



MOUNTAIN LINE

Strategic Plan

2026–2029





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Welcome Letter from Heather Dalmolin

Mountain Line CEO and General Manager



On behalf of the employees at Mountain Line, we are pleased to present the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan. With a reputation for delivering on our promises and advancing transit initiatives across our community, we want to continue to improve the way we communicate our service objectives and share how we are measuring success.

This means we must behave in ways consistent with our mission, vision, and the core values that drive us toward continuous improvement. As a result, our Strategic Plan will focus on the following key areas for success:

- **Service Excellence:** Mountain Line will deliver excellent service to our riders, community, and funding partners.
- **Employee Investment:** Mountain Line will support employees with quality jobs, competitive wages, and development opportunities.
- **Community Value:** Mountain Line will partner with our community to help them reach their goals for sustainability, mobility, and smart growth.
- **Financial Stability:** Mountain Line will serve as good stewards of the funds from the community and our partners to provide safe, reliable transit options, today and for the future.

These strategic outcomes are designed to achieve long-term sustainability. We will continue to focus on providing transit programs with an intent to be efficient and effective while embracing opportunities to be innovative in projects, community impact, and funding. This approach has allowed us to differentiate ourselves from other small transit systems in the industry with high transit use and increasingly high frequency.

Success for Mountain Line is rooted in both agency and community leadership that believes in our mission and vision and a strong employee culture that embraces our Core Values to support each other and serve our community.

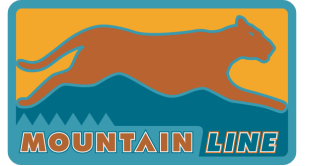
Many transit agencies are struggling today due to challenges in local funding and being embattled by faltering public perception of the safety and reliability of transit. Mountain Line is extremely proud to be able to provide a high level of service that is safe and reliable, a balanced budget that ensures spending is aligned with the services offered, and proud of the public support we have here in Flagstaff. This has allowed us to grow our transit programs, resulting in steady growth of ridership, expansion of service hours and frequency, and development of infrastructure to support our programs.

This plan is designed to provide us with a guidebook for determining and measuring success for the future, ensuring we can sustain and build on the many successes Mountain Line has experienced over the past 25 years.

Sincerely,

Heather Dalmolin

Executive Summary



INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan was created by the Mountain Line team through a collaborative process that began in October 2025. Staff and leadership worked together to develop an ambitious work plan that answered the questions of why, what, how, and who.

By sorting through these fundamental questions, the Mountain Line team's focus is united on work that matters most to the customer experience, organizational priorities, and meeting the needs of Mountain Line's member agencies: the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Coconino Community College, and Northern Arizona University.

Leading the way with sustainable transportation that connects communities and provides value for all.

This statement serves as a clarion call for the ambitious vision everyone at Mountain Line has agreed to work toward.

SUCCESS OUTCOMES

To achieve this goal, the Strategic Plan outlines four success outcomes that guide Mountain Line's work for the next three years:

1. Service excellence
2. Employee investment
3. Financial stability
4. Community value

To support these outcomes, a detailed and prioritized workplan identifies the projects and programs teams will focus on over the next three years.

PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

To track progress and ensure accountability, Mountain Line is introducing the Summit Scorecard performance report. This new tool will capture measurable results tied to each success outcome.

The scorecard will be reviewed quarterly, allowing staff, customers, and the community to monitor progress, respond to challenges, and make informed adjustments as needed.

VALUES TO WORK BY

Driving all of this important work is an organizational commitment to a set of shared values chosen by the Mountain Line team.

These values reflect a commitment to customers, collaboration and teamwork, curiosity and problem-solving, integrity, and respect for all. They guide how Mountain Line serves customers, supports employees, and partners with the community, shaping not just what the organization does, but how it does it.



MOUNTAIN LINE'S
WHY



Getting You Where You Want To Go

MOUNTAIN LINE LEADERSHIP



Heather Dalmolin
CEO and General Manager



Jacki Lenners
Deputy General Manager



Megan Coons
Finance Director



Sam Short
Workforce Director

MOUNTAIN LINE is the transit agency in northern Arizona operating fixed route bus service on nine routes, paratransit service, vanpool, and seasonal Mountain Express service to Arizona Snowbowl.

Established in 2001, Mountain Line has grown into a system that employs more than 100 people and transports more than two million customers a year.

MOUNTAIN LINE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Tony Williams
Coconino Community College



Josh Maher
Northern Arizona University



Lori Matthews
City of Flagstaff



Jeronimo Vasquez
Coconino County



Miranda Sweet
City of Flagstaff

THE MOUNTAIN LINE BOARD OF DIRECTORS exists to ensure representation of all Mountain Line partner members. The Board views itself as being primarily a policy-making and governance body.

The Board has delegated administrative functions to the Mountain Line General Manager and staff, subject to ongoing monitoring and oversight.

MOUNTAIN LINE Strategic Planning Process

Planning for Mountain Line’s successful 2026-2029 fiscal year agendas began in October 2025 with focused efforts from staff, Board members, and community stakeholders all striving for the common goal of delivering high-quality services to Mountain Line customers and value to the Flagstaff community.



MOUNTAIN LINE Mission and Vision

The hearts and minds of the Mountain Line workforce are captured in the *why* we choose to do what we do.

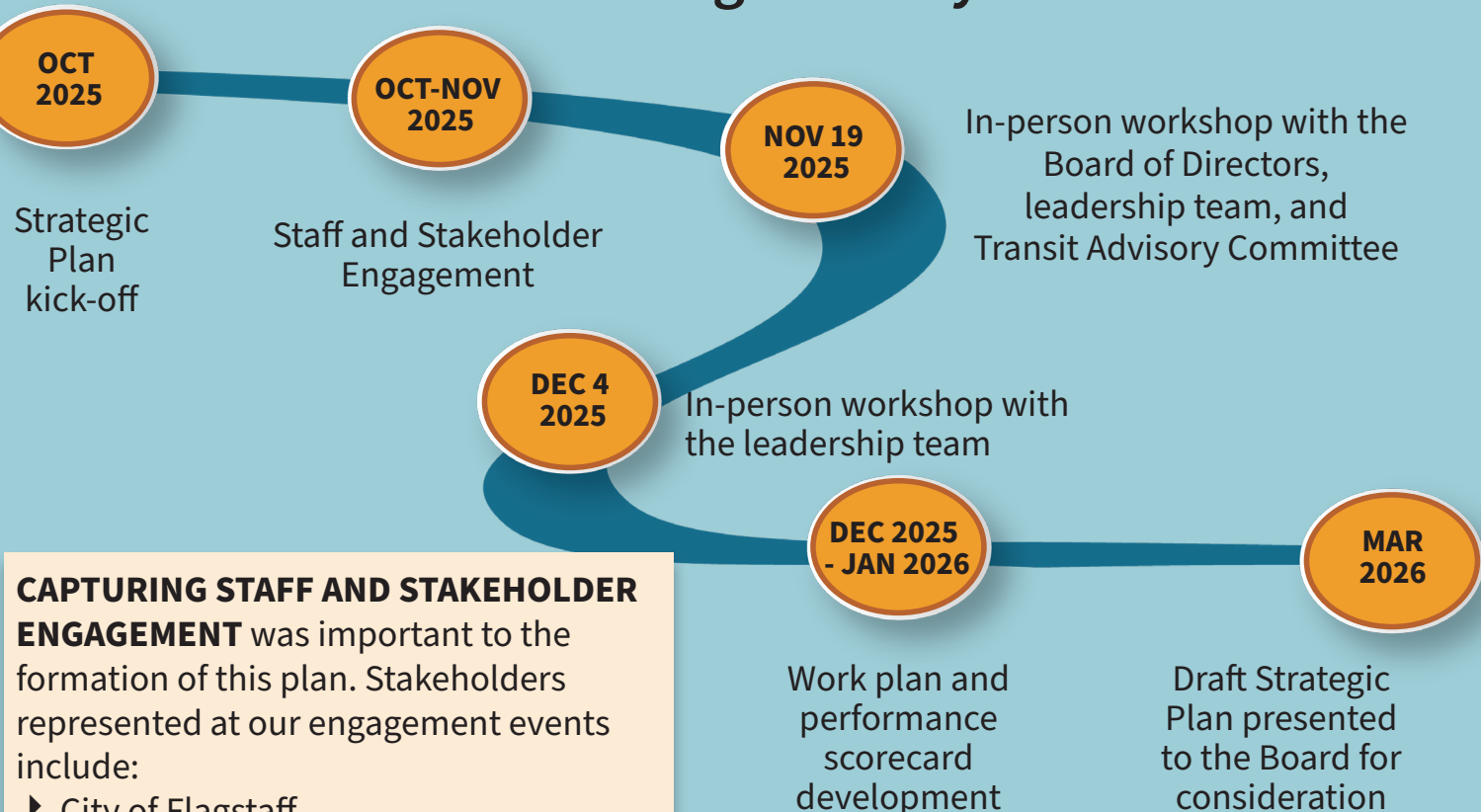
MISSION

Getting you where you want to go.

VISION

Leading the way with sustainable transportation that connects communities and provides value for all.

The Planning Journey



CAPTURING STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

was important to the formation of this plan. Stakeholders represented at our engagement events include:

- ▶ City of Flagstaff
- ▶ Flagstaff Unified School District
- ▶ Northern Arizona University
- ▶ MetroPlan
- ▶ Coconino Community College
- ▶ Community-at-Large

MOUNTAIN LINE STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS & TIMELINE

1. **October 2025:** Strategic Plan kick off
2. **October - November 2025:** Staff and Stakeholder Engagement, including 15+ interviews with Board members, leadership team, and Transit Advisory Committee members
3. **November 19, 2025:** In-person workshop with the Board, leadership team, and Transit Advisory Committee
4. **December 4, 2025:** In-person workshop with the leadership team
5. **December 2025 - January 2026:** Work plan and performance scorecard development
6. **March 2026:** Draft Strategic Plan presented to the Board for consideration

MOUNTAIN LINE Values



The principles that guide Mountain Line’s culture and define how the workforce shows up for one another is captured in the agency’s Values.

Customer Commitment	I value the customers that use our service, so I commit to making a welcoming environment for all, using my expertise, skills, and knowledge.
Collaboration	I value working together as a team, so I commit to actively listening to my teammates and communicating clearly with compassion.
Embrace Challenges	I value curiosity and critical thinking, so I commit to solving problems with an eye for improving our services.
Integrity	I value doing the right thing at all times and holding my teammates to the same standard, so I commit to fostering an environment built on trust and honesty.
Respect	I value differences, so I commit to treating everyone I meet with kindness and grace.

MOUNTAIN LINE Success Moments & Outcomes

At the heart of Mountain Line’s strategy is a shared commitment to delivering excellence to the Flagstaff community. That commitment is focused through four core areas of service and operations, each supported by a clearly defined success moment and a measurable outcome for fiscal years 2026–2029. Achieving these outcomes will position Mountain Line to fulfill its promise of excellence and strengthen the value it provides to the community it serves.

DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS

OUTCOME AREA	DEFINITION OF SUCCESS AND MEASURABLE OUTCOME
Service Excellence	DEFINITION Mountain Line will deliver excellent service to our riders, community, and funding partners. OUTCOME By the end of 2026, establish a baseline for the percent of customers who are satisfied or very satisfied with Mountain Line service (Fixed Route and Paratransit) using a customer satisfaction survey.
Employee Investment	DEFINITION Mountain Line will support employees with quality jobs, competitive wages, and development opportunities. OUTCOME By the end of 2026, achieve an Employee Engagement Index score of 76 using an employee engagement survey.
Financial Stability	DEFINITION Mountain Line will serve as good stewards of the funds from the community and our partners to provide safe, reliable transit options, today and for the future. OUTCOME By the end of 2026, maintain the required operating fund balance: 25% of 5-year operations cost forecast.
Community Value	DEFINITION Mountain Line will partner with our community to help them reach their goals for sustainability, mobility, and smart growth. OUTCOME By the end of 2026, establish a baseline for the percent of the community that believes Mountain Line brings value to the region using a community survey.

MOUNTAIN LINE Work Plan Priorities

To achieve the Success Outcomes, and to carry out Mountain Line’s mission of “Getting you where you want to go” while also advancing its vision of “Leading the way with sustainable transportation that connects communities and provides value for all,” the Mountain Line workforce will implement a series of tactical projects and programs over the next three years.

Each initiative has a clearly defined owner and implementation team. Quarterly milestones

have been established to ensure accountability and keep delivery on track.

The work plan tactics outlined below are aligned with four core strategic areas:

- ▶ Service Excellence
- ▶ Employee Investment
- ▶ Financial Stability
- ▶ Community Value

OUTCOME AREA	TACTIC NAME	OWNER
Service Excellence	Customer Satisfaction Survey	Deputy General Manager
	On-Time Performance Strategy	Operations Director
	Bus Stop Improvements	Capital Development Manager
	Technology Improvements	IT Manager
Employee Investment	Operational Assessment Implementation	Deputy General Manager
	Implement Employee Development Plan	Workforce Director
	Employee Engagement Strategy	Workforce Director
Financial Stability	Employee Retention Plan	Workforce Director
	Asset Maintenance and Replacement Fund	Finance Director
	Sustainable Financial Plan	Finance Director
	Implement Financial Monitoring Process	Finance Director
Community Value	Capital Improvement Plan	Finance Director
	Prop 488 Communications Strategy	Deputy General Manager
	Low-Income Fare Pilot Program	Deputy General Manager
	Community Value Survey	Deputy General Manager
	Community Value Communications Strategy	Deputy General Manager

MOUNTAIN LINE Performance Scorecard

A strong strategy requires a clear mechanism to measure progress. With this Strategic Plan, Mountain Line introduces that mechanism.

The Mountain Line quarterly performance scorecard – Summit Scorecard – provides a focused view of the agency performance across metrics directly aligned with the previously defined four core strategic areas.

Designed to offer both clarity and depth, the scorecard delivers a concise snapshot of performance for those seeking a high-level view while also providing detailed data for those who

value deeper insight. Meaningful metrics and ambitious targets will help keep the workforce, Board of Directors, customers, and community informed and aligned around Mountain Line’s definitions of success.

While public transit generates countless data points, the Summit Scorecard includes only those key performance indicators (KPIs) that are directly tied to Mountain Line’s success outcomes and vision of leading the way with sustainable transportation that connects communities and provides value for all.



Summit Scorecard quarterly reporting provides a focused view of agency performance across metrics directly aligned with Mountain Line’s four core strategic areas.



SUMMIT SCORECARD

OUTCOME AREA	METRIC / KPI	DEFINITION	2026 PERFORMANCE GOAL	INFORMATION SYSTEM	OWNER	GOAL POINTS
Service Excellence	Overall Satisfaction (Fixed Route)	The percentage of customers who are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall performance of Mountain Line service.	Establish Baseline	Customer Survey	Deputy GM - Ops	6
	Overall Satisfaction (Paratransit)	The percentage of customers who are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall performance of Mountain Line service.	Establish Baseline	Customer Survey	Deputy GM - Ops	6
	On-Time Performance – Perception	The percentage of customers who are satisfied or very satisfied with on-time performance.	83%	Customer Survey	Deputy GM - Ops	5
	Service Improvements	The total number of service hours for all modes over baseline service hours (baseline=service hours prior to Prop 488 vote=75,667 hours).	9,626	Internal Metrics	Planning Director	4
	Personal Security – Perception	The percentage of customers who feel safe or very safe on-board and/or at bus stops.	86%	Customer Survey	Workforce Director	4
	Ease of Use – Perception	The average percent of customers who are satisfied or very satisfied with the statements: How easy it is to: (1) Purchase and pay your fare; (2) Plan your trip; and (3) Transfer buses.	Establish Baseline	Customer Survey	Deputy GM	4
	Safety – Actual	The number of preventable and non-preventable safety incidents per 100k miles.	6.00	Internal Metrics	Workforce Director	2
	Customer Net Promoter Score (Fixed Route)	On a scale of 0-10 of how likely to recommend Mountain Line to others.	Establish Baseline	Customer Survey	Deputy GM - Ops	2
	Customer Net Promoter Score (Paratransit)	On a scale of 0-10 of how likely to recommend Mountain Line to others.	Establish Baseline	Customer Survey	Deputy GM - Ops	2
						35
Employee Investment	Employee Engagement Index	The overall employee engagement score (%) as defined by 4 key factors indicated in an employee survey: (1) the % of employees who feel they understand what success looks like for ML and how they contribute to that success; (2) the % of employees that believe they have the resources/tools necessary to perform their duties; (3) the % of employees that feel their supervisors provide feedback on their performance; (4) and the % of employees who believe they work in a safe environment where their perspective is invited.	76	Employee Survey	Workforce Director	8
	Employee Turnover Rate	Quarterly turnover rate compared to the previous year = (Number of Employees who voluntarily left) / [beginning + ending number of employees] / 2].	7%	Inflection	Workforce Director	6
	Workforce Preparedness	The percentage of employees who believe they consistently receive on-going, job specific training to assist me in becoming a more efficient employee.	69%	Employee Survey	Workforce Director	6
	Living the Values	The percentage of employees who believe their colleagues live the agency values.	Establish Baseline	Employee Survey	Workforce Director	5
						25
Financial Stability	Future Readiness	Maintain the required operating fund balance: 25% of 5-year operations cost forecast.	25%	Internal Metrics	Finance Director	6
	Operating Sustainability	Months of operating cost on hand.	3	Internal Metrics	Finance Director	4
	Budget Adherence	Did not exceed budget allotment.	100%	Internal Metrics	Finance Director	4
	Cost per Hour (Fixed Route)	Operating expenses divided by total revenue hours (YTD).	\$156.86	Internal Metrics	Deputy GM - Ops	2
	Cost per Hour (Paratransit)	Operating expenses divided by total revenue hours (YTD).	\$136.38	Internal Metrics	Deputy GM - Ops	2
	Cost per Hour (On Demand)	Operating expenses divided by total revenue hours (YTD).	\$122.51	Internal Metrics	Deputy GM - Ops	2
						20
Community Value	Community Value – Perception	Establish a baseline for the percent of the community that believes Mountain Line brings value to the region based on a community survey.	Establish Baseline	Community Survey	Deputy GM	6
	Greenhouse Gas Reduction	Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. (Metric Tons of CO2)	77	Internal Metrics	Deputy GM - Ops	4
	Amenities	The percentage of the community that has a positive perception of amenities (vehicles, stops, shelters, hub, etc.).	Establish Baseline	Community Survey	Deputy GM - Ops	4
	Community Events	The number of community events Mountain Line participates in in 2026.	12	Internal Metrics	Deputy GM	3
	Access to High Frequency Service	The percentage of the Flagstaff population within a 1/2-mile walk of high frequency service (20-minute headways or better). (Baseline=68.2%)	78.5%	Remix	Planning Director	3
						20
						100



Getting you where
you want to go.

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