



**Missoula Urban Transportation District  
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes  
August 9, 2022**

**APPROVED November 9, 2022**

**Members Present**

Don MacArthur, Chair  
Doug Odegaard  
Amy Cilimburg  
Jesse Dodson  
Sebastian Strauss

**Members Absent**

Andrea Davis  
Anna-Margaret Goldman

**Staff**

Corey Aldridge, CEO & GM  
Mary Hanson, Dir. of Finance  
Colin Woodrow, Proj. & Plan. Mgr  
Dan Stone, Transit Planner  
Shanti Devins, Comm. Mgr.  
Megan Clifford, Admin Assist.

**Guests**

None

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

Don MacArthur called the meeting to order at 12:04 PM. Roll call was taken.

**Changes or Additions to the Agenda**

None

**Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

None

**Action Items**

**4.1 Minutes of July 13, 2022**

Odegaard made a motion to approve the minutes of July 13, 2022, seconded by MacArthur. The motion carried unanimously.

Jesse Dodson and Sebastian Strauss joined the meeting.

**Discussion items**

**5.1 Review of 2018 Long Range Strategic Plan RFP and Discussion of Future Planning Efforts**

Aldridge reviewed the 2018 Strategic Plan and objectives with the board. Aldridge highlighted previous discussions that informed the plan and the desire for more public involvement. He acknowledged that in 2022, Mountain Line was able to implement several phases of that plan.

Aldridge then discussed current plans and projects in progress outside of, but involving, Mountain Line. These include the RAISE Bus Rapid Transit Planning, East Missoula Highway 200 Corridor Plan, MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen, Midtown and Downtown master plans, Front and Main conversion, and other ongoing developments. He also highlighted existing or upcoming MUTD projects, including those for a new Maintenance, Operations, and Administration Building (MOAB), Zero Emission Transition Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and Microtransit exploration.

Woodrow updated the board on staff efforts to rethink the Downtown Transfer Center (TC) space in light of the City's reevaluation of its use of space. Woodrow reminded the board that the City ultimately owns the TC land, and MUTD needs to be active in the City's review of this space.

Stone updated the board on the data collection challenges experienced over the last two years due to vendor complications and system verification related to required national ridership reporting. He feels optimistic that the data will become more reliable in the months ahead.

Aldridge said MUTD will not have quality data to review and understand the impacts of the 2022 service expansions until July of 2023. And, in light of this and all previously-mentioned planning efforts, Aldridge cautioned the board that if the district were to proceed with undergoing a new strategic planning process this year, he feels the plan would be flawed.

However, Aldridge said this should not stop the district from continuing to review and plan for service in rapidly developing areas like Miller Creek and the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen area. He concluded by recommending to the Planning Committee that, rather than undergo a formal strategic planning process, the district should focus on smaller projects that will inform later plans and provide valuable data for future robust planning.

MacArthur reminded the Committee that there will always be other plans in flux, and that is why MUTD must continue to conduct its own planning every five years or so. However, he did agree that in light of recent service expansions and the other demands for public participation, the district is likely not yet ready to dive into strategic planning in the coming year.

Odegaard agreed with MacArthur's sentiments. He expressed that he wants the district to "finish well" related to existing plans and research projects. He also expressed that residents of Miller Creek are asking him questions related to transit, and he encouraged future discussions about underserved areas of the community.

Cilimburg weighed in that she doesn't want the district to do what it did last time related to strategic planning. She echoed that she also feels things will constantly be in flux and that the agency needs to think through what is needed to support the community, and the purpose and goals of the agency. Cilimburg added that longer-range plans might be less useful moving forward, given the rate of change happening in our community. She suggested considering strategic purposing in the future, rather than concrete planning, to help MUTD meet community needs and respond to change in an appropriate amount of time. She suggested MUTD reach out to other agencies to learn more about how they are rethinking strategic planning.

Strauss expressed that he is data-driven and agrees with the approach to gathering quality and comprehensive data related to the service expansion before major planning efforts. Strauss also questioned to what extent the district should compare data pre and post expansion. Aldridge mentioned a similar conundrum in 2015, when zero-fare was introduced at the same time the district increased frequency on Routes 1 and 2; this made understanding ridership trends related to one or the other more challenging. He explained that now, the district is looking at the impacts of the pandemic on ridership and will face challenges in understanding ridership changes post service expansion.

Dodson agreed with the expressed sentiments.

Further discussion ensued about potential projects and priorities for the district in the coming years. Climate and carbon footprint were heavily discussed. Discussion then turned to the desire to understand traditional fixed-route alternatives, such as microtransit. Aldridge said cost would determine what and how quickly alternate modes of transit could be deployed. He also expressed interest in understanding how to get community members to recreation opportunities.

MacArthur stated he would like to engage in three projects: a study with a consultant to understand how to put service in underserved areas; analyzing existing service through the lens of greenhouse gas emissions; and understanding where to place new and/or additional transfer centers. MacArthur then polled the board, asking if the district were to have one priority right now, what would it be.

Strauss said he would like to do a more comprehensive study around transfer center points, current operations, and how the district might maintain its existing MOAB facility and open a second location.

Odegaard said he envisions a multi-purpose transfer/charging center that functions more like a satellite facility. He said he would like to start the process of decentralization, particularly in the southern part of the city. He requested the opportunity to come in and learn about daily operations, so he can better understand current and future facility needs.

Woodrow returned the conversation to the City's analysis of its downtown location, which could impact MUTD's transfer center. Discussion ensued.

Cilimburg weighed in that she would like staff to continue to consider all projects and goals, addressing them in a prioritized way.

The meeting concluded with a brief update on land acquisition.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Submitted by Shanti Devins.