

Let us first explain why we think these changes are justified, using the goals stated in the Greater Bozeman Area Transportation Plan Update. On page 1-4, the goals listed are (we're paraphrasing) "functionality; variety of travel options allowing safe, logical and balanced travel"; and that the plan "support safe neighborhoods." Furthermore, goal #3, bullet #2, listed on page 1-6 states that the plan "respect and ensure the area's natural and historic context and minimize adverse impacts the environment and existing neighborhoods." As we've testified before, the planning boundary for the Update includes areas currently and historically used by equestrian riders and drivers. They and other non-motorized residents have used the unpaved roads as a trail system. As these roads are paved with no shoulder and no trail, and traffic volumes and speeds increase, these roads become dangerous to both motorized and non-motorized users. Planning a trail that could accommodate equestrians would keep them off the road and "minimize adverse impacts" of road "improvements." Not planning for equestrian access to trails in equestrian neighborhoods is in direct contradiction to all the goals of the plan: "functionality, safety, variety, respect of historic context and existing neighborhoods."

With this in mind, I'm proposing the following additions:

1. Page 1-6, #2 (Objectives): "consider equestrian needs, where appropriate, when planning and designing new roads"
2. Page 1-6, #2 (Objectives): add to bullet on widened shoulders "/equestrian"
3. Page 2-76: Add Section 2.3.22 (Existing Conditions/System Deficiencies): We have supplied photos of equestrians on narrow and dangerous in-area roads. We would also like text something like the following: "There are no public trail systems in the City of Bozeman or anywhere in the planning boundary that allow for equine rider/driver travel. Historically, equestrians have used the rural road network of unpaved roads to travel between equestrian facilities, MSU and the Fairgrounds. As Bozeman grows, it is becoming increasingly dangerous for them to access these sites."
4. Chapter 4: Problem Identification: Make equestrian 4.8, move transit to 4.9: add something like: "The planning boundary for the Update includes areas currently and historically used by equestrian riders and drivers. They and other non-motorized residents have used the unpaved roads as a trail system. As these roads are paved with no shoulder and no trail, and traffic volumes and speeds increase, these roads become dangerous to both motorized and non-motorized users. Future improvements need to take into consideration all of these users."
5. Chapter 6: 6.1: Complete Streets: We noticed that the "policy" is now a "guideline," and that our chances are slim of getting mentioned here. However, by listing users and not including equestrians, we are by definition not users, which is inaccurate, and could have negative repercussions for us. Our first choice would be to add into the second sentence of the guideline "...equestrians, where appropriate,..." . Using "where appropriate" should alleviate the fear that we want, or should have access to, every trail planned.

We believe in the complete streets policy idea, if it can accomplish its goal of “accommodating all users..” but as it is written, it does not do this. In an effort to be supportive of the guideline as it would benefit the whole community greatly, we’ve included a second choice: would you consider adding into the second sentence after “including:” ...”**but not limited to:..**” before you list the users? Obviously, this would have to be worked into the 6.1.2 Recommendation as well.

6. A Map! The cycling and pedestrian facilities have a map, the equestrian community needs one too, even if it is identified as “**trails possibly allowing equestrian access**” . A map is being prepared showing the routes we’d like access to. If the Plan doesn’t include a map, then by default, equestrians won’t be allowed access. We could be landlocked in our own neighborhoods.

Well, that covers it. Thank you so much for your consideration. We appreciate all the hard work and careful consideration that has gone into this document, which I believe will ultimately enhance the character of the community we all love so much.