



## CONNECTING THE PEOPLE OF THE PEE DEE

### 2024 Year in the Rear-view: A Year of Growth, Connection, and Community Engagement

Reflecting on 2024, we celebrate a year marked by significant growth and milestones, including 50 years of connecting communities across the Pee Dee. From expanded routes and new shelters to continued ridership growth, PDRTA has

made great strides in enhancing service and fostering stronger connections throughout the region. Our dedication to improving public transportation remains unwavering, and as we look ahead, we are excited about the future of mobility in our community.

### Celebrating Our Passengers: Community, Connection, and Appreciation

As part of our commitment to the community, we concluded the year with our 2nd Annual Passenger Appreciation Week in November. This weeklong event was designed to recognize and thank the passengers who rely on PDRTA services to connect them to vital opportunities across the Pee Dee region.

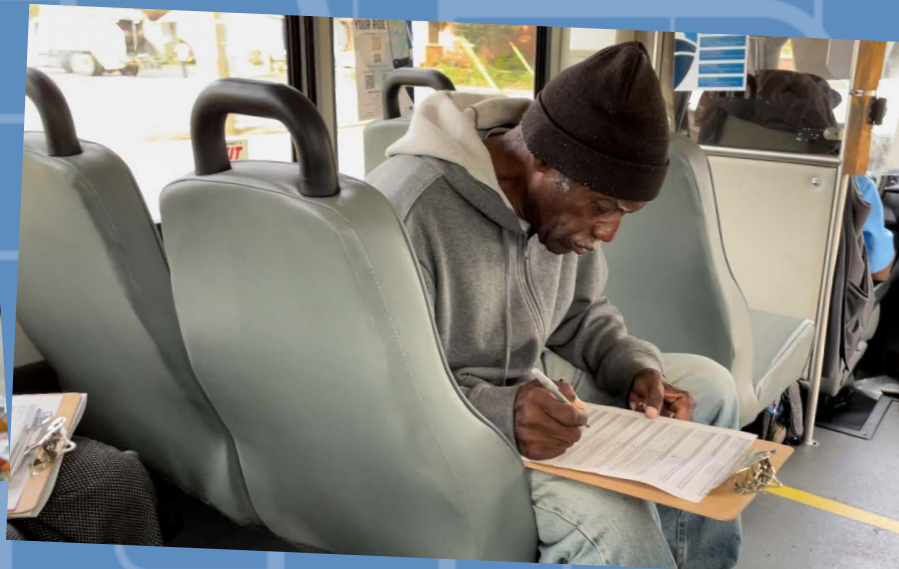
Throughout the week, we offered fare-free rides on all routes and hosted eight pop-up community engagement events across the Pee Dee. These events were strategically held at locations where our routes intersect, allowing for greater interaction with our passengers. Attendees enjoyed complimentary snacks and drinks, participated in drawings for Visa gift cards, and had the chance to engage with PDRTA staff and event sponsors. These events also provided an opportunity to foster awareness of PDRTA's continued growth and future plans. (continued)







In addition to the pop-up events, PDRTA staff boarded buses throughout the week to engage directly with passengers. Staff conducted surveys to gather invaluable feedback on our services, helping to inform future improvements and better meet the needs of the community. Staff members signed up for shifts to ensure thorough engagement and to show our appreciation in person.

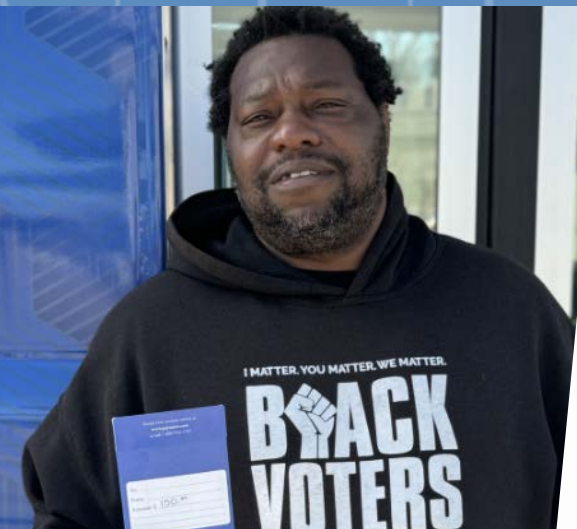


### Passenger Appreciation Week Highlights and Schedule of Engagement:

- **Monday, Nov. 18:** Surveys conducted on **Florence County** routes and engagement event at the Florence Transit Center from 9:45 am to 2 pm
- **Tuesday, Nov. 19:** **Darlington County** routes surveyed, with pop-up events at Darlington Walmart (9 am– 12 pm) and Hartsville Walmart (2 pm – 5 pm)
- **Wednesday, Nov. 20:** **Marlboro County** routes surveyed, with a pop-up at Carlie C's in Bennettsville (9:30 am – 12:30 pm)
- **Thursday, Nov. 21:** **Chesterfield County** routes surveyed, with pop-ups at Pageland KJ's (9 am – 11 am) and Chesterfield Walmart (1 pm – 3 pm)
- **Friday, Nov. 22:** **Dillon and Marion County** routes surveyed, with pop-ups at Marion Walmart (8:30 am – 11:30 am) and Dillon Walmart (1 pm. – 3 pm)

### Looking Toward the Future: Thank You to Our Community and Partners

As we reflect on a year of progress, PDRTA is grateful to all of our passengers, partners, and sponsors who made Passenger Appreciation Week such a success. With a bright future ahead, we remain committed to connecting communities and improving the lives of those who rely on public transportation across the Pee Dee. Thank you for being a part of our journey as we continue to grow and move forward into 2025!



### Celebrating Our Passengers: Winners of the Social Media Contest Share Their Stories

As part of our Passenger Appreciation Week celebrations, PDRTA hosted a fun contest, giving passengers the chance to win a \$150 Visa gift card by following us on our social media channels. We are thrilled to announce the winners of the drawing: Russell Rose and Sheneek Holmes!

Sheneek, a long-time passenger, relies on PDRTA for all of her transportation needs, using our services most frequently to get to and from work. Russell, who depends on PDRTA to attend doctor appointments and get groceries, shared how much the service means to him.

Both winners have expressed how essential PDRTA is to their daily lives, and we are grateful for the opportunity to play a part in their journeys. We love hearing these stories and are proud to continue making a difference in the lives of our passengers. Congratulations, Russell and Sheneek, and thank you to all who participated in the contest!

## FUELED BY...



Diversity Works Magazine

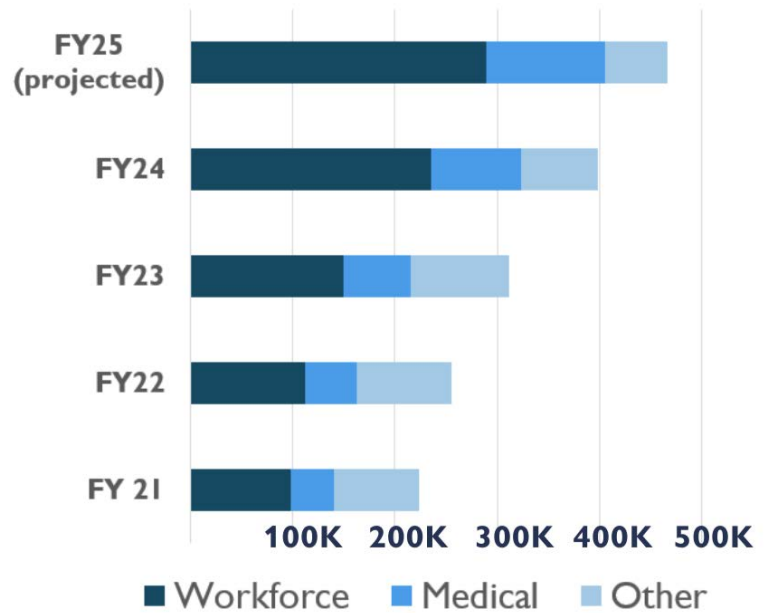
Hope Health

Chesterfield County Economic Development



# THE RESULTS PASSENGER SURVEY DATA

**Overview of 2024 Ridership:** In 2024, PDRTA provided nearly **400,000 passenger trips**, underscoring our critical role in connecting the Pee Dee region and supporting its residents. Our services continue to meet a variety of essential needs, and the latest passenger survey results reveal key insights into how we are serving our community.



## Connecting Workers to Jobs:

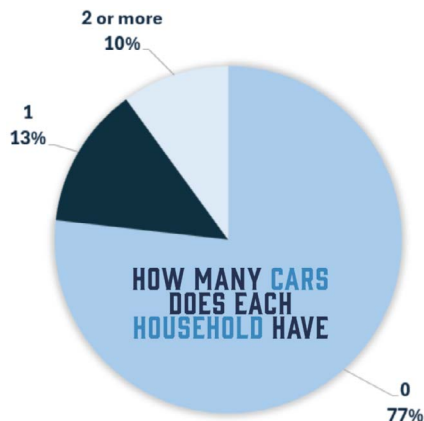
A significant portion of PDRTA’s ridership—**59% of trips**—focuses on connecting **workers to their jobs**. This highlights the essential role public transportation plays in enabling individuals to maintain employment and contribute to the local economy.

**Providing Access to Healthcare:** Healthcare access is another vital service provided by PDRTA. **22% of our trips** are healthcare-related, taking passengers to critical treatments and appointments for preventative care. Our strong partnerships with healthcare providers such as McLeod Health, MUSC, HopeHealth, Genesis Healthcare, CareSouth, HCPSC, Trinity Behavioral Care, Vantage Point and Mercy Medicine ensure that those in need can access the care they require.

**Supporting Education and Other Essential Needs:** In addition to work and healthcare trips, the remaining **19%** of PDRTA passengers trips is dedicated to traveling for **education, shopping, and other important activities**.

**Serving Our Growing Senior and Disabled Population:** Our recent survey reveals that 45% of PDRTA passengers are between the ages of 41-59, and 27% are 60 or older. By 2040, one in five Americans will be 65 or older, increasing the need for long-term, consistent healthcare and mobility independence. With this complexity of caring for an aging population, it is vital that we are proactive in allocating resources to connect our seniors with access to the care and needs that they have. Many major healthcare partners are contributing to this vital connection.

**The Need for Reliable Transportation:** Our data also shows that 77% of PDRTA passengers do not have a car in their household, reinforcing the vital role public transportation plays in providing independence and mobility to those who rely on it. PDRTA remains committed to addressing these needs and enhancing access to essential services for our community.



**Looking Ahead:** As we move into 2025, PDRTA continues to expand and improve services to meet the diverse needs of our community. We are proud of the role we play in connecting people to work, healthcare, education, and more. We are hopeful to move toward a new funding model that will allow us to further enhance our services, provide greater access, and support even more essential community connections. We look forward to continuing to serve the Pee Dee region and ensuring that transportation remains a vital resource for all.

# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



## WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION

### **24/7 Service for Harbor Freight in Dillon County**

Starting November 11, 2024, PDRTA proudly launched an expanded 24/7 Workforce Demand Response Service in Dillon County to support the growing needs of Harbor Freight. This new service offers dedicated transportation for Harbor Freight employees, ensuring they have reliable access to work at any hour of the day or night.

With four drivers specifically assigned to this demand response service, PDRTA is helping to meet the needs of Harbor Freight's workforce, providing crucial connections for employees who work non-traditional hours. This expansion strengthens our commitment to supporting local businesses and the workforce in Dillon County by offering flexible, accessible transportation options.

We're excited to continue expanding our services to meet the needs of the Pee Dee region and look forward to providing even more valuable connections in the future!





## RIDE A MILE **Building Empathy and**

### **Collaboration: Ride A Mile Program Enhances Public Transportation Awareness**

On Tuesday, December 10th, the Leadership Florence class participated in the impactful 'Ride A Mile' program. This session offered a simulated experience of real-life challenges faced by individuals from varying socio-economic backgrounds, with a focus on navigating daily tasks such as transportation, healthcare, and education.



### **Highlighting the Importance of Public Transportation**

A key element of the program is raising awareness of the vital role public transportation plays in connecting people to essential services.

The success of Ride A Mile was made possible by the collaboration of several community partners: Florence Chamber, Florence Adult Education, Lighthouse Ministries, Mercy Medical Free Clinic, and Francis Marion University. Through this partnership, participants were able to build empathy, enhance leadership skills, and develop a collaborative spirit that extends beyond the program into the community.

# OUR DRIVING FORCE



## A GROWING PDRTA TEAM

As part of our ongoing efforts to expand and improve our services, PDRTA welcomed 21 new employees in 2024 that continue to contribute to daily to connecting people throughout the Pee Dee.

Their hard work and commitment have been invaluable as we move forward into the new year. We are grateful for the entire PDRTA team and their commitment as we continue to grow and enhance our impact.

### **Join Our Team and Help Keep the Pee Dee Moving!**

We're excited to announce that PDRTA is hiring! If you're passionate about making a difference and being part of a dedicated team, we want you to help us continue connecting communities and creating opportunities for those who rely on our services. We're currently seeking individuals to fill the following positions:

- Drivers
- Dispatchers
- Deputy Maintenance Manager
- Mechanics
- Utility Worker
- Transportation Supervisor





# EMPLOYEES GIVE BACK

At PDRTA, giving back to the community is important to us. Recently, our team collected 3,182 cans of Vienna Sausages for Help 4 Kids Florence, ensuring children in need have enough food over the weekend.

We also volunteered at Help 4 Kids, spending an hour packing enough meal bags to feed 300 kids in our community.

## About Help 4 Kids

This amazing organization, founded in 2013, has become a lifeline for local children, and hearing the stories of those they help was truly touching. Inspired by a Bible study in 2013, Help 4 Kids has blossomed into a community lifeline and is a testament to the power of community.

- To donate, visit <https://www.help4kidsflorence.org/donate>
- To volunteer, visit <https://www.help4kidsflorence.org/volunteer>
- To sponsor a child, visit <https://www.help4kidsflorence.org/donate>

Together let's make sure every child has the fuel they need to succeed!





# 2024 END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

On December 7th, the PDRTA hosted our annual End of Year Party at the Country Club of South Carolina. This event was an opportunity for our team to come together and celebrate our achievements throughout 2024. It was a night filled with engaging games, recognition, and reflection on a successful year.

## Employee Recognition Awards

During the celebration, we also recognized several outstanding employees for their dedication and hard work.

- Manager of the Year: Cindy Crowley
- Driver of the Year: Terry Bullard
- Support Staff of the Year: Rondalyn McLeod
- 5 Years of Service: Samantha Mack
- 20 Years of Service: Minnie White
- 15 Years of Service: Tavorous Collins
- Extra Mile Award: Terry Carraway



# NEXT STOP?

## Upcoming Dates and Events

1/18 - Cash Community Lunch and Learn

1/22 - 1/25 TASC Legislative Reception

1/25 - 8am - Rodeo in Columbia



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*For more updates and information, follow us on social, view our website at [www.pdrta.org](http://www.pdrta.org)*



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