



**Missoula Urban Transportation District
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2025**

APPROVED

MEMBERS PRESENT

Don MacArthur
Amy Cilimburg
Eva Rocke

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF

Jordan Hess
Colin Woodrow
Olga Kreimer
Spencer Starke

GUESTS

Spider McKnight, Six Pony Hitch

Call to Order and Roll Call

11:02 a.m. – MacArthur called the meeting to order and asked for roll call.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda

No changes or additions to the agenda.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

None

Action Items

4.1 Minutes of February 12, 2025, Meeting – Cilimburg moved to approve the minutes, MacArthur seconded, and the motion carried.

Discussion Items

5.1 Brand Refresh Update – Kreimer introduced Spider McKnight, principal at Six Pony Hitch, who explained that the brand fresh update stemmed from last year's marketing audit identifying opportunities for improvement, particularly regarding accessibility. Understanding the agency's needs required a thorough process and today's update is intended for discussion and feedback rather than immediate board approval.

McKnight emphasized the importance of community support and enhancing rider experience through developing messaging that highlights Mountain Line as a vital public service, a good steward of public resources and a good investment for the community. Strengthening employee recruitment and retention while promoting public transit ridership is also a focus.

McKnight presented a new tagline – How Missoula Rolls – because it celebrates Mountain Line as a big part of the community that emphasizes connection. MacArthur expressed concern that the phrase did not convey the right amount of gravitas given the agency's obligation to deliver outstanding transit. Kreimer pointed out that the phrasing was meant to convey that the agency is approachable and friendly. McKnight said the phrase fit the most scenarios but didn't have to become universal. The brand refresh is meant to be transitional in bridging existing logos and a new one.

McKnight reviewed design flaws with the existing logo and introduced a modified logo that translated onto different mediums and clothing better. She also revealed a new font and updated colorways that will work with existing vehicles and other assets. McKnight showed several examples of how the branding would look on different branding elements such as vehicles and clothing.

McKnight displayed a proposed bus stop signage redesign that featured larger numbers and color-coated routes for improving the user experience. The new signs would also include QR codes for easier access to route information. Cilimburg asked if the routes colors would ever be featured on the buses. Woodrow said that option was not currently in the plans, but the route-color system would create enhanced clarity for mapping. The overall goal is to effectively communicate in a way that attracts and retains new riders while addressing the visibility and functionality of the existing signs. Kreimer noted it was important to present a cohesive look across all branding elements.

Cilimburg asked about the impact of riders using the mall as the center instead of downtown, based on a potential second transfer hub at the mall. Kreimer said directions in Missoula are problematic and referring to inbound/outbound only referred to downtown. MacArthur asked if the new buses could have updated graphics given that they are coming off the line right now. McKnight responded that future orders could feature the updated design.

McKnight showed suggested design changes for the paratransit vehicles because many people do not understand the paratransit service is a separate, non-fixed route service. Cilimburg said the visibility changes should impact the most vulnerable potential riders. McKnight said the goal is to make Missoulians proud of Mountain Line.

5.2 Service Implementation Plan for Summer 2025 – Starke said the strategic plan has now been finalized, though additional minor adjustments will be made based on feedback from board members. The staff intends to introduce the following changes in summer 2025: introduce Routes 10 and 4S, increase Route 3 frequency and realign Routes 7 and 11. The changes will not cause major expenditure increases and represent current ridership demands. The timeline hinges on the city installing the light at Craig and Orange Streets which should occur in early to mid-August.

Routes 3 and 4S are not as dependent on infrastructure changes but the staff wants to implement all the changes at once. Nine new stops will be set up along Wyoming and Catlin Streets, one new stop is scheduled for the 4S route and a new stop on Route 8 will be installed. Pursuant to ADA compliance, all the new stops require a specific pad type and any sheltered stops require ADA accessibility as well. The cost estimate, including four required shelters on Route 10, is between \$150,000 and \$170,000. Woodrow added that stops with poles only cost about \$500 to install.

Starke noted that Route 10 will serve the food bank, a long-requested stop location, utilizing a single bus on 30-minute headways. The East Missoula service increase to twice hourly should show a positive impact as well.

MacArthur asked about service to the Mullan Road/Sxwtpqyen area. Starke responded that choosing the right routes through the neighborhoods would be challenging until they were completely built out. MacArthur remarked that the new facility would need to be operational before the route could be implemented. Woodrow stated that the 2025 maximum fleet deployment was 21 buses so if the new route was started, the fleet could be enlarged to accommodate it. MacArthur suggested that the message should emphasize the route and paratransit service would be forthcoming once the connecting roads are built. Woodrow cautioned that issues with the new rollout should be expected but improving ridership benefits the community.

Kreimer outlined the messaging that centers on making data-driven service changes in response to rider input and the city's changing needs. It emphasizes that Mountain Line is a public service for all the people. Additional focus is directed to helping the city adapt to the changes while acting as good stewards of taxpayer resources by implementing cost-neutral methods.

MacArthur asked what funds would pay for the changes. Woodrow replied that \$200,000 to \$300,000 would be set aside in the budget each year for improving the system.

MacArthur inquired about the messaging regarding service delivery that provided access to the entire community. Woodrow answered that the message will emphasize improving and providing new service to the various neighborhoods. The staff will convey that message to community partners and outreach. Kreimer stressed that timing was essential – a commitment must be made by early May to ensure proper outreach and materials are prepared to gain and maintain the community's trust throughout the process.

Adjournment

1:02 p.m. – Cilimburg adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by Darlene Craven, Board Clerk