

## Staff Report

**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Allison Segal

**Date:** January 22, 2026

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**Agenda Item:** 5.3 FFY2027 Community Coordination Plan and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Grant Application

**Attachments:**

- 5.3.1 FFY2027 Community Coordination Plan

**Recommendation:**

Upon conclusion of the public hearing, approve the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2027 Community Coordination Plan and the MDT Grant Application

**Discussion:**

A coordination plan for an urban area is intended to maximize the collective coverage of transportation programs in the area by minimizing duplication of services. Participating agencies work together to provide the most appropriate, cost-effective services within existing resources and reduce duplication to make funds available for more services. The process also seeks to simplify access to transportation services for people with disabilities, people with low incomes and older adults.

The process to develop the plan includes representatives of the public, private, and non-profit transportation and human-services providers, and other programs sponsored by federal, state, and local agencies to strengthen the impact.

To be considered for funding, the agency is required to submit a copy of an updated coordination plan for the Missoula urban area with the grant application to MDT. The FFY2027 update to the Missoula Urban Area Coordination Plan is attached to this staff report.

The staff is requesting authorization to submit an application to MDT for FFY2027. The application requests \$367,312 in 5310 funds with a 15% local match of \$64,820, totaling \$432,132, for funding three small ADA 12 passenger cutaways with camera and radio systems. These vans are for fleet expansion. STAC ranks the vans as fourth, fifth and sixth in priority.



The plan also includes a \$245,783 request from The Arc of Western Montana for purchasing two ADA 5-passenger mini conversion vans and one all-wheel drive ADA mid-top extended van and a \$119,997 request from Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association for funding three AWD non-ADA 7-passenger mini vans. MUTD would not have any stake in, or responsibility for, these two requests.

**Financial Impact and Funding Source:**

The funds for the local match are available in the fleet replacement reserves and will be budgeted for FY2027.

**DBE Certified:** N/A

# **Missoula Urban Transportation District Coordination Plan**

FFY 2027

for

**Montana Department of Transportation**

prepared by

**Missoula Urban Transportation District,  
Mountain Line, and  
Special Transportation Advisory Committee**

Sebastian Strauss, MUTD Board Chair

Jordan Hess, MUTD CEO/General Manager

Elizabeth Wehling, STAC Secretary

Coordinated by

**MUTD / Lead Agency**

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Submitted to STAC: January 9, 2026

Submitted to MUTD Board: January 22, 2026

Submitted to MDT: February 6, 2026

# Date Adopted by Board of Directors

This plan was adopted on January 22, 2026, by the Board of Directors of the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD), Missoula, Montana.

Adoption is based on the recommendation of the Specialized Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC). The coordination plan update was discussed and recommended for adoption at the January 9, 2026, STAC meeting.

Minutes from the meetings of these two boards showing these actions are included in the Appendix.

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# Introduction

This coordination plan, as required by federal legislation and the Montana Department of Transportation, provides a summary of current and anticipated coordination efforts in the Missoula urban area. All transportation providers in the greater Missoula area are open to all coordination efforts that can lead to the maximization of effectiveness and efficiency in the investment of local dollars to provide transportation services to people who live in, work in, or visit the greater Missoula area.

This document updates the Missoula Urban Area Public Transportation Coordination Plan for Federal Fiscal Year 2027 as recommended and approved by MUTD, the lead organization in the Missoula urban area.

STAC also reviewed the plan and recommended it for approval. STAC is committed to the coordination of all public transportation services within the Missoula urban area that are served by the primary providers in this plan and in coordinating efforts with the outlying areas of the western Montana region served by other providers.

It is the goal of all primary providers listed in this coordination plan to work closely with MUTD and STAC to follow the guidance established by the Federal Transit Administration to:

1. Work together to provide more effective transportation solutions that lead to increased ridership, better access to jobs, reduced congestion, and more efficient provision of transportation services.
2. Continue to identify transit industry best practices and human service transportation coordination activities that improve the action plan for continued transportation coordination improvement.
3. Ensure adequate outreach efforts, including conducting an annual needs assessment, and jointly conducting planning sessions that determine how to use the available resources to best meet those needs.
4. Recognize the outreach efforts of other providers and agencies in western Montana.
5. Seek participation from non-Department of Transportation (DOT) funded partner agencies.

As the lead organization, MUTD is committed to including the following groups and organizations in the coordinated planning process:

1. Transit riders and potential riders, including the general population, individuals with disabilities and older Americans.

2. Area transportation planning agencies.
3. Area public transportation providers, including non-profit transportation providers.
4. Area private transportation providers.
5. Human service agencies.
6. Other government agencies in the area who administer health, employment, or other support such as vocational rehabilitation, medical, independent living, and the County Council on Aging programs.

## 1.0 Agencies Involved

MUTD provides general public transportation in Missoula. Recipients of FTA 5311 or 5310 (seniors and persons with disabilities) grants in the greater Missoula planning area include:

- MUTD
- The ARC Western Montana

The transportation providers are described in detail below.

### Missoula Urban Transportation District

MUTD, operator of Mountain Line, is a local agency that has been offering transportation options to the Missoula area since December 1977. The Missoula county and city elected officials appoint a seven-member board to oversee the agency. Staff at MUTD consists of seventy operators, sixteen maintenance employees, eleven direct supervisors and twenty-four administrative/management employees. Mountain Line's vision is to create a flexible and innovative transit system that serves an expanding community. Mountain Line promotes community involvement and ownership, and actively seeks productive partnerships with other community agencies, businesses, and government.

Currently, Mountain Line operates within a seventy-square mile area, serving the communities of Missoula, East Missoula, Bonner, Target Range, and the Rattlesnake. Mountain Line provided 1,263,888 rides in fiscal year 2025 on fixed-route and 85,507 on paratransit and shuttle van combined.

In January 2015, Mountain Line launched a zero-fare service as a three-year demonstration project, funded by community partners, that was extended another three years. This program is now funded with local tax dollars as approved by the

voters in 2020. The program is now entering its tenth year, having recovered to 80% of pre-pandemic ridership.

Mountain Line provides the following services:

**Fixed Routes:** Twelve fixed routes provide various levels of service, including 15-minute, all day service on Routes 1 & 2. Over twenty vehicles provide this service during weekday peak periods, seventeen during midday, and 6 during the late evening service. Nine buses provide regular Saturday and Sunday service. Buses generally operate between 5:45 a.m. and 10:45 p.m. on weekdays, 8:45 a.m. and 10:45 p.m. on Saturdays, and 8:45 a.m. and 8:45 p.m. on Sundays. This represents over 6,000 hours of revenue service a month.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Comparable Paratransit Services:** This program has been providing transportation services for eligible passengers since 1991. Seventeen paratransit buses carry an average of over seven thousand passengers per month. ADA comparable paratransit service operates weekdays from 5:45 a.m. to approximately 10:45 p.m., Saturdays from 8:45 a.m. to 10:45 p.m., and Sunday from 8:45 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.

**Shuttle Van:** The shuttle van began operation on July 1, 2008. The service is designed for people over sixty who do not qualify for the ADA paratransit service. The shuttle van operates Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This service uses fully accessible buses and vans with lifts that can be used for wheelchairs, scooters and walkers, so there is no need to use the steps. Unlike ADA paratransit's origin-to-destination service, the shuttle features zero-fare, curb-to-curb service that operates under fewer eligibility restrictions and more limited operating hours. Advance reservations and a brief registration form are required.

**Special Services:** Mountain Line provides seasonal service to popular community events such as the Saturday farmers markets and launched a Marshall Mountain pilot program in FFY26.

Mountain Line expanded service in summer of 2022, implementing changes specified in phases one, two, and three of MUTD's 2018 strategic plan, that included earlier Monday through Saturdays starts and later end times. In addition, Sunday service was introduced and limited holiday service was extended to all modes. As a result, the agency posted increased service hours and a 30% increase in staffing.

MUTD recently completed the 2025 Transit Service Plan, a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant funded a bus rapid transit feasibility study, and is at 60% design phase on a new maintenance, operations, and administration building.

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** MUTD requests \$367,312 in 5310 funds with a 15% local match of \$64,820, totaling \$432,132, for funding three small ADA 12 passenger cutaways with camera and radio systems. These vans are for fleet expansion. The local match will be provided from property tax revenue. STAC ranks the vans as fourth, fifth and sixth in priority.

## The Arc Western Montana (Narrative provided by same)

Missoula Developmental Service Corporation, doing business as The Arc Western Montana (The Arc), provides individuals with developmental disabilities and their families with the skills, tools, and supports needed to promote self-determination and community inclusion. The Arc envisions a world in which people with intellectual and developmental disabilities lead purposeful lives and develop meaningful relationships within their communities.

A voting member of STAC since its inception, The Arc offers residential habilitation through ten group homes, day support programs, retirement and nursing services, behavioral supports, and employment services, primarily serving individuals in the Missoula area.

The organization operates a fleet of 25 vehicles to provide demand-responsive transportation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including 9 ADA-accessible vehicles. These vehicles support 57 individuals who cannot access public transportation, including 18 who use wheelchairs and 3 who use walkers, providing approximately 1,000 roundtrip rides per week. The fleet is used daily to transport individuals to the day center, community outings, recreational activities, medical appointments, and errands.

The Arc maintains 10 group homes and 1 day center throughout the Missoula area to support its mission of fostering independence, inclusion, and meaningful community participation.

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** The ARC requests \$245,783 in 5310 funds with a 15% local match of \$43,375, totaling \$289,158, for funding two ADA 5 passenger mini conversion vans and one all-wheel drive ADA mid-top extended van. These vans are for fleet replacement. The local match will be provided from the ARC of Western Montana. STAC ranks these vans first, second and third in priority.

## 1.1. Other Area Providers and Key Stakeholders

Other area providers and key stakeholders involved in the Coordination Plan include:

ASUM Office of Transportation  
University of Montana  
Vickie Rectenwald  
University Center, Ste. 114  
Missoula, MT 59801  
243-2045

A.W.A.R.E. Inc.  
Ron Knight  
2300 Regent St. #103  
Missoula, MT 59801  
543-2202

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes  
Corky Sias  
P.O. Box 278  
Pablo, MT 59855

Missoula Aging Services  
Lisa Sheppard  
337 Stephens Avenue  
Missoula, MT 59801  
728-7682

Opportunity Resources, Inc.  
Josh Kendrick  
2821 South Russell Street  
Missoula, MT 59801  
406-329-1754

Missoula Transportation Planning  
Services  
Charles Menefee  
127 W. Spruce Street  
Missoula, Mt 59802  
552-6630

Missoula/Ravalli Transportation  
Management Assn.  
Lyn Hellegaard  
2820 S. Higgins Ave.  
Missoula, MT 59801  
327-8707

Mineral County Pioneer Council  
PO Box 10  
Saint Regis, MT 59866-0010  
822-3577

Sanders County COA  
Tony Tannaci  
P.O. Box 339  
Hot Springs, MT 59845  
827-6966

### Missoula Aging Services (Narrative provided by same)

Missoula Aging Services (MAS) is a nonprofit organization established by Missoula County in 1982. It is the Area VII Agency on Aging covering Missoula and Ravalli Counties and is also an Aging and Disability Resource Center. MAS's mission is to promote the independence, dignity, and health of older adults and those who care for them through advocacy, education, services, and volunteer opportunities.

MAS has been represented on STAC for over twenty years, advocating for the transportation needs of older adults. MAS's current Area Plan on Aging, effective October 2023-September 2027, is based on extensive community input, including a

statistically valid and benchmarked survey of older adults. The plan identifies available, affordable, accessible transportation, as a key to aging at home successfully. Additionally, MAS's strategic plan lays out transformative pathways to "aging with confidence and without fear" and includes this outcome, "transportation options span the community and meet people's diverse needs as they age." As a result of these two planning efforts, MAS is committed to ongoing exploration of innovative ways to fill service gaps in coordination with Mountain Line. For example, MAS has partnered with Mountain Line on the Confident Rider program where MAS volunteers trained by Mountain Line staff in turn train older adults to use the fixed-route system. MAS also offers volunteer rides to older adults who need transportation to and from medical procedures requiring sedation and help "through the door." MAS will also continue to assist older adults to apply for and navigate paratransit and senior van services. The MAS website links to Mountain Line schedules and routes, services, and how-to videos.

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** MAS is not submitting a request this year.

## ASUM Transportation (Narrative provided by same)

Established in 1999, the Associated Students of the University of Montana Transportation (ASUMT) promotes and provides safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation options to the University of Montana campus community.

ASUM's park and ride system started with a 15 passenger van providing 3,860 fare-free rides in 2000 and developed into the UDASH transit system, currently on track to provide 120,000 trips in 2025-2026. UDASH provides fixed-route service during the fall and spring semesters, with no service available during the summer and winter breaks.

UDASH currently operates three 35-foot battery-electric buses and three 35-foot diesel buses. UDASH service includes two fixed routes, all of which pass through the UM transit hub located near the music building on UM's main campus.

- Maroon Line serves as a main campus circulator, including the MMAC, University Center, UM housing complexes along South and Higgins Avenue, and two park-and-ride lots.
- Silver Line serves as a loop between the main campus, the Missoula College at River Campus, and downtown Missoula, including a privately-owned student living complex.

UDASH service is free and open to the public. Every UDASH bus is ADA accessible, and all operators are trained in ADA requirements and mobility device securement. All UDASH operators are UM students enrolled in at least six credits. A team of four full-

time permanent UM staff manages the UDASH driver pool employing between 18 to 25 students each semester.

In addition to UDASH fixed-route service, ASUMT contracts with campus affiliates to provide zero-fare shuttle service for large campus events, such as Grizzly football games and stadium concerts. ASUMT offers contract charter services to University of Montana affiliates within the immediate Missoula area, including Griz Airport Shuttles. UDASH also provides shuttle service to the broader Missoula community, including river float shuttles.

ASUMT also operates the ASUM bike program, consisting of 125 rental bicycles available at low cost to UM students, staff, and affiliates. The ASUM bike program has co-sponsored a car-free pledge program in which up to 25 first-year students who pledge not to bring a vehicle will receive a complimentary bike, four complimentary airport trips, and discounts at local restaurants and stores. The ASUM bike program also maintains open bike shop hours and conducts bike education outreach activities. This program has contributed to the University of Montana's Gold-level designation as a bike-friendly university.

ASUMT promotes many services to the UM community, including, but not limited to, Mountain Line, Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association, Missoula in Motion, and Free Cycles. ASUMT coordinates services with Mountain Line by educating riders about transit options, promoting Mountain Line services, sharing bus stops, and engaging in joint planning. ASUMT and Missoula in Motion work jointly to promote transportation options and the Way to Go Club. ASUMT subsidizes student visits to Free Cycles.

ASUMT fixed-route services are funded by a mandatory transportation fee set by the Montana Board of Regents. As of fall 2025, full-time students pay \$49 per semester, and part-time students pay \$38 per semester. The projected UDASH budget to support fixed-route services in the 2025-2026 academic year is \$870,000. Charter service expenses are not supported by the transportation fee, but instead are billed to the contracting party.

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** ASUM Transportation is not submitting a request this year.

## City of Missoula Public Works and Mobility Department (Narrative provided by same)

As staff to the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Public Works and Mobility Department participates in and coordinates the transportation planning program for the Missoula metropolitan planning area in accordance with federal law. This program is a collaborative effort conducted in cooperation with the City and County of Missoula, MUTD, Montana Department of Transportation, Federal Highway

Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and other local, state, and federal agencies. The mission of the Transportation Division is:

*“To plan and program a safe and efficient transportation system for the Missoula area that increases access and mobility through multimodal options, improves the environment and supports economic development, thereby enhancing quality of life.”*

The State of Montana designated the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board as the MPO in 1982, when the urbanized area reached a population of 50,000. Governance of the MPO is provided by the Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee, composed of City and County elected officials, MUTD leadership, MDT district and state-wide representatives, and the Missoula Air Quality Board. TPCC is supported by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee that includes staff from agencies represented in the MPO.

Prior to 2005, MPO staff was part of the long-range planning section of the Office of Planning and Grants and its predecessor agencies. Under the interlocal agreement between Missoula County and the City of Missoula signed August 11, 2005, transportation became a separate division within OPG. In January 2013, the transportation planning division was relocated to the City of Missoula Development Services office, where it continued to provide transportation services to both the city and county in the Missoula urbanized area under a new interlocal agreement signed October 9, 2013. In 2020, as part of a City of Missoula reorganization effort, the MPO was integrated into the Department of Public Works and Mobility.

In addition to the committees noted above, MPO staff participates in STAC, a coalition of organizations that provide and use specialized (curb-to-curb, demand responsive) transportation services.

Transportation staff manages the preparation and updating of federally mandated planning documents that maintain the region's eligibility to receive federal highway and transit funds. These documents include the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Unified Planning Work Program, and the Public Participation Plan. MPO staff works to ensure that all transportation planning activities comply with the MPO's adopted public participation plan.

MPO staff manages four cooperative agreements related to required coordination. The four agreements are listed below and are also posted on the MPO website under the “Gov’t Agreements” at:

1. Memorandum of agreement between the City and County of Missoula and the State of Montana regarding disbursement of federal transportation planning funds, dated November 17, 2021.

2. Agreement between Missoula County, the City of Missoula, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board, MUTD and the State of Montana establishing the urban transportation planning program, dated June 23, 2021.
3. Memorandum of agreement between MUTD and the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board dated February 16, 1995.
4. Interlocal agreement between Missoula County and the City of Missoula for transportation planning services dated October 9, 2013.

Beyond the federally mandated planning processes, the Missoula MPO instills its mission through funding and leading supportive planning efforts, policy development and federal infrastructure grant writing.

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** The MPO is not submitting a request this year.

## Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association (Narrative provided by same)

MRTMA is a private, non-profit agency that has been offering transportation demand management services and resources since 1996. A six-member board of directors, selected from the public at large in Missoula and Ravalli Counties oversees the organization. MRTMA consists of a staff of one full-time office and four part-time office and management staff. The mission of MRTMA is to create a more livable region, by promoting the availability of transportation options to reduce single occupancy vehicle use. To accomplish this, MRTMA provides ride sharing programs, ride matching and scheduling services, and coordination in developing park and ride facilities. In 2004, MRTMA, in partnership with the University of Montana, constructed a transit center on the south side of Missoula. The facility is used by carpoolers, ASUMT riders and Mountain Line.

MRTMA serves Missoula, Ravalli, and Lake Counties. Missoula County serves Missoula, Lolo, Evaro, Polson, Ronan, Arlee and Frenchtown. Ravalli County service goes to Hamilton, Corvallis, Victor, Stevensville, and Florence. Lake County serves Arlee, Charlo, and Ronan.

MRTMA Vanpool program provided 18,615 rides in Fiscal Year 2025.

Missoula Ravalli TMA provides the following services:

- **Vanpool Program:** The I Ride Vanpool program is designed to serve the commuter workforce living in communities along the Highway 93 corridor and I-90 and working in the Missoula urban area. The program also provides reverse commute service to Missoula residents working in outlying communities such as Hamilton and Arlee. The vanpool program controls

operating costs through a volunteer-driver program. The vanpool program currently has 19 routes serving 56 individuals and 25 worksites.

- Special Services: MRTMA provides transportation services for government officials touring community development projects.
- Ride Matching Program: The ride sharing/carpooling program is designed to serve the commuter workforce living in communities in Montana and working in other communities, individuals seeking to trip share and agencies/organizations providing rides between communities to post-ride availability. The program is maintained by and accessed through the MRTMA website.
- Guaranteed Ride Home Program: MRTMA has developed a guaranteed ride home program for vanpoolers. The MRTMA program utilizes Huckleberry Express Taxi, BitterRoot Bus and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Transit for vanpoolers living in working in Ravalli and Lake Counties.
- MRTMA coordinates with the following:
  - BitterRoot Bus through client referrals, Guaranteed Ride Home and technical assistance.
  - Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes through client referrals, Guaranteed Ride Home, ETA voucher program and technical assistance.
  - Western Montana AOA through Guaranteed Ride Home Program, client referrals, accounting and technical assistance.
  - Mineral County Pioneer Council through referrals and technical assistance.
  - Bitterroot Valley Taxi: ETA voucher participant.
  - Mountain Line through vanpooler access when in the Missoula urban area and utilization of MRTMA transfer center.
  - ASUMT through utilization of MRTMA transfer center.
  - Opportunity Resources through client referrals.
  - Summit Independent Living Center through client referrals.
  - Vocational Rehabilitation through referrals and purchase of vanpool transportation services.
  - Airport Shuttler through referrals.
  - Missoula Parking Commission financial support and free parking passes.
  - GlaxoSmithKline through employer sponsored vanpool.
  - Designs for Health through employer sponsored vanpool.
  - Community Medical Center through preferred parking for vanpool, ETA voucher program and technical assistance.
  - Flathead Transit through referrals, ETA voucher program and technical assistance.

- Sanders County Council on Aging through client referrals, ETA voucher program and technical assistance.
- Clark Fork Valley Hospital through the ETA voucher program.
- Mineral County Attorney's Office through the ETA voucher program.
- Western Montana Mental Health through agreement and use of MRTMA vehicles for after hour and client group trip service.
- Seeley Lake Community Foundation through technical assistance.
- Seeley Lake School District through technical assistance.
- Lake and Missoula County Job Service through technical assistance and ETA voucher program.
- Huckleberry Express Transportation through referrals and ETA Voucher.
- Seeley Lake Community Foundation technical and capital assistance.
- Valley Veterans Service Center provides vehicle and operating funds for transport to Missoula Vet Clinic and Ft. Harrison.

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** MRTMA requests \$119,997 in 5311 funds with a twenty percent local match of \$30,000, totaling \$149,997, for funding three AWD non-ADA 7 passenger mini vans. These vans are for fleet replacement. The MRTMA savings account will provide the local match. STAC has ranked the vans as seventh, eighth and ninth in priority.

#### BitterRoot Bus (Narrative provided by same)

The BitterRoot Bus provides on demand bus service in the Ravalli County area (Hamilton, Corvallis, Victor, Stevensville, Darby and surrounding areas). BitterRoot Bus also provides weekly trips to the Missoula metro area every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. The bus arrives in Missoula around 10 a.m. each day and departs no later than 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday and 4:00 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. While in Missoula, the bus will generally take passengers to up to two locations, such as a doctor's appointment and shopping. Passengers are encouraged to use Mountain Line if more than the allotted stops are needed. This service is available to the general public. Scheduling rides in advance is required.

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** The BitterRoot Bus is not submitting a request this year.

#### A.W.A.R.E., Inc. (Narrative provided by same)

AWARE (Anaconda Work and Residential Enterprise) is a private, non-profit corporation started in Anaconda, Montana in 1976 by a small group of parents whose discussions of opportunities and possibilities for their children with special needs led

to the opening of a small furniture refinishing business. This business was a place where people with developmental disabilities could learn a trade and make a valuable contribution to the community. Since AWARE started 47 years ago, it has continued to help thousands of people across Montana achieve their potential.

AWARE is directed by a 7-member board of directors and currently employs approximately 800 people in multiple communities across Montana, including Missoula. AWARE offers a variety of services in fully licensed and nationally accredited programs geared towards improving lifestyles and opportunities for Montanans affected by disabilities or mental challenges.

AWARE has provided services in Missoula since 1993 and currently operates four adult developmentally disabled group homes. The residential services mission is "to provide clinical supervision, care and life counseling, to clients and their families with severe emotional/cognitive challenges that will guide the individual towards independence". To this end, AWARE provides transportation on a daily basis to group home residents and staff, transporting them to and from employment or interviews, medical and dental appointments, planning meetings, community outings, church, grocery and personal shopping and other errands as required. In some instances, the residents are from different counties and are required to participate in meetings and court hearings in their respective communities. Transportation is also provided to allow visits with family members in Missoula and the surrounding area. AWARE provided approximately 397 rides per month in 2023. This ridership number is down from the previous year because two youth group homes closed down.

Relative to coordination efforts, AWARE is represented on STAC and shares the commitment of its members to coordinate public transportation services within the Missoula urban area thereby maximizing funds and equipment available to provide transportation services to all who need it. No increase in ridership is projected for FY 2025-2026.

#### AWARE, Inc. Missoula Fleet

- Mileage is as of December 2023
- 2014 Dodge Grand Caravan / 6 passenger / 128,631
- 2017 Dodge Grand Caravan / 72,237 (totaled in accident)

**Financial Request for Fiscal Year 2027:** AWARE is not submitting a request this year.

## 2.0 Agencies Not Involved

All agencies active in STAC were given the opportunity to participate in the update and review of this plan.

Jefferson Lines, Beach Transportation, and Airport Shuttler have been invited to collaborate in the review of this plan but have chosen not to participate.

## 3.0 Needs Assessment

Public outreach was conducted through a variety of means. A public notice advertisement requested comments in writing or at STAC public meetings or the MUTD Board of Directors meetings.

Among those agencies solicited for input were STAC members, local government offices connected to transportation issues, Opportunity Resources, and Missoula Aging Services.

### Missoula Urban Transportation District Planning Efforts

During 2025, in collaboration with MPO, MUTD conducted a comprehensive operational analysis of Mountain Line and a long-range plan for strategic vision through 2050. The result of the public-intensive planning process was the creation of an adaptive plan for the future of Mountain Line services that maintains a primary transit network for land use planning, responds to changes in development, and a strategy of increased frequency of Mountain Line buses for a transit system that is both more user friendly and efficient.

Over the next few years, the policy recommendations and action items outlined in the planning efforts will help MUTD to:

- **Focus Investment** on a transit network that will support high ridership in alignment with projected job and population growth patterns, including senior and disabled residents.
- **Improve Service Quality** that makes transit more competitive with the private auto by enhancing travel time, accessibility, and reliability and improving services on the primary transit network.
- **Foster Community** to leverage transit investments in support of growth management and development goals, enhance place-making, and achieve environmental goals.

- **Capitalize on New Infrastructure** to broaden access to parks and recreation, grocery stores, food assistance, and expanded coverage.
- **Develop and Foster Partnerships** for high quality transit, requiring investment from many public and private stakeholders. For MUTD to succeed, it needs to build and maintain political, financial, capital development, and marketing support from multiple partners.
- **Provide Education and Outreach** to develop and enhance education and financial incentive programs that support transit use in Missoula.
- **Integrate with Large Transit Investments** by adjusting routes to support the implementation of a BRT, and planning for increased fleet capacity when the MOAB is completed.

## 4.0 Public Involvement

STAC meets monthly, and the primary providers involved in this coordination agreement meet at least quarterly. All members of both committees have ongoing public outreach programs that continually canvas riders and other members of the public to assess the growing needs for public transportation in the Missoula area. Individual agencies allow for public comment at board meetings and conduct periodic service analysis and public outreach efforts.

Opportunities for the public to participate in the development of this plan included:

- Solicitation of comments from area agencies including ORI, The ARC of Western Montana, MUTD Board of Directors, Missoula Development Services' transportation staff, and AWARE.
- Public comment at the January 9, 2026, STAC meeting.
- Public comment in writing via mail, fax or email.
- Public comment at the January 22, 2026, MUTD Board meeting.

## 5.0 Private Sector Providers

### Regional and National Transportation Connections

#### Flathead Transit/Jefferson Lines

Flathead Transit, a service of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, provides passenger service between Missoula and Whitefish, and partners with Jefferson Lines to offer nationwide service. (406) 675-2700.

Jefferson Lines provides inter-city bus service from a bus terminal located at 1660 West Broadway in Missoula. Corporate offices are in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (612) 359-3400.

## Beach Transportation

Beach Transportation provides school bus and charter services. (406) 549-6121.

## Cab Services

None

## Shuttles

The Airport Shuttler provides shuttle services to and from the Missoula, Montana Airport. (406) 880-74333.

## Passenger Airlines

The Missoula, Montana Airport is served by five major airlines with regularly scheduled flights:

- Alaska Airlines – (800) 252-7522
- Allegiant Airlines – (800) 432-3810
- American Airlines - (800) 433-7300
- Delta Airlines – (800) 221-1212
- United Airlines – (800) 864 -8331

## 6.0 STAC

STAC meets monthly and the primary providers involved in this coordination agreement meet at least quarterly.

### EXISTING SERVICE / PRIMARY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Primary providers in the Missoula urban area:

| Organization               | Name          | Address          | City, Zip       | Phone    |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| The ARC Western Montana    | Kristi Kusche | 1005 Marshall    | Missoula, 59801 | 728-5484 |
| Mountain Line              | Jordan Hess   | 1221 Shakespeare | Missoula, 59802 | 543-8386 |
| Opportunity Resources Inc. | Josh Kendrick | 2821 Russell     | Missoula, 59801 | 329-1754 |

As primary providers of community transportation services in the Missoula urban area, the parties agree to:

- Recognize this plan as the designated coordination plan for the Missoula urban area in the application process for funding requests presented to MDT and FTA.
- Recognize MUTD as the lead organization and decision-making transportation advisory committee for the administration of the Missoula Urban Area Public Transportation Coordination Plan.
- Meet with STAC a minimum of once every quarter.
- Coordinate the planning and delivery of services together to utilize existing capital and operating resources as productively as possible.
- Coordinate the planning and prioritizing of future capital and operating requests.
- Provide coordinated trip training, outreach and comprehensive service information to all participants of this plan.
- Work together to support, develop and expand existing programs.
- Continue to seek public involvement in all planning efforts.
- Update the transportation coordination plan annually.

## 7.0 STAC Members

STAC meets monthly to discuss issues related to transportation. Following is a roster of current STAC members.

- Tami Hoar, Summit Independent Living Center
- Lyn Hellegaard, MRTMA
- Elizabeth Wehling, MUTD
- Chris Hightower, MAS
- Josh Kendrick, ORI
- Evan Hauser, Missoula Housing Authority
- Paige Kerwin, ASUMT
- Kristi Kusche, The ARC
- Andrea Dahl, Consumers/Older Adults
- Glenn Ingram, Missoula Development Services Transportation Division
- Charles Menefee, Missoula MPO

- Ben Weiss, Bike/Pedestrian Committee
- Desiree Dean-Kaldor, Montana Vocational Rehabilitation
- Ron Knight, A.W.A.R.E., Inc.
- Tom Thompson, Consumer Representative

## 8.0 Attachments

- Coordination plan review and approval: Draft January 22, 2026, MUTD Board Meeting Minutes
- Copies of letters requesting local agencies to participate in coordination plan development
- Various interlocal agreements
- Primary provider fleet roster
- Legal public notice and affidavit of publication
- MUTD system map and schedule
- MUTD SAMs number
- STAC meeting minutes through January 22, 2026