



Billings Chamber 2016-17

Strategic Priorities

Short Term (2016-2017)

Local Option Authority

Local voters should have the authority to enact a local option tax that will reduce property tax while furthering our community's quality of life initiatives. The state legislature must authorize that local authority. Incremental measurable successes include: local coalition development; educational materials produced; support from the business community in small and large, east and west cities; bill draft.

Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site

Billings' 40 miles of Heritage Trail must connect to our culture and history to enhance our parks thereby improving our quality of life and telling the story of Billings. The development of this site will fulfill a 1928 commitment by the State of Montana, Billings and the Chamber. With fundraising near completion, this year will focus on developing the site and further promoting the "Yellowstone Kelly Brand."

Mid Term (2017-2018)

Air Service

Increase and maintain existing service while improving the airport facility experience.

- a. Secure new destination service. Request for a federal small community air service grant should be decided upon in July. Coupled with private business support financially, we will continue to work with American Airlines to secure direct service to Dallas. We will also continue to meet with all airlines to increase and improve existing service.
- b. Support the airport's \$45 million remodel to create a stronger aesthetic welcome and touch points throughout the airport while improving back of house operations. First impressions matter.
- c. Continue local and regional marketing campaigns to include print, out-of-home, digital and web to encourage regional travelers to drive/fly BIL rather than other regional airports and encourage more frequent trips; and inform residents on the importance of our airport.

Workforce

With approximately 4% unemployment in Billings, businesses struggle to find qualified workers. BillingsWorks is a community leadership group charged with growing and improving the talent pool. With the talent attraction web site launched, we will continue to partner to create awareness and usage of this platform.

Long Term (2018-2020)

Convention Center

Improve meeting and convention space to grow current events and attendees. Without new space 25% of current meetings and events will be lost impacting our \$365 million tourism economy. Examine all funding opportunities with an emphasis on public/private partnerships.

Trails

Make connections to the Marathon Loop to complete the vision and increase number of off road paved trail miles. 2016-17: Yellowstone River Trail connection complete with Western Sugar easement. Final feasibility study to be complete connecting the rims to the valley. Partner with Trails Committee, Trail Net, City and others to complete the Loop by 2020.