic bike lane on one side of the street or does there need to be directional lanes on both sides of a street? *Bottom of page 8 & 11 link to options*

#### **Page 22, Bicycle Routes Map**

This map should also be a larger foldout, as it is hard to differentiate between the legend colors and map colors. Document that Broadway Avenue bike lanes would not present a design conflict with existing parallel parking. Include a recommended treatment for Hauser Avenue that would better define vehicular travel lanes, parking and bicycle travel. *Larger maps will be provided*

#### **Page 24, Community Events**

Identify existing community events specific to Red Lodge to ensure that they continue – i.e. Elementary/Middle School Bike Rodeo, National Trails Day, National Public Lands Day, Earth Day Tree Planting and Parks Cleanup. Add a section on the Community Bike Program under development by the

BRTA to provide bicycle repair and free bicycles to youth and the elderly in conjunction with the Spoke Wrench bicycle shop.

a. Under fix your bike day mention a current goal: The Beartooth Recreational Trails Association (BRTA) with a local bicycle repair shop that will provide bicycle repair and free bicycles to the youth and elderly.

### **Page 25, Fix Your Bike Day**

Mention that it is standard practice to install bike tool racks in bike parks. This is planned for the recently built mountain bike trails at Coal Miners Park. This could also be done at schools.

a. Bullet point: Installing permanent bike tool racks in bike parks  
b. perhaps change the header from Fix Your Bike Day to **Fix Your Bike Programs** to accommodate the addition of bike tool racks and the BRTA/bike shop program

### **Page 26, Helmet Giveaway**

Mention the existing city police program of giving kids ice cream certificate tickets when they are observed riding with a helmet (verify this is still a current practice).

### **Page 27, Maintenance Programs**

Include a program for Adopt-a-Trail, recently developed by the BRTA for City trails. Contact Grant Barnard.

a. Change header to Adopt-a-Sidewalk to Adopt-a-Sidewalk/Trail change a few words in the first paragraph to accommodate the change

### **Page 27, Red Lodge Proud and Beautiful**

Include a statement that this organization could also contribute toward landscaping features such as trees, shrubs and flower baskets for trails and sidewalks. *Too much for a small group of volunteers*

### **Page 28, Enforce Existing Ordinances**

List some specific ordinances related to active transportation that should be modified to address deficiencies as was done on Page 14 for sidewalks. *Addressed in first bullet point*

### **Page 31, Private Grant Sources**

Add the following links:

<https://www.imba.com/resources/grants>

<https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-fund/>

<https://americanhiking.org/gear-resources/grant-opportunities/>

### **Page 33, Manual Counts**

Add a recommendation to install trail registers where people can voluntarily sign in. *viewed by steering committee as too cumbersome to administer*

### **Pages 35-39, Inventory and Analysis**

Insure that the contractor provides the City with the GIS data used to generate the maps. *Larger maps will be provided*

Again, the maps, and the table on Page 39 with the miniscule title, should be enlarged to be readable. *Larger maps will be provided*

Add a map that shows land ownership patterns at a larger scale and includes routes to/from USFS, BLM, State of Montana, and private ranch lands. Minimally, the ATP should incorporate the 2006 Trails Plan mapped connections to public lands and open space areas outside City limits. Ideally, the ATP should re-examine those connections in the 2006 plan and augment them with new maps according to current needs/desires.

- a. add 2006 Trails Map to appendix

#### **Page 41, Demographics**

Cite the source for the demographic information, the U.S. Census American Community Survey. It could be noted in the document that the walk to work commute mode has, since 2010, ranged from 18% - 27.1%. The 2014 number is 18%.

#### **Page 43, Related Documents**

The statement that the recommendations of the 2006 Trails Plan have been incorporated into the ATP is not factual as the recommendations for connections to 2006 public lands and open space areas outside City limits are not incorporated into the ATP.

- a. can add

Are there any relevant Carbon County documents that should be cited such as their Growth Policy and Development Regulations? *None*

Are there any Forest Service or BLM documents that should be cited that affect public lands access connections? *Too big of a picture for this project*

#### **Page 45, Action Plan**

Replace sidewalks along Haggin Avenue (ENG1) with a multi-use path, at least for the section along Coal Miners Park. *Can be addressed at a later date*

#### **Page 47, Recommended Capital Improvements Projects**

Note which projects are currently included in the City's Capital Improvements Plan and those that are proposed new projects to be included in the CIP. *CIP projects are mentioned*

*a. group by projects by estimated price or other sensible order; the list is currently jumbled and doesn't seem to be in a particular order which people found confusing. Are projects listed by order of priority was a common question.*

#### **Page 48, Recommended Projects Map**

Include a larger foldout map so that it is readable. *Larger maps will be provided*