



**Story County Transportation Collaboration  
Wednesday, October 7, 1:15-2:30 pm, Zoom format**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Cami Lucht & Kalen Petersen (RSVP), Amber Schaefer (Mainstream Living), Brooke Ramsey & Danny Schnathorst (HIRTA), Shari Atwood (CyRide / Ames MPO), Kathy Wellik (ISU), Roger Kluesner (McFarland Clinic), Margaret Desio (Aging Resources), Anneke Mundel (United Way of Story County)

- I. **Introductions:** Given some new faces, introductions were made. Cami Lucht is the new Volunteer Coordinator with Central Iowa RSVP (replacing Arti), Danny Schnathorst is the new Mobility Coordinator at HIRTA, and Kathy Wellik is the Transportation Coordinator/Director of Fleet at ISU.
- II. **Meeting Minutes:** The January 15, 2020, meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with no changes.
- III. **Old Business:**
  - a. **“Extending the table” – Necessary at this time?** – Anneke noted previous unresolved questions about whether additional stakeholders needed to be at the table and how frequently this collaboration wanted to meet. Anneke noted a long list of invitees, but many have had conflicts with meeting times. Kathy asked if school districts were part of the collaboration given their transportation challenges; she noted her spouse coordinates transportation at Roland-Story CSD, and they have found it difficult to secure transportation to Woodward for teenagers. Anneke noted that the Ames CSD transportation coordinator has been invited to collaboration meetings and that others could be included as well, if the collaboration felt that would be helpful. Brooke noted that school district policies mean that collaboration with public transportation providers varies (ex/ Perry, Boone, Indianola and other school districts do routinely contract with HIRTA for transportation). It was decided to table this conversation for now.
- IV. **Agency Updates, with an emphasis on the transportation landscape during the coronavirus pandemic**
  - **United Way of Story County** – Anneke shared that the Wheels for Work program continues to go strong, with 11 vehicles given to Story County residents in FY19-20. She noted UWSC had recently revised its Strategy Map and had included new county-level transportation indicators. Finally, Anneke noted that UWSC had been awarded a \$87,868 grant through Iowa Workforce Development’s Coronavirus Employer Innovation Fund. UWSC and collaborating partners will launch three training programs in Story County before December 2020: MIG Welding (10/12 start date), Manufacturing Production Tech (anticipated November start date), and C.N.A. (ditto). Anneke stated interested individuals can contact United Way at 515-268-5142 or email [SCWIP2020@gmail.com](mailto:SCWIP2020@gmail.com) to secure their spot.
  - **Central Iowa RSVP** – Kalen stated that their volunteer driver services were suspended until mid-June. Given riders’ needs and willing drivers, services have resumed with coronavirus protocols in place (sanitizing kits in each vehicle, etc.) Cami stated that they have 15 regular clients in the Ames/Nevada area and 9 in Story City. Kalen said their rides currently represent about 65% of the usual volume, pre-covid. In part, Kalen said this is due to clients only attending essential medical appointments and the availability of online/telehealth options.
  - **Mainstream Living** – Amber stated that Mainstream has managed to retain the bulk of its employees during the pandemic. However, their services have had to shift dramatically: enclave work (at Hach and Danfoss)

has largely been suspended for now, and day-hab programs are operating in a new and more limited fashion (ex/ no cinema trips, more activities are being brought to clients, etc.). Amber also noted that clients are largely getting transportation from family members or staff to reduce their exposure (not using public transportation).

- **McFarland Clinic** – Roger noted that McFarland saw their typical volume of appointments cut in half in April, That has rebounded since to normal volumes. McFarland has had clear protocols from the start that have reassured clients. Roger thanked the transportation providers for ensuring clients could get to their appointments safely.
- **HIRTA** – Brooke said that HIRTA has experienced a 30% increase in one-time/next day rides but also has seen a sky-rocketing of cancellations on the day-of rides (up to 20% during COVID-19 from 5-8% pre-COVID). Brooke said some clients stated doctors' offices were making last-minute cancellations, though not specifically in Ames. - Brooke noted the extensive coronavirus safety protocols HIRTA has put in place (no group trips, blocked seats, microbial seat covers, medical-grade fogging of vehicles, temporary and now permanent plexiglass barriers around the drivers, etc.). - She also shared that HIRTA has applied to be a RSVP center for several counties and, similarly, has arranged volunteer drivers in Boone County to help with cost-effective transportation to medical appointments. (RSVP provided assistance in setting this up.)
- Danny, the new HIRTA Mobility Outreach coordinator (a new grant-funded position), is busy launching several campaigns: "Ride Safe and Ride HIRTA" (about coronavirus safety protocols, intended to reassure the public following CDC recommendations avoid public transit), "Ride to Vote" (transportation to county auditors offices and early voting sites, as well as election-day free rides), and "Do You Have Transportation?" (a campaign being done in conjunction with healthcare providers, to encourage early transportation arrangements for medical appointments).
- **ISU Transportation / Fleet** – Kathy said ISU's 650+ vehicle fleet is self-funded, so it was greatly impacted by the university's coronavirus closures. Some drivers were temporarily reassigned to Veenker Golf Course but are now back on staff. Kathy noted there are comparatively few fieldtrips right now (similar to 2007 volumes). She also noted extensive pandemic protocols, from mandated masks to a 72-hour hold between each vehicle's use.
- **Aging Resources** – Margaret said Aging Resources funds both HIRTA (for people over 60) and Heartland Senior Services. Heartland has not been able to offer Congregate Meals or its Day Center due to the pandemic, but it has been providing more home-delivered meals instead. – Margaret noted that some Day Centers in other counties have opened at 50% capacity. In all cases, staff are calling to check on seniors more frequently to screen for elder abuse, provide services, offer respite to caregivers, etc.
- **CyRide** – Shari shared the extensive safety precautions CyRide put into place at the start of the pandemic: only 9 riders (plus 1 driver) per bus maximum, boarding from the back door, masks for all riders plus shields for drivers, etc. She said an aeronautical engineer studied air flow in the buses to ensure good ventilation (a video was made and posted on CyRide's site), and that they are now exploring ultraviolet sanitization (?) for winter months when bus windows are closed. - Shari also noted changes in their route scheduling due to the closure of ISU and less riders: the "limited route" service during spring break was extended, for example. She said similar "limited route" schedules would be put in place when the students leave for the semester (Thanksgiving thru late January). – Shari noted CyRide ridership was down, with 20,000 in April and similar numbers throughout the summer, with an increase to 185,000 in August once students returned. Shari said September numbers were down 30% from usual as many students are electing to walk to classes given the pandemic and extra passing time. (September numbers are not yet certified.) - She noted one interesting challenge: finding a way for drivers to obtain their mandatory drug and alcohol tests as McFarland has been unable to offer these as a coronavirus precaution. Brooke noted that they have just been approved for saliva swabs as an alternative.

**V. Other – Having the Transportation Collaboration function as the Ames Area MPO's advisory group** – Shari stated the following:

*Due to the formality of the Human Services Council not moving forward, I would like to change and have the MPO's Passenger Transportation Planning efforts be done formally through this group. The plan is required every 5 years or anytime there is an update of projects. The last plan was completed in March*

2019. <https://www.cityofames.org/home/showdocument?id=49667>. The plan seeks to improve transportation access and availability for the community with an emphasis toward low-income, elderly and disabled populations. Any 5310 funding (transit elderly/disabled funding) needs to be planned for projects that benefit the elderly and disabled. The PTP must be coordinated with human service agencies.

Projects have specified as:

- Dial-A-Ride ADA Paratransit Service (CyRide contracts with HIRTA)
- Replacement vehicles (buses & vans) for Dial-A-Ride Service (CyRide leases vehicle to HIRTA)
- Bus Shelters
- Automatic Vehicle Locating System & Annunciators
- LED Signage

*The PTP requires a minimum of two meetings a year on this effort but I've included discussions with the Collaboration as well as the Human Service Council in the past. The Human Service Council was just the formal group that recommended projects/changes in the planning efforts to the MPO for approval of the plan. I think the PTP aligns well with the tasks of the Transportation Collaboration and I'd like to have the Transportation Collaboration be the formal group to make recommendations to the MPO moving forward.*

Anneke asked the collaboration members their thoughts. Brooke said that, since the Transportation Collaboration has effectively been functioning in this capacity, she did not feel this would be a change and did not feel a "vote" of consent would be necessary. Kalen stated that she sees how the Transportation Collaboration playing this role could avoid duplication of efforts. However, she noted that she would only be in agreement if this remains a small part of the TC agenda; in the past, she said that Ames MPO summaries/discussion had taken a lot of time. Kalen suggested one idea: that materials be provided in advance for collaboration members to review, and the discussion stay brief. Anneke said that she would ask for other collaboration members' views and put this back on the January agenda for a discussion/decision.

**Next meeting date:** January 6, 2021. Zoom format anticipated.

*United Way of Story County Vision: To improve the quality of life in our community for individuals and families.*

*United Way of Story County is a strategic leader in building countywide partnerships to identify needs and to develop, support, and evaluate effective human services, especially in the areas of education, income, and health, for our diverse community.*