

MISSOULA URBAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2025

APPROVED

Committee Members Present: Don MacArthur, Sam Oliver, Kerri Levin

Committee Members Absent: Amy Cilimburg

Board Members Present: Sebastian Strauss, Jason Wiener

Staff Present: Jordan Hess, Colin Woodrow, Spencer Starke, Garin Wally

Guests:

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

11:45 MacArthur called the meeting to order and asked for roll call.

2.0 Public Comment

None.

3.0 Approval of Minutes & Financial Statements

3.1 August 6, 2025, Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Oliver moved to approve the minutes, MacArthur seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

3.2 August 21, 2025, Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Oliver moved to approve the minutes, MacArthur seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

3.3 September 10, 2025, Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Oliver moved to approve the minutes, MacArthur seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

4.0 Reports and Presentations

4.1 Recreation Shuttle – Mid-Pilot Update

Hess explained that the agency coordinated the pilot program as part of the Front County Recreation Collaborative. Since the service began on September 13, ridership has numbered between 10 and 30 over the weekend service days, averaging around 19. On the most recent Saturday, however, three passengers rode the shuttle, indicating how weather impacts service demand. There's a significant lull during midday and on return trips according to the operators' manual tallies. Riders are predominantly mountain bikers, but there are a number of non-bikers as well. MacArthur asked if the number of trips could be reduced and Hess said a tighter schedule would work. He explained that the number of bikes fluctuated while passengers stayed consistent. Woodrow added that the cost per ride would always be high, but the benefits to running the program would continue to grow by creating access for the community, being a soft entry into transit for new riders, and that incorporating more community partners will expand the impact. MacArthur supported exploring opportunities for community sponsorships. Hess said the staff would prepare an end-of-season report regarding ridership, financial support from this season, and a projection of operating costs. Hess said this program would continue to grow in terms of creating access for the community and building sponsorships to cover the costs moving forward. Hess concluded that overall, many community stakeholders approved of the program, and it's been a great way to connect with the community.

4.2 Service to Outlying Areas of District

Hess reviewed the challenges associated with establishing a new route 15 out on the west side of town given the new established definition of service area as being a mile and a half. The paratransit service boundary is three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route stop. Paratransit ridership continues to grow, but expanding the paratransit boundary will be costly. Oliver noted that paratransit is outgrowing fixed-route and MacArthur added that reducing fixed route service is one option for reducing the paratransit service area. He asked if other agencies were experiencing this imbalance. Hess responded that the growth is not unusual, though the agency's level of growth is compared to national trends. Meeting paratransit demand has not yet required cutting fixed-route service, but demand trends certainly could make that a potential reality. Levien said paratransit operators worked long days to accommodate as many ride requests as possible.

Wally reviewed service areas and 1.5 mile boundaries, noting that Route 15 would not include much of the district and that the main areas along the route are rural. Starke pointed out that the area the group toured was within the current 1.5 mile buffer with about fifty percent within a paratransit boundary. Hess said the complexities of annexation and service provision within the scope of the recently passed house bill defining area warranted further discussion. MacArthur said residents within the 1.5-mile service area should be paying into the district.

4.3 Update on Petitions to Remove Properties from the District

Hess explained the complexities of annexation and de-annexation are one of the reasons the board has not adopted a policy but rather relies on case-by-case legal guidance. Based on the individual requests for removal, the board can choose not to act, and after 60 days, the residence could be removed from the property tax rolls. MacArthur suggested there may be public relations opportunities to inveigle the property owners not to leave based on their proximity to potential service. MacArthur reviewed actions items as follows: research previous legal opinions to establish a basis for acting and establish a

process for resolving the individual petitions for removal as they come in. Hess said the agency cannot modify the service area but adding service to preserve the existing district area would not be optimal either. MacArthur asked if it would be possible to get the de-annexed subdivisions back. Hess asked whether an election to redefine that district boundaries would affect financing for the new facility.

5.0 Adjournment

MacArthur adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.