

**Transit Coordination Plan**  
**Powder River Public Transportation**  
**Fiscal Year 2024**



The Transit Coordination Plan was developed through a process involving users of the transportation system. The passengers include the general public, the elderly, low income, residents of our local nursing home and persons with disabilities. Members of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), County Commissioners, representatives of the Powder River Manor, the Council on Aging are actively involved in the development of this plan.

Powder River Transportation is the sole provider of general public transportation in the county and surrounding area. There are no fixed route or intercity bus systems, railway or private taxi services. The local school system is the only other agency that provides transportation and their busses are not ADA accessible, nor are they available to the general public as they are owned by private contractors.

According to the 2021 statistics from U. S. Census, Powder River County has a population of 1,702. 47.99% over the age of 18 and 30.1% over the age of 65. These aging population statistics demonstrate the need for public transportation to serve the general public and to accommodate the elderly and those persons with disabilities. Our county demographics remain fairly constant as do the needs of these citizens.

The transportation service is provided by Powder River County, with the Board of County Commissioners serving as the governing board for the transit program as mandated by state and federal guidelines. There is a full-time transportation coordinator to take care of the daily administrative duties, reports, grant writing and general office and business duties. We have one full time permanent driver, two part time permanent drivers, the transportation coordinator is also a driver for trips as needed. The part time permanent drivers very often work daily. The TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) provides oversight to ensure that the program is structured to meet the transportation needs of the community. Drivers are responsible for trip reports and vehicle inspection reports. Our two local vehicle repair shops are hired to do the preventive maintenance according to the Preventive Maintenance Plan. Both of these garages have qualified mechanics to perform minor and major repairs.

The transportation system provides demand/response service. Attachment #1 shows a typical weekly schedule. When the dispatcher receives a call for an out-of-town appointment, it is then scheduled on the calendar and then advertised to the public so everyone is invited to participate. The upcoming schedule is advertised weekly in the local newspaper and on the county's website on the transportation page, posted at the Senior Center, the library, County Courthouse and the local nursing home. We make trips to Belle Fourche, SD, Spearfish, SD, Ft. Mead, SD (VA Hospital and clinic) and Rapid City, SD; Gillette and Sheridan, WY; Billings, Forsyth, Colstrip and Miles City, MT. These trips range from 160 miles to 340 miles round trip.

PR Transportation is the only non-emergency transportation available to our local nursing home for medical and recreational purposes. This service transports many Powder River Manor residents to both local and out of town medical appointments and some community activities. For example; every Wednesday at noon there is a senior congregate meal at a local restaurant. We have passengers from both the nursing home and the community that can utilize our service so they can attend this meal. The Powder River Manor is a 41-bed facility, but averages 20 residents.

The transit vans also make out of town trips organized by the local Senior Center, Council on Aging and other community groups as long as they are during regular business hours. We advertise these trips the same as any other trip so everyone, including the general public, has a chance to participate. The transportation system can also be utilized by community organizations, churches and groups traveling to meetings and events, again, as long as they are during the regular hours of operation and open to the general public. This allows more people to attend as a group and allows those who may need the wheelchair lift to participate. The use of the vans by these groups is coordinated around regularly scheduled trips. Occasionally a request is made for a trip on a weekend. The coordinator will determine on a case-by-case basis if these trips will be made, considering hours, distance and driver availability.

The TAC determines the transportation needs of the community. Committee members are selected from in town and the various outlying areas of the county and include a representative of the groups who are the primary users of the existing transportation system, such as the elderly, low-income, individuals with disabilities, Council on Aging, our local nursing home and minority groups. The TAC is a valuable resource in assessing the current and changing needs of the transportation services, identifying the users of the system and assisting in determining how the transportation needs of the community can best be met. The TAC, as a county advisory committee is continuing to help set goals for the system and provide oversight in the overall operation of the system. The TAC has adopted this Coordination Plan at their meeting on January 11, 2023. The minutes are attached.

A full time Transportation Coordinator organizes and manages the transportation system and is responsible for the quarterly reporting, grant writing and all other office, building and vehicle tasks. This helps to utilize the service to its fullest potential. The Transit Coordinator also supervises and dispatches drivers, schedules and coordinates all trips, gets the schedule out to the public, makes sure all vehicles are maintained in compliance with the vehicle maintenance agreement, and also serves as a driver when needed. The Transit Coordinator is responsible to the County Commissioners as a department head.

We drove over 114,633 miles during the 2023 fiscal year. Our mileage is increasing as well as our ridership. Our ridership this year is starting to increase without pandemic restrictions and have added an additional driver for additional coverage. Many of our passengers have come to rely on this service for their personal out of town medical needs and due to increase in fuel prices. We have reasonable fares and the county supports and contributes to the transportation system. Senior and disabled citizens are charged one half of the fare. If anyone cannot afford to pay the fare, we have donations from two local non-profit organizations who have contributed money for this very reason. This transportation system allows older residents and the disabled to stay in their own homes longer by getting to medical appointments in a timely and safe manner. Some younger residents have used the transportation system for not only medical trips, but employment and educational related trips, recreational reasons and personal trips for services not available in our small rural community.

Even though our local clinic is staffed by a full-time Physician Assistant, most of our population still has to travel to other medical facilities to meet their needs. We try to place a priority on medical trips and about 90% of our trips originate that way. Often, though, the trip will end up being combined with personal needs, business or shopping as our small community has limited resources. We have several passengers who are veterans who go to the VA Hospital/Clinic at Ft. Meade, Gillette, WY and the VA Clinic in Billings, MT. Several times during the year we coordinate with passengers to meet other types of transportation, such as other bus lines or airlines.

We currently have a 11-Passenger 2020 Ford Transit Ambulette with wheelchair lift with 2,028 miles on it; a 6-passenger 2020 Honda Odyssey with 85,519 miles on it; a 6-passenger 2020 Toyota Minivan with 45,256 miles on it; a 6-passenger 2018 Toyota Minivan with 124,225 miles on it; a 5-passenger 2017 Dodge ADA Conversion Van with 86,344 miles on it; a 12-passenger 2018 Ford Transit Passenger Wagon that has 14,203 miles on it; a 2016 Dodge Minivan with 135,990 miles and a 2010 Dodge ADA Conversion Van with 125,459 that is currently waiting to be auctioned off at a public county auction in May 2023. They two vehicles have been replaced and served as backup vehicles. We are currently waiting on 2 addition vehicles that were awarded in FY2023.

The 2018 Ford Passenger Wagon has been used for several trips and has proved to be much easier for passengers to get in and out of. It is very comfortable to ride in and is economical to drive. The 2017 ADA Van is used for disabled passengers on a demand/response basis. We have received a 11-passenger 2020 Ford Ambulette that is wheel chair accessible and has a lift that can transport more than one wheelchair bound passengers. The mini-vans are used daily during the week making trips to both in town and out of town medical facilities and other destinations when there are fewer than 6 passengers, servicing both the public and the local nursing home. These vans are invaluable given the miles that we drive each year. The 2018 Ford Passenger Wagon is used when we have several passengers and for senior trips as it allows easier loading and unloading and roomier seating for our elderly and disabled passengers.

Our ADA conversion van has also been invaluable as it is used when fewer passengers are taken. We make many trips for the nursing home to out-of-town medical facilities and the ADA mini conversion van is more economical to run and more comfortable for the passengers. Most days we have several vehicles in use.

Powder River County Transportation will be applying for a new 6-7 passenger minivan to replace our 2020 Honda Odyssey Minivan this year to maintain rotation of vehicles. This 2020 Honda Odyssey has currently the following mileage of 85,519, the VIN is [5FNRL6H74LB029154](#) and the Project number of this vehicle is 1224. We are currently putting an average of 3,000 miles on it every month which will put it over 100,000 in May, 2023. We use this vehicle almost daily because most of our riders are elderly but are ambulatory.

In addition to applying for a new van, it is also requested to purchase a laptop to replace the stand-alone computer in the office. Due to Coordinator serving as a backup driver, he/she will be able to continue to work on original documents during the day should he/she attend conferences, meetings or drive and have down time during trips. Estimated cost will be \$5,000.00.

We have implemented Dial-A-Ride, a local service for those who are not able to get to services on their own. The need for this service was recognized by the TAC as some seniors and disabled are not able to get out and get to their physical therapy, the grocery store, the post office, library and other personal appointments on their own. The need for continued funding is essential to keep this program actively growing to meet the needs of our community. We utilize our mini vans or the ADA Conversion Van for these local trips. We have made pamphlets and have distributed them to the public and are placed around town at different businesses. We also have this information available on the county website, in the local newspaper and posted at the Senior Center.