

Top stories in this newsletter



Air Quality
Air-filter/Fan Units



November City Ballot
Initiatives



Looking Ahead to
2022



Equity & Inclusion
City Wins Award for
Equity & Inclusion

BREATHING EASY: CITY OFFERS FREE AIR-FILTER/FAN UNITS

Wildfire season brings thick smoke and high temperatures. Residents open windows to cool their homes, and in some cases then struggle with air quality related respiratory issues. After reading and testing the effectiveness of these DIY Air Filters on YPR, the City partnered with Livingston's True Value, Ace Hardware and volunteers from Expedition Church to provide residents with this inexpensive and effective solution to improve the air quality in their homes. The response was surprising with over 150 orders for units. We couldn't have done this without our partners and amazing volunteers who helped assemble the units. City residents can still sign up for one on our webpage at <https://www.livingstonmontana.org/community/webform/box-fan-air-filter>.

ASSISTING THE COMMUNITY OF BROWNING

The City was notified by the State of Montana that Browning was not eligible for the Federal American Response Plan Act (ARPA) funds because their city government has been dissolved as unresponsive. Therefore the State re-allocated those ARPA funds to other municipalities based on population. The City of Livingston is scheduled to receive \$2,997 that was originally slated for Browning Community.

City Administration understands the legal requirements of the Federal ARPA funding guidelines, and it seemed unjust to deprive the Browning Community federal funds when they are already disadvantaged due to a failed government. As acknowledgment of this limitation of the federal program, we have elected to return Browning's money to their community by donating the \$2,997 to a local non-profit focused on mental health and substance abuse recovery. Join us in encouraging community leaders across the state to do the same. You can read more about the Northern Winds Recovery Center here: <https://nwrecoverycenter.wixsite.com/nwrc>.

VOTERS WILL SEE TWO IMPORTANT CITY INITIATIVES THIS NOVEMBER



The first, is asking the electors is establishing a Charter form of government for the purpose of changing from the general powers form of government to a self-government form through a Charter, as per recommendation by the study commission.

So what does that mean? what is a Charter form of Government? A municipal charter form of government defines the organization, powers, and functions of the City Government. It provides a municipality with more autonomy over local affairs in laymen's terms it would allow the City Commission more control over matters not specifically referenced in state code, similar to the way the state constitution does the federal constitution.

The second ballot initiative will ask the Livingston voters about voting for a \$20 million general obligation bond, for funding one or more separated grade rail crossings and related infrastructure. These discussions have been ongoing since March of 1977 and during the most recent [Rail Crossing Community Work Session meeting](#) held June 25, 2021, the Commission decided to move the decision to the voters on a November ballot.

During that meeting, City Finance Director, Paige Fetterhoff stated that interest rates are still low, there has never been a better time to bond for these types of projects. City bond counsel has advised, project location and engineering does not have to be decided for this project to move forward.

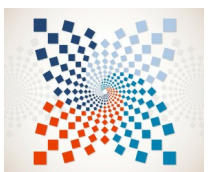
Voters are now tasked with a decision after 40+ years, are residents willing to fund this project to move this project forward?



LOOKING AHEAD AT 2022

The City has completed several goals outlined in the [City's Organizational Strategic Plan](#) such as creating an assistant Chief of Police position, aligned our physical space with organizational structure, updated the City's Growth Policy, completed the ADA compliance plan and more. As we look ahead to 2022, the City will continue to focus staff time, energy and resources executing the remaining goals in this plan. A few projects like the updating downtown streets & utilities updates, or annexing pockets of county around the city are nearly complete. A special meeting will be conducted Thursday, October 14, 2021, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. to update and focus on funding priorities listed in the plan. All are welcome to attend this meeting.

CITY WINS 2021 ICMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROJECT



Equity & Inclusion

The City of Livingston was notified it was the recipient of a nationwide Community Equity and Inclusion Award for populations of less than 10,000 people. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and challenges 2020 brought with it, City leaders continued their commitment to this project by evaluating current practices then identified areas that could be improved upon. Here are some of the initiatives we undertook to promote equity and inclusion:

1. Employee Education Because in-person training was suspended during the pandemic, Livingston engaged a contractor to provide cloud-based training in micro-aggressions in the workplace, creating a welcoming work culture, trust and tribalism in the workplace, and bridging the millennial-boomer divide.
2. Additional anti-bias training for Livingston Police Department staff on ethics in law enforcement, implicit bias, anti-bias training, and de-escalation tactics. The officers, in collaboration with union representatives and management, requested and received a state-of-the-art body camera system.
3. Access to Buildings and City Infrastructure. Livingston developed and implemented an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan in collaboration with its engineering partners to identify and eliminate physical barriers to buildings and raise streets so that sidewalk transitions can be easily navigated by individuals with limited mobility. In addition, departments in older buildings modified operations so that residents can receive services on the ground level. A new city hall facility purchased in 2020 is completely ADA compliant and will co-locate frequently visited departments in a single downtown location.
4. Removing Access Barriers to City Services. The city reviewed all its operations, including commonly used forms, to identify any unintentional barriers or extraneous questions. As a result, the city revised a number of public documents, moved several transactions to an electronic platform for ease of use, and converted its website to be ADA compliant.
5. Demonstrating Inclusion and Equity. Proclamations delivered at city commission meetings codify the city's commitment to being a safe and welcoming community for people of color and of any religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation. In 2020, Livingston also became one of a handful of communities in Montana to formally recognize Indigenous People's Day on the second Monday in October. The city commission voted to convert all city contracts, documents, and ordinances to gender-neutral language and pronouns, and similar changes will be made in public communications.

Tangible results and outcomes of the programs included a reduction in ADA complaints for building access, reduced complaints against police officers, and increased collection rates on utility bills. In 2020 the city added questions relating to diversity and equity to its annual employee climate survey, and 82.4% of employees who responded answered that they believed people are treated fairly and equitably, without bias. Read more about the 2021 Local Government Excellence Awards at <https://icma.org/articles/member-news/2021-local-government-excellence-award-winners>

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Do you want to know about the community resources in our area? Information about many types of services such as disability services, housing resources, food services, help for domestic violence, and much more is available on our Community Resources and Information webpage at: <https://www.livingstonmontana.org/community/page/community-resources-and-information>.

STAY UP TO DATE ON NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Did you know you can subscribe to the City's general news and announcements? Visit <https://www.livingstonmontana.org/newsletter/subscriptions>

Michael Kardoes, City Manager

citymanager@livingstonmontana.org

220 E. Park St. Livingston, MT | (406) 823-6000

www.livingstonmontana.org