

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administration Conference Room # 217 at the Billings Logan International Airport on Wednesday, November 5, 2025. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Steve Tostenrud
Megan Bostrom
Allison Corbyn
James Mariska
Denis Pitman
Barbara Schneeman
Ron Spence

City Staff

Jeff Roach, Director of Aviation and Transit
Paul Khera, Assistant. Director of Aviation
Rusty Logan, Assistant Director of Transit
Raya Logan-Jackson, Administrative Support

Guests

Mr. Lem Robinson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Steve Tostenrud called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

Megan motioned to approve October 1, 2025 minutes as recorded, Denise seconded. Minutes approved.

Courtesies – Barbara wanted to thank Marita for her participation on the YAM Art Board to help pick our next art exhibitors at the Airport.

Public Comment Opportunity – Mr. Robinson was asked if he had anything to discuss with the board and he stated he was just here to listen.

- **Master Plan Update:** Final draft alternatives (Chapter 5) in progress, Final draft with one item for each area expected to be completed and have a public meeting by Spring, no tentative date.
- **Airport Governance Update:** October 15th kickoff meeting with consultant group and executive team. Draft schedule given to all board members with timeline for the project's Phase 1. In research and data collection as well as stakeholder input phase. Expected to go to City Council by May meeting.
- **Government Shutdown:** Record setting length of Government shutdown, elections are expected to spur some new activity. Last Friday staffing triggers were hit by TSA and ATC at larger airports. Probability increasing for Significant Impact Day, when entire national airspace system is impacted by callouts or staffing issues with ATC or TSA. Locally we have

not seen impact with our Tower or TSA staff. We have had local outreach & community support, food box distribution was organized by Family Services, they also encouraged Federal workers to come shop their free food pantry at their warehouse. Community members donated treats & gift cards. Schools offered their backpack program food assistance and United airlines catered lunch for our FAA and ATC staff. When the federal government reopens, it is expected to take about 9 days for staff to receive backpay based on timeline from 2017 shutdown.

Informational Items

Airport Operations

- Current Passenger counts 775,000 and with current projections BIL will hit 1 Million passengers in December 2025.
- **Runway 7-25 project:** still in progress, estimated to be 80-90% complete. 10/23 a NOTAM was issued about runway closures from 12:00am-4:00am, due to an unknown FAA issue the notam disappeared, and reappeared. In that time a flight for Alaska airlines took off late due to IT delays, did not receive the NOTAM- and had to divert to Bozeman Airport. We did receive some complaints in office, but most were taken directly to the air carrier. PAPI Lights need to be flight checked, delays due to shut down. Project is estimated to be completed by Nov. 21st 2025.
- **Ticket Counter:** Currently we have 33 counter spots available, after expansion we will have 40 in the same footprint, the back of house space and offices will all be updated. It will also include an inline system for baggage. Project estimate is 18-24 months and will be phased, possibly in 1/3 sections at a time. Counter space has not been updated in 30 years and needs modernization; new counters will accommodate oversized bags and provide an IT Room for air carriers.
- **Taxi Lane Update:** Still in design stage and design is undergoing the required Independent Fee Estimate, goal is to open more hangar space.
- **Pond E Expansion:** project design underway, expanding to south.
- **Ops and Maintenance:**
 - Annual Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (WHMP) review was completed Oct 16. No significant issues identified.
 - Skylight over TSA queuing undergoing warranty work.
 - Window cleaning this week.
- **Airport Vacancy Updates:**
 - Reposted Supervisor Ops/ARFF. Candidate backed out due to wife's health issues.
 - Custodian vacancy posting not receiving applicants

- Admin Asst. (Raya) last day is November 18. Reason for leaving is a personal issue, not airport related. Position reposted.
- IT position is going to be posted after city review, position description is with HR.

MET Operations Update

- **Construction Updates:** Punch-list significant work complete; full closeout anticipated by end of November.
- **Bus Wash:** Submittals in progress; construction expected to begin within a month.
- **Access Controls & Security Camera Projects**
 - Transfer Center & Stewart Park: Upgrades to downtown cameras and new installations at Stewart Park, including building access controls.
 - Metroplex Facility: Remaining structure to receive electronic access controls and lot gates.
- **Bus Purchases**
 - Approval for purchase of 8 vans via Washington State DES contract (no bid required).
 - Cost: ~\$150,000 per vehicle; total ~\$1.2 million.
- **Family Services Bus Stop:** In- House Survey received 120 responses after filtering responses only about 10 respondents significantly affected by current stop distance. MET will work with MDT to establish a marked crosswalk. Family Services continues to request direct service.
- **Temporary Disability Program**
 - Supports addiction treatment clients through temporary benefit codes.
 - Designed to prevent indefinite disability benefit accounts.
- **Training & Certification:** Ongoing employee recertifications and new hire training.
- **Funding & Governance Study:** Committee meetings ongoing; next meeting scheduled week after next. Expect more complete recommendations and deliverables at that time.
- **National Transit Database (NTD)**
 - Report submitted 10/30/25, awaiting FTA feedback. Transitioned from manual surveys to APC+GPS data for accuracy.
 - Analyzed 502,000+ lines of APC data for Passenger Miles Traveled (PMT).
 - FY25 PMT: 2,744,594 miles (536,256 passengers) (Manually Surveyed)
 - FY24 PMT: 1,460,464 miles (385,381 passengers) (APC + GPS tracking)
 - **Increase: +1.28 million miles, +150,875 passengers**
 - Average Miles per Passenger: Weekday 5.08 | Saturday 5.56 (up from FY23's 3.84 / 3.88)
- **Fleet Update**
 - Aging fleet continues to experience recurring issues (hoses, turbos, batteries).
 - Electric bus troubleshooting ongoing.

- One mechanic on long-term leave, expected to be returning soon.
- New Maintenance Supervisor (Dan): Implemented cost savings through alternative sourcing of goods.
- **Hanover Technology Update:**
 - Added cellular connectivity for destination signs, annunciators, and infotainment systems.
 - Enables real-time updates and remote troubleshooting.
 - Installation: ~45 minutes per bus.
- **Apple Maps Integration:** Project nearly ready for public release. Trip planning functions complete; working to finalize real-time arrival estimates.
- **Personnel Update:** Zero driver vacancies; two new hires begin Monday.

Ridership Stats:

- September Fixed Routes: 56,407 rides (+11.2%)
- Paratransit: 3,703 rides (-0.4%)
- Total: 60,110 rides (+10.45%)
- Year-over-Year Growth: +14.54%
- First month exceeding 60,000 rides since January 2014 (60,829).
- Nov 3: 2,500+ riders (2.8 people boarding/minute).

CIP UPDATE: A draft of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) has been provided to the Finance Department and distributed to city council members as part of the annual budget process. The plan will be presented to City Council on November 17, 2025, with a decision expected by the December 10, 2025 meeting.

The estimated project cost for the terminal ticket counter project is \$24 million, with funding anticipated from multiple sources, including:

- FAA AIP Entitlement Funding and \$7.5 million in discretionary funding
- PFCs/ATP funds
- Potential financing for a portion of the total cost

The CIP includes realigned projects for the first four years and introduces FY2031 proposed projects for the fifth year. The FY27 budget process will begin in January.

Discussion also included the New Airport Operations Building design. The update is primarily driven by the age of the current facility and the fact that operations equipment and vehicles have outgrown the existing site. The Master Plan identifies three potential sites, with two located on

the north side of the airfield, favored for their available space and central proximity to overall airfield operations.

Montana Dept of Transportation Corridor Study: A virtual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, from 1:00–2:00 PM, followed by an in-person open house on Thursday, November 20, from 4:00–6:00 PM at the Aviation Department Operations Center.

Discussion will focus on primary access points for the Highway 3 improvement project, with AJ Way identified as the main access point per a request from the State National Guard. For airport-related improvements, plans include adding a left-turn lane at Overlook Drive and South View. The airport is also encouraging MDT to consider connecting frontage roads to AJ Way, which would require acquiring right-of-way from Billings Flying Service.

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD:

Future Aviation and Transit Board Meeting Locations: Ron wanted to discuss future locations for holding the Aviation and Transit board meetings due to concerns of lack of public opportunity for participation due to parking constraints, lack of space, and lack of public participation in meetings. Utilizing the new MET conference room was discussed or alternating locations between the Airport and MET. Jeff noted meetings are publicly posted, if public community members wanted to participate in a meeting we are able to validate parking passes for them. Board members emphasized that we need to publish that we would validate parking with meeting notices so the public is aware of that option ahead of time.

Meeting adjourned at 5:21 PM.