

**Considerations for discussion of 15 Climate Change Advisory Committee
Recommendations
Environmental Quality Council
Draft April 2008**

The information below is a summary of key points from the Montana Climate Change Action Plan and the associated appendices. The legislative and administrative options prepared by staff and participating agencies do not include an economic analysis.

TLU-10

Transportation System Management

(69% of participating EQC members voting 4 or 5 and 61% of the public voting 4 or 5)

✓ Promote the development of efficiencies in Montana's transportation system to achieve fuel savings and improved safety.

* **Note:** Much of the information below was prepared and offered by the Montana Department of Transportation.

Conservation Considerations:

- Reductions in transportation sector
- Pages H-44 through H-46 Appendices

What's Being Done:

- MDT, county road supervisors, and Montana transit providers evaluate current infrastructure, options and opportunities on regular basis.
- MDT, working with transit providers has expanded transit service in smaller communities from nine providers in 2005 to 36 community transit providers by 2008, a consolidated service model.
- All urban areas consider bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs in transportation plans which are funded by MDT.
- Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula use their Metropolitan Planning processes and all other urban areas use their transportation planning processes to consider allocating urban highway funds to transit or bike/pedestrian facilities (23 USC Section 134, and MCA 62-127-(3)).
- MDT allocates over \$5 million annually to local and tribal governments for "transportation enhancements" through the Montana Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP). This program is established via a tri-party agreement between MDT, Montana Association of Counties, and the League of Cities and Towns. In CTEP, local and tribal governments select eligible projects with this funding after engaging in a public involvement process. More than 50% (5 year average = \$2,456,138) of the projects selected are for locally important bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- MDT also considers bike and pedestrian infrastructure in all projects and constructs these features as appropriate. Beyond the CTEP program, MDT annually expends over \$3 million on footpaths and bicycle trails (5 year average = \$3,166,758). MCA 60-3-301(3) provides that MDT must let an average of \$200,000 each year on footpaths and bicycle trails over a five year period. Actual expenditures exceed statute by 1583% over a five

- year period.
- MDT allocates approximately \$2.0 million annually for locally developed urban transportation plans. These transportation plans must consider the following factors in developing plans and programs (23 USC Sections 134 and 135) as does the states long-range transportation plan. They explicitly consider bike and pedestrian needs. They are developed locally to ensure consistency with local land-use goals and local buy-in for the adopted strategies. Note that these locally developed transportation plans must consider the following factors:
 1. energy conservation
 2. Support for economic vitality
 3. Safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
 4. Increased security of the transportation system
 5. Increased accessibility and mobility for people and freight
 6. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patters
 7. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the system across and between modes for people and freight
 8. Promote efficient system management and operation
 9. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
 - MDT has committed to a schedule that will update all transportation plans in Montana before 2012 with an emphasis on operations and safety. The operations element in urban transportation plans will improve traffic flow and reduce conflict points. In metropolitan areas the transportation plans will meet air quality conformity requirements for criteria pollutants.
 - MDT has committed to implement congestion management plans for construction projects on all high volume corridors by 2009. These plans will implement strategies to keep traffic flowing through construction zones.
 - Urban Transportation Districts receive money allocated by MDT for operating and contracting for operation of public transportation systems, 7-14-102, MCA. Urban Transportation Districts are formed pursuant to 7-14-201, MCA.
 - Zoning regulations contemplate traffic congestion, pursuant to 76-2-304, MCA. Local subdivision regulations contemplate congestion pursuant to 76-3-501, MCA.
 - Department of Transportation required to provide “energy-efficient and ecologically compatible transportation services with optimum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy,” 2-15-2505, MCA.

Potential Action:

* Legislative or EQC options (not complete, intended to be starting point for discussion):

- Legislation to strengthen current access management programs.
- Legislation could review options for further expansion of transit services. This would require a new or expanded state revenue source. Transit cannot operate without subsidy, according to MDT. The only currently available state funding available for transit is approximately \$250,000 annually generated via the TransAde program (MCA 7-14-

112). Since 2005 MDT has been able to expand community transit services using federal funds through the 49 USC Section 5311 program.

- State and local governments ensure that all new streets are designed to provide full range of transportation options. Amend existing planning laws. This would have funding implications for the cost of infrastructure. The current federal and state funding invested in bike and pedestrian facilities is in excess of \$5.7 million annually. A mandated a design standard will increase the overall cost of infrastructure, according to MDT.
- Preserve railroad right-of-ways. The only federal funding available for this is to use CTEP funding to preserve the right-of-way for bike/ped facilities. The Moore to Lewistown line was preserved using this funding source. MDT has also acquired railroad right-of-way for future highway construction. This mechanism is only available if a highway construction project is under development and needs the right-of-way.
- Expand upon MDT purpose in 2-15,2505, MCA to include reducing vehicle miles traveled where efficient. The agency purpose statement now includes providing “energy efficient” and “ecologically compatible transportation services.”
- The 2007 Legislature contemplated House Bill No. 505 to create a travel reduction task force, provide for state agencies to develop alternative commuting options for state employees, provide guidelines for reducing travel for official purposed by state agencies, and provide benchmarks for reducing travel by state employees. The bill died in committee.

* Resolution or recommendation stating intent

* No Action

* Administrative options:

- MDT evaluate and recommend roundabout installation as appropriate and evaluate no less than 15 intersections or locations annually. Evaluations are currently an on-going agency commitment. MDT encourages roundabout installation, when the installation is based on sound engineering principles. All right-angle intersections considered for new construction and any intersection being analyzed for safety are considered for this treatment.
- MDT continue commitment to multimodal transportation systems by continuing to invest in bicycle and pedestrian facilities. MDT currently spends about \$5 million annually on these activities. MDT also invests about \$7 million annually in 36 community transit services. The Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula transit systems receive another \$3.6 million annually for metro-transit services. All urban areas may transfer highway funds to be used for either transit or bike/pedestrian facilities.
- MDT continued support of community transit systems.
- MDT will complete signal synchronization on all state managed routes in urban areas, mostly arterials, by 2009.
- MDT continues to develop access management plans
- MDT continues to convert traffic lights to LED bulbs by 2010 and works with cities to convert lights under city jurisdiction.