

Montana Transportation Commission

**February 26, 2026 Meeting
Commission Room
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, Montana**

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) (online)
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
Ryan Dahlke, MDT Project Development Engineer
Jon Swartz, MDT Asset Strategy, Operations, & Maintenance Program Manger
Jim Wingerter, MDT District 3
Aubrey Yerger, MDT
Shane Pegram, MDT
Brenden Borges, MDT
Lauren Eichenfels, MDT
Nick Ross, City of Bozeman

On Line:

John Schmidt, MDT District 5
Geno Liva, MDT District 2
Mike Taylor, MDT District 5
Paul Johnson, MDT
Brandon Jones, MDT
Mitch Buthod, MDT
Sheila Ludlow, MDT
Tyler Moss, MDT
Lucia Olivera, FHWA

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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 October 30, 2025, November 5, 2025, November 25, 2025, and December 16, 2025, were presented for approval.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the minutes for the Commission Meetings of October 30, 2025, November 5, 2025, November 25, 2025, and December 16, 2025. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 1: Local Construction Projects on State Highway System, Local Forces – Cities of Great Falls and Kalispell

Doug McBroom presented the Local Construction Projects on State Highway System, Local Forces – Cities of Great Falls and Kalispell 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 better coordination between state and local infrastructure improvements. MDT staff reaches out to local governments to solicit local projects on state systems to ensure compliance with this statute.

The Cities of Great Falls and Kalispell are planning to design and build transportation improvement projects on the state highway system. The projects will be funded locally and will utilize local forces for construction. The projects will be designed with input and concurrence from MDT staff to the extent practicable.

When complete, the Cities will assume all maintenance responsibilities associated with new project elements. Thus, MDT will not incur additional liability or maintenance costs as a result of the proposed projects.

On behalf of the local governments, as required by MCA 60-2-110, staff requests that the Transportation Commission approve the local projects listed below. The projects are also illustrated on the attached maps:

Location	Type of Work	Cost (estimate)	Fiscal Year	Type of Labor
Sun River Road (U-5225), from 14th Street SW to 4th West Hill Drive, in	Mill & Overlay	\$150,000	2026	Local

Great Falls				
1st Avenue East (U-6723), from Idaho Street to Montana Street, in Kalispell	Mill & Overlay	\$75,000	2026	Local
5th Avenue West (U-6721), from Center Street to Idaho Street, in Kalispell	Mill & Overlay	\$200,000	2026	Local
Center Street (U-6714), from Main Street to 5th Avenue West, in Kalispell	Mill & Overlay	\$300,000	2026	Local

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission approve these improvements to the state highway system - pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Sanders thanked the staff for combining the projects into one agenda item, it is much appreciated. Commissioner Frazier agreed. Commissioner Sansaver asked about “pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval process.” Are we in the pending part right now or the review process? Doug McBroom said yes, we are working on it right now. Commissioner Sansaver asked if it would come back to the Commission again. Doug McBroom said no. Commissioner Sansaver asked what if you don’t agree with the review, does it go back to drawing board where you fix it because you’ve been given permission to move forward. Doug McBroom said that is essentially correct. We’ve gone through the back-and-forth process on projects. These in particular are very simple projects, and I don’t anticipate any concerns at all.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Local Construction Projects on State Highway System, Local Forces – Cities of Great Falls and Kalispell. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 2: Local Construction Projects on State Highway System, Contract Labor – Cities of Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls and Missoula – Powder River County and Prairie County

Doug McBroom presented the Construction Projects on State Highway System, Contract Labor – Cities of Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls and Missoula – Powder River County and Prairie County 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. MDT staff reaches out to local governments to solicit local projects on state systems to ensure compliance with this statute.

Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Missoula, Powder River County and Prairie County are planning to design and build transportation improvement projects on the state highway system. The projects will be funded locally and will utilize contract labor. The projects will be designed with input and concurrence from MDT staff to the extent practicable.

When complete, the local governments will assume all maintenance responsibilities associated with new project elements. Thus, MDT will not incur additional liability or maintenance costs as a result of the proposed projects.

On behalf of the local governments, as required by MCA 60-2-111, staff requests that the Transportation Commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer contracts for the projects listed below. The projects are also illustrated on the attached maps. There is one project on the list I want to highlight for you. Giant Springs Road in Great Falls is a slide repair. That work has been done but it is on the Agenda because slide repairs tend to repeat themselves. In case it actually impacts the highway, this is on the Agenda to cover our bases. Basically, the slide repair is done and hopefully no further action will be needed.

Location	Type of Work	Cost (estimate)	Fiscal Year	Type of Labor
Rimrock Road (U-1002), at Missouri Street, in Billings	Bike/Ped Crossing Improvements	\$150,000	2026	Contract
Rimrock Road (U-1034), from 46th Street West to 54th Street West, in Billings	Reconstruction	\$5,000,000	2026	Contract
Rimrock Road (U-1034), from 54th Street West to 62nd Street West, in Billings	Reconstruction	\$10,000,000	2026	Contract
Broadwater Avenue (U-1006), from 8th Street West to 12th Street West, in Billings	Bike/Ped Crossing Improvements	\$250,000	2026	Contract
Central Avenue (U-1008), from 8th Street West to 13th Street West, in Billings	Bike/Ped Crossing Improvements	\$300,000	2026	Contract
Grand Avenue (U-1004), from 8th Street West to 13th Street West, in Billings	Bike/Ped Crossing Improvements	\$300,000	2026	Contract
Grand Avenue (U-1039), at 56th Street West, in Billings	New Traffic Signal / Crossing Upgrades	\$500,000	2026	Contract
24th Street West (U-1005), at	Bike/Ped Crossing	\$150,000	2026	Contract

Location	Type of Work	Cost (estimate)	Fiscal Year	Type of Labor
Howard Avenue, in Billings	Improvements			
Virginia Lane (U-1015), at Poly Drive, in Billings	Traffic Signal Upgrades	\$25,000	2026	Contract
Wicks Lane (U-1012), at Nutter Boulevard, in Billings	Curb Extensions	\$125,000	2026	Contract
College Street (U-1210), from 8th Avenue to 11th Avenue, in Bozeman	Reconstruction	\$3,000,000	2026	Contract
Park Street (N-29), at Arizona Street, in Butte	Reconstruction	\$900,000	2026	Contract
26th Street (U-5226), at 11th Avenue South, in Great Falls	Mill & Overlay	\$225,000	2026	Contract
Giant Springs Rd (U-5221), near the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, in Great Falls	Slide Repair	\$200,000	2026	Contract
Mount Avenue / 14th Street (U-8116), at Eaton Street, in Missoula	Reconstruction	\$400,000	2026	Contract
Moorhead Road (S-391), at RP 3.6, in Powder River County	Bridge Replacement	\$800,000	2026	Contract
Secondary 340 (S-340), at RP 15.1, in Prairie County	Culvert Replacement	\$300,000	2026	Contract

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission approve these modifications to the state highway system and requests that the Commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer the contracts for these projects to Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Missoula, Powder River County and Prairie County - pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Sanders asked who pays for the slide repair the first time. Doug McBroom said the locals paid for it. Commissioner Sanders said if it happens again, we want to have funding to pay for it. Doug McBroom said it will still be the locals who are on the hook but in case it impacts the roadway we are covering so they can get it repaired. Commissioner Sanders asked if it was contingency funding. Doug McBroom said correct.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Construction Projects on State Highway System, Contract Labor – Cities of Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls and Missoula – Powder River County and Prairie County. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 3: Construction Project on State Highway System
Contract Labor – Last Chance Gulch – Helena**

Doug McBroom presented the Construction Project on State Highway System, Contract Labor – Last Chance Gulch, Helena 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. This is exactly like the projects in Agenda Item 2.

Last Chance Gulch - Helena

The City of Helena is proposing modifications to Last Chance Gulch (U-5807) to improve traffic operations and safety near Neill Avenue. Proposed improvements include the installation of all-way stop control at the intersection of Last Chance Gulch and Neill Avenue / 11th Avenue.

MDT headquarters and District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. The City of Helena 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, the City of Helena will assume all maintenance and operational responsibilities associated with the proposed improvements.

Staff recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission approve these modifications to Last Chance Gulch and requests that the Commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer the contract for this project to the City of Helena - 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 – Last Chance Gulch, Helena. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Bridge Program Projects – Additions to Bridge Program (9 New Projects)

Doug McBroom presented the Bridge Program Projects – Additions to Bridge Program (9 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 nine (9) 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 \$170.5 million (\$147.6M federal + \$22.9M state match). The breakdown of project costs (by program) is listed below:

Surface Transportation Bridge (STPB) Program	\$ 52,635,542
National Highway Performance Bridge (NHPB) Program	<u>\$117,846,515</u>
	\$170,482,057

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 asked how these projects are going to fit inside the TCP. Where do you see these landing and how do you see us getting through it? Some of these are substantial to say the least. Ryan Dahlke said as you may recall in the TCP last year there was around \$60 million that was a positive balance in 2030, so this is partly to fill that and it’s also partly to fill the out year (the next year). So, we’re short projects in 2031 which will then come into the program this year. So, it’s partly to fill 2030-2031 and there will also be a good group of projects coming in April, more bridge projects to fill the 2032 year. So, we’re hitting about \$ 100 million in bridge work. This set of nominations as well as the next set coming in April will fill us out for about one or two years beyond the program, so it allows us to get design going on some of the complex bridges. For example, the I-90 Madison River at Three Forks project is a very large project at \$80 million for all phases. That is a dual set of interstate structures which are long, 600-700 feet long. We are having some scour concerns with those set of bridges and we don’t want to put millions of dollars into a scour mitigation. So, our strategy is to develop the project to a certain level and just monitor the scour to see how things are going because one event, not only scour but

they are seismically susceptible as well. So, we're setting ourselves up for either a design-build project once we get some details figured out or it is just kind of sitting there. We're not committing the \$83 million in our TCP. This project would strategically sit in the out years allowing us to deliver \$100 million in bridges every year but it's there in case we have to have it. It is a high-risk bridge on a critical corridor in Montana so that's why we're doing it this way. That is just one bridge of note, and I'll be happy to answer any follow-up questions.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said this is a request for the April meeting, if we can see the updated TCP list and work through that when you add the next set in along with these added to it – if we can just go through the bridge section of the TCP and get a firm understanding of how all this money is going to flow with what we approved last fall, that would be helpful to me. Doug McBroom said what I hear you asking is to show you the financial plan strategy-wise for the next five to seven years and how not only our existing bridges, but these new nominations are going to fit into that plan. Commissioner Aspenlieder said yes.

Commissioner Sansaver said adding these nine is going to be over the next five years. Then next year when we come back into this, we will probably be adding more so it will go into 2032-2040 indefinitely. I'm encouraged to see we're addressing bridges. I'd like to see more timber bridges, but I'm encouraged to see there is more bridges and more money going into the bridge program. Doug McBroom said most of the projects you're seeing here are going to fit in years four and beyond. However, just like all of our projects, if we run up against problems like delays with right-of-way permitting, the railroad or something like that, these projects can then slip in.

An additional note – the ones you see on this list are all high-risk scour bridges that need attention soon, so we'll be trying to manipulate these as we get schedules developed after they are approved by the Commission then we'll develop schedules and see how soon we can get them in. That may push another lesser priority project out a year just so we can address the high-risk ones first. This list attacks most of our at-risk bridges. There are a couple of timber bridges in here and a couple of load-posted bridges. In April you're going to see a whole slug of timber and load-posted bridges and really attacking that group in April. So, the nominations between today and April you're going to see all of our at-risk bridges addressed in projects that are active, all of our NH load-posted bridges, all of our NH timber bridges and then a number of our non-NH bridges. That pot is huge, so we have a lot of work to do on that. I'll give you some final numbers in April with a lot more detail about timber and load-posted bridges.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Bridge Program Projects – Additions to Bridge Program (9 New Projects). Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 5: National Highway System Program – Additions to NH Program (1 New Project)

Doug McBroom presented the National Highway System Program – Additions to NH Program (1 New Project) to the Commission.

The National Highway System (NH) Program finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct Non-Interstate routes on the National Highway System. Montana’s Transportation Commission allocates NH funds to MDT Districts based on system performance.

At this time, MDT is proposing to add one new project to the NH program in the Butte District. The project on the attached list meets the criteria set forth for NH-funded projects. The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$1,496,417 (\$1,295,600 federal + \$200,817 state match) – with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the National Highway System (NH) Program.

MDT is requesting Commission approval to add a new project to the National Highway System Program. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming Process – as well as the policy direction established in TranPlanMT. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of this project to the program.

Staff recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of this NH project to the highway program.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the National Highway System Program – Additions to NH Program (1 New Project). Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 6: Transportation Alternative (TA) Program Projects – Additions to TA Program (3 New Projects)

Doug McBroom presented the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Projects – Additions to TA Program (3 New Projects) to the Commission. The Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program provides assistance to local governments, tribal entities, transit providers, resource agencies and/or school districts for community

improvements deemed eligible to receive TA funding. Program priorities are determined via a competitive process – with the highest scoring proposals moving forward as project nominations.

At this time, MDT is advancing three (3) new projects from the most recent round of Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program project evaluations. These projects are shown on Attachment A. If approved, it would be MDT’s intention to let, award, and administer East Helena’s project. Lewis & Clark County and the City of Helena will be utilizing the Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) process for project delivery.

MDT is requesting Commission approval to add three (3) new Transportation Alternatives (TA) projects to the program. The estimated total cost for all projects is \$2,518,818 (\$2,180,797 federal + \$338,021 local) – with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program.

The projects are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming Process as well as the policy direction established in TranPlanMT. Specifically, traveler safety and bicycle/pedestrian features will be enhanced with the addition of these projects to the program.

Staff recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of these Transportation Alternatives (TA) projects to the highway program and requests that the Commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer contracts to Lewis & Clark County and the City of Helena (for their respective projects) – in accordance with MDT’s Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) process for project delivery.

Commissioner Swarts moved to approve the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Projects – Additions to TA Program (3 New Projects). Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

Nick Ross, City of Bozeman

Nick Ross, I serve as the Director of Transportation and Engineering for the City of Bozeman. I’m here to learn a little bit about your process and hopefully engaging for the future. I’m here specifically about the College Street Project you approved. I don’t mean this to speak ill of any of my friends at MDT, you truly have some very good professionals all the way down from Geno Liva, Brandon Jones all the way up to my

executive colleagues here today. I will say it was a bit of surprise for the city of Bozeman to hear about a month before that we will be finished with final design on the project – a project that we have fully funded, planned and designed, on a route that was platted in 1890, built with City of Bozeman taxpayer money, and maintained with city of Bozeman taxpayer money through the entirety of its history to now have MDT take an interest in the project.

By way of hoping that we get to a better place of coordination and delegation in the future, I'm here recommending that we allow our cities on projects that we fund, design, and maintain to have a greater role in making sure we execute with as little bureaucracy as possible to make sure these projects get out to our taxpayers as cheaply and effectively as we can. So, I believe you've already approved the delegation, and I appreciate that and I look forward to working with you on more in the future.

Commissioner Sansaver said you mentioned you wanted to cut out the bureaucracy and then looked at us. Thank you. Commissioner Sanders said we talked on the phone but it's good to finally see your face. Thanks for showing up here and the interest you have. The question I have is how much coordination was done beforehand with MDT on this project. Nick Ross said part of the surprise is that there's sort of been different executions of this MDT policy on projects in the past. We were surprised that this one even got pulled into State Transportation Commission authority based on how this has gone in the past. We had no coordination. We are fully aware that STPU funded urban route projects are 100% in lock step with MDT and quite frankly we're grateful for projects like Katy Blvd in particular that we would have trouble executing. For one that is fully city funded, it's our interpretation that we didn't require MDT approval to go use our money on our streets.

Commissioner Sanders asked if there was some way to help them identify what projects are going to be subject to MDT letting and our statutory requirements. Dustin Rouse said College Street is designated as an Urban Route and as such it falls under the Commission's authority. We are working on the language for which projects even if they are on a Commission-designated route, should come before the Commission. For us there is some criteria those projects need to meet. If the City is proposing a steel-covered walkway on a Commission-designated route that has no other impact, do we treat that the same as something where we're modifying features on that route? With that, if it's acceptable, I'll have our Chief Legal talk in regards to what we see as what's appropriate to bring to the Commission and what is not.

Commissioner Frazier said in looking at this issue and why the Transportation Commission approves the design and as mentioned it is city funded, the city built it and it's our street and we maintain it. The public also has an expectation that when they drive down a street it will meet certain safety standards. To go back in history

about 28 years ago when a certain city proposed on one of the streets that they wanted eight foot and nine-foot traffic lanes on one of the busiest streets in the town. They wanted to install obstacles calling them mini-roundabouts with these eight and nine foot lanes which would cause congestion and accidents and basically be a safety hazard, but they were funding it and designing it. So, there is that kind of a protection for the public in general. When you go back 50-80 years when this MCA was enacted is that you had some things for some routes that were going to be major transportation routes through a town that had to meet certain standards so that people could get through the town so you wouldn't have a renegade city council deciding that they were going to install a wall so everybody had to walk or bike into a town. That's my take on the history of developing the MCAs.

Valerie Balukas, Chief Legal Counsel, said under MCA 60-2-111, which is the provision of letting of state contracts on state highways and Commission designated state highway systems and the history came into effect in 1947. It has been part of the policy of the State of Montana for decades. The language says, "all contracts for the construction or reconstruction of highways located on Commission designated highway systems, the state highways including portions in cities and towns and all contracts entered into using local funding must be let by the Commission." So, the question that is coming up more and more and where we're working with MLCT is "what is construction, what is reconstruction and what is maintenance?" That's where some of the friction has come up is different interpretations at MDT versus the locals between what is a reconstruction versus what is maintenance. One of the things we're looking at in terms of the question about early coordination and I'm not part of these early coordination meetings, but my understanding is some of the descriptions say things like multi-model operations. So, when they're evaluating whether it has to go the Commission there's not a lot of information. My understanding on this one is when the information came in about a month ago, it has a raised median cross-walk in the middle for pedestrians which in the opinion of MDT staff was really a reconstruction and not just a restriping of lanes but it was building out a pedestrian raised median in the center and that is why staff opinion was to bring it to the Commission and get approval to let the project.

Commissioner Sansaver asked if the law was passed in 1947. Valerie said that is when it started and it has evolved over time. It was enacted in 1947. Commissioner Sansaver said in this day and age with technology being the way it is and more and more cities taking on not only the build but the responsibility of developing structures that coincide with the State of Montana, isn't it time that we go back to the Legislature to make changes to make it more affable to both the cities and the state. I recall when I first came onto the Commission, I challenged one of those laws and it went back to the Legislature, and we ended up changing the law. Something like this is so far outdated over many years, how often are we allowed or does it take the Commission to initiate a change. Valerie Balukas said my position is just advisory; I'm not a policy maker. I'll let you know that this law is fluid and has been amended

numerous times. It was first enacted in 1947, and it's been amended as recently as 2023. So, it does get amended and updated over time, but I'll defer to the policy makers for the process.

Deputy Director Flynn said I think the question is what's important to the Commission, to the Department, and to the locals. To Commissioner Frazier's point earlier, there's something to be said for having that consistency when you're looking at your state highway network which does include some urban routes. My personal opinion is if a city is going to repair a road, reconstruct a road in the same manner with the same configuration as it originally existed, I can't see why the Commission would care about that. If you're changing the configuration or changing the roadway, I'm of the strong opinion that if it's on the state highway network even an urban route that very definitely should come before the Commission to make sure we're okay and you're okay with changing the operation of that roadway. So, there's probably some middle ground in there somewhere that we could verify for sure but that's my opinion.

Commissioner Sansaver said it goes back to definitions of rehabilitation or reconstruction or new construction. I agree with the gentleman from Bozeman. There is a lot of bureaucracy in everything that's done whether state, federal or local. We've actually streamlined a lot of our meetings by taking out a lot of that bureaucracy and it's very encouraging and expeditious. Then we have to go back and consider the streamlining of local municipalities like the Bozeman area, Great Falls, Helena. It's almost getting to the point where we have our rules and laws, the Commission has a necessary process that needs to take place. I agree I've brought the question many times if the city is going to be building this and we're going to be maintaining this and it's going to be affecting the traffic flow, the Commission does need to address and approve, but there are a lot of situations with rehab that shouldn't have to come before the Commission.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said I agree with Commissioner Sansaver. I don't necessarily disagree with Deputy Director Flynn. If there are ways to think about this to allow cities to do what cities do and not have to send it up through Helena which takes three-four months of process on top of a project, that can cause some of the cities to miss the construction season and that's not helpful to anybody. It's certainly not the best use of taxpayer dollars and frankly not the best use of our staff's time either. When these things come from the big eight cities, their engineering departments are staffed with licensed professionals and there is very little risk associated with this stuff from my perspective that we need to be trying to mitigate unless you're changing the operation of the designated road or highway. So that gets in a nuanced conversation about what professional thinks this is a change in functional use. Montana Avenue in Billings is a prime example when some of my counterparts in Kalispell wanted to talk about going to a two-way conversion on Montana Avenue. Yes, that functionally changed the way Montana Avenue works. If

you want to be dumb and do that then we should take our designation and take our money away. That was the end of that conversation. We're talking about things like crosswalks and flashing beacons that do not functionally change the way that road operates. It's pedestrian safety, increased pedestrian facilities whether I agree with them or not, it is not changing the way that College actually works. That should be the way we address these. I don't know what the solution is, but we need to get better at this stuff and try to keep as much in the district's hands as possible and keep our Helena staff working on things that are important on our highway systems not how inner-urban routes need to function.

Commissioner Frazier said I hear both sides of this. Not too long ago in the recent past a rogue city council in Western Montana decided they did not want trucks on their streets, and they were proposing to install overpasses or bridge structures at a low height so trucks couldn't go down the streets through town. So somewhere there has to be a balance, a little bit of oversight or some authority that says that if you have a main trade route, a highway system going through the town where we need commerce to go through, you can't install things to impede that. For maintenance and safety improvements do we really need to examine those? I think there's a balance that probably needs to be discussed and have the Legislature look at that.

**Agenda Item 7: Speed Limit Recommendation
Old US 10 (X-44302) – Forsyth**

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, Old US 10 (X-44302) – Forsyth to the Commission. Discussions regarding the speed limits on Old US 10 began in March of 2025 at the district level. Data collection was slated to occur this year, but we were unable to acquire it. In order to meet the local desires for quicker action, MDT decided an interim would be acceptable considering the nature of the request is mainly an alteration of the speed zone transitions on the eastern edge of Forsyth.

Rosebud County would like to shift the 45-mph speed zone to the east side of Snapper Drive and also introduce a transitional speed zone as they do not prefer the existing 45/70-mph transition. The main desire is to slow vehicles down before they get near Snapper Drive as this intersection is the main connection to the Riverview Villa Retirement Living.

Rosebud County cites that many seniors who utilize this intersection have poorer vision and slower reflexes which leads them to have a harder time judging gaps in traffic and oncoming speeds of vehicles. Additionally, the current 45/70-mph transition currently is 300-feet west of the intersection which has vehicles transitioning through this intersection making the situation even more difficult for assessing vehicle speeds and adequate gaps.

MDT concurs with moving the 45-mph transition to the east side of Snapper Drive and also creating a 60-mph speed zone that will help reduce vehicles transitioning into Forsyth. This will reduce the current 25-mph speed zone difference to 15-mph, which is consistent with current MDT guidance. Additionally, the 60-mph speed zone will cover the two geometric curves located between milepost 1 and milepost 2. MDT also recommends extending the 60-mph speed zone until past the main airport approach for two reasons. The first is that Rosebud County would like to see the transition extend until this point to help reduce further speeds before entering Forsyth. The second reason is approach density and geometric constraints both rapidly diminish the further east you go from the intersection with the airport.

MDT recommends that both of these speed zones changes be implemented to further increase safety and better help vehicles transition through this unique area.

Staff recommendations

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

An interim 45-mph speed limit beginning approximately at the intersection with Slaughterhouse Creek Road and continuing east to a point approximately 500-feet east of the intersection with Snapper Drive, an approximate distance of 3,900-feet.

An interim 60-mph speed limit beginning approximately 500-feet east of the intersection with Snapper Drive and continuing east to a point approximately 200-feet east of Tillet Field Road, an approximate distance of 1.5-miles.

Commissioner Sansaver stated he had the opportunity to visit with a friend before the meeting and having dealt with Shane Pegram, District Administrator, the data has not been collected conclusively on this agenda item and the next agenda item. They are asking for a temporary speed adjustment. Are you suggesting this is temporary or are you suggesting this should move forward and be the speed limit moving it east of the Senior Citizens Center? Dustin Rouse said what we are bringing forward today will be interim speed studies. We want to take action because we saw the issue here and in coordination with Rosebud County, we believe this is the appropriate mitigation in this area. For this speed study, our recommendation is that the Commission would take action officially and approve an interim study, so at some point we can go back and take a look at it. However, what we're proposing with this speed study really is pretty standard as far as just installing signs to have the normal transitions into and out of a community. What I propose and I'm open to the Commission's recommendations, is the Commission approve this interim recommendation and if locals have concerns or bring up a request in the future we

can go back out and take a look at it. My intent is the Commission approve it and short of getting a future request, we leave the speeds as approved.

Commissioner Sansaver said you are saying that for the next year we will have this interim speed limit but if the local community comes back to the Commission or to the State and requests that it be reduced yet again, how long does it take to collect that data and then apply the data to a recommendation by the staff to the Commission. Are we looking at another two years, another year to see if the interim study works out just fine and then we move it forward to affirming it. Dustin Rouse said typically to collect the data and the crash history and citations to complete the full speed study can take a year because we want to make sure, we're collecting it at the right time. We like to collect it in the summer months so we can get a good picture of the traffic flow in that area. Your second question as to how long does that take once the Commission approves an interim study for it to be in place and for us to take a look at it again – typically we would like to see at least a year. So, if the Commission approves it, we would like to leave it in place for a year to let traffic patterns normalize and not assess it before that time period.

Commissioner Sansaver said what you're saying is this interim study will go on for two years before it becomes law. I added one and one and came up with two. Dustin Rouse said through MCA if the Commission approves an interim speed study, that becomes law. Once these signs are posted that interim approval becomes law. Commissioner Sansaver said but it is still interim. Dustin Rouse said correct. Commissioner Sansaver said then there will be a two-year period before it became law that we would change the speed limit to that after the interim. You will come back and say the interim worked out great and we want to keep it at 45 mph 390 feet past the Senior Center. Dustin Rouse said yes, when we come back it would be to officially remove the interim designation and make it permanent. Commissioner Sansaver said I get asked that and that's why I'm asking for clarification.

Commissioner Frazier said it is my understanding that even though we establish an interim speed zone, it is the legal speed limit, and they can still write speeding tickets. It is interim until we make it permanent when you bring it back to us. So, we will see it again.

Commissioner Sanders said what you're throwing out there is an arbitrary two years and nothing is holding us to that, right? For all three of these interim studies, I would personally like to see us set a timeline that within two years there will be a speed study done. I would prefer that you go back in after one year but no longer than two years. The second agenda item for a speed study does say there will be a comprehensive speed study done. My personal preference is that we establish a two-year time frame if that is reasonable from your perspective to go back in and do speed studies to substantiate these interim speed limits. Dustin Rouse said that is very reasonable.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation, Old US 10 (X-44302) – Forsyth with the addition of a follow-up speed study to be completed within two years. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 8: Speed Limit Recommendation West Towne Street (N-57) – Glendive

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, West Towne Street (N-57) – Glendive, to the Commission. Discussions regarding the speed limits on West Towne Street began in early 2025 at the district level. The original request was received for a speed study in November 2023, however, due to the transition at the investigations position this request was lost in transit. Coordinating with the district in October 2025, this discrepancy was realized and an interim draft was created to meet the immediate needs of the County.

In Dawson County’s original request, they note a desire to conduct a traffic speed study near the intersection with MT 200 and Towne Street. Dawson County highlights that traffic accidents have occurred recently at this intersection and in the vicinity of it and desires a lower speed through this area which they believe will enhance safety on this corridor.

A cursory investigation into the crash history shows that between the intersections with MT 200 and MT 16 there is a crash cluster compared to the rest of the corridor. There is a total of 18 crashes over a 3-year period between these intersections, and the proposed recommendation will encompass this entire crash cluster.

Discussions between the district, investigations and the county lead to the consensus recommendation of a new speed zone between these two intersections. The agreed upon recommendation is for a 40-mph speed zone to be instituted from the existing 45/35-mph transition and continue south until several hundred feet south of the intersection with MT 200, for an approximate total distance of 3,600-feet. The total reduction of this new speed zone would be 5-mph from the existing 45-mph speed zone. This interim speed study will be followed up with a comprehensive speed study to either confirm or modify the recommendations given in this memorandum and will be done in coordination with Dawson County.

Staff recommendations

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

An interim 40-mph speed limit beginning approximately 400-feet west of the intersection with MT 200 and continuing east to a point approximately 900-feet east of the intersection with MT 16, an approximate distance of 3,900-feet.

Commissioner Swartz asked about the crash map. Could you go through what the different colors of the nodes mean, it would be nice to have a legend on there. Dustin Rouse said I'll lean on the traffic folks for the answer. There is a legend on the lower left – the blue is for property damage only with no injuries, fatalities are colored in red, orange is for serious injuries, yellow is for possible injuries.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said this looks like a pretty insignificant change to the travelers. I'm dubious that changing the speed limit from 45 mph to 40 mph does anything here especially on that stretch of town which is pretty wide open and is unlikely to see any kind of change in driver speeds or dynamics without a change in enforcement. So, do we really think this is actually going to do anything? Dustin Rouse said we have multiple studies that indicate if there is a trend in crashes, if we lower the speed through an area, we could potentially see a reduction in crashes. Based on what we saw and the difference between having the 45 mph extend through those intersections versus having a step down to 40 mph as you come into the area, we believe just having that transition to a slower speed to indicate to drivers they are entering a change, the change being the intersection, there certainly could be some benefit to installing this and having a step down as folks enter the community. You're correct, a five-mph reduction is not significant but short of having a full speed study to determine the absolute best approach we believe it is a viable interim solution. With the Commission's approval, we can put this in place and come back and take a look at it and determine if it had an impact or not and either make it permanent or adjust accordingly. So yes, we believe it could have some interim benefit, and we'd like to study the impact of this change.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said you've got some obvious crash cluster data, you've identified an issue which is generally around that intersection. Are we also noting this area and Balder Avenue as a potential for a safety project or programming a safety project in there? Are we coordinating with the traffic safety bureau to see if this generates any level of intersection modification? It seems like to me that is the crux of the issue not necessarily the speed limit. Are we flagging this over the two years as we collect data as a potential area for a safety project? Dustin Rouse said that is a great point. Any time we have a request for a speed study we are coordinating with the District, the local government, and if there are intersections or other issues occurring within the study area, those are things we definitely look at. Just the request typically flags coordination with the district and locals. Brandon is part of our safety program so those are flagged and things we would be looking at including the intersection and intersection evaluations.

Commissioner Frazier said this is an interim speed study and something we can do fairly quickly where the studies take a while so that is why I support this action. Even though it is a slight change in the speed limit, it's worth a try at something we can do. So, I support that effort to try and get something on the ground out there faster because the speed study and other traffic impact studies take time. This is something we can do, and we'll be looking at it again.

Brandon Borges said for a lot of these interims, generally speaking we only bring them around if we agree with the locals. So, 99% of the time it is in concurrence with the locals and MDT. We come together to form a consensus about what the interim should be, so it follows all of our basic engineering and state guidance. Then 95% of these interims tend to be transition changes which when we do a follow-up speed study, 90% of the time it is a confirmation of what we already know. We follow the same standard and practices we've done for several years. We take the data and if it confirms those transitions, we move on. Usually when we do these interims it is under the assumption that the majority of the time nothing is going to change after the study is done and we communicate that to the locals as well. My final point is that any time I find any safety related issues or geometric issues like curves that are not posted at a correct advisory speed or don't have an advisory speed on the curve and we find a crash cluster, all of that gets forwarded to our safety people and our geometrics people. Anything I find immediately goes to them and they investigate further.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation, West Towne Street (N-57) – Glendive. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 9: Speed Limit Recommendation
Sheep Dip Road (X-48027) – Columbus**

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, Sheep Dip Road (X-48027) – Columbus to the Commission. In October of 2025, discussions between the District and Investigations began to determine an appropriate speed zone for Sheep Dip Road. It was determined that instituting a speed zone for Sheep Dip Road (X-48027) on the north side of the Columbus Interchange would be feasible. Currently Sheep Dip Road begins at the interchange and heads northwest for an approximate distance of 4,200-feet. To the south of the interchange the roadway becomes MT 78 and is part of the primary highway system. Considering this route is very short there is limited information able to be collected on it.

Crash data shows only one crash on this route in the last three years, and citation data shows only 3 citations given in the same timeframe. The typical sections of the roadway are 12-foot travel lanes with no shoulder. There are no centerline or shoulder rumble strips. There are no passing zones stripped for this section of roadway. The roadway environment is mix of residential and commercial. Stillwater County Civic Center and Fairgrounds is located along this route and is the main concern of the community and Stillwater County.

Stillwater would like a posted speed limit on Sheep Dip Road to match the speed limit of 35-mph that begins where the state and county boundary exists at the intersection with Gates Road. Currently there is no assigned speed limit as the route has no posted speed limit signs and no documentation to show that there has been in the past. Considering the route is unposted and Stillwater County’s desire to assign a speed limit, we recommend instituting an interim speed limit for this route. MDT recommends an interim 35-mph speed limit for this route considering the geometric constraints, short distance of the route and roadway context.

Staff recommendations

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 850-feet north of the intersection with 8th Avenue and continuing west to a point approximately at the intersection with Gates Road, an approximate distance of 4,200-feet.

Commissioner Sanders said is it worth doing and interim on this since it’s only eight tenths of a mile. Are we going to do a complete speed study on this? What is the plan? Dustin Rouse said as we discussed on the previous items and particularly on this one, if the Commission chose to establish the 35-mph interim recommendation then we will go back and take a look at it and will bring the information back to the Commission that we believe the 35-mph speed limit is appropriate.

Commissioner Aspenlieder moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation, Sheep Dip Road (X-48027) – Columbus. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 10: Certificates of Completion
November and December 2025**

Shane Pegram presented the Certificates of Completion for November and December 2025 to the Commission. Certificates of Completion serve as official

documentation of the Department’s final acceptance of a project. These certificates confirm that the contract has been completed in full compliance with all approved plans, specifications, and special provisions, as authorized by the Transportation Commission.

Upon acceptance of a Certificate of Completion by the Commission, the Department will notify the Contractor and its designated Escrow Agent to authorize the release of bid documents held in Escrow. This acceptance also initiates financial closeout procedures, including preparation of the final voucher for federal reimbursement, reconciliation of state funding, and completion of audit and records retention requirements in accordance with MDT specifications and federal regulations.

Month	Total Contracts	Awarded Amount	Final Amount	Growth	Tied Contracts
Nov 2025	3	\$5,430,325.81	\$5,378,980.20	-0.95%	0
Dec 2025	3	\$2,193,640.34	\$2,171,543.75	-1.01%	0

Staff recommends approval of the Certificates of Completion as presented for November and December 2025 as proposed.

Commissioner Sansaver said he appreciated the new format on Agenda Items 10 & 15 in the presentation book. It is a little better summary. Great work in trying to make this information more digestible quickly. Thanks for the improvement.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Certificates of Completion for November and December 2025. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 11: PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NHPB 90-9(136)509, UPN 9990000 – Little Bighorn R, Crow Agency

Aubrey Yerger presented the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NHPB 90-9-(136)509, UPN 9990000 – Little Bighorn R, Crow Agency to the Commission. I’ll start with a brief overview of the project delivery selection process (PDSP) which is the department’s structured approach for determining the most appropriate delivery method for evaluating transportation projects. The purpose of our PDSP is to provide a systematic method for selecting the best project delivery method based on the specific project, as well as ensure decisions are transparent and based on team consensus. During our PDSP the delivery methods considered include Design-Bid-Build, Design Build, Progressive Design Build, and Construction Manager/General

Contractor (CM/GC). The PDSP team evaluates the appropriateness of each delivery method for the project. The seven criterion listed below are used to determine the appropriateness of each of the four delivery methods. Some key considerations are each of the delivery methods differs in risk allocation, opportunity for innovations, schedule and budget management. The process is not a one-size-fits-all and each project is evaluated individually based on its unique challenges and risks. Our objectives in the PDSP process are to assist staff in making informed recommendations as well as document and justify the recommendations to the Commission and public. Our PDSP ensures a systemic consensus-driven recommendation for the most appropriate delivery method. In short, our PDSP provides a clear documented process that helps us select the most appropriate delivery method for each evaluated project with the information available balancing the seven evaluation criterion. This approach demonstrates to ourselves as well as the Commission and the public that we are making informed transparent decisions.

The Little Bighorn R – Crow Agency project is a bridge replacement project for I-90 Eastbound and Westbound structures over Little Bighorn River within Crow Agency.

The project also includes flood mitigation work as recommended in an alternatives analysis from I-90 Flooding – Crow Agency project (UPN 9766000). The I-90 Flooding – Crow Agency project was closed-out, and the scope was absorbed into this project. The scope identified in the alternatives analysis is to convey water from the interchange with MT-212, just south of the structures.

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

Selection Criteria	Delivery Method			
	DBB	DB	PDB	CM/GC
Criterion 1: Cost Impacts	5	4	2	1
Criterion 2: Schedule Impacts	2	10	10	4
Criterion 3: Opportunity to Manage Risk	8	6	8	8
Criterion 4: Complexity of Design and Construction Phasing	3	3	3	3
Criterion 5: Opportunity for Innovation	2	5	5	3
Criterion 6: Complexity of Coordination	10	8	8	8
Criterion 7: Resource Availability	2	5	2	1
Total Score	32	41	38	28

Discussions during the PDSP are summarized as follows: Design Build offers a competitive bid solicitation which may drive costs lower than our PDB or CM/GC

options with a robust preliminary project development executed prior to solicitation that could be used for Design Build such that coordination with the Railroad can occur during this preliminary project development mitigating schedule and stakeholder coordination risks associated with the Railroad, thus providing the opportunity to meet the scheduled obligation of construction funds in FY 2028. Design Build would provide the innovations of up to three firms from the Technical Proposal and MDT has the opportunity to utilize any innovations from any of the firms. Additionally, MDT has sufficient resources to manage a Design Build project over the other methods. Therefore, staff identified Design Build as the most appropriate delivery method for this project with the key elements discussed in the recommendation memo. Please note that we will bring staff recommendations for the project stipend to the Commission at a later meeting once preliminary project development has progressed and we are better suited to make these recommendations to the Commission. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the PDSP committee and staff that Design Build be approved as the most appropriate delivery method for the Little Big Horn River Crow Agency project.

Staff recommendations

As a result of this Project Delivery Selection Process, it is the recommendation of the PDSP Committee that Design-Build be approved as the most appropriate delivery method for the Little Bighorn R – Crow Agency project.

Commissioner Sanders said that in the resource availability there are concerns about current resources within the Consultant Design Bureau and the other three. Is there a staffing shortage and do the other three take significantly more effort than Design Build? Aubrey Yerger said although Alternative Contracting is within Consultant Design, I am not the Bureau Chief, however it is my understanding that they are fairly full right now and we did take staff resources across MDT as a whole into consideration in regards to the other delivery methods. Ryan Dahlke is heavily involved in the bridge resource realm. Ryan Dahlke said the other methods of Design-Bid-Build, Progressive Design Build, and CM/GC take a lot more internal staff effort. Even in Consultant Design, like traditional Consultant Design Bid Build team, it puts a load on them as well. So, the Design Build project itself does more to limit our involvement to reviews versus heavy involvement throughout.

Commissioner Sanders said so you're adequately staffed it is just that Design Build takes a lot less involvement. Ryan Dahlke said we are not adequately staffed. Staffing steps away from this agenda item. Our Bridge Team is significantly understaffed. We have 65 FTEs in that bureau and there are 27 vacancies. It's been long term. We're doing everything we can to recruit and retain but we have significant shortages in the Bridge Bureau which really gives us a challenge on how we can even review projects that are led by consultants because we still, as an owner, need to ensure some quality

and expectation long term. It's a significant challenge and it has been for a few years.

Deputy Director Flynn said it is a concern for me. To have the Bridge Bureau understaffed seems like a significant issue. Ryan Dahlke said we have a bunch of different strategies, Alternative Contracting Consultants – we're utilizing consultants to check other consultant's work. We're doing everything we can as an agency to advance the Bridge Program, not only with projects but advance the Bridge Program as far as staffing to try to build it up again. Deputy Director Flynn said in addition to that this concern is actually garnering attention from the Governor's office as well. The Governor's Budget Office is heavily engaged in trying to find resources for us to try and deal with this issue. At the crux of the matter is nationally there is a shortage of structural engineers that we need to fill these spots. We're competing against firms that can pay significantly more money if they can find people at all. It's significant for a state to try and pick up some of these resources. It is first and foremost in our mind and we're scratching our heads trying to figure it out.

Commissioner Frazier said I have questions on the risk in the ratings. Two of the things I see in this project is dealing with the railroad and dealing with the Tribal government, county government and the local governments. There is a lot of risk for a Design Build firm to go in especially dealing with the railroad. Somehow, I don't see that as being a lower cost item. If I was a consultant and had to go deal with the railroad, I would put a lot of contingency into dealing with the railroad because they are very difficult. Usually, MDT likes to say we're going to deal with that and that also puts risk on a consultant because you've got one guy at MDT and they will be continually waiting on him to go through the railroad. How is that going to be addressed with the Design Build? Aubrey Yerger said we do have a pretty solid plan for a very robust phase one. Part of the challenge with this project was a previous flooding project has been rolled into this, that did affect the railroad. So, rolling in that project will benefit the railroad which we see as a plus in communicating and coordinating with the railroad. Ryan Dahlke said additionally to explain that, the risk item on Criterion Three is why Design Build scored lower because the risk with the railroad is the bottom line. The Tribal coordination won't be quite as difficult because it is on an Interstate corridor but of course there is still going to be involvement with the Tribe.

What we plan on doing with this project in particular is a more robust phase one regarding coordination with the railroad. There is a benefit for the railroad, and our railroad team really feels like we have some real potential to streamline coordination and get concurrence because of the benefits that it gives the railroad. So, we're going to attempt to mitigate a lot of the risk through the first 12 months of the project in phase one to try to address some of the risk you're talking about. Commissioner Frazier said my frustrations in dealing with the railroad in the past is about every eight months they had a new person I was dealing with.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said in looking at these last couple of PDSP processes, it looks like from our perspective the shine has officially worn off the CM/GC process. They all score at the bottom which I'm sure MCA is high fiving each other about but now the new shiny object is Progressive Design Build. Although these two projects did not land in the Progressive Design Build, it looks like we're now moving away from the CM/GC process and Progressive Design Build is the new shiny object that we're going to try out. Can someone briefly speak to that?

Aubrey Yerger said I think the biggest message that I see is that we really want to keep all of these delivery methods in our toolbox. In my opinion, where we could really see a CM/GC project shine is where project development has proceeded forward to a point where Progressive Design Build wouldn't make sense for the project, but we have identified a challenge where we need that contractor involvement. So, I do foresee future use of CM/GC but again fitting the best project to the best delivery method is where that delivery method would shine the future.

Commissioner Frazier asked how you see Progressive Design Build fitting in. Aubrey Yerger said Progressive Design Build fits really well into a project where there is little to no project development and we would like that contractor involvement, projects like the Nine Pipes Project or DARR, those current Progressive Design Builds. The really nice thing about Progress Design Build is all of our consultants and contracts are on a singular team and that is really beneficial to MDT in the projects and the traveling public in general.

Commissioner Aspenlieder moved to approve the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NHPB 90-9(136)509, UPN 9990000 – Little Bihorn R, Crown Agency. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 12: PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process –
NHPB 94-1(89)51, UPN 9991000 – Bighorn River, 1M
W Bighorn**

Aubrey Yerger presented the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NHPB 94-1(89)51, UPN 9991000 – Bighorn River, 1M W Bighorn to the Commission. The Bighorn River – 1M W Bighorn project is a bridge rehabilitation/replacement project for I-94 structures over Bighorn River near Bighorn. Work will include replacement of the narrow and scour susceptible I-94 eastbound structure and rehabilitation of the westbound structure. Similar to 9990000 Little Big Horn River – Crow Agency, MDT went through a PDSP for Big Horn River 1M W of Bighorn.

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.

Selection Criteria	Delivery Method			
	DBB	DB	PDB	CM/GC
Criterion 1: Cost Impacts	5	5	2	1
Criterion 2: Schedule Impacts	4	10	10	6
Criterion 3: Opportunity to Manage Risk	4	5	4	4
Criterion 4: Complexity of Design and Construction Phasing	3	3	3	3
Criterion 5: Opportunity for Innovation	2	4	3	2
Criterion 6: Complexity of Coordination	3	3	3	3
Criterion 7: Resource Availability	2	5	2	1
Total Score	23	35	27	20

Design Build offers a competitive bid solicitation which drives costs lower than PDB and CM/GC. Design Build is equal to Design-Bid-Build in this project since there is low anticipated risk. Design Build would provide the opportunity to meet the scheduled obligation of construction funds in FY 2028 as well as provide the innovations for up to three firms from the Technical Proposals. As similar to the previous agenda item, MDT has sufficient resources to manage the Design Build project over the other methods. Therefore, staff identifies Design Build as the most appropriate delivery method for this project with the key elements discussed in the recommendation memo. Please note that we will bring staff recommendations for the project split and stipend to the Commission at a later meeting once preliminary project development has progressed and we are better suited to make these recommendations to the Commission.

Staff recommendations

As a result of this Project Delivery Selection Process, it is the recommendation of the PDSP Committee that Design-Build be approved as the most appropriate delivery method for the Bighorn River – 1M W Bighorn project.

Commissioner Frazier asked how far apart this bridge is from the other one and would you be looking at tying the two or are they far enough apart and big enough that they would remain separate. Aubrey Yerger said both of these projects are estimated at about \$20 million apiece and therefore tying them would be challenging on the fiscal side from the contractor perspective in that same federal fiscal year. Ryan Dahlke it would be a very large Design Build contract, and they are on different corridors – I-94 south of Billings is down by Crow Agency and this one is quite a

ways east of Billings on I-90 so they are quite separated. Additionally, all the risk we've talked about on the Crow Agency project we don't want that to drag down to this one.

Commissioner Aspenlieder moved to approve the PDSP – Project Delivery Selection Process – NHPB 94-1(89)51, UPN 9991000 – Bighorn River, 1M W Bighorn. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 13: TranPlanMT Public Involvement & Stakeholder Survey Results

Doug McBroom presented the TranPlanMT Public Involvement & Stakeholder Survey Results to the Commission. This is a survey that we do every two years. It is a longitudinal survey; that's a fancy way of saying we ask the same questions every time so that we can get trends and understand those trends over time. Here to present this survey is the person who ran the project, Lauren Eichenfels.

Thank you for your time. Lauren Eichenfels gave a slide presentation of the results of the 2023 TranPlanMT Public Involvement and Stakeholder Survey.

TranPlanMT is Montana's federally mandated long-range statewide transportation plan. This plan establishes policies in the following 6 areas for the 20-year planning horizon.

- Safety
- System Preservation and Maintenance
- Mobility and Economic Vitality
- Accessibility and Connectivity
- Environmental Stewardship
- Business Operations and Management

These policy areas reflect input from the public and other transportation stakeholders.

The purpose of the TranPlanMT Public Involvement and Stakeholder biennial surveys is to examine Montanans' perceptions of the current condition of the transportation systems, views about possible actions that could improve the transportation system in Montana, and opinions about MDT quality of service to its customers.

These surveys support this continuous and ongoing planning process.

Commissioner Sansaver asked about debris on the roadway. Is that dead animals, garbage, etc.? Lauren Eichenfels said we give some introduction to the question, and I don't believe roadkill is an element in the question, but it could be assumed that way. I think it tends to be refuse, construction debris, things that if you're driving down the highway and you encounter a tire in the middle of the road or something like that. Commissioner Sansaver said it would be more like hay being hauled.

Commissioner Sanders said do we concur that District One has a significantly higher problem with roadway conditions. The survey shows conditions serious over 25%. Doug McBroom said it's the number of lane miles the Missoula District has along with the amount of traffic and also Missoula just has an odd freeze thaw cycle that tends to cause some early damage to roadways as well. It stays in that 30-degree range, and you get more freeze thaw cycles in that area than in some other areas. All that combined and the volume of traffic we see there, we agree with that assessment. Commissioner Frazier said coupled with that the Kalispell area the aggregate available in Kalispell is softer than you find in the rest of the state. It is softer rock and more freeze thaw cycles that cause more potholes.

Lauren said the survey found that Maintaining Roadway Pavement Conditions was the number one priority across four districts. In 2025 the Butte District, District Two differed from the other four districts by ranking Wildlife Crossings and Barriers and as their number one priority action. Wildlife Crossings and Barriers has been on the radar for the Butte District for a while, it was just unique that it happened to rise above Road Pavement Conditions and maintaining them. We'll see if there is a trend there the next time we do the survey. We found it unique because in the past we've had Maintaining Road Pavement Conditions as the top for all districts.

Lauren said regarding funding, we asked respondents to rank if funding was to decrease where should we be pulling from to address the reduced funding. The answers have been consistently ranked for at least the last few surveys – bicycle pathways remains the first choice where funding should be reduced if it was necessitated. Pedestrian Walkways is second, Local Transit Buses is third and then Rest Areas. Maintenance has always been the last area people select to pull funding from, which is no surprise since people recognize the need for maintenance. That is consistent between stakeholders and the public

Commissioner Sansaver said regarding local transit buses, what is the involvement there. Is that the pullouts or side street parking or the actual physical vehicle? Lauren Eichenfels said for the purposes of this question we don't get as granular as whether it's the service or the infrastructure supporting the local transit. I think in terms of how people select that it would be whatever it means to them. If you live in Missoula, you may have a more robust local transit system than in District 4. So, this one is open to some interpretation. That is a good question.

Lauren said we asked for feedback as to how MDT is doing in terms of delivering customer service and performance. There are several areas that we provide and this one focuses on Overall Quality of Service. We focus on this because at the end of the day this is the feedback we can relate to on how MDT is doing in terms of how we're serving the public and our customers. This includes responsiveness to customer ideas and concerns, sensitivity to the environment, convenience of travel through work zones, public notification about construction projects and highway maintenance and repair with a grade of A or B. We compared 2019, 2021, 2023, and 2025 data. Our goal is a 50% A or B response rate. In 2021 we had a dip below the 50% threshold, and we attribute that to a transition within bicycle and pedestrian stakeholder group as well as COVID but in all other years we maintained the 50% minimum.

Lauren said responsiveness to ideas and concerns has historically remained pretty low and has been the lowest service category with the lowest percentage of A or B grades from the public for all five districts. We've had some discussions in the past about service area and making adjustments but at this time we haven't. If I were to assess why that has consistently ranked low, I would say it is potentially the interpretation of what responsiveness to ideas and concerns means. We know from working with the public we all have different interpretations of what that means.

Commissioner Sansaver asked who does that fall on. Does that fall on the state staff, the Commission, the districts or all of them? Lauren said that related directly to MDT – anyone in this room, anyone doing work on behalf of MDT, we all have a responsibility to strive to deliver that. That is what is challenging, having the public interpretation and everyone having their own interpretation of what that level of responsiveness needs to be. Do we acknowledge a comment and say thank you for engaging with the public involvement process or are they expecting to actually see a comment come to life and be factored into decisions. That contributes to where people have a lesser level of satisfaction.

Commissioner Sansaver said I notice in District 3 & 4 there was a megaphone which illustrated that they are not hearing or getting enough information in those districts. Is that part of this responsiveness? Lauren said going back to the priority actions that is what they see as the second priority. For Districts 3 & 4 keeping the public informed was a priority action and not necessarily identified as a problem but an item the respondents found to be very important. Commissioner Sansaver said if I were grading that it would be part of the responsiveness problem – we're not doing a good enough job in Districts 3 and 4 of getting the information out to the different communities. That goes back to the District Administrators and the District Commissioners. Lauren said that could potentially be if there's enough data that supports a trend in that direction. The District 3 Administrator and I spoke a little bit about this the last time I presented the survey. Sometimes there can be a tough year when we get into the breakdown by district. I don't like to use an isolated incident

like that; I like to see data. It depends on who is engaged and the people who are going to complete the survey are probably the ones that have something they would like to make known that maybe is not all that positive. I think there is value in monitoring those very closely which we do, but I think seeing some trends with the public that really demonstrates where we may have a problem.

Commissioner Sansaver asked the District Administrator what he thought about that. District 4 is so spread out with small communities and I don't know if all the County Commissioners are on the same page with information. District 3 includes Helena and Great Falls and is more of a combined district. Do you feel you get information out to everybody out there? Jim Wingerter said yes, I do, I think we respond to those responses that come into our office as best we can. Some are positive and most are challenging to say the least if we have a complicated urban project that is creating changes to the traveling public. We do respond to those responses, and we are making changes as we can and continue the mobility of the traveling public. I'm very comfortable and feel very good about how we respond and react to the comments that come in. Commissioner Sansaver said I will ask the same question to Shane.

Deputy Director Larry Flynn said obviously there is an overlap here, but I would make a distinction between the previous slide where the public would like to be more informed. To me that is the proactive nature of a project in their community and what we feel the impact is going to be. Where this one is more, I've got a great idea on what we can do differently. Those are a lot more challenging to manage. A lot of the ideas would be longer term in nature and often times we're in the unfortunate position to say no to other people's great ideas. Especially as we feel the pressure on our funding and our resource availability we just simply can't react to everything that is going on. To your point about who is accountable, when you look at this it is a cross-off by districts. This isn't an isolated theme; this is department wide and that rests on all of our shoulders for sure and is something we will take seriously.

Lauren Eichenfels said some good news for 2025 is we had a number of system components rise including the overall system in terms of satisfaction for the Great Falls District. The percentage of A or B grades across all of the service and performance components for District 3 were at or above the 50% threshold. Jim Wingerter said after the 2023 presentation I was concerned about our district. After discussing it with the staff, I feel a lot of this goes to our staff and customer service outreaches and our PI group internally that is handling our public information for our projects. Based on the customer service outreaches and the support of our PI firm and others here in MDT headquarters, I'm really satisfied to see the numbers this year. Thanks to the folks in the Helena office and the district office who have made a great effort to listen to our folks and respond to them and do what we can.

Commissioner Sansaver said I was one of those guys in 2023 complaining about the road to Chinook. For the record that road is really nice. Lauren Eichenfels said any time we have something positive to highlight in improving public perception and the

feedback we receive overall from these surveys.

Commissioner Frazier said thank you for presenting the survey and 30 years' worth of data. This gives us some feedback on what to prioritize. Lauren said we are focusing on the most current three biennium in terms of this presentation, but we have survey data on our website that goes all the way back to 2003. We began the survey in 1994. I will make sure the Commission receives a copy of the full presentation broken down by district following this meeting.

Informational Item only.

Agenda Item 14: Directors Discussion

Deputy Director Larry Flynn

Realignment of MDT

The department is moving forward nicely with our realignment of our services.

Reauthorization

An item of concern is our on-going analysis of available funding sources both at the federal and state level. The Director and Mr. Stapley are both in D.C. this week meeting with our Congressional delegation and engaging with other highway professionals around the nation to address the upcoming Reauthorization of our highway bill. We expect to see some good things from there.

There's a couple of things that raise concern as well. One of the issues nationally is to start diverting highway funds directly to local governments. We feel like that could be a little bit damaging to our ability to manage a stateside transportation system if we have a smaller pot of funding to work with and local communities are selecting projects outside of the state system. We're watching it pretty carefully and will keep you updated on that.

On the state side of funding. Our State Special Revenue Account is our matching source for the federal funds, and it is facing some intense pressure as well. We're working closely with our executive and legislative partners as well as industry folks to try to identify a solution set as we come into the 2027 Session.

Commission Engagement Plan

Doug McBroom said in December you requested what everyone knows about complex org is that communication is difficult at times and it's hard to get around

people. We have successfully launched our Commissioner Engagement Plan. When you are in school you always figured out a “two-for” where you wrote a paper for more than one class. The Commissioner Engagement Plan happens to be a “two-for” – not only is it designed to give you the information you requested on things like project development delivery updates, system impact issues, meeting that we attend, but it also forces our staff to communicate better with each other. That’s the “two-for”. I think the value is both of these. The first one was sent out yesterday to all the DA’s and is designed for the DA’s to basically visit with you and have a consistent message of what you had requested to hear. We’re going to do this monthly but whatever your pace and meetings with your DA’s will be then we will accommodate that. So, if you meet with your DAs quarterly, you’ll have three of these to talk with you, if you meet with them bi-monthly they will have two of these.

One example of what I think is a success is I got an email on Tuesday from Chairman Frazier asking about an update on a specific systems impact project which happens to be in District One. Something that staff noticed is that project is something that could bubble up to you.

Emergency Bridge Projects Update

Dustin Rouse said I-90 Barrick Canyon Bridge Report. Battle Ridge is out there actively removing the deck, and we did an advanced procurement of the beams, so they are being fabricated as we speak. We anticipate those will be delivered to site starting March 5th and Battle Ridge believes they are on schedule to be complete by the end of March.

The Libby Repair, Secondary 482 we’re replacing the bridge on Farm-to-Market Road. We’re targeting the June 25th Letting to Let that contract. Similar to what we did for the Bozeman structure we are looking at doing advanced procurement of the bridge beams and the rocker bearings so we can deliver them to whatever contractor is selected at that Letting. We plan on giving the contractor a Notice to Proceed for early July. That’s our target and we believe we’re still on track for end of 2026 completion for the new bridge. To give you an idea of scale, the existing bridge was a two-span, the channel actually moved and took out the roadway. The bridge is still there but it has a lot of other issues. So, we’re going to remove that structure and then span where the channel has migrated to. We’re installing a three-span structure to replace that bridge. That is what we’re designing and working on now.

Commissioner Frazier said I was informed one time that there were 52 bridges that were affected by the flooding. Have we looked at them all? Doug McBroom said my understanding is all the publically open structures, our bridge inspectors have been out inspecting all of those and have provided all that information to the respective bridge owners and repairs have been completed. Our inspectors were very busy getting that work done.

**Agenda Item 15: Change Orders
November & December 2025**

Shane Pegram presented the Change Orders for November and December 2025 to the Commission. These reports are informational only and do not require any action by the Commission.

Month	Total Contracts	Total Change Orders	Total
November 2025	9	15	\$383,444.55
December 2025	13	16	\$(19,175.59)
Sum Total:			\$364,268.96

Agenda Item 16: Letting Lists

Ryan Dahlke presented the Letting List for your information. Ryan said Mr. Rouse already covered the Secondary 482 repair, so I don't need to address that. This item is informational only. Commissioner Frazier said it is looks like we're having some larger lettings in July. We used to have the larger ones in January and February.

Next Commission Meetings

The next Commission Conference Calls were scheduled for March 10, 2026, March 31, 2026, and April 21, 2026.

The next Commission Meeting was scheduled for April 30, 2026.

Commissioner Sansaver thanked Aubrey Yerger and Shane Pegram for sitting in. You both did a great job. I know it's not easy to sit in.

Meeting Adjourned

Commissioner Loran Frazier, Chairman
Montana Transportation Commission

Chris Dorrington, Director
Montana Department of Transportation

Jess Bousliman, Secretary
Montana Transportation Commission