Zero Fare Public Transit in Missoula

Talking Points

**Creating a More Livable Missoula with Zero-Fare Public Transit System**

**Core Message:**

*Mountain Line bus service benefits us all and is a long-time community partner contributing to the quality of life and local economy in Missoula. Mountain Line helps students get to school, employees get to work, and helps seniors and people with disabilities remain independent.*

* A zero-fare public transit system, one riders do not need to pay upon boarding, will increase the ridership and efficiency of Mountain Line, our community bus system.
* Mountain Line’s community partners support zero-fare community transit to substantially increase ridership, help our buses operate more efficiently, and make better use of transit dollars.
* By going zero-fare, many more people will ride the bus, which reduces single-vehicle trips, parking and traffic congestion, while helping improve air quality. Research from the 39 communities with zero-fare systems indicates that ridership will increase from 20% to 60% in a matter of just a few months.
* Without a need to collect fares at every stop, buses will run more efficiently and on-time, reliably moving Missoulians where we need to go.
* Zero-fare will allow Mountain Line to operate more efficiently, saving money on various operational costs associated with ticketing and fare collection.
* By allocating existing Missoula’s transportation funds and forming community partnerships Missoula can implement the most effective way to significantly increase bus ridership.
* If Mountain Line eliminated its on-board fare collection, ridership would see an increase of 25%, or about 250,000 rides annually.
* Missoula can support a zero-fare public bus service by reallocating existing transportation funds within existing budgets, without increasing taxes or compromising bus service.
* More people riding the bus means a healthier, more-livable Missoula, with less air pollution and traffic congestion.
* Like our public schools and our public library, affordable public transportation serves a community need that benefits us all, and it can be funded and operated more efficiently without a direct user fee.
* By eliminating on-board fare collection, Mountain Line can ensure that everyone—no matter their income—can access affordable public transportation.