



**Bike Walk Montana**  
**works to ensure biking, walking, and rolling - whether for transportation or recreation - are safe and accessible within and between our communities**

This past year saw a great deal of introspection within the Bike Walk Montana (BWMT) organization. Change is a reality of living in Montana. A quick look at the 2020 census shows Montana's population increased by almost 95,000 people between 2010-2020. Using rough math, that is about 790 people a month, or over 25 people a day moving here. Another interesting statistic: over 1.9 million people (about twice the population of South Dakota) flew through Bozeman/Yellowstone International Airport in 2021! A new record when most airports nationwide saw a decrease in travelers!

What do these numbers have to do with BWMT? Whether people come here permanently or to visit, they will be using sidewalks, paths, trails, and roads both for recreation and transportation, motorized and non-motorized. BWMT believes this makes our efforts to positively influence the safety of non-motorized transportation more important than ever.

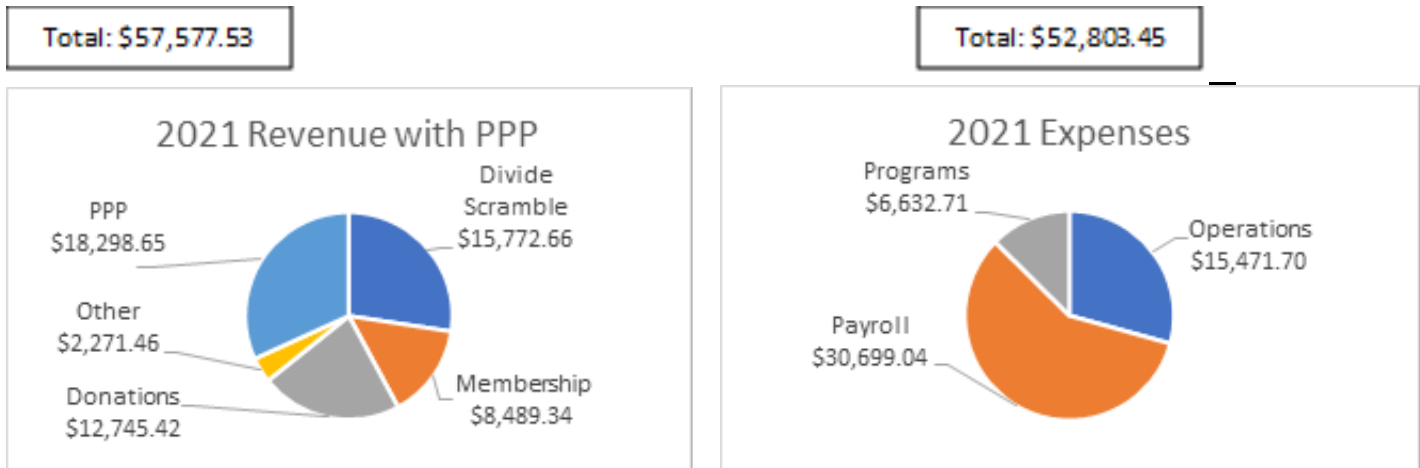
So we asked ourselves a hard question: "Can a small, member-supported organization positively influence the safety and accessibility of roads, sidewalks, paths, and trails for cyclists, walkers, and those using rolling modes of transportation?" We believe the answer is a resounding "YES!" The next natural question is; "How?" we conducted a self-assessment to determine where to place our focus of effort to best influence change and achieve our mission.

To achieve this, BWMT is focusing on three areas; Advocacy at the State Legislature, developing a working relationship with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and increased education across the state. A tall order by any measure, but business as usual will not improve the safety and accessibility for non-motorized means of transportation. We believe that improved education regarding biking, walking, and rolling, coupled with a cultural change where biking, walking, and rolling safety measures are naturally included in any related legislative action, or MDT project will be a great start. This is where BWMT is moving as we begin 2022.

We need your help to continue this important work. Please join or donate today. Visit <https://www.bikewalkmontana.org/>

Below are a few highlights from 2021:

## Financials



Note: PPP is the Federal Paycheck Protection Program

## 2021 Legislative Session in Review

BWMT participated in the 2021 Legislative Session in several “interesting” ways. We engaged legislators and testified on several key bills. The first was a bike safety bill that included language to provide a minimum 5’ passing distance for motorists when passing bicycles. While this type of safe passing law has been pursued for several years by BWMT, we ultimately worked to table this bill due to a number of onerous requirements for cyclists which were added to the bill.

A second bill addressed regulation of eBikes, and what at first seemed a positive effort became quite controversial and was defeated on the Senate floor. A third bill addressed licensure of small recreational shuttles that was a very good bill with strong support and passed with BWMT support. BWMT also followed and testified on school bus safety and Montana trails bills.

Bike Walk often ended up playing defense to avoid passage of bills that would be detrimental to walkers and bikers. However, during this Session we were able to identify several legislators from both parties who are bike/walk-friendly and we will reach out to them prior to the 2023 Session to identify opportunities to propose and pass positive legislation for Montana’s bike/walk community.

## Montana Department of Transportation

MDT is in the process of hiring a Bike/Pedestrian coordinator. We hope to develop a good working relationship with this individual, and others in the agency, and to offer our support in improving safety and accessibility for biking and walking.

## Education

BWMT had a busy fall connecting communities to safety educators, program designs, and transportation professionals in order to get their projects up and running. We participated in a walk audit at the Monforton school near Bozeman. One of the main goals of a walking audit is to provide a feedback source that will help create a pedestrian/bike friendly environment for students travelling to and from school. Street crossings, intersections, sidewalks, driver behavior, safety, comfort, and appeal of

school walking routes are evaluated during the audit. Participants are able to offer potential solutions to any observed issues. Walk audits are a great way to engage community, elected officials, and transportation leaders in prioritizing pedestrian safety. Information gleaned from these audits can inform action plans for improvements to transportation including streets, non-motorized paths and bike lanes. We also participated/assisted in Bozeman's Bike Your Park Day by providing educational material.

Thank you to the many community members and organizations who took a leadership role in organizing Walking Audits, Safe Routes to School projects and Bike Rodeos. You are making a difference in the transportation safety and health of our state!

For more information on how you can conduct an audit, a bike rodeo or safety-skills clinic, or for material and other handouts, please contact us at either [Bruce@bikewalkmontana.org](mailto:Bruce@bikewalkmontana.org) or [info@bikewalkmontana.org](mailto:info@bikewalkmontana.org).

#### Future awareness effort: Divide Scramble 2022

Divide Scramble 2022 is on for June 18th (pending final Forest Service approval) in beautiful Butte Montana!

Visit <https://www.ridethedividemontana.com/> for more information or to register.