

Northern Transit Interlocal Coordination Plan Outline Fiscal Year 2023

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Northern Transit “Enjoy the Ride!” Interlocal



***Montana Department of Transportation
March 15, 2023***

1. Date Adopted by Board of Directors:

- The Board of Directors of Northern Transit Interlocal is actively involved in setting policy for Northern Transit Interlocal. For the purpose of obtaining cost-effective insurance, Toole County agreed to be the lead agency of Northern Transit Interlocal; minutes showing approval by the TAC and formal approval of the Coordination Plan by the Toole County Commissioners/TAC Board of Directors on February 14 & 15, 2023, are attached.
- Please see Affidavit of Publication (submitted to section indicated through Black CAT Transit Data Management System and attached organizational chart.)

2. Agencies Involved

- Northern Transit Interlocal was formed by the communities of Shelby, Conrad and Cut Bank and counties of Toole, Pondera, and Glacier in the fall of 2005.
Northern Transit Interlocal by-laws are on file.
- Northern Transit Interlocal processed two capital project grants in FY2021. Currently they are still in the development stage. NTI submitted a two capital project grants in FY 2023 with no notification on submissions. All Bus operated by Northern Transit Interlocal include:
 - 1 – 2019 Dodge Caravan ADA – 5 Passenger - Gas; ADA Accessible
 - Mileage – 12/31/2022: 59,443
 - 1 – 2017 Ford Econo – 27 passenger – Gas; Accessible
 - Mileage 12/31/2022: 60,067
 - 1 - 2017 Ford Econo – 27 passenger – Gas: Accessible
 - Mileage 12/31/2022: 65,597
 - 1 - 2017 Ford Econo – 19 passenger – Gas: Accessible
 - Mileage 12/31/2022: 120,797
 - 1 – 2009 Ford F450 – 21 passenger – Diesel; Accessible
 - Mileage 12/31/2022: 208,541
- Northern Transit Interlocal was awarded (2) 27 Passenger Bus for FY 2018 to replace both 2009 Ford 450 Bus. Northern Transit Interlocal was awarded a 19-passenger bus in FY 2017 to replace the 2008 Dodge Sprinter.

- The first day of bus service was Monday, March 3, 2008. Please see attached schedules for current route information. One of the 27 Passenger or sized vehicles in fleet to match passenger load, provides transportation from Shelby to Kalispell on Tuesday and Friday weekly schedule. The 19 passenger 2017 bus typically operates the morning schedule to Great Falls on Monday and Thursday. Our 21 or 27 passenger bus provides afternoon transportation from Shelby to Great Falls on a Monday and Thursday afternoon. (One a.m. run; One p.m. run). NOTE: Glacier County Transit, Toole County Transit, & Pondera County Transit work the outer areas of each county to bring passengers to an NTI pick up point. For example: Glacier County Transit brings passengers from Browning & Cut Bank to meet the NTI bus in Shelby that goes onto Great Falls.

- Brochure included as indicated on specified section in Black CAT application system.
- Maintenance Plan and Driver's Manual on file.
- Drug and Alcohol Policy on file.
- Participating agencies include City of Shelby, City of Cut Bank, City of Conrad, Toole County, Glacier County and Pondera County. Kalispell Regional Medical Center, Logan Health Systems and Benefis Hospital make donations to the operating expenses for Northern Transit Interlocal. The working relationship between medical providers and Northern Transit has grown over the years. NTI provides them with statistical data annually that indicates the number of passengers/patients that make the connection to their facilities, via Northern Transit Interlocal. The amount of additional funding from these two major medical companies is a driving force in the success and growth of NTI. NTI also receives grant funding from Town Pump Charitable Foundation. NTI also coordinates services with Blackfeet Transit, Eagle Transit, Great Falls Transit, Liberty County Transit, Little Shell Tribe Transit, & Northern Montana Transit.

3. Agencies not involved:

- All agencies associated with Northern Transit Interlocal Coordination Plan continue to participate.

4. Needs Assessment

- Please see Five-Year Transit Development Plan, Chapter 4, “Needs Assessment” – on file at MDT.
- Please see attached “NTI Ridership Satisfaction” surveys.
- Attached ridership growth graph that helps us to better provide the routes and services designated to our local area. NTI has inquired about installing on board GPS location, and on-board video recording devices. A comprehensive communication system between dispatch & drivers is being researched.
- NTI has made on going policy and protocol changes in response to Covid-19. We continue to add safety measures to best suit everyone’s safety. FTA, MDT & CDC Covid-19 protocol and safety measures are followed and used as policy throughout NTI. NTI has added additional safety procedures, such as sanitizing all surface areas of the bus throughout the scheduled route following all passengers off-loading. In December 2022 NTI initiated a Passenger Code of Conduct Policy. This was necessary with the growth of NTI, giving a record 17,474 rides in 2022. With growth we understand passenger conduct needs to be addressed to protect passengers & drivers.
- NTI added an expanded route for Fiscal Year 2023, beginning service from Browning to Great Falls on Monday weekly. The route mirrors the Thursday Orange route schedule. TCT Transit is looking to add an additional in-town service day in Shelby. Presently TCT operates in the town of Shelby on Wednesday weekly. Feasibility, passenger input and statistics have proven another in town day is necessary. TCT will look to send submittal to MDT for assistance and approval.

5. Public Involvement

- Please see attached Golden Triangle Contact Information List which defines the entities who have been invited regularly to discuss and participate in the development of the application and Coordination Plan.
- Please see newspaper articles, NTI dedicated website, Facebook internet posting and fliers updating the public and inviting public participation.
- NTI has a dedicated Facebook page for its Passengers. Here passengers can offer feedback, share pictures from their trips with NTI, and read up on the latest policy changes or added services. NTI strives to work

with the public directly through home or health care shows, attending chamber meetings or events, and just making our public we serve feel like family. The more people understand the service NTI provides for them, the more riders for the transit, and it offers them a safer way to travel. As of 3/10/2023 NTI Facebook main page has 6,700 likes/followers. Facebook, Instagram and dedicated websites have definitely helped passengers make their own reservations.

6. Private Sector:

- There are no private transportation providers in our service area.

7. Plan for Growth and/or increase Ridership.

- Northern Transit Interlocal, in conjunction with Glacier County Transit, provides a complete transportation link from Browning to Great Falls on Thursdays. We also currently have Pondera County Transit & Glacier County Transit working with Northern Transit Interlocal to provide Transportation to Kalispell from Conrad, Shelby, Cut Bank, & Browning every Tuesday and Friday weekly.
- Northern Transit Interlocal, in conjunction with Pondera County Transit, provides a link for residents of Conrad and Valier to meet with the bus to Kalispell each Tuesday & Friday. Pondera County Transit also runs to Valier on Mondays and Thursdays allowing residents in these rural towns to connect with the NTI bus going to Great Falls on Monday and Thursday.
- It is important to note that NTI's ridership increased considerably through 2019 and that trend was expected to continue until we were faced with a global pandemic. Covid-19 (Coronavirus) disrupted service for a 3-week period. With new protocols in place for public safety, our ridership was negatively affected in 2020. NTI Board of Directors, Transit Director and employees alike worked hard to bounce back from the pandemic scare and bring back riders to our transportation system. Education on-line through all our internet related services, reaching out to the general public through news articles, radio, in person conversation etc., started to see more and more passengers riding with NTI. 2021 was an excellent year for NTI, ridership numbers grew and were only 16% under the record ridership

numbers of 2019. 2022 was a record ridership year for NTI, giving 17,474 rides. The addition of the expanded Browning to Great Falls made a big difference in rider ship count for Fiscal Year 2023.

- Our advertising on a bus campaign we started two years ago was a huge success. We now have 19 advertisers to date. Helping our local businesses is essential for the growth of not only NTI, but our communities, and business partners alike.

- Please see the attached ridership chart showing the current year's ridership in comparison to previous years. NOTE: 2020 was the year of Covid-19, NTI kept on providing service, with every attention being made for the safety of our passengers.
- **8. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings:**
- The TAC meets on a quarterly basis. Meetings are advertised on the area radio station as well as published in the Regional Newspapers, Website, Facebook, & Instagram pages.
- **Please see the attached minutes:**
 - **Meeting where the Coordination Plan was approved February 14 & 15, 2023.**
- Please see attached organizational chart.
- Please see attached public notice.

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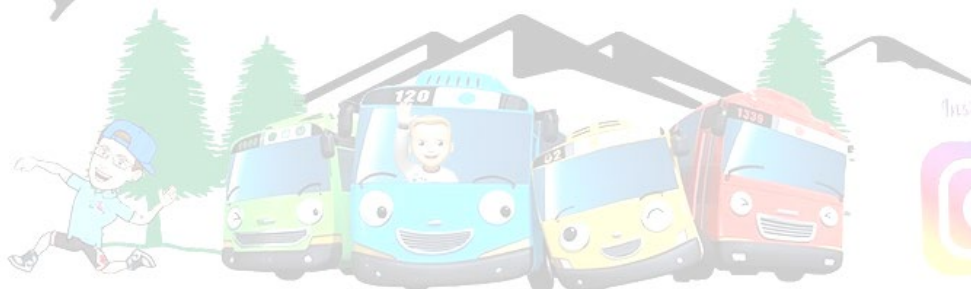
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