



BILLINGS AREA  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
COORDINATION PLAN

2026

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
Purpose .....	3
Public Transit Sources of Funding and Eligible Projects.....	3
Goals .....	4
COORDINATION STRUCTURE .....	4
Coordination Group .....	4
Coordination Technical Advisory Committee .....	5
AGENCIES INVOLVED.....	5
Coordination Technical Advisory Committee Agencies .....	5
Coordination Group Agencies.....	7
Other Identified Area Agencies.....	8
PARTICIPATING AGENCY FLEET STATUS.....	10
FUNDING AND 2026 CAPITAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS .....	11
TransADE.....	11
Capital Assistance Projects for 2026.....	11

## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Purpose***

This coordination plan, as required by the Montana Department of Transportation and federal regulations, provides an overview of the structure and practices of the Billings Area Public Transportation Coordination Group and Technical Advisory Committee along with a summary of current and anticipated coordination efforts in the Billings, MT area including prioritized projects for the current funding cycle. Billings is the largest city in the state with a population of approximately 120,000 people (according to 2020 census counts) and covers a geographic area of over 43 square miles. Roughly, two-thirds of the city is located within the Yellowstone River valley with the remainder of the city located north of a sandstone cliff formation above the river valley; Billings is also in close proximity to a significant rail hub for the region (Laurel, MT) which presents a number of challenges regarding transportation where rail and vehicle traffic interact. Regarding demographics, according to 2018 census estimates, 22.7 percent of the population is under the age of 18 years while 18 percent is over the age of 65 years. Further, according to the same source, 9.1 percent of the population under the age of 65 presents with some form of disability. Approximately 11.1 percent of the population falls below the federal poverty level; the area's median household income is \$69,692 annually.

The Billings area is served by a variety of health care providers, human services organizations, senior services agencies, private transportation companies, and a single public transit operator. As transit funding is limited at the local, state, and federal levels, it is imperative entities within the Billings area coordinate transportation services and needs in order to maximize mobility for residents and minimize duplication of services.

The primary purpose of this plan is to refine existing methods and develop new strategies that increase mobility for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations through public and stakeholder input. The identified strategies update the current Billings Area Public Transportation Coordination Plan and involve the public transit operator as well as other area agencies/entities. All area transportation and human services providers are welcome to participate in the group.

### ***Public Transit Sources of Funding and Eligible Projects***

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers a variety of public grant programs across the nation. This coordinated plan focuses primarily upon those outlined in 49 U.S.C. 5310, but the public transit operator may also utilize other funding sources in support of goals outlined in this document. In regard to FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, funding may be utilized for both traditional and non-traditional projects, as recommended by the Coordination Group and selected by the Technical Advisory Committee.

## **Goals**

The overall goal of this plan is for all providers listed in this coordination plan to work closely with each other and the lead agency, the City of Billings MET Transit, to:

1. Provide more effective transportation solutions for improvements to ridership, improved access to jobs, and reduced congestion.
2. Minimize duplication of services and ensure more efficient provision of transportation services and resources.
3. Identify transit best practices, enhancements, and human service transportation coordination projects which may help improve transportation services and coordination.
4. Identification and discussion of community needs and recommendations on how to best meet those needs.
5. Ensure adequate and appropriate outreach efforts including seeking participation from non-participating local agencies and entities who may not qualify to receive state or federal transportation funding.

As the lead agency, MET Transit is committed to including the following groups and organizations in the coordinated process:

1. Existing and potential transit riders including the general population, individuals, with disabilities, seniors, and low-income groups.
2. Area transportation planning agencies and transportation providers, including both private and non-profit entities.
3. Human services agencies.
4. Other public and private agencies which administer health and medical, employment, vocational rehabilitation, independent living, and other essential services.

## **COORDINATION STRUCTURE**

Management of the Coordination Plan is facilitated by the lead agency, MET Transit, in conjunction with other agencies and interested parties. In order to ensure efficient and effective group coordination and planning, the overall Coordination Plan will involve input from two distinct groups: the Transportation Coordination Group and the Coordination Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

### ***Coordination Group***

The Coordination Group is composed of representatives from area agencies listed in this plan, as well as members of the public and any other interested groups. Coordination Group meetings are held at least once per quarter and open to the public with the meeting date, times, and locations published in accordance with the MET Transit Public Participation Plan. These meetings are intended to aid in determining the needs of and prioritizing solutions and services for transportation in the City of Billings area. Once needs and potential solutions are identified,

the Coordination Group will make recommendations on projects to be considered by the Coordination Technical Advisory Committee.

### ***Coordination Technical Advisory Committee***

The Coordination Technical Advisory committee is a five (5) member committee composed of representatives from area agencies responsible for providing services to the distinct groups identified in the Federal Regulations regarding section 5310 funding. Specifically, the group will include one representative each from agencies responsible for providing services to seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations; each representative should be an individual with the authority to recommend or make decisions regarding projects and transportation coordination within their respective agencies. The group will also include representation from the lead agency, MET Transit, as well as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Agencies and members are as follows:

- Allies in Aging of Yellowstone County (formerly Adult Resource Alliance and Big Sky Senior Services)
- Riverstone Health/Healthy By Design
- COR Enterprises
- Billings Urbanized Area MPO
- City of Billings MET Transit

This group will meet at least once per quarter following the quarterly Coordination Group meetings to discuss and develop recommended projects. Identified projects will be assessed for feasibility, potential impacts, and overall effects on area transportation and coordination efforts; periodically, the CTAC may invite outside members directly involved in proposed projects to provide further information for or discussion on the identified project. Should multiple projects be identified and recommended which exceed available funds, the group will select and prioritize projects based upon majority consensus; application for these projects will then be submitted for funding. Prior to final recommendation and application for funding of projects, the CTAC will publish a public meeting notice and allow for public comment on selected projects.

## **AGENCIES INVOLVED**

### ***Coordination Technical Advisory Committee Agencies***

**MET Transit:** As MET Transit is the local designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration 5307 operating funds to provide public transit service, it serves as the lead agency in coordination efforts. MET has been providing public transportation since 1973 and currently provides both fixed-route and paratransit services. Paratransit is public transportation for individuals who are, due to a disability or other condition, unable to use the MET fixed-route service. Paratransit service was originally established in 1977 by Special Transportation, Inc, which was assumed by the City of Billings MET Transit in 1997 under the new designation of MET Special Transit; MET Transit has since renamed all operations under paratransit to MET-PLUS. Paratransit service meets the transportation needs of a broad spectrum of people who otherwise could not travel locally.

MET provides fixed-route and paratransit service from approximately 5:45 am to 8:15 pm, Monday through Friday and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Saturdays. MET serves any disability group, ambulatory and non-ambulatory, including seniors with disabling conditions. Provided rides include trips for employment, educational, medical, shopping and recreational and any other reason. MET coordinates with many different agencies, as well as the general public, to provide transportation within the City of Billings. Skilled nursing facilities and hospitals coordinate with MET for transportation when they are unable to provide rides to clients. Montana Medicaid and Allies in Aging both contract with MET to provide medically related transportation, as well as support for waiver services.

**Billings Urbanized Area Metropolitan Planning Organization:** The Billings Urbanized Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) oversees transportation planning for the Billings Urban Area. The urban area encompasses the City of Billings, as well as a planning area extending approximately 4.5 miles outside the city limits. The MPO prepares a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) each year that contains discussion of projects to undertake during the upcoming program year, including transit specific projects. The UPWP is supplemented by a five-year Transportation Improvements Plan (TIP). The TIP is a fiscal planning program for federally assisted highway and transit improvements for the Billings Urban Area. Every five (5) years, the MPO prepares an Urban Area Transportation Plan that assesses the transportation needs and recommends actions to address those needs. As the MPO exists as a requirement for both Federal Highway and Federal Transit funding in the small urban area and is directly involved in all aspects of area transportation, MPO involvement in coordination efforts is essential for addressing and planning for existing and future transportation needs.

**Allies in Aging** provides a comprehensive network of services that help older adults remain independent, connected, and supported. Our programs are designed to meet the diverse needs of seniors across Yellowstone County, ensuring access to nutrition, transportation, in-home care, financial protection, and meaningful community connection.

Their services include:

- **Nutrition Support**, offering community dining opportunities at multiple sites and home-delivered Meals on Wheels for older adults who are home-bound or facing food insecurity.
- **Benefits and Resource Navigation**, including Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid education and enrollment assistance.
- **Transportation Services**, providing non-emergency medical rides, community access rides, and volunteer-based transportation support.
- **In-Home Services**, such as personal care, homemaking, nursing medication setup, health checks, and caregiver support.
- **Financial and Protective Programs**, including representative payee services, guardianship, and elder abuse prevention and education.
- **Community Volunteer Programs**, connecting neighbors of all ages to meaningful service roles that strengthen independence and reduce isolation.

Together, these programs reflect our commitment to ensuring older adults experience dignity, safety, and belonging as they age well.

**Riverstone Health:** Riverstone Health was created in 2008 as a single identity that grew out of

the Yellowstone City-County Health Department. The foundation of their work has been Health, Education, Leadership and Protection (HELP). In their medical and dental clinics, they provide care to 20,000 patients each year. Through their Montana Family Medicine Residency they train doctors to help meet Montana's shortage of family medicine practice physicians and provide health services, such as WIC and Maternal Child Health, to help families and young children. They provide hospice services and focus efforts at preventing infectious diseases to make the whole community a safer and better place to live.

**COR Enterprises, Inc.:** COR was originally known as the Billings Sheltered Workshop and has been in operation since 1971; they provide vocational rehabilitation and developmental services for persons with disabilities. COR Enterprises services include Organizational Employment, Community Employment and Community Support Services. Aside from the Yellowstone County and Billings area, this agency also provides services in Musselshell, Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater and Wheatland Counties.

COR Enterprises provides rides for their clients, primarily Monday through Saturday. The agency does provide rides on Sundays for special events and services needed by their clients. Most rides are provided between the hours of 7:00 am and 4:30 pm; however, several rides are also provided during evening hours depending on the client's needs. Transportation is provided for a variety of services, including employment, medical, shopping, and recreational purposes. COR Enterprises regularly coordinates with both the MET fixed-route buses and MET-PLUS. COR coordinates and provides transportation for clients from other agencies such as the PD Waiver Program, Developmental Disabilities and the SDMI Program. COR Enterprises has vehicles available through an individual agreement for other Human Services agencies, to use when COR is not using them.

### ***Coordination Group Agencies***

Listed below are providers who participate in the Coordination Group meetings and in the coordination of services.

**Billings Clinic:** Based in Billings, Billings Clinic is Montana's largest health care organization and serves a vast region covering much of Montana, northern Wyoming and the western Dakotas. Billings Clinic manages 11 Critical Access Hospitals and has other partnerships across the region. Affiliated hospitals are located throughout Montana and Wyoming. Billings Clinic is a physician-led, integrated multi-specialty group practice with a 304-bed hospital and a Level II trauma center. It also operates a number of clinics providing a full range of medical services. Billings Clinic's vision is to be a national leader in providing the best clinical quality, patient safety, service and value.

**Intermountain Health Care:** Intermountain Healthcare is based in Salt Lake City, Utah, and provides high-quality, affordable, and personalized healthcare to the people of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and Kansas. Intermountain Health delivers care by taking a proactive approach to help you stay well. As an innovative, nonprofit healthcare system, Intermountain invests back into improving the care they deliver. Intermountain

Healthcare has more than 63,000 employees, 385 clinics, and 33 hospitals. Locally, representatives from the Intermountain Healthcare St. Vincent Regional Hospital participate in coordination efforts.

**State of Montana DPHHS Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP):** The Montana Developmental Disabilities Program’s central office is in Helena with regional offices in Billings, Glasgow, Great Falls and Missoula. DDP contracts with private, non-profit corporations to provide services across the lifespan for individuals who have developmental disabilities and their families. The focus of the program is to tailor care to the individual and provide it in as natural an environment as possible.

### ***Other Identified Area Agencies***

MET Transit has identified the following local area agencies who occasionally participate or may be interested in participating; contact was made via invites to the local coordination group.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Advanced Care Hospital of Montana          | Northern Rockies Surgery Center             |
| Affinity at Billings                       | Prairie Tower Apartments                    |
| Aspen Grove                                | Rainbow House                               |
| Aspen Meadows                              | Residential Support Services                |
| Autumn Springs Assisted Living             | River Ridge Rehab & Nursing                 |
| AWARE                                      | Rocky Mountain College                      |
| Billings School District #2                | Rocky Mountain Home Care                    |
| Billings Yellow Cab Services               | Rocky Mountain Hospice                      |
| Blind & Low Vision Services                | S.T.E.P.                                    |
| Casmur Assisted Living                     | Sage Tower                                  |
| Central Court Village                      | The Springs at Grand Park – Assisted Living |
| City Cab                                   | St. John’s Lutheran Ministries              |
| Eagle Cliff Manor                          | Skyline Heights Nursing and Rehab           |
| Edgewood Vista                             | Starnier Gardens                            |
| Fraser Tower                               | Sweetwater Retirement                       |
| Head Start, Inc.                           | Synergy Home Care                           |
| Highgate Senior Living                     | Tender Nest Assisted Living                 |
| Holiday Aspen View                         | Limoscene - Total Transportation            |
| Human Resources Development Council        | United Way                                  |
| Interim Health Care                        | Vintage Suites                              |
| Job Connection                             | Visiting Angels Senior Home Care            |
| The Legacy Assisted Living                 | Vocational Rehab                            |
| LIFTT                                      | Volunteers of America                       |
| Magic City Terrace – Volunteers of America | Westpark Retirement Village                 |
| Mental Health Center                       | Yellowstone County Human Services           |
| Morning Star Senior Living                 | Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic             |

MSU-Billings

Yellowstone River Nursing & Rehabilitation  
YMCA/YWCA

## PARTICIPATING AGENCY FLEET STATUS

Most recent reported fleet information for agencies participating in the Coordination Plan are as follows:

### MET TRANSIT

Year	Make	Model	Mileage	ADA Lift Equipped	Passenger Capacity	Currently in Use?
2015	Eldorado	Aerotech	144,505	Yes	16	Yes
2017	Elkhart	Coach	149,484	Yes	16	Yes
2018	Elkhart	Coach	123,333	Yes	16	Yes
2018	Elkhart	Coach	135,136	Yes	16	Yes
2018	Elkhart	Coach	138,065	Yes	16	Yes
2018	Elkhart	Coach	135,307	Yes	16	Yes
2018	Elkhart	Coach	150,090	Yes	16	Yes
2019	Elkhart	Coach	108,029	Yes	16	Yes
2019	Elkhart	Coach	90,864	Yes	16	Yes
2019	Elkhart	Coach	96,887	Yes	16	Yes
2023	Ford	Transit	15,741	Yes	7	Yes
2023	Ford	Transit	18,033	Yes	7	Yes
2023	Ford	Transit	19,401	Yes	7	Yes
2023	Ford	Transit	14,513	Yes	7	Yes
2024	Ford	Endera	10,679	Yes	16	Yes

### ALLIES IN AGING

Year	Make	Model	Mileage	ADA Lift Equipped	Passenger Capacity	Currently in Use?
2004	GMC	G31	90,325	Yes	12	Yes
2003	GMC	G31	92,400	Yes	12	Yes
1997	Buick	LeSabre	168,596	No	3	Yes

### COR ENTERPRISES

Year	Make	Model	Mileage	ADA Lift Equipped	Passenger Capacity	Currently in Use?
2024	FORD	Endera	10,490	Yes	11	Yes
2024	KIA	Sportage	37,209	No	4	Yes
2023	NISSAN	Rogue	37,053	No	4	Yes
2022	FORD	Transit	17,868	Yes	9	Yes
2019	FORD	Elkhart	92,686	Yes	14	Yes
2019	DODGE	Caravan	84,646	No	7	Yes

2017	GMC	Sierra	101,847	No	4	Yes
2014	CHEVY	Impala	126,185	No	4	Yes
2014	Chrysler	T&C	121,799	No	5	Yes
2012	FORD	Flex	108,085	No	6	Yes
2012	SUBARU	Outback	103,084	No	4	Yes
2011	FORD	Elkhart	141,935	Yes	14	Yes
2010	Lincoln	MKS	72,323	No	5	Yes
2006	SUBARU	Forester	109,959	No	4	Yes
2005	DODGE	Caravan	225,997	No	4	Yes

## **FUNDING AND 2026 CAPITAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS**

Agencies identified in this coordination plan have an in-depth understanding of the limits of available funding to provide transportation services to both the groups identified in the 5310 program and the public as a whole. The group has continually discussed innovative means to improve access to transportation by utilizing available funding in more efficient and effective ways. In the coming year, MET Transit intends to continue engaging identified agencies in the coordination plan in re- evaluation of existing coordination practices and agreements. Both the CTAC and Coordination Group understand existing needs in the community which may be better served by evaluating existing practices in ways which utilize available funding in increasingly effective ways.

### ***TransADE***

The transportation coordination group has discussed the use of TransADE funds to improve access to transit for the identified groups, and the public. Currently, MET Transit utilizes TransADE funding to prevent a decrease in available services as the funds help to maintain current service levels provided by the public transit agency. While federal regulations require paratransit service within a ¼ mile corridor around fixed-route service, MET Transit currently provides paratransit service beyond this minimum requirement by serving nearly any area within the City of Billings city limits. Without TransADE funding, this expanded service would be detrimentally impacted.

### ***Capital Assistance Projects for 2026***

Throughout the course of discussions in the previous plan year, the existing group identified needs regarding fleet replacement for local area transportation and human services providers as well as modifications to the existing MET Transit practices. Through discussion reflected in the attached meeting minutes, the group identified and agreed upon the following three eligible capital projects:

#### **Priority 1: COR ENTERPRISES ADA VEHICLE**

COR has a number of vehicles that have exceeded usable life when considering both age and mileage as indicated by their vehicle list. COR expressed the need for both an ADA accessible Cutaway with 12+ passengers, as well as two non-ADA vehicles, which can be fulfilled preferably with a minivan but a small SUV may also suffice. COR utilizes awarded vehicles primarily for transport of client with disabilities between day program sites and client group homes or residences. COR also utilizes the vehicles in support of daily life activities for individuals with disabilities. Current estimated pricing is \$49,999 per minivan and \$135,552 for the small ADA-Cutaway.