BACI 2.0 Community Progress Reports

Belgrade

- **What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?**
  - We were successful in getting a Safe and Usable Streets Resolution Adopted (based on the Complete Streets Concept). We never encountered any opposition, and had enthusiastic support every step of the way through the school board, chamber of commerce, board of health, planning board, and city council. We also completed a simple pedestrian lane striping project along Main Street with MDOT. The idea of the striping came from a walking audit of downtown Belgrade with the planning board-inspired by Mark Fenton’s walking audits at the Action Institute.

- **What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?**
  - The traditional idea that transportation planning and engineering is just for moving motor vehicles as quickly and efficiently as possible is tough to overcome in the design community, the political climate, and in the competition for funding. Money, or the lack thereof, is always a big issue.

- **What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?**
  - Continuing to make our city more pedestrian and bike friendly, safer, and less dependent on motor vehicles—especially within the city’s core. We want to continue to be cognizant of our many citizens, some in vulnerable situations, who can’t drive—for whatever reason, so they can still function here. The focus will also be on ways to design our aging and underutilized core area to make it more attractive to businesses and residents to spur sustainable economic growth and make our city a better place to live and work.

- **Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?**
  - Walk and bike your town. Go out by yourself. Go out in a group and talk about issues you see along the way. Walking and biking just gives a whole different perspective compared to being behind a windshield. Also, in our case we learned that there is a lot of demand out there for more sidewalks, trails, and designs to accommodate active transportation. It’s actually been the number one thing people are requesting. As mentioned above, our Safe and Usable Streets Resolution had no opposition and enthusiastic support—which was a big surprise.

Dillon

- **What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?**
  - Our first BACI team’s goal was to develop an Active Transportation Implementation Plan (ATP) for Dillon. We developed several objectives and although we didn’t progress the way we wanted to, the work plan provided a tool for discussion and communication to
community members and organizations to talk about the transportation plan, a City Safe & Accessible Street policy, and showcasing two Dillon trails to encourage community use.

- A draft Safe & Accessible Street Policy resolution was created.
- Developed a questionnaire and Power Point presentation to several organizations to elicit community input and buy-in for the ATP.
- Promoted the Montana Trails Rx to local healthcare providers and received their support to use the Trails Rx for their patients. Since then, we have four designated Trails Rx in Beaverhead County (3 in Dillon and 1 in Wisdom). We have marked the trails by 1/8 mile with plastic markers and Bike Walk Montana has developed the pamphlet and maps.

- What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?
  - **Challenge One**: Dysfunctional City Council resulting in most of the council members resigning or “voted off”. Also at this time, a new mayor was elected who did not have the support of the majority of the “old” council members. Unfortunately, this really put a damper on 2 of our objectives….
    - Update the City ordinance to include a loan program for infill and repair-only for sidewalks and present to the City Council. Nothing was accomplished regarding this objective.
    - Present the Safe & Accessible Street policy resolution to the City Council. We have a draft resolution ready to go and plan on presenting that to the City Council.
  - **Challenge Two**: The previous Operations Manager and BACI I team member “disconnected” with the BACI I team and “organized” with another group to work on a street project without informing or engaging the BACI I team. A lot of our work plan depended on this team member to work with the City Council and the team to move forward with the objectives of the work plan. Although we were at a disconnect, the information that this person received at the BACI I training was presented/used by the other group and a “showcase” street project was completed to show area businesses and residents how it would add to the uptown walkability and accessibility.
  - **Challenge Three**: One of the BACI I team members quit the group right after the BACI training. Basically, we forged on with me and two other very active members to do what we could with the trails system and promoting the health aspects of walking.

- What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?
  - Gain more knowledge on grant opportunities for small projects
  - Learn more about downtown walkability projects.
  - Trails: Work towards “connecting” all the city paths; No central hub for paths; Need maps for all the trail systems; Designated starting points for trails; Need a resolution passed regarding trail development; Need consistent signage for trails; Have the Dillon trail systems and maps on the City website
  - Pass a resolution and policy on Safe and Accessible Streets

- Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0.
  - Consistency; Communication; Importance of city and county working together
Greater Glendive Area/Dawson County

- What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?
  - One of the first activities Building Active Glendive (BAG) performed was to hold a naming contest for Gateway Trail into Makoshika State Park after it was built with CTEP funds. The Buccaneer Trail was scouted by BAG members and built by organizations represented in BAG. This trail connects Makoshika State Park with Dawson Community College. The Walking Biking Master plan for Glendive and Dawson County was nearly complete when BAG was incepted, but was not approved and adopted as policy. BAG facilitated this process, and it will be in the Glendive City/County Growth Policy when it is adopted.
  - Additionally, Town Street is identified in that master plan partially as a walking and biking area, and when restructured, will have bump outs and bike lanes with a road diet. BAG composed and assisted in the adoption of the Complete Streets Resolution for Dawson County and the Safe and Accessible Streets policy for the City of Glendive. BAG and the Dawson County Economic Development Council partnered to produce a trail map highlighting walking and biking in the Greater Glendive Area and Makoshika State Park. Finally, bike racks were donated to the city by some locals, and BAG assisted in the placement and based on the Walking Biking Master Plan.

- What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?
  - Dawson County experienced a loss of CTEP funds for a Jefferson School Road project. This demonstrates funds are not guaranteed and are becoming much more competitive. To adapt to this, BAG has adopted a, “lighter, quicker, cheaper,” model in the Jefferson School area. BAG met opposition from both city council members and the public with the city policy, and therefore, the council declined to make it an ordinance. We worked with the opposing council members and ultimately made a better policy.
  - Some decision makers are not supportive of the Jefferson School Road Project. BAG suggested we build the path with the Dawson County Road Department. At first, this idea was applauded by decision makers because the estimated cost was less than that of a TA grant match. However, some of the decision makers felt it was still too expensive. BAG is still working on this problem, but could use assistance from the BACI 2.0. The City of Glendive’s Public Works Department is heavily overloaded with work to do. This often creates a “bottle neck” for projects since this is where permits reside. BAG attempts to maintain an open line of communication in case there is some way we can assist in reducing the workload.

- What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?
  - BAG wants the policies in place so we can start writing for grants and building infrastructure. With the Montana State Parks, they want to have all the digital mapping for the parks so visitors can use GPS in the park, and they also want to
finish the connection to the college. Makoshika State Park is working with BLM for easements on the Buccaneer Trail, and should be completed soon. The back country trails are being signed and hope to have all 20 miles of trail completed.

- The other major projects for BAG is working to acquire the Clough Street Spur from Burlington Northern Santa Fe, and working toward having complete streets portions in the new subdivision regulations. Regarding the spur, there are funds available from the Transcanada grant given to us to build trails, but we are having difficulty finding exactly who to talk to for acquiring it. For the subdivision regulations, the engineering firm Kadrmas, Lee, and Jackson have agreed to update the regulations at no cost to the city. BAG volunteered to assist in this process.

- Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?
  - We believe a group should keep their momentum. When an organization is gaining ground on a particular initiative, it is very easy to allow it to fizzle out. When suggesting new ordinances or changes to policy, be first and be credible to both the public and decision makers involved. This reduces the impact of naysayers. Groom key community partners and elected officials, and invite them into your group. Finally, make your worst opponent your best friend, or at least educate them in what you are attempting to do and why. Sometimes, they’ll become a supporter. Other times, they call you a communist.

Great Falls

- What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?
  - Although the Great Falls City Commission rejected a “Complete Streets” policy in May 2012, the Commission did adopt a new “growth policy” in August 2013 that incorporates many elements of such a policy. Since 2013, the city has: 1) improved connectivity by putting in more sidewalks, 2) added accessible curbing to existing sidewalks, 3) added bike lanes, and 4) supported the Montana Department of Transportation in the installation of a major roundabout at the corner of Smelter Avenue and Division Road.
  - The River’s Edge Trail has continued to make improvements to increase connectivity to all neighborhoods. Management of the trail has successfully transitioned to the City of Great Falls.
  - Get Fit Great Falls (a county-wide coalition with 24 members) has incorporated BACI objectives into its strategic plan.
  - The City Park and Recreation Department is currently facilitating a city wide master plan for the city’s 52 city parks. They also conducted a park usage study for the first time in seven years.
  - While the City was unable to formally pass a Complete Streets policy, the process of trying to adopt one did educate people and build public support for the general
concept. Individual projects undertaken since 2013 have demonstrated Complete Streets, including community beautification and economic development. That awareness and the building of a community consensus have been the biggest drivers in our successes. City and state partnerships have also been critical to funding projects.

- **What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?**
  - **Funding.** Just getting sidewalks put in throughout the city would cost $1 billion. The City is chipping away at projects as they can, but certainly funding is an issue for all projects. Furthermore, funding is an issue for the Park and Recreation Department. We have more parks and park acreage than almost any city in the country, but don’t have revenue sources to maintain them. Our sports multiplex is outdated and what once was a hub of activity isn’t well used.
  - **Business buy-in** is another barrier. Many businesses need to be convinced of the value of community growth to their business growth. Businesses also need to make conscious decisions that make it easier to walk than drive.
  - **There is also a sentiment among many that is against change.** Great Falls drivers would rather have convenience than be considerate of other users including bike riders and walkers.
  - **Ideas to respond to the challenge of building further community support include:** 1) Guerrilla urbanism – exposing the community to small changes; 2) traditional and social media marketing; 3) reaching out to civic groups.

- **What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?**
  - **We hope to get from the training ideas for building community consensus and potential funding sources.**
  - **Our goals for the next six to 18 months include:**
    - Get involved in the City Park Master Planning process, including bringing fresh ideas for park usage.
    - Start a park attendant program that would place two interns in low-income city parks throughout the summer to expose neighborhood children and families to low-cost or no-cost activities to do in their parks.
    - Look for funding opportunities including CDBG, TA grants, city and school partnerships etc.
    - Bringing business leaders to the table.
    - Complete an idea from our Place making exercise.
  - **Long term goals include:**
    - Make 10th Avenue South more walker and bike rider friendly.

- **Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?**
The River’s Edge Trail success story is a wonderful public and private partnership that has truly enhanced our entire community.

We can also share the lessons learned from the work arounds the City made after Complete Streets failed to pass the commission in 2012.

Get Fit Great Falls is an example of a functioning community collaboration that is working toward system and cultural changes that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Hamilton

- What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?
  - Successes: Adopted a complete streets policy for the City of Hamilton; completed fitness trail design
  - Contributors: Interest and commitment of Hamilton City Council and BACI Committee
- What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?
  - Challenges: Resistance to change; Funding
  - Response: Keep moving forward; Reaching out to partners
- What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?
  - Getting more children to walk and bike to school
  - Connecting parks, schools, residential, and commercial districts
  - Update Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Code to implement complete streets policy and support active transportation
- Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?
  - Keep it simple and achievable; Be patient; Break it out into phases

** See Hamilton Supplement at end of document

Polson

- What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?
  - The City has adopted a resolution for Safe and Accessible Streets Program (Complete Streets Program). City was awarded a mini grant through BACI to hire a grant writer to do research on resort tax looking at its successes and challenges in other communities that have resort tax. This study helped kick-off the Resort Tax discussion in Polson. With the idea of connectivity in mind, the City has completed the walking path under bridge for Sacajawea Park.

- What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?
  - Through the process of adopting the Safe and Accessible Streets Program, there was a small group of disgruntled citizens who believed the program was some sort of conspiracy. We responded by changing the title from Complete Streets to Safe and
Accessible Streets. In addition, we used as much local data as possible to support the resolution.

- What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?
  - New ideas: 1) Complete the City trails maps (Eagle Scout to work with City’s GIS Coordinator); 2) Safe routes to schools program (safe access for kids to cross streets – flashing lights & flags); 3) Extend the Carol Sherick trail through town for connectivity.

- Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?
  - Persistent and patience are important as well as already having a plan put together and ready to go (shelf-ready project). In addition, it’s recommended to collaborate with other communities that may be trying to do the same types of projects. Public outreach is critical as well as continuity between agencies.

Red Lodge

- What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?
  - We are currently working on our first Active Transportation Plan (ATP). We received funding through BACI, the Red Lodge Parks Board and CDBG to fund the project. We have organized a steering committee, a stakeholder group, held a widely attended webinar and have a Community Forum featuring Mark Fenton in May.

- What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?
  - Scheduling conflicts have made getting Steering Committee and Stakeholders together for meetings difficult. Keeping enthusiasm and information at elevated levels in regards to the stakeholders during a long process has been a challenge.

- What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?
  - We are interested in learning what other communities have done successfully and where they have failed is of great interest. In the next 6-18 months we hope to complete our Active Transportation Plan, apply for TAP funds, receive money from the Parks Board, update codes and have “champions” continue to promote the ATP.

- Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?
  - Bringing adversarial views into the process early is difficult, but should be strived for. Consider carefully who will be on your team to bring an active and diverse group. Be explicit with goals and provide a clear vision.
Sidney/Richland County

- What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?
  - Have City/County/Chamber members on Active Richland County Action Group
  - A Complete Streets Policy was adopted by the City of Sidney on March 17, 2014
  - Mobility Walk downtown Sidney on June 30, 2015
  - Sub committee was formed for Richland Community Complex
    - Committee has raised $91,000 (October 2014-July 2015)
    - Committee is going through the process of a feasible study
  - Bike Lane was put in on West Holly Street in November 2015
  - Included in Growth Policy and Transportation Policy
  - Attended the New Mobility West Community Mobility Institute on May 11-13, 2015
  - In the processes with working with the Chamber to get Way Finding signs, a portion of funds are coming from the CVB for the City of Sidney
  - The thing that most contributed to our success was the knowledge on what we need to do and best interest. The speaker at the last BACI that was an Engineer was great for our public works director to hear him speak on the importance of this information.

- What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?
  - Some of the challenges/barriers have been with an outside contractor doing the Growth Policy and Transportation Plan. The original contract did not include a specific pedestrian bike plan to be included in the Transportation Plan. The contractors not having a clear understanding of the area. Each community is unique and does not necessarily fit a “one size fits all” plan. There is constant communication with the contractors to keep them on the right track on what way this community wants it.

- What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?
  - To have more community involvement, sustainability, and a plan that leads up to the next growth and transportation plan policy update. To be able to take this plan out to our communities and ensure a plan for follow through. Work with a PhD student to put together a communications plan for this. Training on Community Outreach for City Council members, Chamber, Planning Board and other key policy makers.

- Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?
  - “It is a marathon not a sprint” to get goals accomplished
  - Finding money to keep these important things going
  - Community Partnerships
Hamilton - Supplement

What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?

After attending the BACI conference in Bozeman in March of 2014, our BACI came back with a lot of ambition. We passed a Complete Streets Ordinance in June of 2014. We also collaborated with the Downtown Association First Friday events and coordinated a “Out on the Townie” bike ride through our designated bike route in town. We had a pedal cranked ice cream maker that served up fantastic vanilla ice cream. We gave out prizes to kids and adults for the best dressed townie bike. The event and ride were true successes and created awareness to our bike route through Hamilton. We did this event in 2015 and plan on doing it every June into the future. The BACI grant was used to design a fitness trail in one of our parks in Hamilton. We had the design created and the city council approved it in the summer of 2015. We want to put the fitness trail along a new path on our River Park trail that is a part of the park’s Master Plan. The major contributors and support have been our Hamilton City Council, Hamilton Parks and Public works department, and the devotion of our BACI team.

What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?

One of the biggest challenges for Hamilton is the fact that the city is divided with Highway 93 running north and south and a State Highway (Eastside Highway) running east and west. Both highways have split the town with schools and communities and main street being on either side of the highway. Another challenge is city and county boundaries and zoning. The city has ordinances, growth policies, and plans in place, and the county does not. The best way to respond to all of these challenges is to not get too overwhelmed and to set realistic smaller goals that encompass a lot of stakeholders, and to also reach out to partners like the school district and downtown groups. Another barrier is finding the funding sources.

Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?

Our main focus for the BACI training is gathering information and keeping our BACI team motivated, and to work with key stakeholders such as the city, Bike Walk Bitterroot, school district, and the downtown. Goals we’d like to achieve 6-18 months out are: building the fitness trail, proposal to Montana Rail Link for a walking path through town, multi-modal analysis focus on new development, promoting a bike to school and work day, and way finding signage throughout the city to connect parks and downtown.

Are there any insights or lessons you have learned that you feel would be helpful to other communities coming to BACI 2.0?

Some lessons we have learned is to be patient and persistent, and to keep goals simple and achievable.
Whitefish

1. **What have been your main successes since you attended the last Action Institute and what do you think most contributed to that success?**

   a. We organized a successful day long **workshop in Whitefish with Mark Fenton** and invited key people from throughout the Flathead Valley. The event was very well attended (about 100 people). We had several city council members, doctors, business owners, chamber of commerce members, Heart of Whitefish members, and city staff, attend the workshop. We had teams from Kalispell, Polson, Whitefish, and other groups represented. Mark did a walking audit of downtown Whitefish. And we concluded with recommendations from workshop participants and Mark Fenton on improvements needed in downtown Whitefish. Our BACI task force also prepared goals for that July 2014 workshop (I have brought copies).

   b. We have hired WGM Group to prepare the City’s **2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan**. The last plan was done in 1998, though it was amended over the years. The budget for the plan is $40,000. Theresa Majeski, a CDC Public Health Associate with the Flathead City-County Health Department, is also helping us with the plan. The plan should be completed by the end of this summer.

   c. We have hired a **new Public Works Director, Craig Workman, and a new Parks Director, Maria Butts**, since the last BACI workshop. Both of them are attending the BACI 2.0 workshop.

   d. A bike/ped path was constructed and sidewalk from the Whitefish River to the west edge of town along **Highway 93 West**. It was constructed as part of MDT’s Highway 93 Reconstruction project. Also, decorative lights and trees were installed to make the path and entrance to town more enjoyable. The City is now in charge of providing for maintenance of the path, boulevard irrigation and most of the light maintenance (and energy use).

   e. We constructed the **E. 2nd Street bike/ped path** connecting downtown to the Wag Dog Park. We also constructed a path along Dodger Lane to the Armory Rec. Center.

   f. We constructed the Skye Park Bike/Ped Bridge connecting the west side of town to City Beach. We plan to add connecting paths once we acquire additional easements from BNSF.

   g. We have installed a couple of solar powered **pedestrian crossing flashing beacons**, RRFBs, using Safe Routes to School funding. 1st and Baker and Spokane and 5th Street. The second crossing required the OK of MDT since it is on Highway 93.

   h. We helped provide funding for a few **Walk to School Days**. We applied for a Whitefish Community Foundation Grant since there is no longer a Safe Routes to School grant program.

   i. We distributed the Safe Routes to School funded **bicycles to the Whitefish Middle School** (18 bikes and a trailer). They have also been used by the City’s Parks Department in the summer.

   j. **The Downtown Master Plan** was update was adopted in 2015 and the proposed “Bike/Ped Promenade” was a main component of this update.
2. **What have been your biggest challenges/barriers and how did you respond/react to those challenges?**
   
a. Requiring a **Multi-Modal Traffic Study** instead of a Traffic Impact Study for new development. Mark Fenton thought this would be easy to do. But it hasn’t happened yet.
   
b. Setting up a **sidewalk repair program**. We haven’t had the staff time to set up such a program.
   
c. **Riverbend Condo trail**. This is an important link but very difficult to construct due to the narrow sliver of property between the condos and the Whitefish River. And we only have a 6 foot easement.
   
d. **Medical Mile**. I think that NVH is making progress on this. And the City is supposed to help out with funding since NVH paid for the Mark Fenton workshop stuff.
   
e. We desperately need a **O&M program** and funding for our existing bike/ped paths. This needs to be conveyed to the City Council for the 2017 budget.
   
f. We need to write a letter to MDT requesting that the barriers be moved on the viaduct. And then we MDT will use the whitefish Urban Fund allocation to start designing this improvement.
   
g. We have improved our **striping of the bike lanes and ped crossings**, but we need to keep up with this. The bike/ped master plan should provide a map of the priority ped crossings and bike lanes.
   
h. We need to take advantage of the high school student’s interest in a **Bike Share** program. We should continue to work with the students and take advantage of their positive energy and ideas. Perhaps Theresa can help us with this, or our summer engineering intern.
   
i. Build the **Whitefish River Trail extension south of the Rygg property** using cash-in-lieu funds.

3. **What is your team’s main focus for the upcoming training? What do you hope to achieve within the next 6 to 18 months related to creating more active environments?**
   
a. The “place-making” exercise should help us with our bike/ped master planning.
   
b. It will be helpful to discuss the “promenade” from our Downtown Master Plan with MDT folks and others.
   
c. We will complete the 2016 Bike/Ped Master Plan and hopefully have the community energized to improve bike/ped connections throughout town.
   
d. Hopefully, we will have our additional BNSF easements near the Skye Park bridge so we can extend those connections.
   
e. We will have constructed the West 7th Street bike/ped path as part of the Street Reconstruction project.