

NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA TRANSIT
COORDINATION PLAN 2015-2016 -Revised 2023

1. Date adopted by board of directors:

Formal adoption by the Opportunity Link board of directors on 01/11/2024. Attached file "Board Minutes 2024" documents formal action by board.

2. Agencies involved:

The following agencies are associated with the development of and implementation of our Coordination Plan:

Opportunity Link, Inc. (OL) – a regional non-profit based in Havre, MT has been serving as lead agency for the North Central Montana Transit since 2009. Opportunity Link provides in-kind assistance to NCMT via accounting and technical assistance services. OL shares the NCMT bus facility and also serves as its funding partner. OL opened the governance role to other partners but all NCMT partners agreed to have OL continue serving as lead.

Fort Belknap Transit Agency – is a public transit agency run and governed by the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council. FBTA coordinates its routes with NCMT and provides connections with NCMT such that passengers are able to travel from south of the reservation (Hays-Lodgepole) all the way through to Havre and Great Falls. FBTA also shares the twice-weekly Great Falls route with NCMT with FBTA sometimes utilizing its own vehicle and driver to service the route.

Rocky Boy Transit – is a public transit agency run and governed by the Chippewa Cree Tribe. RB Transit coordinates its routes with NCMT as much as they are able to. They had recently implemented changes in their routes to include on-demand services to residents of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation.

Blaine County Commission – serves on the NCMT Transportation Advisory Board. Blaine County is a funding partner of NCMT and appreciates the connecting services that NCMT provides to its residents.

Hill County Commission – serves on the NCMT Transportation Advisory Board. Hill County is a funding partner of NCMT.

City of Havre – serves on the NCMT Transportation Advisory Board. City of Havre is a funding partner of NCMT.

Montana State University Northern (MSUN) – is a multi-purpose partner of NCMT. MSUN is a funding partner of NCMT.

Great Falls Transfer Center – is a coordinating partner of NCMT. Currently, NCMT has four stops within Great Falls and the GF Transfer Center is where NCMT passengers can

connect to local city buses, Salt Lake Express Stage line, and others. They appreciate our service since NCMT benefits their system by bringing passengers to Great Falls who might otherwise choose to travel through Billings.

Bear Paw Development Corporation (BPDC) – serves on the NCMT Transportation Advisory Council. BPDC is a funding partner of NCMT and also helps provide technical assistance to NCMT.

Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Line (BGC) – is a funding partner of NCMT. BGC provides support to NCMT's city or in-town route to coordinate with their summer programs for Hi-Line youth.

Bullhook Community Health Clinic (Bullhook) – is a funding partner of NCMT. Bullhook Clinic supports NCMT to provide transportation options and services to its clients and patients. Bullhook continuously promotes NCMT routes to its clients.

NCMT Routes (Cities & Reservations) - Monday through Friday, Unless Otherwise Specified*

Blue Line (Havre to Rocky Boy Service)

Morning Route: 7:00am – 8:50am

Afternoon Route: 3:00pm – 5:10pm

Red Line (Havre to Ft. Belknap Service)

Morning Route 1: 6:40am – 9:20am

Afternoon Route 3:30pm – 6:00pm

Green Line (Havre to Great Falls Service)

Mon-Wed-Fri* Morning Route: 9:00am – 10:55am

Green Line (Great Falls to Havre Service)

Mon-Wed-Fri* Afternoon Route: 1:05 pm – 3:10pm

Purple Line (Havre In Town Route)

Mon – Fri 9:00 am to 3:00pm

2009 Dodge Sprinter 2727674

2013 Ford E-350 Van 3165522

1991 Blue Bird ZZZ 502747

2021 International IC 4908179

2021 International IC 4908166

2019 Dodge Caravan 4803612

2020 Toyota Sienna 4793526

3. Agencies not involved:

Havre VA Office – NCMT director is reaching out again in 2022 to Havre VA to address transportation concerns of the veteran community. They have not participated at this time.
Havre Senior Citizen Center – NCMT director is reaching out again in 2022 to Havre VA to address transportation concerns of the veteran community. They have not participated at this time.

Havre Private Taxi Company – NCMT director had reached out for possible coordination of services. They expressed no interest in participating.

4. Needs assessment:

For service year 2015-2016 and succeeding years, and revised in 2019, NCMT started the process for developing a 5-year Transportation Plan for the region. Although the process is still on-going, initial needs that came out of the assessment include the following:

Governance Needs:

- Current governance is struggling to achieve sustainable transit funding
- As a non-profit lead agency, NCMT is unable to directly raise millage
- Collaboration with city and county departments such as planning, GIS, street maintenance, and vehicle maintenance more difficult as an outside (non-profit and not local government) organization.

Service Needs:

- Great Falls service expansion, and importance of broader intercity connections
 - Four or five day a week service to Great Falls
 - More capacity on Great Falls bus
 - Interline with Greyhound (Salt Lake Express)
 - Good coordination with key providers
- Airport connections
 - Good connections to Havre airport
 - Good connections to Great Falls airport
- Last mile issues and noon service on Blue and Red lines
 - Last Mile – multiple site-specific strategies needed including coordination with tribes, other local partners, and bike/ped infrastructure
 - A midday run would be most easily achieved in collaboration with tribes
- Havre in-town: fixed route vs. demand response
 - Fully explore costs and benefits of fixed route vs. demand-response service
 - Design a service that best meets needs and takes advantage of funding opportunities
- Improved marketing and communication
 - Greater public awareness and ease of access to accurate information
 - Real time bus location technology for mobile phones
- Infrastructure
 - Make bus service easier, more convenient, more comfortable and safer to use.

- Improve bus stop signage and posted info
- Develop an infrastructure plan and explore funding for shelters, benches and bike/ped access improvements

5. Public involvement:

NCMT passengers, partners and supporters are frequently informed of NCMT activities including participation in the TDP, development of the coordination plan, and route and service decisions.

In addition, public notices are included in the Havre Daily News, the Blaine County Journal, local and reservation radio stations, social media platforms and newsletters.

6. Private sector:

As mentioned in (3) above, the only private taxi company in Havre has not expressed any interest in coordinating with NCMT services. The Havre Town Taxi has held discussions with our TAC previously regarding service offerings and is a viable alternative to those who are not limited by income and in need of alternative transportation.

7. Plan for growth and/or increase in ridership:

With minimum investment in promoting NCMT services, ridership in our flagship routes has steadily increased. There continues to be a need for more frequent or mid-day runs and a significant demand for increase in service for the Great Falls route.

NCMT intends to continue to provide high quality, safe, and reliable services in the region and will invest in marketing and/or communications outreach to increase public awareness.

NCMT is also in negotiations with Boys and Girls Club of the Hi-Line to provide transportation on a year-round basis for the organization.

There are additional requests for increased services inside the Havre area and to Great Falls for more reliable and regular transportation. This is being analyzed by NCMT for potential expansion.

NCMT already currently provides transportation assistance and services to our elderly and disabled residents and visitors through its regular routes and expansion of our regular services. However, NCMT is committed to improving its outreach and services to the elderly, disabled, and our other mobility-challenged groups. We will visit and meet with senior citizen groups and organizations to orient non-users of the NCMT system and its services that are available to them such as lift equipment and route expansions. In the process, we will also conduct listening sessions to obtain suggestions on how NCMT could better serve their needs.

From our TAC meetings and recently completed TDP, we are aware that the population of our service area is aging and services to the elderly and non-drivers are determined to be a priority. With this increasing need and our limitation on resources, NCMT will also be exploring the potential of a volunteer driver program with District IV HRDC and possibly the senior citizen centers.