

Montana Transportation Commission

June 26, 2025 Meeting
Residence Inn Missoula Downtown
125 N Pattee Street
Missoula, Montana

IN ATTENDANCE

Loren Frazier, Transportation Commission Chair (District 3)
Kody Swartz, Transportation Commissioner (District 1)
Shane Sanders, Transportation Commissioner (District 2)
Noel Sansaver, Transportation Commissioner (District 4, on line)
Scott Aspenlieder, Transportation Commissioner (District 5, on line)
Chris Dorrington, Director, MDT
Jess Bousliman, Commission Secretary
Dustin Rouse, Chief Engineer, MDT
Valerie Balukas, Chief Legal, MDT
Rob Stapley, Planning Administrator, MDT
Doug McBroom, Statewide Planning and Modal Operations Administrator, MDT
Bob Vosen, District 1, MDT
Gino Liva, District 2, MDT
Jim Wingerter, District 3, MDT
Shane Mintz, District 4, MDT
Mike Taylor, District 5, MDT
Dave Gates, Construction Engineer, MDT
Ryan Dahlke, Preconstruction Engineer, MDT
Paul Johnson, MDT (on line)
Lucia Olivera, FHWA (on line)
Brenden Borges, MDT (on line)
Mitch Buthod, MDT (on line)
Joan Redeen, MDT (on line)
Charlie Severs (on line)
Shawn Baker (on line)

Please note: Minutes are available for review on the commission's website at https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/trans_comm/meetings.aspx. Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request. For additional information, please contact transportation secretary Jess Bousliman at (406) 444-6201, jbousliman@mt.gov or visit the commission's website at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/trans_comm/meetings.aspx. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592 or call the Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request.

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.

Commissioner Aspenlieder noted that we, in District 5, lost an advocate for transportation, for MDT, and for the people of eastern Montana when Commissioner Ostlund tragically died last week. Many of the MDT staff knew Commissioner John Ostlund, some of them probably loved him and some not. John was a staunch advocate for rural Montana and worked tirelessly in advancing transportation issues, getting product to market and working on behalf of the people of Yellowstone County in all facets but I'll focus on transportation issues. He was a former County Road Superintendent for decades before he became a County Commissioner. Our Billings Bypass was really his brainchild and came from a lot of work of Commissioner Ostlund. Now as we're coming to the cutting of the ribbon to open that road up, that happened in part because of Commissioner Ostlund's vision for Billings and for improving the lives of the folks who live in our area. As we move forward with that project in particular, I encourage us to take a look at ways to incorporate John's vision into that and look for an opportunity to properly recognize John as we formally open that facility up in the coming months. I know Director

Dorrington and District Administrator Taylor were very knowledgeable about John and the work he did. I want to take time to recognize John and send condolences from the MDT family to John and his family for all the decisions of 50 plus years of public service that he put into Yellowstone County the people of Eastern Montana.

Commissioner Frazier thanked him and said I first met Commissioner Ostlund when I was working on Shiloh Road for MDT. He was newly elected as a Commissioner 20 some years ago. In my opinion, I dealt with him then as a consultant on some other issues in Yellowstone County and he was an outstanding Commissioner and he will be greatly missed. I offer my condolences to his family and to the people of Yellowstone County who lost a good one.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the Commission Meetings of March 25, 2025, April 15, 2025, April 24, 2025, and May 6, 2025 were presented for approval.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the minutes for the Commission Meetings of March 25, 2025, April 15, 2025, April 24, 2025, and May 6, 2025. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 1: Construction Project on State Highway System Love's Travel Stop – Laurel

Rob Stapley presented the Construction Project on State Highway System – Love's Travel Stop, Laurel 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.

Laurel Love's Travel Stop is proposing modifications to 19th Avenue West (X-15208) near Laurel to address traffic generated by their new gas station and convenience store. Proposed improvements include the installation of a new right-turn lane (on 19th Avenue West) near the West Laurel Interchange. MDT headquarters and Billings District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. Love's Travel Stop 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:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve this modification to 19th Avenue West pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Construction Project on State Highway System – Love's Travel Stop, Laurel. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 2: Construction Project on State Highway System Kalispell North Town Center, Kalispell

Rob Stapley presented the Construction Project on State Highway System – Kalispell North Town Center 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.

The Stillwater Corporation is proposing modifications to US-93 (N-5) in Kalispell to address traffic generated by their new development (the Kalispell North Town Center). Proposed improvements include additional turning lanes, bike/ped features, ADA upgrades, and a new traffic signal at the entrance to their facility near Nob Hill Loop. MDT headquarters and Missoula District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. The Stillwater Corporation 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 new turn lanes (on US-93). The City of Kalispell will assume all maintenance and operational responsibilities associated with bike/ped features and ADA upgrades.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve these modifications to US-93 pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Construction Project on State Highway System – Kalispell North Town Center. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: Construction Project on State Highway System Eagle Valley Ranch Subdivision – Kalispell

Rob Stapley presented the Construction Project on State Highway System – Eagle Valley Ranch Subdivision, 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 coordination on public and private infrastructure improvement projects that impact MDT routes.

Kalispell Spartan Holdings LLC is proposing modifications to US-93 (N-5) in Kalispell to address traffic generated by their new development (Eagle Valley Ranch Subdivision – Phase 4). Proposed improvements include additional turning lanes, bike/ped features, ADA upgrades, and a limited $\frac{3}{4}$ turn approach (with raised median) at the entrance to their development near Eagle Valley Drive. MDT headquarters and Missoula District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. Spartan Holdings 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 new turn lanes (on US-93). The City of Kalispell will assume all maintenance and operational responsibilities associated with bike/ped features and ADA upgrades.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve these modifications to US-93 pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Construction Project on State Highway System – Eagle Valley Ranch Subdivision, Kalispell. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 4: Construction Project on State Highway System – Contract Labor
Park Street Crosswalks, Livingston**

Rob Stapley presented the Construction Project on State Highway System – Park Street Crosswalks, Livingston 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.

The City of Livingston is proposing modifications to Park Street (N-11) 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 rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) at crosswalks near Main Street and Geyser Street. MDT headquarters and Butte District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. The City of Livingston 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 Livingston will assume all maintenance and operational responsibilities associated with the proposed improvements.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve these modifications to Park Street and requests that the Commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer the contract for this project to the City of Livingston pending completion of applicable state and local design review and approval processes.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Construction Project on State Highway System – Park Street Crosswalks, Livingston. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 5: Surface Transportation Program – Urban Main Street, Butte

Rob Stapley presented the Surface Transportation Program, Urban – Main Street, Butte to the Commission. The Surface Transportation Program Urban (STPU) provides funding for improvements on the Urban Highway System in Montana's 20 urban areas. STPU allocation amounts are based on a per capita distribution and are recalculated after each decennial census. Priorities for the use of STPU funds are established via local planning processes with final approval by the Transportation Commission.

At this time, MDT is requesting the addition of the following project to the STPU program:

Main Street - Butte: This project is located within the Butte Urban Area on Main Street (U-1801). The project scope includes reconstruction work (without added capacity), curb and gutter, sidewalks and ADA upgrades on Main Street from Daly Street to Mullin Street. The estimated total cost for all phases is \$5,602,000 including indirect costs and inflation. Butte's annual STPU Allocation is \$596,804 with an anticipated letting year FFY 2029, balance of approximately \$7,383,000.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of this STPU project to the highway program.

Commissioner Sansaver asked the distance of the work on Main Street. Rob Stapley said it appears to be about two miles.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Surface Transportation Program, Urban – Main Street, Butte. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 6: Surface Transportation Program – Urban Grand Avenue, Billings

Rob Stapley presented the Surface Transportation Program, Urban – a Grand Avenue, Billings to the Commission. The Surface Transportation Program Urban (STPU) provides funding for improvements on the Urban Highway System in Montana's 20 urban areas. STPU allocation amounts are based on a per capita distribution and are recalculated after each decennial census. Priorities for the use of STPU funds are established via local planning processes with final approval by the Transportation Commission.

At this time, MDT is requesting the addition of the following project to the STPU program:

Grand Avenue - Billings: This project is located within the Billings Urban Area on Grand Avenue (U-1039). The project scope includes reconstruction of the roadway (to a 3 lane facility), stormwater improvements, curb and gutter, sidewalks, a shared use path, new street lights, ADA upgrades, and intersection improvements on Grand Avenue from 41st Street West to 62nd Street West. The City of Billings has requested Local Agency Guideline (LAG) certification to develop and construct this project. The estimated total cost for all phases is \$25,534,000 including indirect costs and inflation. The annual STPU Allocation for Billings is \$2,551,754 with an anticipated letting year FFY 2028 balance of approximately \$23,096,431. The remainder of

project costs will be funded with Billings CMAQ dollars up to a capped amount of \$3,426,000.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of this project to the highway program and requests that the Commission delegate its authority to let, award, and administer the contract for this project to the City of Billings – in accordance with MDT’s Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) process for project delivery.

Commissioner Frazier said we’re delegating authority to let, award, and administer the project, what about design? Rob Stapley said design should have been listed as well. The City of Billings concurred.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Surface Transportation Program, Urban – Grand Avenue, Billings with the amendment of including design under the delegation of authority. Commissioner Aspenlieder seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 7: Interstate Maintenance Program
Additions to IM Program (2 New Projects)**

Rob Stapley presented the Interstate Maintenance Program – Additions to IM Program (2 New Projects) to the Commission. The Interstate Maintenance (IM) Program finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct routes on the Interstate System. Montana’s Transportation Commission allocates IM funds to MDT Districts based on system performance.

At this time, MDT is proposing to add two new projects to the IM program – one in District 1 and one in District 2. The projects on the attached list meet the criteria set forth for IM-funded projects. If approved, it would be MDT’s intention to let these projects individually. The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$10,529,260 (\$9,606,900 federal + \$922,360 state match) with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the Interstate Maintenance (IM) Program.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of these IM projects to the highway program.

Commissioner Frazier asked about the culvert replacement near Clancy. Is it the large box near Prickly Pear Creek? We just did some work on the culverts in that area and I’m curious if it’s the same one. Rob Stapley said it’s Prickly Pear Creek at mile marker 179.8 and is just to fill some pot holes and is not a huge undertaking. Commissioner Frazier asked if there were any other questions on the project. If not I’ll call the question.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Interstate Maintenance Program, - Additions to IM Program (2 New Projects). Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 8: National Highway System Program
Additions to NH Program
(7 New Projects)**

Rob Stapley presented the National Highway System Program – Additions to NH Program (7 New Projects) 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 seven new projects to the NH program – two in District 1, two in District 3, two in District 4, and one in District 5. The projects on the attached list meet the criteria set forth for NH-funded projects. If approved, it would be MDT’s intention to let these projects individually.

The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$30,979,364 (\$26,821,943 federal + \$4,157,421 state match) with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the National Highway System (NH) Program.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of these NH projects to the highway program.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the National Highway System Program – Additions to NH Program (7 New Projects). Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Elected Officials

Commissioner Frazier asked if there were any elected official on line that wished to comment at this time. No comment was given.

**Agenda Item 9: Primary System Program
Additions to STPP Program
(10 New Projects)**

Rob Stapley presented the Primary System Program – Additions to STPP Program (10 New Projects) to the Commission. The Surface Transportation Program – Primary (STPP) finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct routes on the state’s Primary Highway System. Montana’s Transportation Commission allocates STPP funds to MDT Districts based on system performance.

At this time, MDT is proposing to add ten new projects to the STPP program – two in District 1, one in District 2, six in District 4, and one in District 5. The projects on the attached list meet the criteria set forth for STPP-funded projects. If approved, it would be MDT’s intention to let these projects individually.

The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$48,039,609 (\$42,000,954 federal + \$6,038,655 state match) with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the Surface Transportation Program – Primary (STPP).

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of these STPP projects to the highway program.

Commissioner Frazier asked if the Alder minor rehab would include slope flattening or some safety improvements on that stretch. Geno Liva said he would have to check into that. Commissioner Frazier said I'm familiar with that stretch of road and I don't think it has changed since 1975. Gino Liva said it will include rehab and replacement along that corridor. The area has four timber structures that are in good condition right now so we don't need those replaced but the remainder will have typical rehab work. Commissioner Frazier asked if it had anything to do with some of the steep slopes. Gino Liva said typically there may be some but will be vetted throughout the entire process.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Primary System Program – Additions to STPP Program (10 New Projects). Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 10: Secondary Roads Program Additions to STPS Program (4 New Projects)

Rob Stapley presented the Secondary Roads Program – Additions to STPS Program (4 New Projects) to the Commission. The Surface Transportation Program – Secondary (STPS) finances highway projects on the state-designated Secondary Highway System. Secondary Roads are those routes that have been selected by the Montana Transportation Commission to be placed on the Secondary Highway System. Secondary Roads Program funding is distributed by formula and is utilized to resurface, rehabilitate and reconstruct roadways and bridges on the Secondary System. Capital construction priorities are established by the Counties and pavement preservation projects are selected by MDT (per the guidance in MCA 60-3-206).

At this time, MDT is proposing to add four new projects to the STPS program – one in District 1, one in District 2, and two in District 4. The projects on the attached list meet the criteria set forth for STPS-funded projects. If approved, it would be MDT's intention to let these projects individually.

The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$8,490,449 (\$7,351,037 federal + \$1,139,412 state match) with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the Secondary Roads (STPS) Program.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of these STPS projects to the highway program.

Commissioner Sansaver moved to approve the Secondary Roads Program – Additions to STPS Program (4 New Projects). Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 11: Urban Pavement Preservation Program Additions to UPP Program (2 New Projects)

Rob Stapley presented the Urban Pavement Preservation Program – Additions to UPP Program (2 New Projects) to the Commission. The Urban Pavement Preservation (UPP) program provides funding for pavement preservation work on

urban routes throughout the state. MDT Districts work with local governments to advance nominations that align with system needs as identified by local pavement management systems.

At this time, the Billings District is requesting Commission approval for two Urban Pavement Preservation projects in Billings. The projects on the attached page meet the criteria set forth for UPP-funded projects.

The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$2,345,479 (\$1,981,930 federal + \$363,549 state match) with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the Urban Pavement Preservation (UPP) program.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of these UPP projects to the highway program.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Urban Pavement Preservation Program – Additions to UPP Program (2 New Projects). Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 12: Highway Safety Improvement Program
Additions to HSIP Program
(9 New Projects)**

Rob Stapley presented the Highway Safety Improvement Program – Additions to HSIP Program (9 New Projects) to the Commission. The Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) Program makes federal funding available to states to assist with the implementation of a data-driven and strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads. In Montana, the primary focus of the HSIP program involves identifying locations with crash trends (where feasible countermeasures exist) and prioritizing work according to benefit/cost ratios.

At this time, MDT is proposing to add nine new projects to the HSIP program – five in District 1, one in District 2, and three in District 5. The projects on the attached list meet the criteria set forth for HSIP-funded projects. If approved, it would be MDT's intention to let these projects individually.

The estimated total cost for all project phases is \$5,741,889 (\$5,167,700 federal + \$574,189 state match) with the entirety of the federal funding originating from the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of these HSIP projects to the highway program.

Commissioner Swartz asked for an explanation on how they arrive at the benefit-to-cost ratio. Ryan Dahlke said basically we look at the cost of crash history, the property damage, serious fatalities on those types of crashes, and the cost to implement proven counter measures. If the cost to install the improvements is a more positive ratio than the crashes, then HSIP program has to have a 1.0 benefit cost to pencil out. That is basically the long and short of how we analyze benefit cost. Commissioner Swartz said then the higher the number the better and the more needed the project is? Ryan Dahlke said yes. Commissioner Frazier said if the cost and the benefits is a ratio of one then it's a go; if it's at 30 then we really need to do it.

Ryan Dahlke said the higher the benefit cost ratio doesn't necessarily equate to the importance of the need or higher need for the project, it is the bigger bang for the buck.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Highway Safety Improvement Program – Additions to HSIP Program (9 New Projects). Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 13: Speed Limit Recommendation
Jim Darcy School Zone (S-279),
North Helena**

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation – Jim Darcy School Zone (S-279), North Helena to the Commission. Dustin Rouse said there were some questions at the previous Commission Meeting on the timeliness of the speed studies and this first one is an example of that. Currently there are 15 speed studies out for review right now. They are completed and are out for review. You will see a lot coming up in subsequent meetings. So we are knocking those speed studies out and as we move forward you'll see a lot of them as we work through the backlog. From now on you'll see them come to you in a more timely manner. Also three of the more challenging projects we sent out to consultants – Bozeman Interstate, Fairmont Interstate, and Huffine.

In 2019, a speed study was requested to review the speed limits on Lincoln Avenue with a focus on the Jim Darcy School Zone. The Jim Darcy School was reconstructed followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and then reconstruction of the intersection with Montana Avenue and the northbound I-15 on/off ramps. Another project is scheduled to reconstruct the intersection with Applegate Drive. Considering the substantial changes, with the support of Lewis & Clark County, MDT has decided to review the speed limits on Lincoln Road from the I-15 interchange to milepost 4. This study will review the area from the I-15 interchange to milepost 1. A subsequent speed study will review milepost 1 to milepost 4 after completion of the Applegate Drive Roundabout, which is estimated to be around 2027.

The last improvements by MDT were completed in 2023 with the construction of Montana Avenue and I-15 roundabouts. This project also installed pedestrian crossing features. Previously MDT completed a project, RTS 279-1(1), for the study area in 1993. Within this speed study, Lincoln Road is part of the urban highway network (U-5826) and signed as Secondary 279 (S-279). The segment is classified as a minor arterial. Typical sections are primarily comprised of two 11-12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction) and no shoulder. Pedestrian facilities are present around the intersection with Montana Avenue and continue north on Montana Avenue on the west side of the road and west on the north side of the road until the crossing at Jim Darcy Elementary. From the school property, the multi-use path continues west to the end of the study. There is adequate sight distance both on and along the roadway as the alignment is both tangent and primarily flat in this area. There are no centerline or shoulder rumble strips and passing zones are not striped until west of Jim Darcy School. Average annual daily traffic volumes from 2022 range from almost 7,450 vehicles near the interstate to about 4,080 vehicles near milepost 1. Peak AADT was observed in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic at about 7,960 vehicles near the interstate, 5,150 vehicles around the school, and 4,920 vehicles west of the school. On average there has been a 10-percent decrease in traffic volumes over the past five years, but it ranged between 17-percent and three-percent depending on the location. The school has shown the least fluctuation. It should be noted that traffic volumes on average were 20-percent higher during the summer months. The roadside environment is rural with a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial,

and agricultural land uses. Between the interstate and Montana Avenue there is commercial and agricultural land use with a restaurant, gas station, grocery store, and hardware store. From Montana Avenue to Grand Valley Loop, there is primarily industrial and institutional land use in the form of a substation, bank, and Jim Darcy Elementary. Between Grand Valley Loop and milepost 1 there is some residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial development. The residential and commercial is near the school in the form of 5 homes and a campground. Most of the industrial land use is around milepost 1. Agricultural land is located between the industrial and residential commercial land use.

A review of the spot speed samples shows that the prevailing speeds along Lincoln Road match the 45-mph speed limit, however, they do not match the special 35-mph speed zone. The 85th percentile speeds and upper limits of the pace are for the most part within ± 3 -mph of the 45-mph and ± 12 -mph of the 35-mph school zone posted speed limits. Within the 35 mph special school speed zone about 62 percent of drivers are all within 10-mph of each other. The same is not true in the 45-mph speed zone with about 71 percent of drivers traveling within 10-mph of each other. The prevailing speeds indicate the 45-mph speed limit is appropriately set; however, the school zone speed is elevated beyond what should be expected. Speeds overall do decrease as users enter the school zone but only by approximately 2-mph. The lower percentage within the pace can indicate different driver populations which are navigating the school zone at different speeds. Crash data for this section is not considered elevated. The school zone limits are shorter than what would be preferred, and the school zone is only 1,100 feet in total length. MDT recommends maintaining the existing speed limits and extending the school zone 300-feet to the west and 300-feet to the east. These extensions would place the school zone signs 500-feet from the edge of school property and would be 1,700-feet in total length, a 54% increase in total length. This could help drivers transition down to the school speed limit before they are immediately in proximity to the school itself.

Lewis and Clark County agrees with MDT's recommendation and their concurrence is attached.

Staff recommendation:

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

A 35/45-mph school speed limit beginning approximately 300-feet west of the intersection with Montana Avenue (straight-line station 24+00) and continuing west for an approximate distance of 1,700-feet, approximately 550-feet west of the intersection with Grand Valley Loop (straight-line station 41+00)

Director Dorrington said as you extend east you encounter the roundabout and Commissioner Sansaver had a question a couple of days ago about increasing the speed going into a roundabout in his district and I want to make sure we're not doing that here. Dustin Rouse said following our last meeting one of the concerns brought up was when MDT installs new roundabouts in locations there are times, especially in suburban areas, where the increased speeds are 45-55 mph. In having speed studies brought back to the Commission we don't want to violate driver expectations of an anticipated speed entering a roundabout. With all the roundabout projects our Traffic and Safety Section design, they are very good at developing speeds. We're instituting a collaboration within our internal staff to make sure that any time we install a roundabout or make speed adjustments within proximity of a roundabout, we make sure we're coordinating with locations around it to make sure the speed is appropriate entering the roundabout. So yes we will make sure we're consistent with the speeds around the roundabout. In the future we will meet as a group to insure that if necessary we will bring an interim request to the Commission to set an interim speed

so that it won't be necessary to come back and change it. We will set it as we recommend at the time, give it some time before we bring it back to the Commission, typically a year to verify that the speeds we set are appropriate.

Commissioner Sansaver said I appreciate the work you've put into this in answering my question. So basically you're saying that when we put in a roundabout you are not going to request a speed study at that roundabout location. But you will set the speed limit going into the roundabout without having to speed up or slow down. Is that correct? Dustin Rouse said that is correct. Commissioner Sansaver said that's good. I appreciate the work the Department has done; you've done a pretty comprehensive job in addressing the situation. Thank you.

Commissioner Frazier said something that is a little confusing to me on your map with the scale, you show the 35 mph zone being extended and then you are hopping back up to 45 mph very close to where you're roundabout is. To me it looks like we're approving a 35 mph zone for the school and then a 200 foot section of 45 mph before you go into the roundabout for your east-bound traffic. I assume we don't want to do that. Dustin Rouse said I assume the top line of red is what you're concerned about. We won't install a 45 mph sign there. The school zone just ends at that moment.

Commissioner Sansaver asked if the roundabout is on Montana Avenue. Dustin Rouse said yes. Commissioner Sansaver asked if that small section would stay consistent with the 35 mph school zone. Director Dorrington said the 45 mph is the regulatory speed limit west of the school all the way to the Interstate and during school hours when the light is flashing it drops to 35 mph. I'll talk to our traffic folks to ensure that when we install the permanent signing that we don't install a 45 mph sign there. Jim Wingerter said if you look at the notes they show the signing plan.

Commissioner Sanders moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation – Jim Darcy School Zone (S-279), North Helena. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 14: Speed Limit Recommendation East Missoula Highway / East Broadway Avenue (U-8112), Missoula

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation – East Missoula Highway/East Missoula Avenue (U-8112), Missoula to the Commission. This Agenda Item is closely tied to Agenda Item 15. In November of 2022, Missoula County requested a speed study be performed on Old Highway 200 from Brickyard Lane in East Missoula to Tamarack Road in Bonner because of continued requests from residents to lower the posted speed limit. During the review MDT approached the topic of reviewing the speed limits on East Missoula Highway from Missoula through East Missoula. MDT and Missoula County came to an agreement to review the speed limits on East Missoula Highway from the intersection with Van Buren Street in Missoula to the beginning of the Old Montana 200 (X-32200) – East Missoula study. A second separate study was completed in tandem with this study to review the entire corridor of Old Montana 200 from the intersection with 1st Street in the community of Bonner to the beginning of this study in East Missoula. If you look at the fold out map in your packet, it shows both of the speed study recommendations we're presenting today. The first study is on the left side and shows the proposed speed zones and our recommendation is a "no change" for that segment in the East Missoula area. The right side shows the next segment and we are proposing a transition change from 45 mph to 35 mph through that area. I wanted you to see the two recommendations on one map.

Commissioner Sanders said there is no change but the signage looks different to me. It shows 35 mph all the way from Speedway Avenue into Van Buren. Is that correct? That segmented red line looks like it is 35 mph. Dustin Rouse said the city's request is 45 mph in that area. The 35 mph zone exists at Van Buren today and our recommendation is no change to that area. Commissioner Sanders said but the 35 mph goes all the way from Speedway all the way to Van Buren. Dustin said don't focus on the dash lines on the top, look at the green lines – the green lines are the 35 mph zone and the red lines are the 45 mph zone. Commissioner Sanders said the map doesn't present that very well. Dustin Rouse said it is a little confusing that is why I wanted to go over it before we talk about it. So we are proposing to extend the 45 mph zone and reduce the 55 mph zone.

Dustin Rouse said within this speed study, East Missoula Highway is part of the urban state highway system (U-8112) and classified as a minor arterial. Typical sections consist primarily of two 12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction of travel) with varying shoulders widths throughout the study section. Near the end of the study (where old MT 200 turns into East Missoula Highway) to approximately Staple Road, the shoulder widths are at a minimum of 1-foot. From this point and heading west, the shoulder width becomes approximately 6 feet to just beyond the interchange area. Inside of the interchange area, the shoulder width becomes approximately 4 feet. From the interchange area to the end of the study the shoulder width constricts to approximately 1-foot at the railroad underpass. A 5-foot bike lane starts just beyond the intersection with North Easy Street and continues to the study end at the intersection with Van Buren Street. There is adequate sight distance for most of the study area both on and along the roadway for the posted speed limit. However, there are areas where the trees are located directly adjacent to the roadway, and this may obscure some visibility around several approaches.

Additionally, there can be some sight distance obstructions near the interchange area due to the geometry of the roadway and grades present. There are currently no passing zones allowed within the study area. There are several bus stops after the interchange and near the end of the study, for a total of 5 stops. Average annual daily traffic volume from 2022 varies from 5,651 near the beginning of the study, 10,503 near the interchange area and 6,790 near Van Buren Street at the end of the study. Peak AADT was observed in 2021 and overall, there has been a 19 percent increase in traffic volumes since 2018. It should be noted that traffic volumes on average were 21 percent higher during the summer months. The roadside environment is primarily suburban with a mile of commercial at the end of the study. Development along this roadway is constrained due to the steep hillside slope to the north. Interstate 90 and the Clark Fork River to the south. Development density increases past the interchange area as you near the end of the study, from single family residential to higher density apartment complexes and businesses. From the start of the study until Sommers Street is primarily suburban residential. After this point until approximately Peacock Street is mixed commercial and residential. Past the interchange area and heading west, the approach density shrinks, and the residential density increases with several large apartment complexes to the south of the roadway. Past Missoula College the density becomes mainly commercial and is maintained on both sides of the roadway. Riverside Health & Rehabilitation Clinic and Missoula College are in the higher density sections near the end of the study.

Summary: A review of the spot speed samples shows that the prevailing speeds along East Missoula Highway match with the set speed limits. The 85th percentile speeds and upper limits of the pace are for the most part within ± 6 -mph of the 35-mph and 45-mph posted speed limits. Within the 35-mph speed zone about 84 percent of drivers are all within 10-mph of each other. The same is true in the 45-mph speed zone with about 79 percent of drivers traveling within 10-mph of each other. The amount within the pace is high throughout the study area with low degrees of variance present. Current speeds indicate that the posted speed limits match the

existing roadway context. When utilizing the closest 50th percentile the result is a no-change across all speed zones. The 85th percentile and 50th percentile are grouped close together and are often only separated by about 4-mph. In addition, the amount within pace is very high and shows a high degree of uniformity amongst drivers across this corridor section. There are sections with an elevated crash rate, however, this still necessitates the use of the closest 50th percentile.

Missoula County concurs with the report and had only one desire which was addressed in the Old Montana 200 speed study, their concurrence is attached.

The City of Missoula does not agree with MDT's recommendation and would like to see the existing 45-mph speed limit between the interchange and Van Buren be reduced to 35-mph. The City of Missoula would like to create a consistent 35-mph corridor for this section of East Broadway, highlighting that the corridor is a multimodal corridor and that 45-mph is too fast for vulnerable road users near the roadway.

MDT would like to stress that the average 50th percentile for this 45-mph section is 43.8-mph while the 85th percentile is 47.5 mph. The difference between the 50th percentile and the 85th percentile is only 3.7-mph and the average percentage within the pace is 79%, showing a high degree of uniformity in the speed profile. Lowering the speed limit to 35-mph would be below the 50th percentile by 8.8 mph and below the 85th percentile by 12.5-mph. Research and national guidance has shown that setting the speed limit by 10-mph below the engineering recommendation has shown to reduce the all-crash rate but increases the fatal and injury crash rate.

MDT does not recommend setting the speed limit at 35-mph for this section and it should be noted that MDT did take into consideration the multimodal users and vulnerable road users near the roadway, which is in part why it made its determination to use the closest 50th percentile for determining an appropriate speed limit.

Finally, more recent citation and crash data were analyzed, including unofficial crash data, the results did not show crash or citation rates substantially different than the years analyzed in this report and the recommendations are still consistent. Without enforcement, the proposed 35-mph speed zone extension by the City of Missoula would likely have limited compliance.

Staff recommendation:

MDT recommends "no-change" to the existing speed limit configuration.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said do you every take into consideration game day. Is there some way to adjust the speed during high traffic times? Dustin said yes we certainly have the ability to adjust speeds during high traffic times. It's more than just game day when we have events taking place. We also have been some very large concerts taking place. We are cognizant of those and work with the University and the City. To date we have a lot of information on the Interstate for regular game days and those events, we also have support on the surface streets with some signing. I have a lot of staff that are ardent fans of the University and I hear about additional support that is needed. We have made some changes to help the overall network. One change was at Van Buren Street where we installed roundabouts that help traffic flow for people getting off the Interstate. We aren't supporting making changes to speed limits although we have done that for some extremely large events in the past.

Commissioner Aspenlieder asked about enforcement. Dustin Rouse said there are locations where we definitely have better enforcement than other areas. The intent of that statement is if the locals have resources to enforce an area then we can ensure

those speeds are followed. We have examples across the state where drivers would drive faster than the speed limit but due to enforcement they hold to the lower speeds. Yes, it's obvious but if the locals have the resources to enforce it then potentially you could set the speeds lower. Commissioner Aspenlieder said then we're saying "we're not going to give it to you but if we did, then you'd have to enforce it." It seems we're just stating the obvious.

Commissioner Sansaver asked about the distance before Speedway from the 35 mph zone to the 45 mph zone to the 50 mph zone what is the distance? Dustin Rouse said the 45 mph segment is a little over a mile in length. Commissioner Sansaver asked if the county wanted that changed. Commissioner Frazier said the county wants it to stay the same and the city wants to make it 35 mph the whole way which doesn't mesh with any kind of an engineering study. Commissioner Sansaver said it is confusing that a one-mile stretch would make any difference as far as safety is concerned because then it would jump from 35 mph to 50 mph. Why wouldn't we be willing to accommodate that request? What difference does it make for one mile?

Commissioner Frazier said I've driven this stretch quite a bit and there aren't a lot of approaches in this stretch and not a lot going on so it's one of those human behavior things. One place I get frustrated is from Anaconda to Georgetown Lake when I go ice fishing where they have artificial speed zones that go up and down and there's not a lot going on there. We'd be putting up signs that wouldn't be very enforceable and set a speed trap. Dustin Rouse said I asked the same thing. The concern is the consistency with the 45 mph speed. If we drop that we're going to see a spread in what we see drivers operating at and that increases the potential of crashes and violating driver expectations. A rule of thumb – if it's ½ a mile or less that might be something we would consider but adding another mile of directing traffic to stay at 35 mph brings the high likelihood of some drivers exceeding the speed limit and others not and they end up passing.

Commissioner Sansaver said I'm not up with driver expectations but when a city has a concern like that obviously there's a need. Weren't there 13 accidents in that stretch? The county seems to be satisfied with MDT's recommendation, is that correct? Dustin said yes that's correct. The 13 crashes you referenced is on the next speed study. Commissioner Sanders said I didn't think the city of Missoula was concerned about Speedway, I thought it was the interchange with I-90 and Van Buren. Dustin said that is correct.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation – East Missoula Highway/East Broadway Avenue (U-8112), Missoula. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 15: Speed Limit Recommendation Old Montana 200 (X-32200), East Missoula

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation – Old Montana 200 (X-32200), East Missoula to the Commission. In November of 2022, Missoula County requested a speed study be performed on Old Highway 200 from Brickyard Lane in East Missoula to Tamarack Road in Bonner. MDT reviewed the area and agreed to study the entire corridor between East Missoula and Bonner from the intersection with Speedway Avenue to the intersection with 1st Street. There have been "continued request from residents to lower the posted speed limit." During the review MDT approached the topic of reviewing the speed limits on Speedway Avenue west of the beginning of this study to Missoula with the county. A second separate study was completed to review the entire corridor of East Missoula Highway

/ Speedway Avenue from the intersection with Van Buren Street in Missoula to the beginning of this study in East Missoula.

A review of the spot speed samples shows that the prevailing speeds along Old Montana 200 match with the set speed limits. The 85th percentile speeds and upper limits of the pace are for the most part within ± 2 -mph of the 55-mph speed zone. Within the 55-mph speed zone about 63 percent of drivers are all within 10-mph of each other. 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. The 55-mph does not make sense considering the area is only considered rural because of the lack of development for this short 1-mile section. The lack of development is mainly in part due to this section being geographically constrained with the Clark Fork River to the south and steep grade to the north. This rural section currently separates two suburban sections, both at the beginning and of the study. MDT recommends utilizing the closest 50th percentile for this section to bridge the gap between these two communities, in addition this roadway does not meet shoulder or travel lane width guidance which further supports using the 50th percentile for determining a reasonable and prudent speed limit. The existing transitions at the beginning and end of the study would be considered less than ideal. The existing 35/55 mph transition at the beginning of the study does not meet best practices for speed transitions as there is a 20-mph gap between the two speed limits. MDT recommends based on research and national guidance that the change in speed limits should be no more than 15-mph. As a result, MDT recommends a 45-mph speed limit transition to further help drivers navigate this transition area. The existing 45/55-mph transition area at the end of the study does not accurately reflect the roadway context for this area. The suburban context extends currently to approximately between Sunnyside Court and Lerch Lane with housing development on either side of the roadway. Additionally, the existing 45-mph speed limit that exists between the roadway does not meet minimum length guidance. MDT recommends extending this 45-mph speed zone to better transition between the rural and suburban environments located on Old Montana 200.

Missoula County agrees with the majority of the recommendation with the exception of the proposed 45-mph zone. Missoula County would like to see the proposed 45-mph speed zone be extended to just beyond Marshall Canyon Road. This would be an extension from MDT's proposed 45-mph speed zone by approximately 2,000 feet. Missoula County highlighted that this section experiences a lot of traffic related to recreation, and slower speeds through the corridor would be beneficial. The County also highlighted that 13 crashes occurred in the last five years between Sha Ron Fishing access and Marshall Canyon Road. They cite that a lower speed limit for that section could lead to reduced crash rates. It should be noted that of those 13 crashes cited, 10 of the crashes are already covered by MDT's proposed 45-mph extension. Additionally, the speed data collected at station 5 which is located near Marshall Canyon Road has an average 50th percentile speed of 48-mph and an average 85th percentile speed of 53.5-mph. Utilizing the closest 50th percentile yields a recommendation of 50-mph for this section as proposed by MDT and a 45-mph speed zone would be under the 50th percentile by 3-mph. Finally, more recent citation and crash data were analyzed, including unofficial crash data, the results did not show crash or citation rates substantially different than the years analyzed in this report and the recommendations are still consistent. Without enforcement, the proposed 45-mph speed zone extension by Missoula County would likely have limited compliance.

Staff recommendation:

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

A 45-mph speed limit beginning approximately 400-feet south of the intersection with West Riverside (straight-line station 17+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1,600-feet, approximately 900-feet south of the intersection with Fontaine Drive (straight-line station 33+00)

A 50-mph speed limit beginning approximately 900-feet south of the intersection with Fontaine Drive (straight-line station 34+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1.76-miles, approximately 150-feet east of the intersection with Sunnyside Court (straight-line station 127+00)

A 45-mph speed limit beginning approximately 150-feet east of the intersection with Sunnyside Court (straight-line station 127+00) and continuing west outside of the study area for an approximate distance of 2,500-feet, approximately 400-feet west of the intersection with Shepard Lane (straight-line station 152+00)

Commissioner Aspenlieder asked if this was a state secondary or X route. Dustin Rouse said this is an X route, the Old Montana 200. Commissioner Aspenlieder asked how we dispose of these routes. Missoula County has a lot of them and they would like to see a lot of multi-modal transportation. How do we have a conversation about giving these to Missoula County so they can do whatever they want? Commissioner Frazier said we attacked that 20 years ago and tried to renegotiate about who maintained what and who had what route. This is Old Montana 200 which MDT maintained forever, when the Interstate came through traffic went onto I-90, but since MDT owned it and maintained it we have kept that status and made it an X route. It is not the system but it is MDT's to maintain. Being able to talk the county into taking over so many miles of road through East Missoula for the maintenance they would probably do it but they would want us to give them money to maintain it. That was the way it was in 2001 and I don't know if anyone has taken another run at that. It's a good question. It's a matter of money. We would love to give routes like this away to the county but they are part of our old system just like West Broadway is ours.

County Aspenlieder said this is a conversation we can have later but I'm sure there are other X routes that don't make sense. I get the negotiation in turning it over but at some point the state has to have a conversation about what we can maintain and what we should maintain. The fact that it was a highway but now doesn't act as a highway is not a reason for holding it in perpetuity forever and ever just because we had it at one time. I know in eastern Montana there are plenty of old highway routes that got disposed of and turned over to the county and I don't think the county really had much say in that other than MDT saying we're declassifying it and moving on. That is a discussion for a later date. Commissioner Frazier that is a very large topic.

Commissioner Aspenlieder asked what the road section looked like. We're talking a lot about bike traffic but what does the road section look like? Commissioner Frazier said it's a two-lane road with a very narrow shoulder, maybe a 24-foot top. Basically it is a two lane without shoulders. Commissioner Aspenlieder asked if Missoula County has looked at this for TA improvements. If their concern is for bicyclists, have we ever seen a TA project or TA recommendation come through to do some kind of bike/pedestrian improvements on this route by the county not MDT? Has that ever been a discussion? It feels like we're artificially trying to impact the traveling public with vehicular speed limits based on bike traffic which this was not constructed for to begin with. It would make sense to me that we should set this for vehicular traffic and if the county wants to nominate a TA project out of their money then great but the county trying to conflate this as a safety issue because there are bikes on the road without coming to the table to mitigate the bike interactions is really what should be happening here not artificially trying to set speeds in my opinion.

Dustin Rouse said you bring up a very good point. The county has pursued grants for this location and this segment is part of an east Missoula project that they were awarded a grant for. They did pursue a grant and were successful obviously with the intent to try and improve the pedestrian and cyclist facilities out here. It depends on what comes out of DC and what the legislation looks like whether they may or may not be able to make those improvements.

Commissioner Swartz said if that grant does come through and gets funded I think it's a more reasonable time to look at those speed changes if there are bicycle facilities included. I understand that Marshall Mountain has been taken over and there are people who go mountain biking up there but at this time it's still a travelled roadway with very narrow shoulders and it's not appropriate to lower that speed limit through that stretch. The engineering data supports people are going to drive that faster. It's probably not enforced and I've never seen any enforcement on that stretch of road and I drive it very frequently. I think staff did a great job and I agree with their recommendation and think that a more appropriate time to address a speed change all the way to Marshall Mountain is if they get funding to widen that road.

Commissioner Frazier asked how they came to lower it to 50 mph. It seems to me that 55 mph seems to be what the majority of people are driving. Dustin Rouse said we did take into consideration the amount of pedestrian and cycle use and the very narrow shoulders so 50 mph was more appropriate.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation – Old Montana 200 (X-32200), East Missoula. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 16: Speed Limit Recommendation US 87 (N-87), Roundup

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation – US 87 (N-87), Roundup to the Commission. Background In April 2023, the mayor of Roundup requested on behalf of the city and county a speed study be performed on US 87 entering the city of Roundup. There were desires to have the existing 55-mph, 45-mph, and 35-mph speed zones reduced by 10-mph because of the decline from Airport Road. MDT reviewed the area from the intersection with 8th Avenue (US-12) to approximately milepost 3.

A review of the spot speed samples shows that the prevailing speeds along US-87 match with the set speed limits. The 85th percentile speeds and upper limits of the pace are for the most part within ± 5 -mph of the 25-mph and ± 7 -mph of the 70-mph posted speed limits. Within the 25-mph speed zone about 87 percent of drivers are all within 10-mph of each other. The same is not true in the 70-mph speed zone with only about 53 percent of drivers traveling within 10-mph of each other. 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. The 25-mph speed limit does fit the urban context; however, it currently does not go far enough and should be extended just before 12th Avenue to encompass the entire urban section of this roadway. The transitions from the 25-mph to the 70-mph need to be adjusted in conjunction with the 25-mph being extended and the existing transitions lengths being less than desirable. This shifts and extends the 35 mph and 45-mph to the recommended length of 1,600 feet. The final transition is recommended to be a 60-mph speed zone that is one-mile in length. This allows for the 60 mph zone to extend through the grade that begins at the existing 55/70-mph transition and extends to the top of the hill near Airport Road.

Additionally, this 60-mph transition accommodates the higher speeds present through this section and will act as a better buffer between the suburban and rural environments.

The City of Roundup agrees with MDT's recommendation and their concurrence is attached. Musselshell County was contacted multiple times for official comment without success and because of the 120-day comment period expiring, their comments are regarded as being concurrent with the findings of the report.

Staff recommendation:

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

A 25-mph speed limit beginning at the intersection with 8th Avenue (straight-line station 00+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1,600-feet, approximately 50-feet south of the intersection with 12th Avenue (straight-line station 16+00)

A 35-mph speed limit beginning approximately 50-feet south of the intersection with 12th Avenue (straight-line station 06+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1,600-feet, approximately 50-feet north of the intersection with 4th Street West (straight-line station 32+00)

A 45-mph speed limit beginning approximately 50-feet north of the intersection with 4th Street West (straight-line station 32+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1,600-feet, approximately 1,150-feet north of the intersection with Golf Course Trail (straight-line station 48+00)

A 60-mph speed limit beginning approximately 1,150-feet north of the intersection with Golf Course Trail (straight-line station 48+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance of 1-mile, approximately 800-feet north of the intersection with Airport Road (straight-line station 100+00)

Commissioner Aspenlieder moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation – US 87 (N-87), Roundup. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 17: Speed Limit Recommendation
MT 16 9N-16), Sidney**

Dustin Rouse presented the Speed Limit Recommendation – MT 16 (N-16), Sidney to the Commission. In March of 2023, Richland County began discussions with MDT resulting in a request for a speed study to be performed on Montana 16 in Sidney from the top of the hill to the intersection with Central Avenue. Richland County voiced desires to have the following speed limit configuration: a 45-mph speed limit from the top of the hill on MT-16 to the intersection at Miller's corner; and a 35-mph speed limit from 22nd Avenue to Central Avenue.

No specific concerns were expressed in their correspondence. After reviewing the area MDT adjusted the limits of the study to begin at the intersection with Central Avenue also known as Montana 200 and continue north (west) until milepost 33.

Within this speed study, Montana 16 is part of the non-interstate national highway system (N-62) and classified as a principal arterial. Typical sections are primarily comprised of two 12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction) with a 14-foot center two-way-left-turn lane and varying shoulder widths that double as a bike lane until Airport Road. Parking is not allowed along the side of the roadway. The shoulders start at eight-feet and then reduce to six-feet north (west) of Lincoln Avenue NW. Curb and gutter is present from the intersection with Central Avenue until the intersection with Red River Drive. Pedestrian facilities are present on the west side of the road from Central Avenue until 3rd Street NW and on the east side sporadically from the intersection with Central Avenue to the intersection with 14th Avenue NW. There is adequate sight distance both on and along the roadway as the alignment is primarily both tangent and flat in this area. A long gradual hill along with two long sweeping curves do exist. There are no centerline rumble strips. Shoulder rumble strips are present north (west) of Red River Drive. Passing zones only exist north of milepost 35 and account for about 24-percent of the study area. An auxiliary through lane exists from Red River Drive to Milepost 35. There are also auxiliary right turn lanes for the intersections with Red River Drive, Silurian Lane, Cambrian Lane, 22nd Avenue NW, and Airport Road. Shoulder widths diminish when a right-turn lane is present. The center two-way-left-turn lane becomes a standard left turn lane for the intersections of Central Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Airport Road, 22nd Avenue NW, Yellowstone Drive, and 25th Avenue NW. Average annual daily traffic volume from 2022 ranges from about 8,200 vehicles within the urban environment to around 1,900 vehicles in the rural environment. Overall, there were three segments urban, suburban, and rural. Within the urban environment traffic volumes fluctuated between about 8,200 and 5,750 vehicles. The suburban segment had about 4,600 vehicles recorded in 2022. Finally in the rural environment traffic volumes were recorded between 2,400 and 1,900 vehicles. Peak AADT was primarily observed in 2018. There was one segment in the rural environment and one in the urban environment where the peak occurred in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Overall, there has been on average a 7-percent reduction in traffic volumes for the majority of the study area over the past 5-years. The only areas that saw traffic volumes increase were at the beginning and end of the study area. These areas saw a 21-percent and 5-percent increase over the past 5-years. It should be noted that traffic volumes on average were about 27-percent higher during the summer months for the entire study area but the majority of it only saw a 17-percent increase. The roadside environment starts out as urban, transitions to a more suburban setting before finally transitioning into a rural environment. Land use from Central Avenue until 14th Avenue NW is mixed between residential and commercial with some institutional. There are multiple hotels, a bank, grocery store, the post office, county health department and other businesses. After 14th Avenue NW the development begins to transition to a more suburban environment with a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land use. North of 34th Avenue NW the roadside environment transitions to a more rural setting and is completely rural north of County Road 126. Land use north of County Road 126 is primarily agricultural.

A review of the spot speed samples shows that the prevailing speeds along MT 16 match with the set speed limits. The 85th percentile speeds and upper limits of the pace are for the most part within ± 3 -mph of the 35-mph, ± 7 -mph of the 45-mph and ± 5 -mph of the 70 mph posted speed limits. Within the 35-mph speed zone about 79 percent of drivers are all within 10-mph of each other. The same is true in the 45-mph speed zone with about 68 percent of drivers traveling within 10-mph of each other. The 70-mph speed zone also has approximately 66 percent of drivers traveling within the pace. Within the 35-mph speed zone inside of Sidney, driver speed variance is considered low with 79% of drivers traveling within the pace. NCHRP recommends utilizing the rounded down 85th percentile based on an elevated access point density. However, considering the percentage within pace is very high and the average 85th percentile is 34.6-mph for this section, we do not recommend setting the speed limit to 30-mph. We recommend keeping the existing 35-mph speed limit for this section in order to maintain the high degree of vehicles

traveling within the pace and to not increase the already low speed differential for the 35-mph speed zone. Within the 45-mph speed zone or the suburban roadway context, prevailing speeds indicate that speed limits are appropriately set. Speeds on this section are generally elevated higher than the posted 45 mph speed limit with the average 85th percentile being 48-mph. Considering this section does not meet design standards for shoulder width, we recommend using the rounded down 85th percentile. This would result in a recommendation of no change to the existing 45-mph speed limit for this section. Within the 70-mph speed zone or the rural roadway context, prevailing speeds indicate that speed limits are appropriately set. The average percentage within the pace is 66% and the 85th percentile speeds are above the posted speed limit for all stations within the speed zone except for the station near the transition area. Considering the roadway context and the roadway not meeting design standards, the proposed speed limit should be based on the rounded down 85th percentile. This would result in a no-change to the statutory 70-mph speed limit. There is no transitional speed zone going from the 70-mph rural speed limit to the 45-mph suburban speed limit. The addition of a transitional 55-mph speed limit is recommended based on current MDT practices. A station located about half a mile from the existing 70/45-mph transition shows that vehicles are already utilizing this part of the 70-mph speed zone to transition. Additionally, this station reports the lowest percentage within pace for the entire study at approximately 46%. A half mile is recommended for speed zones that are posted at 55-mph. The preferred step-down process by MDT based on current knowledge is to change the speed limit by no more than 15-mph between speed zones.

Richland County agrees with the 55-mph transitional speed zone; however, they disagree with keeping the existing 35-mph and 45-mph speed zones. Richland County would like to see the proposed 35-mph and 45-mph zones they originally expressed desire for in the original request for a speed study. Specifically, as outlined in the report, they would like the 35-mph speed zone to be extended to 22nd Avenue and the 45-mph speed zone to begin from 22nd Avenue and end at County Road 126. This in principal would eliminate the proposed 55-mph transitional speed zone as it would be replaced by the 45-mph speed zone extension. Additionally, speed data does not support the 35-mph and 45-mph speed zone extensions desired by Richland County. The 35-mph speed zone extension would go below the 85th percentile by approximately 8.5-mph and below the 50th percentile by approximately 3.5-mph. The 45-mph speed zone extension would show even more significant speed differentials. In the middle of the proposed 45-mph speed zone extension, the 85th percentile is approximately 68-mph and the 50th percentile is approximately 60-mph. This would exceed the 45-mph speed zone by approximately 23-mph and 15-mph of the 85th and 50th percentiles respectively.

MDT does not recommend setting the speed limit below the 50th percentile by 15-mph and research shows that setting the speed limit 15-mph or more below the engineering recommendation leads to an increase in the all-crash rate and injury crash rate. Richland County was contacted several times for clarification on their desires and they reiterated what is highlighted in the introduction on the report, which is their original desire as part of the speed study request. This is not what MDT proposes, and the report does not state this is the recommendation. The correspondence is given for both the official letter and emails in regard to comments on this report. Richland County was told they could join the commission meeting and voice their desires directly to the transportation commission.

Staff recommendation:

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

A 55-mph speed limit beginning approximately at milepost 36 (straight-line station 159+00) and continuing north for an approximate distance

of 2,650-feet, approximately 400-feet north of the intersection with 34th Street (straight-line station 132+50)

Shane Mintz said when the county sent their response I knew it wouldn't jive with MDT's recommendation. The county wanted to see the 35-45 mph zone extended from the Fairgrounds just to the other side of 22nd Street. That transition length was their biggest issue. We asked them to put that in writing and recommended they have their attorney do it. He pretty much copied their original request which includes taking the 45mph zone all the way up the hill. I reached out to them after the letter to confirm their position and they did say the lower end of this stretch was their bigger issue. They wanted to see that transition from 35 mph to 45 mph extended.

Commissioner Sansaver said in visiting with Shane Mintz about this there seems to be kind of a convoluted mess from West Poly Street to 22nd Street and should be reduced to 35 mph going up and down that hill because there is still a lot of activities around it. If you're doing 45 mph coming down that hill there are a lot of opportunities for accidents there. That is what Shane was saying that the county would really like to see 22nd Ave lowered to 35 mph before you get into all the residential area. Are we talking down to Poly Street? Shane said yes that is correct. Part of their concern is the traffic coming down. It has been an issue in the past for some of their constituents and that is why the county made the request.

Commissioner Sanders said in our correspondence in the summary page, second paragraph, says there are no specific requests in their correspondence. So how do we initiate the speed study in that case? Are we just assuming what the locals want or are we relaying on your conversations with the locals? Shane Mintz said typically what's beneficial from a county's standpoint includes near misses, issues we may not capture when we do a speed study. When we get a request and the county just asks for a speed study, we send a letter asking for specific examples of either crashes not reported or near misses and what they're seeing at the specific location that would help us understand the request.

Shane Mintz said to add a little bit more to that, one of the challenges is actually getting the "why" back from them and then asking "what are you hoping for out of this study?" Sometimes their answers are pretty short. The county didn't make the request all the way to Central; we added that ourselves. They just wanted to go to the bottom of the hill but it made sense to our traffic engineers to take it all the way to Central.

Commissioner Sansaver said in looking at the document from their attorney, I don't believe all of them were on the same page with this and certainly that portion from 22nd Avenue to Poly Street. It should be a concern for the state that the 45 mph speed limit ends there. Can we change it without having to go back to the county? Can't we just reduce the speed limit from 45 mph to 35 mph from 22nd Avenue and Poly Street? Dustin Rouse said the segment Shane brings up, if you look at it from the 50th percentile if we did the extension the county is asking for that would be below the 50th percentile. If the differential is over 10 mph we historically see crash trends go up but it's only a 3.5 mph difference so I'd be open to that.

Commissioner Aspenlieder said in the interest of moving this along, there was a point in time where I said I can't support anything other than what the hard data shows but to demonstrate how I've grown professionally through this process, I'll make the following motion. Commissioner Sansaver said he would second the motion. Ryan Dahlke said with the amendment extending the 35 mph zone to 22nd Avenue, is there any consideration for the transition zone. That would essentially shorten that transition zone which is typically 1,600 feet. Commissioner Aspenlieder said he would include in his motion that the transition zone be adjusted to the standard length. Commissioner Sansaver agreed with the addition.

Commissioner Aspenlieder moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation – MT 16 (N-16), Sidney with the amendment of extending the 35 mph speed zone back to the intersection of 22nd Ave NW while still holding the standard transition length from the 45 mph speed zone. Commissioner Sansaver seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 18: Certificates of Completion March & April 2025

Dave Gates presented the Certificates of Completion for March & April 2025 to the Commission for review and approval. The Certificates of Completion for March consists of 12 contracts and 13 projects (two projects are in one contract). These contracts close out with the sum total of \$63,888,274.85. The sum total is 3.12% below the total bid amount of \$65,948,289.80.

Certificate of Completion for April 2025 consists of 12 contracts and a total of 15 projects (3 were tied to letting and construction). These contracts close out with the sum total of \$39,811,164.49. This sum total is 0.24% above the sum total bid amount of 12 contracts of \$39,717,426.26.

Director Dorrington said I would like to commend staff and contractors and consultants on a job well done in hitting those construction budgets and not being significantly over but rather under. Nice work.

Staff recommends approving the Certificates of Completion for March and April 2025.

Commissioner Swartz moved to approve the Certificates of Completion for March & April 2025. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye except Commissioner Aspenlieder, as he was no longer on the call.

The motion passed.

Agenda Item 19: Kagy Boulevard, Bozeman Removal of Limited Access Control Designation

Dustin Rouse presented Kagy Boulevard, Bozeman – Removal of Limited Access Control Designation to the Commission. The City of Bozeman has asked MDT to remove the Limited Access Control designation on Kagy Boulevard. MDT implemented Limited Access Control on a 1.13 mile portion of Kagy Boulevard (U-1212) in Bozeman with project MT 10-1(25)3 (CN 0237-005) in 1989.

MDT has since entered into a City-Wide Maintenance Agreement with the City of Bozeman. Maintenance and permitting jurisdiction on Kagy Boulevard is now the City of Bozeman's responsibility based on that agreement. Since MDT is no longer responsible for maintenance and permitting on this section of highway, this section of Kagy Boulevard no longer needs to be designated as a Limited Access Control facility. It is MDT's Access Management Unit's opinion that the Limited Access Control designation for this section of Kagy Boulevard should be vacated.

An exhibit is attached for Commission information and review: Exhibit A is a map of the area showing the portion of Kagy Boulevard that is currently an Access Controlled facility.

Dustin Rouse stated he was asking the Chair and the Commission to consider tabling this Agenda Item so the Department could gather some additional information and

bring it back to the Commission at a later date. The limited access control on this route was executed through a Resolution and also to establish limited access control on Duney. We want to work through all the appropriate steps to make sure that when we bring this item back to you, we have all the background information and that we take appropriate action to make sure that when we remove this designation, we're following the appropriate path.

Staff recommendation:

MDT staff recommends that the Transportation Commission table this item for a few weeks before removing the Limited Access Control designation on this section of Kagy Boulevard.

Commissioner Sanders moved to Table the Kagy Boulevard, Bozeman – Removal of Limited Access Control Designation to allow staff more time to research the area. Commissioner Swartz seconded the motion. Commissioner Frazier, Swartz, Sanders, and Sansaver voted aye.

Tabled.

Agenda Item 20: Director's Discussion

Director Chris Dorrington

Speed Studies

As we looked at the many speed study requests today, they are very complex and we're not going to be receiving fewer requests in the future. In talking with the District Administrators they are getting at least one a week. We are looking at a few things in order to create a better "no" point. It isn't that communities aren't perceiving a need for change or demand, but as pointed out in our discussion, there is no specific ask or concern required, it just asks the department to adjust the speed. It doesn't mean the speed doesn't need adjusting but I think we need to raise the bar to a level appropriate with the abundance of work needed to conduct a full speed study and the amount of time needed to hash through the level of detail. I think we need a better "no" point. I think there are some data sets that would reflect speeds and speed trends in a very current fashion. I just sat through a technology presentation, and what's out there is incredible. If you think about the Google data set and what can be mined from that and some companies are now starting to do that. So if we saw 50th or 85th percentile speeds in current volumes not reflect what is perceived then a "no" answer would be easier to say and then be able to give them the "why". I think we'll flesh that out in the next six months and we'll come back and give you more information. It will reduce the number of speed studies to the most relevant and then discuss impacts. We need to raise the bar from the local requests to say "here's what we're trying to do with our request."

Agency Realignment

We're still moving quite a bit. We have obvious positions in place now. – Senior Leaders have been selected for positions. Strategy Operations is John Swartz, Policy Shop is Rob, Statewide Planning is Doug Broom, Deputy Director is Larry Flynn, Chief Engineer is Dustin Rouse, and General Operations is Sharon Duncan.

The Realignment in our Agency is to focus teams and people on the core purpose of what they're doing and provide them resources to accomplish that and complete their commitments. I believe everybody in the Agency has deliverables to someone whether a stakeholder or another internal worker, and then to combine that with

effectiveness and efficiency of operations. So we're moving along and I'm happy about that. More to come as we continue.

Summer Construction

Summer construction is in full swing. We had a rather unfortunate incident in Bob's District where a truck driver passed a Pilot Car at 3 am, swerved to miss a machine, rolled their vehicle and crushed a flagger who was in the appropriate area to be flagging for that operation. It is so frustrating. So I stress to be careful through construction zones no matter how frustrating it is to travel at a lower speed for an extended period, it is still necessary to do the right thing. I know you all know that.

Legislation

Coming up on July 16th will be the first of the Interim Legislative Committees. The Interim Budget Committee will be here soon and be selecting studies which improve transportation. We will be influencing that but it's really up to the Interim Committee to select their study plans and resource them appropriately. I'll report back to the Commission as soon as we have awareness of what they've selected and how it will affect our work.

We're also implementing legislation for Rulemaking. The most visible will be the Utility Penalty Bill which penalizes utilities that don't move ahead of construction. We've had excellent participation so far. The Bill passed unanimously out of both sides and we're on the Rulemaking. It's a significant lift but it's going to be great and I'm very proud of our team for doing that.

Commissioner Frazier asked about Agency Realignment, is there an organizational chart available so I can see who is in charge of what. Director Dorrington said he would send that to him. The successive groups underneath people are still in flux but that should be decided in the next couple of weeks and we will send that to you.

Commissioner Frazier said a lot of the people and employees I've talked to and am still in contact with, told me they've noticed a positive change in the last year. I wanted to pass that along to you. Most of the people I see and know that are still your front-line employees think you guys are doing a good job. I'm hearing positive things.

Commissioner Swartz asked if they are trying to mine things like the Tesla data sets, etc., to get basic travel information. Director Dorrington said yes that is what we're looking at. I don't want to name vendors because we haven't selected anybody in the initial phase of this but there are data sets that produce speed and congestion information. If you go to Google maps and say I want to go from here to here they have red, yellow, green which is an indication of speed and congestion. The data sets are more complex behind the scenes and are then presented simply. What I'm looking to do is mine that data set or have a company mine that data set and produce something for us that says "on a consistent basis or at a certain time, these are the trends we're seeing." Then if we receive a request from a local community that says we're seeing speeds go through the roof but none of the data reflects that, then I think we could say the data we have access to doesn't indicate that so it's a "no" for now unless you provide justification and some information. That would reduce the number of requests to something doable and probably more statistically relevant across the state that is reflective of community need and maybe even safety trends. Commissioner Swartz said I complement you on the evolutionary thinking.

**Agenda Item 21: Change Orders
March & April 2025**

Dave Gates presented the Change Orders for March & April 2025 to the Commission. This is an informational item only.

Change Orders for March & April 2025 are as follows:

Month	Total.....
March 2025 (19 contracts)	\$ 165,865.82
April 2025 (32 contracts)	<u>\$1,299,177.82</u>
	\$1,464,983.64

Of particular note in April is Change Order 26 on the Red Lodge Area Flood Repairs in the amount of \$297,099.61. This is for planned work on the Beartooth Highway Slide Area on 212 from milepost 571 to 574. It consists of earthwork, woody toes, and seeding and revegetation in the slide area. Also included is the Biological Resources Report, Product Report, Stream Lateral Mitigation Study and Bank Stability Study.

One of the challenges here is we keep talking about how much did we plan for and is this thing ever going to be finished. The big question you have to keep in mind regarding the process of our planning and estimating, for example, we specifically didn't plan for a slide or extended scour mitigation as it has evolved. Right now, as shown in the current Change Order, the current contract amount is \$28,671,194.39 and today our project manager submitted a Change Order in the amount of \$1.4 million so it sounds like we're about wrapped up after this. The \$1.4 million Change Order that came in today will be for a complete slope flattening and reclamation on the Beartooth Area Slide. So this should be the final Change Order.

Commissioner Frazier said I haven't heard the term "woody toes" since the Bitterroot Fires back when I was a District Administrator. It's not something we usually use in roadwork. It's just piling a bunch of logs to help hold a streambank from erosion when the resource agencies will not allow rocks.

Commissioner Frazier said I think staff is doing a good job with this project. We knew going in that this was a design build in dealing with an emergency and it's one where you don't start seeing everything you have until you get into it. We're within the range we initially expected and maybe just a little over so thank you for the update. Dave Gates said in corresponding with our DA, keep in mind there are issues with flood permits and there's a risk there and we're still working through that.

Director Dorrington said thank you to all who attended yesterday and thank you to Bob and his crew for the awesome tour. It was time well spent both being together and seeing the projects. It was great.

Commissioner Frazier said regarding the event we had at Big Fork, for a community to be that happy and have that many people show up, good job. Bob Vosen said thank you and I'll share that with the team. Dustin Rouse said it is rare that we have that many people at an event who are really happy with us. Commissioner Sansaver apologized for not being able to be there physically. Everybody here is sick. I hope you had a wonderful experience in the Missoula area.

Agenda Item 22: Letting Lists

Ryan Dahlke presented the Letting Lists to the Commission. This is an informational item only. He handed out hard copies of the Letting List through the end of the year.

Next Commission Meetings

The next Commission Conference Calls were scheduled for July 8, 2025, July 29, 2025, has been cancelled, and August 19, 2025.

The next Commission Meeting was scheduled for August 28, 2025.

Meeting Adjourned

Commissioner Loren Frazier, Chairman
Montana Transportation Commission

Chris Dorrington, Director
Montana Department of Transportation

Jess Bousliman, Secretary
Montana Transportation Commission