

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES December 13, 2022

DRAFT TO APPROVED BY A MOTION

NOTICE

Public comment will be taken only during the Public Comment periods as indicated on the agenda. Comments may be sent to Planning Staff via e-mail before 10:00 AM on the meeting date. All e-mails received prior to this time will be read into the record for the public hearing.

Member Participants: Commissioner Denis Pitman, Board of County Commissioners; Bill Cole, Mayor, City of Billings; Planning Board President Dennis Cook, Yellowstone County Planning Board, Kurtis Schneiber, MDT

Staff Participants: Rusty Logan, MET; Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator, Planning & Community Services Department; Wyeth Friday, Director, Planning & Community Services, (Virtual); Tammy Deines, Planning Clerk; Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner, (Virtual)

Other Participants:

1. Call to Order: Mayor Cole called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Public Comment/Communication from the Audience

A. Comments on items not on the agenda and requests to add items to future agendas.

B. Comments on items on the Non-public and Public Agenda Items

There was no communication from the audience regarding agenda items or future agenda items.

3. Minutes of August 30, 2022

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Pitman and seconded by Planning Board President Dennis Cook to approve the minutes of August 30, 2022. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

4. Old Business:

4a. Motion. City of Billings MET Transit 5-Year Transit Development Plan, (TDP) Update. Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator. Rusty Logan, MET Transit Manager, presenting.

Scott Walker introduced Transit Manager Rusty Logan. Rusty Logan said the governing bodies have seen the staff presentation in depth and forwarded recommendations of approval.

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The plan is available on the City of Billings website here:

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/3081/LEARN-ABOUT-SPECIAL-PROJECTS-AT-MET-TRAN>

Resources

- [DRAFT Transit Development Plan](#)
- [TDP Project Public Comment and Feedback Form](#)
- [Click here to download the Routing and System Concepts newsletter for items presented at the June 28th Public Meeting](#)

Mr. Logan covered: Inputs to Decision-making; Service Improvement Recommendations for route redesign components and service expansion components; The benefits of improvements and; The next steps being adoption of the plan and implementation of recommendations.

The anticipated future budget reflects the average Federal increment over the next five years with a 30% increase amounting to an increase of \$540,000 for FY23 with Local funding for match.

Fixed Route network and schedule improvements: Baseline schedule redesign which will retain the east-west continuity in core and add an increment of north-south continuity. This will bring a 30-minute service to fill schedule gaps and provide a consistent schedule. A recommendation is to move from a flag stop system to a designated stop system to reduce missed pick-ups and remove confusion of “safe” stop locations.

Breakdown of Future Investment-Route Expansion: A limited consideration of future route expansion, including Lockwood Transit Service Concepts

Benefits of Redesign and Frequency Investment: Additional jobs will have access to 30-minutes service

Implantation: Complete the plan approval process; Develop detailed route time schedule, Install and relocate signs, benches, and shelters; Expand Workforce and prepare driver assignments with an estimated five new driver positions.

Discussion

Rusty Logan asked the Committee members for questions. Commissioner Pitman asked if the expansion might bring opportunities for advertising revenue. Rusty Logan said they are using the existing MET bench inventory but may expand further depending on usage. Mayor Cole asked regarding the potential impact on ridership with the proposed significant changes. Rusty Logan said pre-covid ridership was about 450,000 rides per year which was cut in half with the advent of Covid-19. The current ridership has rebounded with a range of ridership of 360,000-380,000 annually. He explained that typically there is an initial loss of ridership until riders adapt to a new schedule. The hope to push the ridership numbers up significantly during years one and two and then going forward. Mayor Cole asked if MET has a roll-out plan to effectively get the word out to the public. Rusty Logan said the public survey showed interest expressed by potential new users. MET has significantly increased their social media presence and are partnering with local media. In 2023 a number of events are scheduled to celebrate MET’s 50th anniversary. Mayor Cole encouraged Mr. Logan to enlist City of Billings Public Information Officer Victoria Hill in this effort.

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Public Comment: There was no public comment on this agenda item.

Motion

Commissioner Pitman made a motion and it was seconded by Planning Board President Dennis Cook to approve the City of Billings MET Transit Development Plan as presented by Staff.

Discussion There was no discussion on the motion.

The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

6. Other Business:

- PCC Housekeeping: Commissioner Ostlund will chair PCC for the 2023 term. There will be a new County Commissioner and project updates will be needed. PCC meetings will be held on January 17, 2023 and February 21, 2023.
- 21st Street Underpass Study: Kurtis Schneiber said MDOT is focusing on mitigation measures for signage and signalization and will not be moving forward with a design concept. He pointed out that 21st Street is not a State route. Scott Walker said the 2023 Work Program includes a feasibility study to look design and cost estimates. Discussions will follow on the pros and cons of adding 21st Street to the Urban Area System with the City, County, and MDT.
- Commissioner Pitman said it has been an honor to serve with the Board of County Commissioners and PCC over the last decade. He commented it is exciting to see long term projects coming to fruition such as the Inner Belt Loop, Shiloh Road, and several Interstate projects. Commissioner Pitman stated that the cooperation of the City, County, and State is a testament to the community that they can get things done and he thanked PCC members for their hard work. Mayor Bill Cole spoke on behalf of PCC and said Commissioner Pitman has been a huge asset to PCC and the community and he thanked him for his service.

ADJOURNMENT: 12:25 PM

DRAFT. To be approved by a motion during the next scheduled meeting

Tamara L. Deines, Planning Clerk