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Montana Department of Transportation Transit Coordination Plan Outline FY25

January 2024

AGENCY PROFILE

West Yellowstone Foundation

Legal Name of Applicant Agency: West Yellowstone Foundation Transit

Name of Transit Program: West Yellowstone Foundation Transit

Transit Coordinator: Carrie Coan

Street Address: 420 Yellowstone Avenue

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 255

City, State, Zip Code: West Yellowstone, Montana, 59758

County: Gallatin

Phone Number: (406) 646-1152

Fax Number: n/a

E-mail Address: ed@wyfmt.org

Web Site Address: westyellowstonefoundation.org

Tax ID #: 81-0494366

DUNS #: 83 117 4342

Fiscal Year Start & End Date: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Coordination Plan Approval Date: January 28, 2024

Current Inventory:

Facility Description- located at 420 Yellowstone Ave. One room office space, restroom, two garage bays

Vehicles (two total)-

2020 Honda Odyssey EX-L milage as of 12/31/23: 41,383

2014 Chevrolet GMC Titan II milage as of 12/31/23: 102,756

1. **Date Adopted by the WYF Board of Directors:** January 28, 2024

2. Agencies Involved:

West Yellowstone Foundation Transit (WYFT) is in the most southwestern area of the State of Montana with the Idaho border only 10 miles west and Yellowstone National Park on the town's eastern border. Our transit is considerably remote from other Montana localities with the nearest metropolitan area being Bozeman which is approximately 88 miles north. Therefore, opportunities for interagency involvement are limited.

Big Sky Transportation District (dba Skyline): WYFT transports riders to Big Sky Conoco Gas Station where they can then transfer to Skyline's transit to travel around Big Sky. WYFT will take riders directly to Big Sky Medical Center Hospital or Clinic as needed or scheduled. Most of our riders request transportation directly to Bozeman and stops at Big Sky are not frequent requests.

Please find the "Cooperative Agreement for Coordination in the West Yellowstone Area for Fiscal Year 2025" with Big Sky Transportation District (d.b.a. Skyline) attached.

WYFT's purpose is to provide regularly scheduled, quality, and reliable transportation from West Yellowstone to Bozeman and Idaho Falls for seniors, handicapped individuals, low-income individuals, and all others as space allows.

WYFT picks up riders at their home, workplace, or designated location, drops them off at any location within Bozeman, Belgrade, Idaho Falls and Rexburg and then returns them to their individual homes or designated drop-off location in West Yellowstone on the return trip.

Requests for Bozeman/Idaho Falls stops are numerous and include medical and dental appointments, shopping for food, clothing, and other items at numerous stores in the area, social security office, Department of Motor Vehicles, the Gallatin County Courthouse, and the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport. Many of our riders do not have driver's licenses, personal vehicles, or are foreign workers who do not speak English which makes our transportation service invaluable and a necessity. Our service provides some sense of independence to community members who do not or cannot drive on their own, whether they are low-income, seniors, or disabled and a secure means of travel as our drivers are personally familiar with most of these individuals and understand their needs.

We currently operate two vehicles: 1) 2015 Glaval Titan II - 12 passenger cutaway bus, Chevrolet Express with an accessible lift and 102,756 miles currently; and 2) 2020 Honda Odyssey – seven (7) passengers (including driver), non-accessible vehicle with 41,383 miles. The Honda Odyssey is utilized frequently during our low-peak tourist season in winter for trips with 1-3 passengers not in need of the lift.

The West Yellowstone Foundation Transit Schedule:

One WYF Transit route is from West Yellowstone to Bozeman via Highway 191 through a 20 mile stretch of Yellowstone National Park and the Gallatin Canyon with its return the same way. A drop-off and pick-up at the Big Sky intersection of Route 64 can be arranged as needed and drop-offs at Big Sky Medical Center are possible. The other WYF Transit Route is from West Yellowstone to Idaho Falls via Highway 20 with its return the same way.

In the winter months with anticipated snowfall of September through April, WYFT operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Ridership is not as frequent at this time. The driver leaves West Yellowstone no later than 8:00 a.m. and departs from Bozeman or Idaho Falls no later than 3:00 p.m. to avoid covered darkness and unpredictable weather conditions.

During the summer season, May through August, the bus runs three (3) days per week on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays with the same goal of leaving town by 8:00am and departing Bozeman at 3:00pm. This is our busiest time of the year.

Town of West Yellowstone Social Services Office:

The Town of West Yellowstone Social Services Office provides vouchers for bus transportation to low income and transient individuals as needed. There is no formal cooperative agreement. Low income riders request a voucher for a ride at the Social Services Office and WYF is compensated \$10 for each voucher presented by a rider.

Town of West Yellowstone:

The Town of West Yellowstone provides \$25,000 annually to assist with the costs of running our transit operations. Our building's site (land) is leased from the Town for \$100.00 per year to defray our operating costs.

Gallatin County:

Gallatin County provides \$23,000 per year for assistance with transit operations.

3. Agencies not involved:

Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center is not a participating agency at this time. It is a privately owned hospital that serves as the nearest Emergency Room for West Yellowstone and also operates a medical clinic. Because the patients have access to some limited medical services locally, patients typically only access Big Sky Medical Center when there is an emergency. We do not provide services for emergent medical care and would instead encourage folks to contact 911 for emergency services.

The local private sector's business is strictly geared towards tourism inside Yellowstone National Park and other surrounding sightseeing areas. They currently do not operate a shuttle between West Yellowstone and Bozeman.

4. Needs Assessment:

WYFT determines the needs of its service based upon input from: 1) our local TAC that represents our ridership's age, economic status, ethnic backgrounds, and general population of the West Yellowstone/Hebgen Basin area; drivers; and other public entities such as the Town of West Yellowstone Social Services Office and Povah Senior Center; 2) West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Center; 3) West Yellowstone Police & Fire Departments; 4) local business owners, and 5) any others who choose to provide feedback.

5. Public Involvement:

We receive the bulk of our feedback from our local TAC members who include: 1) disabled, elderly, minority, and low-income riders; 2) local Social Services Office; 3) West Yellowstone Foundation Bus Committee Chair; 4) WYFT drivers; and 5) the Transportation Administrator/Executive Director. All provide direct input at quarterly scheduled meetings. Our drivers accept feedback during trips, comment cards are always available on the bus as well as in the Social Services Office, and the WYF website and Bus Reservation phone line are available for the public's suggestions and feedback.

Please see attached Notices inviting the public to participate in our TAC meetings. The members who regularly attend are emailed 5-7 days in advance of the meeting as a reminder.

6. Private Sector:

The private transportation companies in West Yellowstone are mainly tour companies who offer guided tours of Yellowstone National Park. They do not provide public transportation around town or to and from Bozeman.

Neither Greyhound Bus Lines/Jefferson Lines nor taxi service is offered locally. There are several transportation companies who provide restricted services including: a) Karst Stage - providing pick-ups and drop-offs for skiers at varied rates depending upon the number of occupants; and b) Salt Lake Express – providing transportation to and from West Yellowstone to and from Salt Lake City Airport via a connection in Rexburg and other more distant locations.

7. Plan for Growth and/or increased ridership:

WYFT Bus Committee and TAC regularly discusses growth and improvement opportunities. Possible examples that will be discussed in the future include: local, in-town service for routine stops like pharmacy, grocery, post office, medical clinic, IMAX, and Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center on days WYFT is not driving to Bozeman or Idaho Falls; attracting more young riders with transportation limitations by more effective advertising; ensuring through advertising that the public is aware that the bus transports residents to Bozeman or Idaho Falls for more than just medical, dental, and nutritional needs; and adding advertising at employee housing communities and apartment buildings to increase awareness of our services.

Currently the Town of West Yellowstone does not have a newspaper. The closest periodical operates out of Island Park, Idaho, which WYFT advertises in intermittently. WYTF publicizes its service with flyers at the post office, clinic, banks, public library, businesses in town, and Big Sky Medical Center, as well as posts regularly on Facebook and the website.

8. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings:

WYFT's TAC meets at least three times annually. Advance notice inviting the public of the scheduled meetings is posted on the website, Facebook, and hard copies at the Post Office.

9. Transportation Advisory Committee Members

Our TAC Members include:

Member Name	Phone Number	Email Address	Representation
Carrie Coan	406-646-1152	wyfoundation@gmail.com	WYF Executive Director/WYFT Coordinator
George Loy	406-646-1152	Geoloy71@gmail.com	rider
Barney Alexander	406-646-1152	bigbalex@ymail.com	WYF Bus Driver
Dianna Hansen	406-646-1152	socialservices@townofwestyellowstone.com	TOWY Social Services Director
Yessika Vega	406-646-1152	yessikav@me.com	WYF Bus Committee Chair/WYF Board member
Kevin Flanagan	406-646-1152	Ksflan04@gmail.com	WYF Board Member
Leslie Stoltz	406-646-1152	lesliestoltz@gmail.com	WYF Board Member
Trent Redfield	406-646-1152	trentredfield@hotmail.com	WYF Board Member and rider