

Montana Transportation Commission
April 30, 2026 Minutes
Commission Room
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT

IN ATTENDANCE

Loran Frazier, Transportation Commission Chair (District 3)
Kody Swartz, Transportation Commissioner (District 1)
Shane Sanders, Transportation Commissioner (District 2)
Noel Sansaver, Transportation Commissioner (District 4)
Scott Aspenlieder, Transportation Commissioner (District 5)
Chris Dorrington, MDT Director
Larry Flynn, MDT Deputy Director, MDT
Jess Bousliman, Commission Secretary
Dustin Rouse, MDT Project Development & Delivery Program Manager
Valerie Balukas, MDT Chief Legal
Doug McBroom, MDT Statewide Planning & Model Operations Program Manger
Jon Swartz, MDT Asset Strategy, Operations, & Maintenance Program Manger
Dave Gates, MDT Project Delivery Engineer
Jim Wingerter, MDT District 3
Andy Cullison, MDT
Aubrey Yerger, MDT
Brenden Borges, MDT
Liz Franklin, MDT

On Line:

John Schmidt, MDT District 5
Shane Mintz, MDT District 4
Mike Taylor, MDT District 5
Dave Cunningham, MDT
Paul Johnson, MDT
Tyler Moss, MDT
Matt Cotterman
Eli Lough

OPENING – Commissioner Loran Frazier

Commissioner Frazier called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Sansaver offered the Invocation. Commissioner Frazier asked for introductions.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the Commission Meetings of January 27, 2026, February 11, 2026, February 17, 2026, February 26, 2026, and March 10, 2026 were presented for approval.

Commissioner Aspenlieder moved to approve the minutes for the Commission Meetings of January 27, 2026, February 11, 2026, February 17, 2026, February 26, 2026, and March 10, 2026. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

***Agenda Item 1: Construction Project on State Highway System
Flathead Lake Club, Lakeside***

Doug McBroom presented the Construction Project on State Highway System, Flathead Lake Club - Lakeside to the Commission. Under MCA 60-2-110 “Setting priorities and selecting projects,” the commission shall establish priorities and select and designate segments for construction and reconstruction on the national highway system, the primary highway system, the secondary highway system, the urban highway system, and state highways. This statute exists to ensure the safety of our system, protect transportation investments, and encourage coordination on public and private infrastructure improvement projects that impact MDT routes.

Flathead Lake Club – Lakeside

Flathead Friends, LLC is proposing modifications to US-93 (N-5) near Lakeside to address traffic generated by their new facility (the Flathead Lake Club). Proposed improvements include the installation of a right-turn lane (at Goldenvue Lane) and a slip lane (at Legacy Park Way).

MDT headquarters and Missoula District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. Flathead Friends, LLC will provide 100 percent of project funding and will be required to complete MDT’s design review and approval process (to ensure that all work complies with MDT design standards).

When complete, MDT will assume all maintenance and operational responsibilities associated with the proposed improvements.

Staff recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission approve these modifications to US 93 - pending completion of applicable state (and local) design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Sansaver asked about slip-lanes. Dave Gates said a slip lane is a passing lane or an additional capacity lane and in this context a right-turn lane.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Construction Project on State Highway System, Flathead Lake Club - Lakeside. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

***Agenda Item 2: Construction Project on State Highway System
Ferguson Farms II Subdivision, Bozeman***

Doug McBroom presented the Construction Project on State Highway System, Ferguson Farms II Subdivision - Bozeman to the Commission. Under MCA 60-2-110 "Setting priorities and selecting projects," the commission shall establish priorities and select and designate segments for construction and reconstruction on the national highway system, the primary highway system, the secondary highway system, the urban highway system, and state highways. This statute exists to ensure the safety of our system, protect transportation investments, and encourage coordination on public and private infrastructure improvement projects that impact MDT routes.

Ferguson Farms II Subdivision – Bozeman

Delany & Company, Inc. is proposing modifications to Huffine Lane (N-50) in Bozeman to address traffic generated by their new facility (the Ferguson Farms II Subdivision). Proposed improvements include the installation of new right-turn lanes at Brookfield Avenue and Resort Drive.

MDT headquarters and Butte District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. Delany & Company, Inc. will provide 100 percent of project funding and will be required to complete MDT's design review and approval process (to ensure that all work complies with MDT design standards).

When complete, MDT will assume all maintenance and operational responsibilities associated with the proposed improvements.

Staff recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve these modifications to Huffine Lane - pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Aspenlieder asked about ADA facilities. Why are we assuming maintenance responsibilities? I understand it's on our route but why are we taking

that on? Jon Swartz said I haven't reviewed this but typically we have agreements with the local government on ADA and sidewalks that they enforce their ordinance, so we don't necessarily do the maintenance of it. They enforce their ordinance and the adjacent landowner is the one responsible for the maintenance of the facility. Commissioner Aspenlieder said this says we assume all maintenance operation responsibilities and we have the same thing in Billings. We don't have those agreements in place yet so how are we navigating this? Valerie Balukas said MDT is responsible for all maintenance on all MDT routes but then we, by agreement, work with the local governments to assign duties for the maintenance. Sidewalks are where cities have local ordinances that in the agreements we enter into there will be a provision that the city agrees to take on responsibility for enforcing the ordinances.

Commissioner Frazier said with sidewalks in general this includes a flashing beacon which is a little more than sidewalk maintenance. Is that the reason for your question? Jon Swartz said we will assume the rapid flashing beacon maintenance. We have signal techs that have the capabilities and technology and experience to maintain those along with all the traffic signals we are maintaining.

Commissioner Sansaver said it says right here we assume the maintenance. Director Dorrington said I think it's a question of temporality. When you approve this project we're stating we assume maintenance but then through agreement we will work with the city of Bozeman and we will take our part and they will take their part but at the point of approval we're saying this is our responsibility but then it will be transferred.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Construction Project on State Highway System, Ferguson Farms II Subdivision - Bozeman. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: Construction Project on State Highway System Contract Labor – North 7th Avenue, Bozeman

Doug McBroom presented the Construction Project on State Highway System, Contract Labor – North 7th Avenue - Bozeman to the Commission. Under MCA 60-2-111 "letting of contracts on state and federal aid highways," all projects for construction or reconstruction of highways and streets located on highway systems and state highways, including those portions in cities and towns, must be let by the Transportation Commission. This statute exists to ensure the safety of our system, protect transportation investments, and encourage better coordination between state and local infrastructure improvements.

North 7th Avenue – Bozeman

The City of Bozeman is proposing modifications to North 7th Avenue (N-118) in Bozeman to improve safety and reduce potential conflicts between vehicles and non-motorized traffic. Proposed improvements include bike/ped feature upgrades, ADA work, and the installation of a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) at a crosswalk near Aspen Street.

MDT headquarters and Butte District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. The City of Bozeman will provide 100 percent of project funding and will be required to complete MDT's design review and approval process (to ensure that all work complies with MDT design standards).

When complete, MDT will assume all maintenance and operational responsibilities associated with the proposed improvements.

Staff recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve these modifications to North 7th Avenue and requests that the Commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer the contract for this project to the City of Bozeman - pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Construction Project on State Highway System, Contract Labor – North 7th Avenue - Bozeman. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Bridge Program Projects – Additions to Bridge Program (22 New Projects)

Doug McBroom presented the Bridge Program Projects – Additions to Bridge Program (22 New Projects) to the Commission. MDT's Bridge Bureau reviews bridge conditions statewide and provides recommendations for construction projects to be added to the Bridge Program. At this time, the Bridge Bureau recommends adding twenty two (22) new projects to the Bridge Program.

Project information is shown on the attachment. If approved, it would be MDT's intention to let these projects individually. The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$225.2 million (\$195.0M federal + \$30.2M state match).

The proposed projects are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming (Px3) Process as well as the policy direction established

in TranPlanMT. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of these projects to the Bridge Program.

Staff recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of these projects to the Bridge Program.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said can you just let us know how the districts play into the nomination process. Dustin Rouse said this represents 31 projects, 5 bundles are within those projects then 26 of the projects have one or two bridges within them. The bundle projects encompass Missoula, Butte, Glendive and Billings. In total there are 56 bridges included in these nominations. One of the questions I anticipated was how this fits into our program because it's a massive nomination amount and a lot of bridges. If you remember our goal is about one billion over a five-year period. So we're running at a pace of about \$200 million per year. This amount fills the cupboards and gets us through when we go into TCP this fall and insert these bridges – we'll have \$160 million outside the program so we'd still need more nominations to keep up with that pace. As far as the dollar amount – it's keeping us on track and on pace to continue delivering at that pace.

A couple of highlights to note: We've talked about timber bridges in the past. Currently there are 363 timber bridges still in service across the state. There's 58 on the National Highway System and 305 on the non-NH System. With this nomination we will have all but two of the NH bridges in projects and that leaves us with 204 on the non-NH system. The only two on the NH is a pedestrian bridge and one on an off-ramp and off the NH route. As far as load posted – with this nomination we still have nine NH bridges and 55 non-NH load posted bridges out there. With this nomination we now have every NH load posted bridge in a project. There will be 30 non-NH load posted bridges still out there. This comes back to your question on the coordination with the district. We sent this list out to all five districts. We adjusted our nominations to make sure, especially on those non-NH routes, that we're hitting the critical routes and picking up the bridges most critical to the districts.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said that is all excellent; that's as much progress as we've seen in a long time. That leads to the logical next question. Can we actually deliver this? Dustin Rouse said no. Commissioner Aspenlieder said so then now what? Dustin Rouse said my no is that right now with the resources we have in bridge, this would be a herculean task. We have to shore that up. We are in the process of looking at every option we can to improve our recruitment in the bridge area. We are absolutely bringing in consultants and having them be a part of the delivery but even with that, we need staff to help navigate even with using consultants. We know we have a gap there. Yes we can make it through the next couple of years; we're in pretty good position to deliver this year and next year as

well but we've got to address that. The director is focused on finding ways to shore up our resources and staff in bridge. To answer your question – right now it will be very, very difficult.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said have we looked at design standards and where they differ or vary from other DOTs or adjacent DOTs that are causing us problems with material and delivery times and things like that. That has been a problem in the past and it continues to be something that contractors point out. How are we doing on that front to make delivery? Dustin Rouse said we held a summit and brought in contractors, suppliers, resource agencies and talked through this exact topic. Out of that Summit we have monthly meetings with the Director where we talk about the steps we're taking to move that direction. Some of the things you brought up – is it worth standardizing bridge design? We surveyed several other states that attempted to do that and it sounds like it makes sense but in practice the uniqueness of bridge sites and constraints it doesn't lend itself to that. So we're looking at other things. One area is doing massive bundles but the problem with really large bundles across the state is our bridge contractors don't have the capacity for really large ones and it prices out some of the smaller companies available to us in Montana. Having a mix of bundled bridges and single bridges is one of the things that came out of that Summit.

The other thing is getting the resources involved and giving them early notice of what we're doing. As part of that we put together a map and surprisingly that was very difficult. We put together a map of every bridge we will be touching over the next five-year period. If you approve these bridges, all these will be added to that map as well. So all the resource agencies – FWP, DNRC, anybody we'd have to coordinate with for flood plains, we are coordinating with them and meet monthly and talk through this map and what's coming at them and what is a priority for us and they're already coordinating with the counties and with their permittees to start clearing the hurdles for us.

Commissioner Sansaver said I think it's great you're doing that because there are a lot of smaller contractors that can't afford bundles and can't manage bundles, so it's encouraging you're working with the Contractors Association. How big is that in the Contractors Association as far as bridge builders? Do we have a lot? Dustin Rouse said historically when we put out bridge projects we would get one or two bidders and sometimes three. Recently we got eight or nine at one point. We're getting the message out. We've been sharing this message with the MCA and with our surrounding states as well so we're seeing more competition and more of the small bidders coming in as well as the larger bridge contractors. We are seeing an uptick in the number of bidders competing which is good for the price of bids as well.

Director Dorrington said during our Bridge Summit one of the challenges the

contractor community posed to us is you keep telling us all these bridges are about to come but we can't staff up or invest until we have a picture of the volume you're talking about. We've been talking about expansion of the TCP for bridges for the last couple of years and we've done that. That's the response the contractor community and the industry needs to see our commitment.

Commissioner Frazier said I'm glad to see progress in this area. Thank you guys and I know it's a lot of hard work and I know you're short staffed. I hope we can get enough bridge engineers on board. So thank you for fixing the problem coming at us that needs to be taken care of.

Commissioner Sansaver asked about the hold up on the engineers. Are there no engineers out there to hire or do we not have the money to hire? Director Dorrington said it is a really complex problem. Part of it comes down to pay. The market is paying at a rate we can't keep up with. We're not so far behind that it's not attractive but then also it requires a special skill set. You have to have a structures background in order to be certified or basically qualified to put projects together. Overall, in the agency there are a couple of places where we probably need to pick up the pace a little bit. It's hard to attract talent but we're slitting our own throat by hiring consultants and paying their entire wage and keeping them in that other seat. It's certainly a complex problem that we're working hard to try and solve. Commissioner Frazier said he read an article a couple of months ago that said there are more engineers retiring right now than there are graduating.

Commissioner Aspenlieder moved to approve the Bridge Program Projects – Additions to Bridge Program (22 New Projects). Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

No public comment was given.

Agenda Item 5: Rest Area Program Projects – Additions to Rest Area Program (4 New Projects)

Doug McBroom presented the Rest Area Program Projects – Additions to Rest Area Program (4 New Projects) to the Commission. MDT's Rest Area Prioritization Committee monitors the condition of Montana's Rest Areas (statewide) and provides project recommendations in support of the goals and objectives outlined in MDT's Rest Area plan. Rest Area improvements are prioritized based on a number of criteria – such as physical condition information, age and usage data, anticipated maintenance costs, customer complaints and District support. At this time, the

Rest Area Prioritization Committee is recommending the addition of four (4) new projects to the Rest Area Program.

MDT is requesting Commission approval to add four new projects to the Rest Area Program. The proposed projects are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming (Px3) Process - as well as the policy direction established in TranPlanMT. Specifically, traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of these projects to the Rest Area Program.

Project information is shown on the attachment. If approved, it would be MDT's intention to let these projects individually. The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$14,833,774 (\$12,843,090 federal + \$1,990,684 state match)

Commissioner Frazier asked if these are all rehabilitation projects on existing rest areas or new ones. Doug McBroom said existing rest areas. Commissioner Aspenlieder commented that he saw this on Bad Route that we're not very good at connecting to the actual community that does this kind of work. What are we doing to ensure we're getting this out to the proper contracting pool that is not used to connecting with MDT? Doug McBroom said we're not the best at working with the vertical market as well as we are the horizontal market. We have taken that into consideration and are working with A&E who works with the vertical market all the time. That is our strongest connection to tie into and make certain they help us access that contracting community. Dave Gates said we've had handfuls of conversations with various contractors that are interested in our bridge program that live in that vertical space of rest areas. A lot of that came on the heels of Bad Route. We encourage folks in their interactions to talk with people about these opportunities. I know you have connections with a lot of folks so if there are opportunities, please let them know.

Commissioner Sanders asked if someone could give a 90-second lesson on vertical vs horizontal spaces. Commissioner Frazier vertical is buildings and horizontal is roads. Commissioner Sanders asked if vertical is not something we do much so it's a challenge getting into that space. Commissioner Frazier said correct. Doug McBroom said in the market most of the approvals are for highways and bridges so there's not a vertical market. So the vertical market isn't tied to us quite as much as the horizontal. The contractors are out there, we just don't have access to them and they're not paying attention to us. Commissioner Frazier said they're not used to looking at what we advertise; they don't see our stuff generally.

Staff recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of these projects to the Rest Area Program. Notes/discussion

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Rest Area Program Projects – Additions to Rest Area Program (4 New Projects). Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 6: Speed Limit Recommendation
MT 16 (N-62) – Culbertson**

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, MT 16 (N-62) – Culbertson to the Commission. In October of 2023, Roosevelt County requested a speed study be performed on MT 16 from the town limits of Culbertson to the Missouri River Bridge. After reviewing the study area, the study was expanded from the intersection with US 2 inside of Culbertson to Milepost 6. Roosevelt County highlighted in their request that the area receive a high volume of traffic that could create a potential safety impact and would like MDT to review the existing transitions outside of Culbertson with the intent on possibly extending them from a half-mile to a mile further than existing conditions. A review of the posted speed limit was also desired due to a new development in the area.

A review of the spot speed samples shows that the prevailing speeds along MT 16 match with the set speed limits with the exception of the 25-mph speed zone. The 85th percentile speeds and upper limits of the pace are for the most part within (+15 & +18)-mph of the 25-mph, ±6-mph of the 70 mph posted speed limits. Within the 25-mph speed zone about 66 percent of drivers are all within 10-mph of each other and approximately 64 percent are within the pace for the 70-mph speed zone. It should be noted there is a noticeable dip in the percentage within the pace near the 55/70-mph transition, with this site experiencing the lowest percentage for the study area at 51 percent. The southbound traffic at this station has a clear separation between the upper limits of the pace and the 85th percentile, showing that two different driver populations are transitioning at different speeds. There is also a clear distinction within the 70-mph for the pace, with percentages within the pace being low between Culbertson and the Missouri River Bridge, which increases after the bridge. The report discusses the two driver populations discovered in this study, however, for the simplicity of the agenda item, it will not be discussed here as it does not affect our recommendations and is mainly academic. Although the prevailing speeds indicate appropriately set speed limits roadway context indicates these speeds are slightly elevated above what should be considered reasonable and prudent. Currently the 25-mph speed zone has low compliance with speeds generally elevated far beyond the posted speed limit and showing a moderate degree on uniformity with moderate levels within the pace. The posted 25-mph speed limits begin and end appropriately and when utilizing the closet 50th percentile, our recommendation would be a 30-mph speed limit. However,

considering local inputs and the original intention of the speed study, we are recommending no-change to the posted 25-mph speed limit. The transitions entering Culbertson are not up to current MDT guidance and best practices. The current transition configuration is as follows: 25-35-45-55-70-mph. The 35-mph transition zone is only approximately 800-ft in length and doesn't fit the context of the transitional area and speed data. The transitional area from a roadway environment context is quick, with the transition from rural town to rural happening very rapidly.

We recommend a 40-mph transition be instituted from the existing 25/35-mph transition to the existing 45/50-mph transition, for a total length of 2,300-ft. This would simplify the transitions into Culbertson by eliminating the 35-mph speed zone and also agrees with the speed data as the 50th percentile for this section is 41 mph. The 55-mph transitional speed zone is shorter than recommended guidance length and it should be increased by 700-ft to a total length of 2,700-ft. The proposed transition configuration would be as follows: 25-40-55-70-mph and would lead to an overall increase in the transition zone by 700ft. This transition configuration reduces the amount of speed zones, reflects the current roadside environment, aligns with the speed data and should better facilitate drivers transitioning from the rural-to-rural town areas.

Roosevelt County disagrees with some of MDT's recommendations. Roosevelt County agrees with the proposed transition zone layout and speeds chosen for the transitional speed zone. However, Roosevelt County would like to see the 55-mph speed zone be extended past the intersection with M-7 Road. Roosevelt County cites that a family residence lives at that intersection and would like to see the 55-mph speed zone extended to cover that family's residence. They also cite that by extending the 55-mph speed zone it will provide a safer and more gradual transition into Culbertson. The Mayor of Culbertson was contacted to provide official comment; however, MDT did not receive any official comment from the Town of Culbertson. Roosevelt County's 55-mph speed zone extension would be an extension of 2,200-ft for a total length of 4,900-ft or 0.93-miles. MDT collected data just north of the M-7 Road, inside Roosevelt County's proposed 55-mph extension, and this data showed an 85th percentile of 73.5-mph and a 50th percentile of 68-mph. Current data shows that vehicles are beginning to transition between station 5 and station 4, this agrees with MDT's assessment of extending the 55-mph speed zone to a half-mile. However, this data does not support extending the 55-mph past the M-7 intersection.

Commissioner Sansaver asked where the 35 mph zone started. Dustin Rouse said I want to explain the 40 mph zone because it's a little confusing and gets into how engineers look at highway. The route that goes through Culbertson (MT 16) is a north to south route. So when we say south, it's anything heading south on that route. The confusing part is at 3rd Avenue where we make this reference, we cite that it should

be south of 3rd which when looking at the map looks like south west of 3rd. Actually the way the routes go, it's to the east on 3rd by 100 feet. Knowing the area it aligns exactly where the existing 30 mph sign is. We're not touching the 25 mph zone, we're not going into the 25 mph zone; we're only making that transition after the intersection on the east side of that intersection and then encompassing both the 35 and 45 mph zones. Hopefully that answers that.

Commissioner Sansaver asked if the 40 mph zone started at station 2. Dustin Rouse said yes. Commissioner Sansaver asked if went beyond station 3 or just to station 3. Dustin Rouse said it goes to station 3. Commissioner Aspenlieder asked for the distance east of 3rd. Dustin Rouse said about 100 feet; kind of northeast of 3rd – what we're calling south.

Shane Mintz said to help clarify on the map you're looking at on the screen – where you see station 2, if you put a station dot straight below it that would have helped clarify things. Commissioner Aspenlieder asked if Culbertson was good with the clarification and where that 40 mph zone starts. We talked about some possible modifications, are we good with the locals? Shane Mintz said if we're talking specifically the city, I really can't answer that. It's more of a county issue. The initial request for the speed study was way more interested in further out all the way out to the M-7 Road. The county was more interested in seeing the 55 mph extended past that. Their focus was way more on that end than it was on the west end of the study.

Commissioner Sansaver asked if they wanted the 55 mph speed limit to extend all the way out to station 7. There are a couple of residents out there. Shane Mintz said they wanted to go out to that road. Actually there was some local interest in talking it out even further. One of the landowners who lived out even further wanted it to go to the top of the hill before you drop down to the river. That doesn't make a lot of sense. That is what was driving getting a reduced speed extended to the second set of residences out there. Commissioner Sansaver said with the explanation given by Mr. Rouse, I think it would be satisfactory to the city primarily because we're not increasing the speed limit within the city limits.

Staff recommendation:

It is the desire of MDT with the approval of the Montana Transportation Commission to institute the following speed limits:

A 40-mph speed limit beginning approximately 100-feet south of the intersection with 3rd Avenue (straight-line station 124+00) and continuing south for an approximate distance of 2,300-feet,

approximately 2,300-feet south of 3rd Avenue (straight-line station 147+00)

A 55-mph speed limit beginning approximately 2,300-ft south of 3rd Avenue (straight-line station 147+00) and continuing south for an approximate distance of 2,700-feet, approximately 900-feet south of milepost 2 (straight-line station 174+00)

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation, MT 16 (N-62) – Culbertson. Commissioner Aspenlieder seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

***Agenda Item 7: Speed Limit Recommendation
Eastside Highway/Main Street/Stevensville Road (S-269) –
Stevensville***

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, Eastside Highway/Main Street/Stevensville Road (S-269) – Stevensville, to the Commission. On January 26 of 2023, the Stevensville Town Council approved a motion to request the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) conduct a traffic study on the Eastside Highway also known as Main Street through Stevensville. The request was championed by the Stevensville Chief of Police and included a review of the speed limit changes between Middle Burnt Fork Road and South Avenue, as well as reviewing the intersections of 6th Street, 2nd Street, and the Eastside Highway with Main Street for pedestrian improvements and possible higher forms of traffic control. The public's main concern is the speed limit transition directly south of South Avenue, pedestrians crossing Main Street, and the gaps available for vehicles turning at the intersections with 2nd Street and the Eastside Highway. After reviewing the area MDT decided the study should begin at milepost 17 and continue north to the intersection with US 93 to include all the intersections and transition zones. This report will review the speed limits through the Stevensville area. Pedestrians at the intersections of 6th Street, 2nd Street, and Eastside Highway, and the possibility of a higher form of traffic control at the intersections of 2nd Street and Eastside Highway will be covered in a separate traffic control study.

A review of the spot speed samples shows that the prevailing speeds along S-269 match the majority of the set speed limits. The 85th percentile speeds and upper limits of the pace are for the most part within +7-mph of the 25-mph and (+1 - +6-mph) of the 45-mph posted speed limits. The 85th percentile speed and upper limits of the pace for the 55-mph speed zone south of Stevensville is (+7 - +9-mph) and is considered elevated. The 55-mph speed zone north of Stevensville is the opposite with 85th speeds at or below the speed limit. Within the 25-mph speed

zone about 77 percent of drivers are all within 10-mph of each other, which is the highest for the study area. The same is not true in the 45-mph speed zone south of Stevensville with only about 68 percent of drivers traveling within 10-mph of each other, which is the lowest in the study. Although the prevailing speeds indicate appropriately set speed limits roadway context indicates these speeds are slightly elevated above what should be considered reasonable and prudent. A 55-mph speed limit north of Stevensville does fit the existing rural environment; however, the segment length is rather short and does lead to a rapid ramp-up/ramp-down behavior. This segment north of Stevensville acts as a small rural buffer between the US-93 intersection area and Stevensville and is approximately 1/2 of a mile in length. Normally, a transitional zone is a segment of medium-speed that bridges the gap between a high-speed and low-speed segment. This segment is a medium speed transitional zone that separates two lower-speed areas. This 55-mph speed zone does meet the minimum zone length requirements of half a mile; however, speed data suggests this section is too short and vehicle traffic is too high between the lower speed sections for vehicles to achieve this speed. Furthermore, if they achieve this speed, vehicles are immediately ramping down as they approach the lower speed segment and only achieve these speeds for a relatively short amount of time/distance. It should also be noted that this 55-mph speed zone was instituted in 1999, and this area has substantially changed over the past 26 years. Additionally, considering the crash rate is high for this section and it doesn't meet shoulder width guidance, we believe that the 55-mph speed zone is too high and isn't functioning as intended. We recommend a 45-mph speed zone, which better reflects the speed data and reduces the speed differential for both lower speed locations that are adjacent. A 45-mph speed zone reduces the speed differential from 10-mph to 0-mph for the transitional 45-mph speed zone near the intersection with US-93 and from 30-mph to 20 mph as you transition down to the 25-mph speed zone inside of Stevensville. Having a lower speed will help reduce the intensity of the ramp-up/ramp-down of the speed profile for this segment as well. We recommend the proposed 45-mph speed zone over the same limits as the existing 55-mph speed zone. This would create a uniform and consistent 45-mph speed zone from the US-93 intersection to the transitional area just north of Stevensville.

For the 25-mph speed zone through Stevensville, prevailing speeds would indicate that the speed limits are not appropriately set as speeds are higher than the current set speed limit. The 85th percentile inside of the 25-mph speed zone is 32-mph and the 50th percentile is 28 mph. If utilizing the closest 50th percentile as the roadway context dictates, this would result in a recommendation of a 30-mph speed zone for Stevensville. However, considering the nature of the original request and local desires, we are not recommending an increase to the existing 25-mph speed zone inside of Stevensville. As part of the request, there is a desire to extend the 25-mph speed zone from South Avenue to Middle Burnt Fork Road which is inside of Stevensville and is currently posted as a 35-mph transitional speed zone that is 900 feet in length. Considering the speeds are also elevated in this section, we do not

recommend reducing the 35-mph to 25-mph as this would substantially deviate from the speed data and would go below the 50th percentile by approximately 10.5-mph. MDT does not recommend setting the speed limit below the 50th percentile by 10-mph or more as research shows this can lead to an increase in fatal and injury crash rates. However, MDT recognizes that the existing 35-mph speed zone is very short in length and could benefit from being extended to better help drivers transition to the rural town environment. MDT recommends extending the 35-mph speed zone just south of Middle Burnt Fork Road for a total distance of 1,600 ft. The proposed 35-mph speed zone extension would meet our zone length guidance, should help reduce speeds inside of Stevensville as drivers have a longer time to properly transition into the rural town roadway environment and better matches the speed data for this section.

The City of Stevensville agrees with MDT's recommendation. Ravalli County was contacted but MDT did not receive official comment.

Staff recommendation:

It is the desire of MDT with the approval of the Montana Transportation Commission to institute the following interim speed limit:

A 35-mph speed limit beginning approximately 100-ft south of the intersection with Mystic River Road (straight-line station 393+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1,600-ft, approximately 100-ft south of the intersection with South Avenue (straight-line station 409+00)

A 25-mph speed limit beginning approximately 100-ft south of the intersection with South Avenue (straight-line station 409+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 0.65-miles, approximately 500-ft north of the intersection with Buck Street/Eastside Highway (straight-line station 442+00)

A 35-mph speed limit beginning approximately 400-ft north of the intersection with Buck Street/Eastside Highway (straight-line station 442+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1,600-ft, approximately 100-ft south of the intersection with Fort Owen Ranch Road (straight-line station 458+00)

A 45-mph speed limit beginning approximately 100-ft south of the intersection with Fort Owen Ranch Road (straight-line station 458+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 0.93-miles, approximately at the intersection with US-93 (straight-line station 507+00)

Commissioner Frazier said I really appreciate having this information on the map. Thank you for listening to us. It made following this one a lot easier.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation, Eastside Highway/Main Street/Stevensville Road (S-269) – Stevensville. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

***Agenda Item 8: Certificates of Completion
January & February 2026***

Dave Gates presented the Certificates of Completion for January & February 2026 to the Commission. Certificates of Completion serve as official documentation of the Department’s final acceptance of a project. These certificates confirm the contract has been completed in full compliance with all approved plans, specifications, and special provisions, as authorized by the Transportation Commission.

Staff recommends approval of the Certificates of Completion as presented for January & February 2026 as proposed.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Certificates of Completion for January and February 2026. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

***Agenda Item 9: PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process –
TBD, UPN 10773000, CMAQ D4 ADA Upgrades***

Dave Gates and Aubrey Yerger presented the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – TBD, UPN 10773000, CMAZ D4 ADA Upgrades to the Commission. This is the documentation we use to implement the most appropriate contract delivery mechanism for projects considered for alternative contracting. The PDSP evaluates seven criteria to help us inform the best tool for the projects. This is a great approach and demonstrates to ourselves as well as the Commission and the public that we are making informed transparent decisions.

The CMAQ D4 ADA Upgrades project has been nominated to reconstruct ramps, approaches, and sections of non-compliant sidewalk to current ADA standards in the communities of Plevna, Baker, and Wibaux.

A multi-disciplinary team evaluated the merits of Design-Bid-Build (DBB), Design-

Build (DB), Progressive Design-Build (PDB), and Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) to select the best delivery method for this project. A summary of the scoring is provided in the table below. Discussion on the criteria is provided in the attached memo.

Highlights of the PDSP: design build offers a competitively bid solicitation which may drive costs lower than progressive design build. Design build offers the most efficient schedule for obligation which is advantageous for project funding. MDT has sufficient resources to manage a design build project over the other methods.

Staff recommendation:

As a result of this Project Delivery Selection Process, it is the recommendation of the PDSP Committee and staff that Design-Build be approved as the most appropriate delivery method for the CMAQ D4 ADA Upgrade project.

Staff recommends the selection criteria weight of 60 percent technical proposal and 40 percent bid price proposal be utilized for determining the Best Value selection in the procurement of the CMAQ D4 ADA Upgrades project.

Staff recommends a stipend of \$35,000 be provided to unsuccessful, responsive proposing firms for the CMAQ D4 ADA Upgrades project.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said I probably should have asked this during the TCP process. The reason for CMAQ dollars for this project – are these local CMAQ allocations or are we using our own CMAQ funding from the state bucket? Doug McBroom said this would be from our state allocation of CMAQ dollars and not the local allocations. Commissioner Aspenlieder said fundamentally I hate that; I don't like it at all. I understand those are qualified funds for an ADA project. It is different when you have Great Falls or Billings deciding to use their own local allocation but when we're using state CMAQ dollars to do ADA projects – and I get it, Culbertson is no different than Baker or Plevna – these towns don't have the ability to do this on their own but it feels like an inappropriate use of the limited federal dollars we have for our system allotment for ADA sidewalk projects in small towns where we have highways. I'll support it because it's already in the que and in the hopper and it's too late to pull the rip cord at this point but I don't like it at all.

Director Dorrington asked if it was because you don't like the project or the use of funds. Commissioner Aspenlieder said it is the use of our federal CMAQ dollars. I get that ADA projects technically fall under the qualifications of using CMAQ dollars but I would prefer that we use our TA dollars for something like this rather than our CMAQ dollars. We can't use TA dollars on highways and we can use CMAQ dollars

on highways and we should be doing that and using our TA dollars on sidewalk and pedestrian facilities like this. That's my thrust. Doug McBroom said there is a need in the ADA transition plan for the state. I don't think Shane has any other funding; there is just not another funding pot. NH is completely allocated for everything else. Commissioner Aspenlieder said yes I get it. Commissioner Frazier said we need another pot of money for the ADA.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – TBD, UPN 10773000, CMAQ D4 ADA Upgrades. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 10: PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NH-STPS 7-1(188)46 & HSIP 7-1(177)51, UPN 10685000 & 10295000, Ravalli County Pavement Preservation – D1 ADA & SF 199 Woodside

Dave Gates and Aubrey Yerger presented the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NH-STPS 7-1(188)46 & HSIP 7-1(177)51, UPN 10685000 & 10295000, Ravalli County Pavement Preservation – D1 ADA & SF 199 Woodside to the Commission. This pavement preservation project in Ravalli County includes improvements at five locations across four state routes, covering approximately 18 miles of roadway. Work will take place on US Highway 93, S-269, S-373 and S-203. Work will include milling, asphalt overlay, new signage, upgrades to sidewalk ramps and approaches to meet ADA standards, seal and cover, fog seal, repairs to bridge decks and new pavement markings. Pavement infrastructure and extend the service life of the current asphalt surfaces. This is a broad list of work items and not all work items will be performed at all five locations of the project. The pavement preservation project will be tied to the SF 199 Woodside safety project and this project includes improvements to the Woodside and US 93 intersection.

A multi-disciplinary team evaluated the merits of Design-Bid-Build (DBB), Design-Build (DB), Progressive Design-Build (PDB), and Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) to select the best delivery method for this project. A summary of the scoring is provided in the table below. Discussion on the criteria is provided in the attached memo.

Highlights of the PDSP: design build offers a competitively bid solicitation which may drive costs lower than progressive design build. Design build offers the most efficient schedule for obligation which is advantageous for project funding. MDT has sufficient resources to manage a design build project over the other methods.

Staff recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Commission approve UPN 10685000 and UPN 10295000 projects located in the Missoula District as a tied Design-Build.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the selection criteria weight of 60 percent technical proposal and 40 percent bid price proposal be applied for determining Best Value in the procurement process for the tied Design-Build (UPN 10685000 and UPN 10295000) project.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve a stipend amount of \$60,000 be implemented for the procurement process for the tied Design-Build (UPN 10685000 and 10295000) project.

Commissioner Frazier said this is kind of a shot-gun funding approach for a design build project. Is our MDT staff prepared to handle that? Dave Gates said yes our staff are prepared. MDT project management will be handled through our shop.

Commissioner Sanders asked if it was codified that we have to approve all alternative contracting. Is that worthwhile for us to do? Do you see a day where we don't have to do this as a Commission anymore? Is that desired by you? Director Dorrington said not at this point. Do I see a day when we get there, yes for sure but it's not today? Commissioner Sanders said then there is value added for the way we do it right now? Director Dorrington said yes.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said I don't think the Contractors Association would support not having these go in front of the Commission because in the past, what we used as alternative contracting methods created some dust up particularly when we were using CMGC. The Contractor's Association was not happy – the comfort level for them was that the Commission had to have a public hearing and that gave them an opportunity and a stage to oppose it should they so choose. Director Dorrington said we're still easing into it basically. Commissioner Aspenlieder said this gives the Contractor's Association a backstop to make their voice heard if they see something they do not like. I would suspect that if we try and change the Contractor's Association would fully opposed to it.

Commissioner Frazier said the positives on that is that this gives a public forum for people to voice their opinion on what type of project and what type of contract we're doing and it gives the Commission an opportunity to be aware of it. I believe maybe 10 years ago I spoke with a Commissioner who was surprised that the department just decided to do these big design build projects. I didn't know anything about them and now we do. Commissioner Sanders said it is interesting that they put a lot of work into it and quantified why the alternative contracting method they choose is best. This gives a forum to hear their concerns. Commissioner Frazier said MDT

staff has done a great job of figuring out a ranking system, showing our decision making, and there is a process for the public to view, and it's in our minutes. You can come back years later and look at the project and why they chose design build or CMGC, etc. Commissioner Sanders said they are going to do the work anyway and I'm all about efficiency but I don't understand why we need to approve these.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NH-STPS 7-1(188)46 & HSIP 7-1(177)51, UPN 10685000 & 10295000, Ravalli County Pavement Preservation – D1 ADA & SF 199 Woodside. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 11: Directors Discussion

Director Chris Dorrington

Director Dorrington said the Commission requested communication with the department to make sure you're getting what you need. Commissioner Aspenlieder said my district goes through a check list to see how things are going and that is very helpful. I don't know if the actual checklist is something we can receive and if it would be value added. There's a lot of good information on the checklist and contained information on upcoming public meetings. I'd be interested in seeing that. In my view District 2 has improved because of it and I wouldn't mind having a copy if you're okay with it. Commissioner Frazier said I would echo that. I appreciate the notice of a lot of the other meetings and I've been able to attend quite a few of them. It's beneficial to know what's happening.

Federal Reauthorization

Regarding our federal reauthorization, we were very hopeful last fall we would get a markup on the federal reauthorization bill in December but that came and went. Then we were hopeful of getting one in April and that has come and gone as well. The House will likely have a draft bill out, Senate DPW was approved on the other side but is nowhere near it. In addition there are two other proposals – one is to monkey with the federal formula which will be highly detrimental to the state, that reallocates funds more to a couple of urban states, and the other allocates money directly to locals on an aggressive percentage scale and that would upend our entire program. So we are opposing the two outsider initiatives and we're hopeful, albeit pretty pessimistic, that we'll get something by September 30th. We've been there before and we can operate but it's really complicated to operate on short term bursts of continuing resolution.

Systems Impact

I wanted to update you on Systems Impact which is something you guys hear a lot about. We have really dug in. We had an awesome experience just a couple of days ago when we did a table top exercise. We brought in Bozeman and worked through a project to highlight how the process works or does not work and elements of the process, a lot of which is communication, information sharing and achievement of a schedule. Boy did we learn a lot in a day. It was awesome and a shout out to my whole crew that just busted out a seven-hour meeting. It was incredible for us and Bozeman was really appreciated of being asked to come in and walk through a project. The whole objective is to get systems impact streamlined and on a committed schedule and then consistent across the state. We're working really hard on that.

I would note and you'll probably see with fuel prices doubling, we'll see asphalt prices harmed by that doubling. It's super frustrating for us. We were just seeing highly competitive bids and really good prices but sad to say we'll see some of that erased – not the competitive part but the pricing will be impacted by the price at the pump.

Executive Planning Process (EPP)

EPP deadline is May 6th so in our June meeting in Miles City we'll be sharing some of our policy initiatives that we hope to accomplish in the 2027 Legislative Session. Most of it aligns around some safety work and then efficiency effectiveness. The last will be revenue. The last funding increase for fuel tax was in 2017. At that time it was projected to last about 10 years and we're there. So in 2027 we're hopeful for a revenue solution but it will not be simple. Locals are also looking at revenue challenges. We really pressed forward in 2023 and 2025 to help the locals with their infrastructure needs but in 2027 we'll have to drive state needs and work hard to get a long-term state revenue solution increase.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said this is one of the hottest political footballs in the Legislature – is part of that solution and are people talking about the coal trust fund capping and redirecting revenue of the coal trust? If we're going to lose some federal funding in a rework at the federal level, our budgets are going to go significantly down and there is no way to make up the difference without looking at the only revenue source we have which is the coal trust fund or a sales tax. What are you seeing or hearing on that front?

Director Dorrington said the revenue picture for 2027 is going to be very grim for this state. There is no surplus, there's only two lever arms which is income tax and property tax and then looking at existing accounts. You make a good point on the coal trust fund. It definitely is counted as a money item. Over the years almost anyone who has looked at that as an opportunity has been slapped down. I don't

know what that will be and I don't know what will become of that. Through the one big beautiful bill, the state lost \$220 million of federal revenue. Most of that is in HHS and a couple of other funded categories. In order to sustain provided services across the state that \$220 million has to be made up with state efficiencies, either cutting services or using state revenue to plug the federal hole. That is going to be one heck of a battle. You raise a good question. The coal trust fund is a place where money exists but boy people hang on to that.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said regarding inter local agreements, what is the status with that? Where do those stand? Doug McBroom said two agreements that we're working on right now are with Montana League of Cities and Towns – one of them is the city-wide city-maintained agreements and the other is the city-wide state-maintained agreements. I'm heading up the city-wide city-maintained agreements and Mr. Swartz is heading up the state-maintained agreements. Both of those we are in a much better spot than we are. There are two pieces in the city-wide that the cities are having difficulty with which is clean up. One of those pieces is defined in a much clearer manner. If you look at the authority the Commission has over those, it is for construction and reconstruction so maintenance is on the department and right now we're going to put that maintenance on the city. So anything that the department essentially does on the maintenance side to ensure that our routes are well maintained, we're defining better in the agreements so the city understands what maintenance is – everything from an overlay to chip seal.

The other piece we're looking at is there are some things that go through the Commission because they are construction but they're following their own city ordinances. A great example is sidewalks. Sidewalks often come to the Commission because they are new construction and you're authorized to approve any construction project. We have a Commission policy (Commission Policy #8) that basically says utility projects do not need to go through you, they are just utility projects on the urban system and the Commission doesn't need to improve that. We are looking at potentially modifying that policy to include some of the things that are normally done by the cities and remind them of the process so they have more ability to do things on their routes that need maintained and basically spend money on but you still have oversight. That is some big progress being made with the MLCT on city-wide city-maintained agreements. Mr. Swartz can talk about city-side state-maintained agreements.

Jon Swartz said similar to Mr. McBroom we're working on city-side state-maintained agreements. These are routes the state maintains. We've had several meetings with local governments and MLCT, and we have another meeting tomorrow to hash out the draft agreements. Really what we're doing is looking at where city routes intersect state-maintained routes and who is responsible for maintaining that infrastructure; it goes back to the city of Bozeman sidewalks. We'll have the language about who is going to maintain or cause to maintain those sidewalks. So

looking at sidewalk striping, traffic signals, RFB, and all the infrastructure on the roadways even down to plowing and pavement maintenance for our highways. I anticipate we'll have a draft approved and a finalized agreement done by the end of May. Right now on our committees Billings, Missoula, Great Falls, and Kalispell are part of that group.

***Agenda Item 12: Change Orders
January & February 2026***

Dave Gates presented the Change Orders for January & February 2026 to the Commission. These reports are informational only and do not require any action by the Commission.

Agenda Item 13: Letting Lists

Ryan Dahlke presented the Letting List for information only. You received a handout for the remaining lettings for 2026. It also goes into the fall which for a federal fiscal year moves into 2027. You'll see there is quite a list of projects in the October–November timeframe. The reason for that is we like to have our projects aligned to award as early as possible in 2027 but also out of that list we pull our redistribution projects but we have to first decide what dollar amount we're receiving and then we'll move those in and you'll see those through this process as well. Until we present them to you they are shown outside of the 2026 plan.

Director Dorrington said redistribution is awesome except it increases the rate, so you utilize more state money in a state where our state funds are limited at this point. This may be the first year where we cannot accept the full August redistribution amount. We're going to be really thoughtful and we'll inform you as we go but I don't think we can commit our state at that rate and still make it through 27-28 so we're going to be a little bit more cautious than normal.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said is that part of your pitch to the Legislature that we're short federal dollars because we don't have appropriate allocations, I presume that is the case. Director Dorrington said it is. There are varying opinions out there across the spectrum of should we be so tied to the federal dollar and should we commit ourselves at a certain rate. There are some people who feel it's just fine to turn back their help. Now for transportation and the 87/13 split we get \$3 back for every dollar we send to D.C. so it's hard for me to say let's not accept those federal dollars. So yes it's definitely part of our pitch. Commissioner Frazier said I agree, I think it would be a sad day if we turned down an 87/13 split. Twenty years ago it was considered a very large black eye for the department to not use our

leverage. It would have been a career altering event. I would encourage us to find money to use – we need every cent we can get because our needs are big.

Next Commission Meetings

The next Commission Conference Calls are scheduled for May 12, 2026, May 26, 2026, and June 16, 2026. We also have a special letting call on June 30.

The next Commission Meeting was scheduled for June 4, 2026.

Meeting Adjourned

Commissioner Loran Frazier, Chairman
Montana Transportation Commission

Chris Dorrington, Director
Montana Department of Transportation

Jess Bousliman, Secretary
Montana Transportation Commission