

Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern BC – 2024 Intake Application Guide



Program Overview

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has provided funding to Northern Development for the continuation of the Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern BC program, more commonly known as BC Bus North. This program is to provide safe, reliable and affordable passenger transportation for rural communities in Northern British Columbia, to improve those services and integrate them to the extent reasonable. Currently, Northern Development provides funding for 15 separate passenger transportation services throughout its service area, including the existing BC Bus North service and 14 community shuttle services.

This competitive proposal-based program provides grant funding for service providers who are qualified and experienced public passenger transportation companies to manage and operate inter-city passenger transportation services for routes in Northern British Columbia. This requires service providers that are skilled in managing efficient and effective inter-city passenger services that support growth strategies and lead to long term independent viability.

Program funds are available to communities, not-for-profits and transportation companies throughout Northern Development's [service area](#). Funding is available on a multi-year basis beginning April 1, 2025 to support operating costs of the proposed transportation services.

Funding Terms

It is anticipated that there will be approximately **\$4,000,000** available through the Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern BC Program. Preference will be given to providers who work towards a profitable and sustainable long-term vision and is willing to contribute a portion of their own funds. Amounts available per year have been adjusted in anticipation of inflation.

Applicants can seek support for operating costs for the following terms:

- Year one (April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026): maximum of \$1,250,000
- Year two (April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027): maximum of \$1,287,500
- Year three (April 1, 2027 - March 31, 2028): maximum of \$1,326,125*

*At this time two years of funding is guaranteed for the period of April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2027 with a possibility of extending for a third year.

Application Intake Deadlines

The Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern BC Program will be delivered through a single call for proposals. Please submit your proposal cover form (with all required attachments) to transportation@northerndevelopment.bc.ca by 4:00 PM on Thursday, September 12, 2024. Alternatively, you can call the Northern Development office and request a secure link to upload documentation.

This call for proposals process allows for a comparative analysis of projects against the criteria outlined in this guide and strengthens Northern Development's responsiveness to transportation needs in Northern B.C.

Given the demands for transportation services in the region, it is unlikely that subsequent calls for proposals will be issued.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

*All applicants must be able to deliver services within Northern Development's service region.

- Registered First Nations bands, wholly owned Indigenous development corporations and tribal councils, Inuit and Metis organizations
- Local governments and wholly owned local government corporations
- Registered non-profits
- For profit transportation companies based in the Trust's service area with a minimum of three years' operating a similar service

Applicants must indicate whether they have an existing passenger transportation license to operate the proposed service.

Preference will be given to applicants who have a minimum of three (3) years' experience operating transportation services within British Columbia and who have existing passenger transportation licenses.

Preference will also be given to applicants who identify at least **one** collaboration partner. Partners can include community organizations, Indigenous organizations, businesses, industry, local governments, or existing transportation services. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how each partner will:

- Support the application
- Participate in the planning and execution of the service
- Contribute to the service, either financially or through in-kind contributions
- Benefit from the service

Eligible applicants do not include the Provincial government or any of its Crown corporations and agencies.

Eligible Projects

Any proposed long haul inter-city passenger transportation service based out of a community within Northern Development's service area may apply to the program.

Eligible projects do not include air or marine services.

Please also note that applications for services that connect to major hubs outside of the Trust's service area will also be considered. For example, this might include a long-haul service that originates in Williams Lake and provides service to and from Kamloops. Another example would be a service that originates in Fort St John and provides service to and from Watson Lake, Yukon.

Northern Development seeks applicants who are qualified business entity(s) to provide the management and operation of inter-city passenger transportation services in Northern British Columbia in a way that will connect as many communities as possible and supports the achievement of the following objectives:

1. To provide inter-city scheduled passenger transportation service, through the operation of a safe, efficient, reliable and customer-service orientated passenger transportation

management company with well-trained, supervised, managed and motivated professional drivers, maintenance staff, dispatchers, management and supporting staff using clean and well-maintained vehicles.

2. To deliver services in a manner that maximizes ridership, increases passenger revenues, considers route efficiencies, decreases the need for passengers to stay overnight and find accommodation, demonstrates coordination of passenger connectivity to other service providers where applicable including pick up and drop off points, maximizes positive customer comments, minimizes negative customer comments, minimizes fuel consumption, works diligently to protect the environment and provides these services at reasonable cost.
3. To provide experience and knowledge in the development and/or operation of new revenue generating or cost reduction proposals to improve the affordability of inter-city passenger transportation services within the region, thereby supporting the long-term sustainability and viability of inter-city passenger services in Northern B.C.

The program is broadly separated into two geographic areas. The Primary Focus areas must be included in any proposal. The Secondary Focus areas can be included as options for consideration in a proposal.

The program's primary focus areas of Northern B.C. communities are:

- Connecting Prince Rupert and communities along Highway 16 with Prince George
- Connecting Valemount with Prince George along Highways 16 and 5
- Interconnecting communities in Northeast B.C., including the Northern Rockies, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, with Prince George
- Connecting Kamloops with Prince George via Highway 97

The program's secondary focus areas of Northern B.C. communities are:

- Connecting Dease Lake with Terrace via Highway 37
- Connecting Bella Coola with Williams Lake via Highway 20

The following show the current routes, schedule and fares for the BC Bus North service as of June 30, 2024. This will provide a guideline and an understanding of the current service operating as well as give applicants the opportunity to discover where efficiencies could be implemented.

Prince George / Prince Rupert

Departures

Originates in PG

Monday

Thursday

Return from the West

Tuesday

Friday

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare
Prince George - Bus Stop Downtown 7 th & Dominion		0800	\$49.82
Prince George - Pine Centre Mall		0810	
Prince George - Westgate Mall (Walmart area)		0820	
Vanderhoof - Co-op	0930	0940	
Fort Fraser - Petro Can		1010	
Fraser Lake - Mall		1030	
Burns Lake - Town Pantry	1125	1140	
Broman/Duncan - HWY 16 @ Duncan Lake Rd		1230	
Topley - Rest Area		1245	
Houston - A&W	1255	1305 (1:05)	
Telkwa - RaceTrac Gas		1340 (1:40)	\$81.62
Smithers - Mall	1355 (1:55)	1435 (2:35)	
Moricietown - Esso Gas Station		1505 (3:05)	
New Hazelton - Post Office		1535 (3:35)	
Gitsegukla		1555 (3:55)	
Kitwanga Junction - Petro Can		1610 (4:10)	\$32.86
Terrace - Skeena Mall (bus stop on Lakelse Ave)	1715 (5:15)	1735 (5:35)	
Port Edward - General Store		1905 (7:05)	\$26.50
Prince Rupert - Downtown 7 th & 1 st Ave (by Highliner Hotel)	1925 (7:25)		

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare
Prince Rupert - Downtown 7 th & 1 st Ave (by Highliner Hotel)		0800	\$26.50
Port Edward - General Store		0820	
Terrace - Skeena Mall (bus stop on Lakelse Ave)	0950	1010	
Kitwanga Junction - Petro Canada		1115	\$32.86
Gitsegukla		1130	
New Hazelton - Post Office		1150	
Moricietown - Esso Gas Station		1220	
Smithers - Mall	1250	13:30 (1:30)	
Telkwa - RaceTrac Gas		1345 (1:45)	\$81.62
Houston - A&W		1420 (2:20)	
Topley - Rest Area		1440 (2:40)	
Broman/Duncan - HWY 16 @ Duncan Lake Rd		1455 (2:55)	
Burns Lake - Town Pantry	1545 (3:45)	1600 (4:00)	
Fraser Lake - Mall		1655 (4:55)	
Fort Fraser - Petro		1715 (5:15)	
Vanderhoof - Co-op	1745 (5:45)	1755 (5:55)	
Prince George - Westgate Mall (Walmart area)		1905 (7:05)	
Prince George - Pine Centre		1915 (7:15)	
Prince George - Downtown 7 th & Dominion	1925 (7:25)		\$49.82

Prince George / Valemount

Same Day Travel

Monday & Friday:

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare	
Valemount – Petro Can - 1495 5 Ave		0700	\$21.20	\$46.64
Tete Jaune – Lodge Campground		0715		
McBride - Train Station 1 st Ave	0800	0810	\$46.64	
Prince George - Bus Stop Downtown 7 th & Dominion	1030			
Prince George - Bus Stop Downtown 7 th & Dominion		1430 (2:30)		\$46.64
McBride - Train Station 1 st Ave	1650 (4:50)	1700 (5:00)	\$46.64	
Tete Jaune – Lodge Campground		1740 (5:40)		
Valemount – Petro Can - 1495 5 Ave		1800 (6:00)	\$21.20	

Prince George / Fort St John

Departures

Originates in PG

Return from Fort St John

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

Friday

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare	
Prince George - Bus Stop Downtown 7 th & Dominion		0800	<p>A diagram showing the fare breakdown for the route. It consists of a large light blue area on the left, a grey area on the right, and a pink area on the far right. The total fare is \$62.54. The breakdown includes: \$30.74 for the first segment, \$29.68 for the second segment, \$48.76 for the third segment, and \$46.64 for the fourth segment.</p>	\$62.54
Bear Lake – BP Gas Station		0905		
McLeod Lake – General Store		0950		
Mackenzie – Junction		1005		
Mackenzie – Recreation Centre	1025	1030		
Azouzetta – Lake Lodge and Cabins	1130	1200		
Chetwynd - Petrocan	1320 (1:20)	1325 (1:25)		
Groundbirch – Race Trac Gas/Store		1410 (2:10)		
Dawson Creek – Co-op Mall	1445 (2:45)	1455 (2:55)		
Taylor – Esso		1545 (3:45)		
Fort St John – (99 Ave at 100 St.)	1600(4:00)			

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare	
Fort St John – (99 Ave at 100 St.)		1400	<p>A diagram showing the fare breakdown for the route. It consists of a large light blue area on the left, a grey area on the right, and a pink area on the far right. The total fare is \$62.54. The breakdown includes: \$46.64 for the first segment, \$23.32 for the second segment, \$48.76 for the third segment, and \$30.74 for the fourth segment.</p>	\$62.54
Taylor - Esso		1415		
Dawson Creek – Co-op Mall	1505	1515		
Groundbirch – Race Trac Gas/Store		1550		
Chetwynd –Petrocan	1635	1640		
Azouzetta – Lake Lodge and Cabins	1800	1830		
Mackenzie – Recreation Centre	1930	1935		
Mackenzie – Junction		1955		
McLeod Lake – General Store		2010		
Bear Lake – BP Gas Station		2055		
Prince George - Bus Stop Downtown 7 th & Dominion	2200			

Fort Nelson / Fort St. John

Same Day Travel Monday & Friday:

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare	
Fort Nelson – Recreation Centre		0700	\$49.82	\$60.42
Prophet River – Post Office		0805		
Bucking Horse River – Lodge	910	920		
Pink Mountain – Campsite and General Store		1000		
Wonowon – Esso	1045	1100		
Fort St John – (99 Ave at 100 St.)	1215	1225		

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare	
Fort St John – (99 Ave at 100 St)	1625	1630	\$49.82	\$60.42
Wonowon – Esso	1645	1650		
Pink Mountain – Campsite/General Store	1720	1725		
Buckinghorse River – Lodge	1755	1800		
Prophet River – Post Office	1925	1930		
Fort Nelson – Recreation Centre	2030			

Kamloops / Prince George

Departures

Originates in PG:	Return from Kamloops:
Monday	Sunday
Thursday	Wednesday
Saturday	Friday

Monday - Thursday – Saturday

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare	
Prince George - Bus Stop Downtown (1566 – 12 th Ave)		07:15		\$99.00
Hixon – (39126 Hwy 97 North)		07:55	\$25.00	
Quesnel - (365 Kinchant Street)		08:45		
Williams Lake – (215 Donald Road)	10:05	10:15		
Lac La Hache – (Hungry Bear Restaurant)		10:55	\$35.00	
100 Mile House – (214 South Hwy 97)	11:15	11:45		
70 Mile House- (70 Mile Store)		12:10		
Clinton- (1300 Cariboo Hwy)		12:30	\$25.00	
Cache Creek – (1592 Cariboo Hwy 97 North)		12:55		
Savona - (1171 Trans Canada Hwy)		13:20 (1:20)	\$25.00	
Kamloops – (#37 945 W Columbia Street)	13:45			

Wednesday - Friday – Sunday

Location	Arrival	Departure	Fare	
Kamloops - (#37 945 W Columbia Street)		14:00	\$25.00	\$99.00
Savona – (1171 Trans Canada Hwy)		14:25		
Cache Creek – (1592 Cariboo Hwy 97 North)		14:50	\$25.00	
Clinton- (1300 Cariboo Hwy)		15:15		
70 Mile House- (70 Mile Store)		15:35		
100 Mile House – (214 South Hwy 97)	16:10	16:20		
Lac La Hache – (Hungry Bear Restaurant)		16:35	\$35.00	
Williams Lake – (215 Donald Road)	17:20	17:50		
Quesnel - (365 Kinchant Street)		19:10		
Hixon – (39126 Hwy 97 North)		19:50	\$25.00	
Prince George - Bus Stop Downtown (1566 – 12 th Ave)	20:30			

Eligible Costs

- **Operating costs**
 - Salary and benefits for the ongoing operation of the transportation services (i.e. coordinator, driver)
 - Operational vehicle leasing costs
 - Maintenance costs, fuel, booking services, driver training, insurance
 - Consulting services to assist in the design and implementation of the services
 - Public outreach, awareness and marketing costs associated with promotion and delivery of the service
 - Purchase and installation of software or applications that support service delivery (i.e., mobile apps, web services, telephone booking systems)
 - Rental equipment
 - Other costs as approved by Northern Development
- **Other costs**
 - PST

Other Eligible Costs

In-Kind Internal Equipment (Vehicle) Use

- When noting internal equipment (vehicle) use in the budget and under other funding sources in the proposal cover form, applicants must attach a breakdown of the calculation used for that amount
 - Vehicle owned by the applicant to be used during the project
 - Reasonable rates must be used
 - Vehicle use must be documented once projects commence (log with vehicle type, date, hours, and hourly rate) in order to verify

✦ Please note that in-kind costs are not reimbursable and are considered part of the applicant's contribution.

Ineligibility

Ineligible Costs

- **Capital costs**
 - Purchase of vehicles, real estate and other fees related to purchasing or leasing land, buildings, or facilities
- **Operational costs**
 - Upgrades to rented, leases or owned buildings
- **Other costs**
 - GST
 - Costs incurred (work started and/or deposits paid) prior to signing an agreement with Northern Development
 - In-kind labour, monetized services or donations

Application and Program Requirements

Only applications that meet these requirements will be processed.

- Complete [Proposal Cover Form](#)
 - Outline the rationale for the project including how the project meets the objectives of the Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern BC Program
 - Outline how the project is a direct response to the need for passenger transportation in Northern BC
 - Demonstration of working with other service providers to provide route efficiencies
- A detailed proposal which includes but is not limited to:
 - Company or corporate profile and experience including financial information and insurance
 - Route and passenger fare structure outlining the proposed services, including trip times or frequency, days of service and stop locations or service areas
 - Accessibility and how the service has been designed to accommodate youth, seniors and persons with disabilities
 - Reservation/booking system, including information on how passengers can pay for trips (cash/card, online only/in-person, etc.) including measures in place to ensure that payment methods do not pose a barrier to access
 - Asset management plan including fleet of vehicles (make, model, age of vehicles, current kilometres, seating capacity, accessibility features, etc.), maintenance and servicing plans
 - Driver qualifications, training provided to drivers and safety measures (ie. criminal record check procedures, cultural awareness training, training to identify and report potential incidents of human trafficking, etc.)
 - Protection of personal information
 - Policies or procedures for safety of both drivers and passengers (including identifying and reporting sexual exploitation and human trafficking)
 - Financial plan*, business case or other market research
 - Include details on how the project will have a positive impact and/or create opportunities in the region
 - Ability of the applicant to provide efficient services and sustainably operate the completed project
- Detailed project budget using Northern Development’s [Project Budget Template](#) (required; in Excel format)
- Supplemental [Service Breakdown Template](#) (required; in Excel format)
- Verification of approval from other funding sources (e.g., approval letter or contract; required prior to approval)
- Most recent annual financial statements
 - Must be specific to the legal entity applying for funding and may not be from a related organization
 - Statements submitted must be in the final approved form, including signatures from the organization’s representatives
 - Statements must be submitted in their entirety; partial documents will not be accepted
 - The following types may be submitted:
 - Notice to reader financial statements
 - Review engagement financial statements
 - Audited financial statements
- Certificate of incorporation (required for not-for-profit societies and business applicants)

- Copy of passenger transportation [license](#)
- If applicable: Detailed quotes for consultant services, software costs, etc.
- If applicable: Letters of support from community organizations
- If applicable: Lease agreement/or user agreement
- If applicable: Partnership agreement(s) outlining each partner's responsibilities

Note: Applications approved for funding will be required to provide proof of commercial vehicle insurance through ICBC to trigger initial payment. Once operational, successful applicants will also need to supply to Northern Development copies of driver's licenses.

Application Assessment

Northern Development staff undertake comprehensive due diligence of each funding application received, which may include contacting relevant agencies and organizations as part of the review process.

All projects are assessed on the strength of the application, requested funding percentage, applicant contribution and strategic factors identified in the funding application package.

The assessment of the required level of funding will take into consideration all other sources of funding available to the applicant. Preference will be given to projects that leverage incremental funding from local government, First Nations, Metis and Inuit organizations, the federal government, the private sector and other non-government sources.

The Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern BC Program will give priority to geographic dispersion of services throughout Northern B.C.

Northern Development will also use other key considerations as it assesses applications, including:

- The extent of Northern Development's financial contribution to the total eligible budget
- The extent of the applicant's financial and/or non-financial contribution to the total eligible budget
- Preference will also be given to applications that request multi-year funding
- Preference may be given to applicants that demonstrate the possession of an existing comprehensive booking platform, or the ability to create and launch one in the immediate future.
- Applicants must indicate their existing vehicle inventory, if any, including make, model, year, capacity and odometer reading at the time of application
- The service promotes partnerships and inclusive ridership between Indigenous communities, businesses, industry, local government, other service providers and/or non-profit societies. Applications demonstrating partnership(s) with any of the listed bodies will be given preference
- Extent to which the proposed service meets the needs of Northern B.C. (services that promote access to work, education, health services, social connections, etc.)
- Applications that demonstrate a viable plan for the service to operate with reduced or no additional grant funding after two years will be prioritized
- The extent to which the proposed service has considered all four seasons experienced in Northern B.C.
- Level of coordination (synchronized, flexible schedules) and inter-connectivity of the proposed services between transportation modes and connections to other services such as community shuttles, BC Transit, Northern Health Connections, Interior Health Connections, etc.

- Inclusivity and accessibility of the proposed service to accommodate youth, seniors and persons with disabilities
- Demonstrated experience and/or capacity to operate the proposed service and carry out the workplan, outlining all tasks and resources needed
- A financial plan* that includes:
 - Operating costs that support successful operations, including expected fuel, maintenance and labour costs
 - An understanding of the fares that would be charged for passengers and the amount of that fare
 - The organization’s approach to qualified driver recruitment and retention
 - A demonstrated need for the program funding and overall strength and feasibility of the proposed plan
 - How information about the service will be marketed to ensure public awareness of the service and ease of access to book passage
- Evidence of broad-based support from multiple stakeholders (i.e., letters of support or funding contributions confirmed via a letter from the contributing entity)

Reporting

Applicants should be aware that there are reporting requirements for this program and should be prepared to meet them. Transportation services that the Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern B.C. Program provides funding for will be required to complete a short training session with Northern Development staff before an initial payment is released.

Applicants will also be required to submit monthly, semi-annual and final project completion reporting to Northern Development. Applicants should review the [Reporting Materials](#) and ensure they are comfortable with them prior to applying.

To Apply

Please review all program documents in detail as incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Completed proposal cover forms with all supplementary materials should be provided electronically to transportation@northerndevelopment.bc.ca.

Questions?

Northern Development Initiative Trust
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Prince George, BC V2L 3L2
250-561-2525
transportation@northerndevelopment.bc.ca
www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca