



Montana Association of Counties

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MEETING MINUTES

MACo TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Billings, MT | Billings Hotel & Convention Center | February 28, 2022

1. Roll Call & Introductions

Commissioner Ostlund called the meeting to order and noted that Co-chair Dunbar was unable to make it due to a medical issue. The roll was called with a quorum being present and guests announced. Commissioner Ostlund asked Jason Rittal of MACo to take minutes of the proceedings.

2. Review & Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 28th meeting as presented, and Commissioner Seifert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. 160 Driving Academy

Steve Gold, CEO, and Shawna Guiarino spoke about the program, the new CDL mandate, and expanding the safety of transportation.

Mission & Program: An introduction to 160 Driving Academy and the school was given. The details can be reviewed at 160drivingacademy.com. They anticipate 50,000 students this year in the 135 schools. They are willing to discuss additional locations and needs including working with bus drivers.

New CDL Mandate: The FMCSA changed the entry level driver training rules on February 2, 2022. All new drivers must attend a certified school. Certification requires certain standards, for instance they track the proficiency of the drivers daily during a 160 hour/4-week course. The cost of the course through 160 is \$6,000 but only 20% pay full as individuals. Generally, employers are paying. Housing is not included, 92% complete the course with 72% passing the CDL on the first attempt.

Expanding the Safety of Transportation: The training does not negate the necessity for a DOT physical and drug screen which federal law requires. The idea is to improve safety of commercial drivers which includes the training but also ages limits of 19 years to drive within state (cannot cross state borders) and 21 to cross state lines.

Class B licenses are less stringent and require 40 hours. 160 generally asks the employer to provide the specific vehicle for these trainings.

Question: Will counties be exempt? Unsure but probably not.

John Anderson of Fergus County was asked to speak about a program they are looking at using. He indicated that Montana is not enforcing the rule change right now, but the feds will. Fergus County is looking into Infinity I Workforce as a potential training platform. It includes 8 hours of video training with a cost of \$75/driver with a \$500 minimum. Information can be found at www.wearetraining.com.

4. Montana Department of Transportation Updates

Dwane Kailey, Chief Operating Officer, and Dustin Rouse, Preconstruction Engineer provided MDT updates to the committee. MDT would like to work with local governments, acknowledging that in the past that hasn't always been great. Mr. Kailey gave a strong indication of a desire to build relationships with local governments and to find a way to get to yes when trying to solve issues.

Mr. Rouse updated the committee on what we know about the technical aspects of IJJA including that the funding really represents a 20% increase in existing programs. It is not all new funding. The 20% is great but the perception that it is all new money is inaccurate. The greatest benefit is that they have, once again, a long-term bill which allows for a level of certainty over the next 5 years.

Of note programs that did get funds or benefit from IJJA include Electric Vehicle Charging stations at \$6M/year and additions to the bridge programs of \$14M/year making a total investment of \$45M/year or \$225M over the term of the legislation.

The legislation is going to result in competitive programs as well and MDT hopes to collaborate with counties to develop a very large bundle of projects which would include off-system bridges. They firmly believe that a joint effort will lead to a greater level of success and impact statewide. Montana does not get a set amount so match, collaboration, impact from a national perspective will be important to rank well.

It appears that at this point BARSAA will provide enough to match the base funding in the bill but if discretionary funding becomes available that may eat it up to the point it impacts Montana's ability to chase those dollars.

5. Secondary Road Program

Andy White, Secondary Roads Engineer, MDT Planning Division, gave a presentation of each District's project list and explained the order of priority/timing. He urged the group to review the STIP and emphasize the importance of that plan.

FLAP is a tool that can be used by counties. Projects are ranked by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and then passed to the Programming Decisions Committee (PDC). Because of IJJA the match percentage may be eliminated with the federal share allowed to be 100%. There is some question on how that applies to previous rounds/calls and legacy calls. There are projects at risk in the pipeline due to match requirements.

6. Update on District Projects

Rod Nelson, MDT Billings District Administrator, introduced Mr. Taylor a pre-construction engineer to introduce the interactive project map that can be found and used at <https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/map-gallery.aspx>.

Some projects of note for the Billings area include the Interstate Bypass which is estimated at \$70M and involves 4 structures, two of which cross the Yellowstone River, and which adds a 3rd lane each way. The estimated completion date is 2024.

The east Laurel Interchange along with repaving is also slated for the near future.

The Billings Bypass is underway with the initial section(s) complete and the next phases in process.

7. Association Updates

County Road Supervisors John Anderson, Fergus County and Andy Dean, Yellowstone County, informed the group that MACRS would meet March 28th-31st. They invited the committee and asked that they please send their folks.

Karen Laitala, Powell County, provided an update regarding the Montana County Weed Control Association (MWCA). Noxious weed management within IJA may have some opportunities in the “General Ecosystem Restoration” section 40804, the “Invasive Plant Elimination Program” section 115522 for transportation corridors, or “Improving watershed health-restoration for native plant species” section 40907.

She then spoke about the Department of Agriculture and how they are working on education for invasive weeds including dedicating staff to build capacity of high priority weed species task forces; new weed free seed coordination; website; consolidating maps; re-starting stalled task forces; species specific management plans; and growing partnerships.

She stated that we should all be aware that 2022 will be the first year for state-inspected gravel pits, and costs of pesticides will be greatly increased.

Lastly, Ms. Laitala announced that MWCA has also hired a new Executive Director, Bethanie Croxford.

8. Review/Update Committee Policy Statements

The committee reviewed a few general policy changes to be implemented in principle now and ratified at the Annual Conference. The policies to be changed are as follows:

- Policy #2 – MACo coordinates transportation planning for all units of local government.
Update: MACo advocates for coordination of transportation planning between units of local government.
- Policy #3 – MACo consciously uses and plans county roads as tools to encourage proper land use to include a primary focus on farm-to-market activities. The location of roads is a major factor in the pattern of controlled land development. Carefully planned road locations and reconstruction may promote proper land use as well as economic efficiencies in the use of limited transportation funds.
Update: MACo supports using and planning county roads as tools to encourage proper land use to include a primary focus on farm-to-market activities. The location of roads is a major factor in the pattern of controlled land development. Carefully planned road locations and reconstruction may promote proper land use as well as economic efficiencies in the use of limited transportation funds.
- Policy #5 – MACo works with individual counties to develop road and bridge standards applicable to the county situation.
Update: MACo supports individual counties developing road and bridge standards applicable to the county situation.
- Policy #8 – MACo maintains uniform procedures for posting private land. Such posting procedures are warranted due to their applicability to gas tax revenue determination.
Update: MACo supports uniform procedures for posting private land. Such posting procedures are warranted due to their applicability to gas tax revenue determination.
- Policy #10 – MACo supports the traditional role of the Local Technical Assistance Program at MSU to provide technical assistance, safety and operator training, and risk management to local government employees across the state and opposes diverting LTAP resources to grant writing and research, believing such diversions will weaken the level of services provided to Local Governments.
Update: MACo supports allocation of and efficient utilization of state and federal funding to provide technical assistance, safety and operator training, and risk management to local government employees across the state and opposes using these resources for grant writing and research, believing that such diversion weakens the level of services provided to local governments.

Motion for Mr. Rittal to make the changes in policy as presented by Chair Ostlund, begin utilizing them, and present them for final ratification at the annual meeting was made by Commissioner Real Bird III and seconded by Commissioner MacDonald. Motion Carried.

9. Other Business

None

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned.

MACO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Ostlund, Co-chair, Yellowstone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darrel Folkvord, Broadwater | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roy Rost, Fallon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Richard Dunbar, Co-chair, Phillips | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keith Holmlund, Custer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Strohmaier, Missoula |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Baue, Treasure | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Larson, Cascade | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Vandersloot, Big Horn |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Bolstad, Sheridan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Macdonald, Roosevelt | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Loren Young, Richland |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jerry Collins, Garfield | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim McCormick, Lewis & Clark | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Anderson, MACRS Rep., Fergus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tony Cox, Sanders | <input type="checkbox"/> James Moos, McCone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andy Dean, MACRS Rep., Yellowstone |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doug Crachy, Powell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Olson, Powder River | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karen Laitala, MWCA Rep., Powell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frank DePriest, Blaine | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> George Real Bird III, Big Horn | |