



**Missoula Urban Transportation District  
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes  
May 10, 2023**

**APPROVED JUNE 14, 2023**

**Members Present**

Don MacArthur, Chair  
Jesse Dodson  
Jason Wiener

**Members Absent**

Andrea Davis  
Amy Cilimburg  
Sebastian Strauss

**Staff**

Corey Aldridge, G.M.  
Jennifer Sweten, Ops Dir.  
Olga Kreimer, Commc'n Spec.  
Colin Woodrow, Plan & Proj. Mgr.  
Vince Caristo, Proc. Specialist  
Michele Erickson, Admin. Assist.  
Jason Struppler, Operator

**Guests**

David Perlmutter, Transit Planning Principal at VIA  
Dan Berkovits, Vice-President of VIA Strategies

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

Don MacArthur called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM. 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 March 8, 2023**

Dodson made a motion to approve the March 8, 2023, meeting minutes. MacArthur seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## Discussion items

### **5.1 On-Demand Transit Feasibility Study 11:04 AM**

Caristo reviewed the information given to the board at the last planning committee meeting about the three firms who submitted bids for the on-demand transit study. All firms were aware of the \$75,000 fixed budget and the tight completion timetable by the end of the year. All three firms had no issues with the project parameters. The agency has chosen to move forward with Via Mobility. Dan Berkovits and David Perlmutter attended the meeting to answer any questions from the Board. Berkovits introduced Via's strategies based on Via's operations experience, advanced planning tools, and service optimization best practices to carry out on-demand transit studies. Berkovits then turned over the presentation to Perlmutter, who gave an overview of Via's goals as follows:

- Broaden coverage of the Mountain Line Network.
- Improve ridership and productivity in hard-to-serve areas.
- Identify opportunities to provide first/last mile (FMLM) connections to fixed-route networks.
- Identify key service parameters and implementation strategies to support cost-effective operations.
- Evaluate the potential for improving operational efficiency through commingling ADA paratransit and micro transit.

Perlmutter then gave an overview of the project and how Via plans to carry out the set goals. First, they will focus on gathering information and identifying comparable on-demand services for case studies. MacArthur asked if Via could find five comparable agencies. Perlmutter explained there are fifteen agencies with similar service parameters, operations models, fare policies, fleet sizes, and service area characteristics. They will work with Mountain Line to get the list down to the best five agencies for comparison. A service assessment will be performed evaluating priority zones and other areas concerning population distribution, employment, high-need communities, and key activity centers. Via has developed its own on-demand transit simulations that evaluates performance with different fleet sizes and projects quality-of-service outcomes, identifies optimal integration with fixed routes, and estimates vehicle and budget needs for various service levels. The fourth task focuses on defining the metrics for MUTD, creating a prioritization analysis, and finalizing service parameters along with a plan for implementation from hours of operation to fleet requirements and vehicle selection.

The next part of the presentation focused on the financial impact of on-demand transit. Perlmutter explained they will be looking at the following areas:

- Vehicle leases/purchases
- Labor (drivers, dispatchers, customer service staff)
- Fuel and vehicle maintenance
- Insurance
- Software installation and licensing
- Maintenance facility needs
- Net charges in fixed-route service levels

Finally, they will focus on performance measures and establish KPIs and benchmarks for the following:

- Ridership and ridership intensity
- Cost per ride
- Utilization/productivity
- GHG emissions

- Customer satisfaction
- Seat availability
- Average wait times

Perlmutter wrapped up the presentation with Caristo about the project timeline completion in September 2023.

Dan Perlmutter left the meeting at 11:50 AM

David Berkovits left the meeting at 11:50 AM.

## **5.2 Advertising Contract Update and Discussion 11:51 AM**

Caristo reviewed the long-standing contract with Missoula Broadcasting for advertising space on the bus exteriors. The contract will expire on October 21, 2023, and there is concern about the cost versus the benefits of continuing to allow advertisements on the buses as new buses are added to the fleet. Currently, Missoula Broadcasting has access to adhere vinyl ads on 24 buses. They sell the space to whomever they can for as much as they can, and Mountain Line gets 35% of the revenue. The agreement also includes a minimum monthly amount paid to MUTD. Advertising revenues have steadily increased since 2020. Revenues for 2022 were less than \$70,000. The Board discussed the possibility of limiting the number of buses that can be used for advertising or eliminating advertising completely. The Planning Committee was not unanimous on whether MUTD should continue advertising on the exterior of the buses.

## **5.3 MOAB Update 12:44 PM**

Woodrow gave an update on the MOAB. The review appraisal arrived on Monday. Woodrow stated the appraisal is for \$8.1 million, including the building, roads, and improvements. The environmental review from RabbitBrush got its first review by the FTA. RabbitBrush found nothing of consequence, so the agency could potentially negotiate for the land acquisition again in July 2023.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:54 PM.

Submitted by Michele Erickson