

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors
From: Jordan Hess, Allison Segal
Date: January 15, 2025

Agenda Item: 5.3 Paratransit Fleet Update

Recommendation:

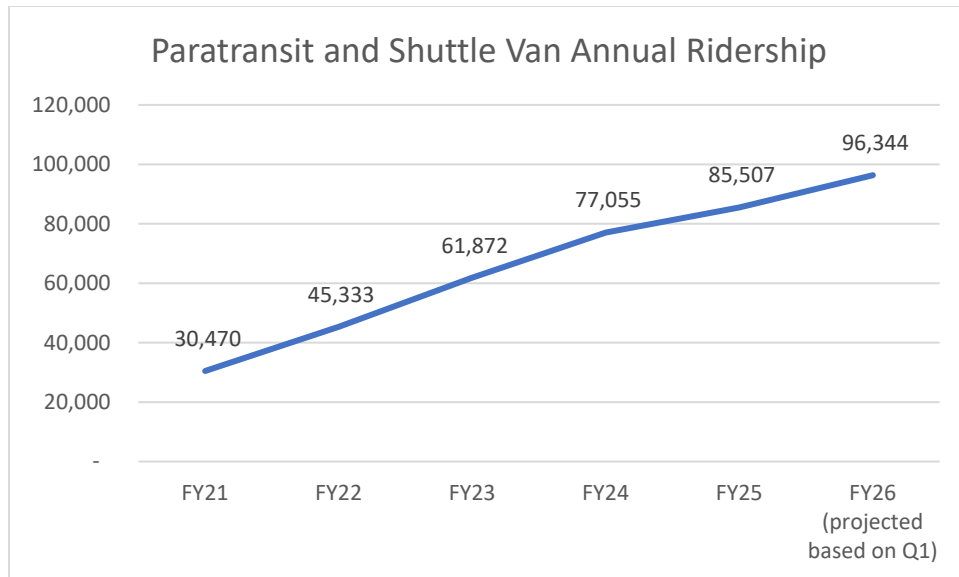
Informational item – discussion only

Discussion:

Mountain Line staff requested modification of the Montana Department of Transportation's state coordination plan to shift funding from two battery electric paratransit vehicles to gasoline-powered vehicles. This shift is in recognition of the agency's urgent fleet needs for paratransit vehicles to meet surging demand, infrastructure limitations associated with adding charging equipment to our current site, and range and technology limitations with available electric paratransit vehicles.

This is not an impediment to reaching the agency's electrification goals given the relatively brief useful life of paratransit vehicles.

Paratransit demand regularly requires the deployment of the entire fleet of 17 vehicles. Six new vehicles are expected to arrive in February/March 2026 that will replace vehicles past their useful life. This still leaves additional vehicles that are past their useful life. The current fleet continually malfunctions, which increases maintenance expenses and at times causes operator injuries. Staff plan to move away from minivans to full-size vans and cutaways and expanding the paratransit fleet to ensure we meet service needs as vehicles require downtime for maintenance.



The agency has outstanding Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities – Section 5310 funds.

MUTD Vehicle Awards – Outstanding 5310 Funds

Award Year	Total Quantity	Pass Count	Vehicle Type	Options	Local Match	Federal	Total Cost
2022	1 Replacement	7	Minivan, Non-ADA, AWD		\$10,000	\$39,999	\$49,999
2025	1 Replacement, 1 Expansion	5	Mini-Conversion Van, ADA	2 w/c stations; ELECTRIC UPGRADE	\$60,000	\$340,000	\$400,000
2026	2 Expansion	9	Extended Van ADA, AWD	ELECTRIC UPGRADE	\$71,709	\$406,354	\$478,063

MUTD Vehicle Awards – Proposed 5310 Funds

Award Year	Total Quantity	Pass Count	Vehicle Type	Options	Local Match	Federal	Total Cost
2022	1 Replacement	7	Minivan, Non-ADA, AWD		\$10,000	\$39,999	\$49,999
2025	2 Replacement, 1 Expansion	12	Small ADA, 12 Passenger Cutaway	Safety Vision 1TB Camera System, Installed and 2-Way Radio	\$92,132	\$340,000	\$432,132
2026	2 Replacement, 1 Expansion	12	Small ADA, 12 Passenger Cutaway	Safety Vision 1TB Camera System, Installed and 2-Way Radio	\$64,820	\$367,312	\$432,132

The 2025 and 2026 funds were previously reviewed and approved for battery-electric paratransit vehicles in conjunction with MDT's fiscal year Coordination Plan. For the reasons outlined, staff plan to procure gasoline vehicles instead of these battery-electric vehicles initially programmed. The Montana Department of Transportation requested the Specialized Transportation Advisory Committee to update the approval for gas-powered vehicles instead of the battery-electric vans. STAC approved the updates during the January 9th meeting.

A meeting with MDT to discuss the proposed vehicle procurements is scheduled for January 20th. The goal of this meeting is to discuss the viability of the proposed vehicle changes, procurement timeline, a grant timeline, and to verify the local funding requirements should these changes be viable.

Financial Impact and Funding Source:

Not applicable.

DBE Certified:

Not applicable.