

Story County Transportation Collaboration
Wednesday, January 6, 2021, 1:00-2:00 p.m, via Zoom
MINUTES

Present: Cami Lucht & Kalen Petersen (RSVP), Amber Schaefer (Mainstream Living), Brooke Ramsey (HIRTA), Kathy Wellik (ISU), Roger Kluesner (McFarland Clinic), Margaret Desio (Aging Resources), Kathy Johnson (Story County Community Services/W4W), Josh Oren (ACCESS/W4W), Jodi Stumbo (The Bridge Home), Jean Kresse & Anneke Mundel (United Way of Story County)

- I. Introductions
- II. Review October 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes – The minutes were accepted as written.
- III. Feedback on Transportation Collaboration (*See Addendum for complete feedback*)
 - a. **Frequency and meeting schedule:** The majority felt that a quarterly meeting was appropriate. While Wednesday morning would work better for some, most could make Wednesday, 1 pm, work especially with a virtual meeting or option.
 - b. **Structure:** Survey respondents see problem-solving as the key component to our collaboration’s work, followed by updates, and then presentations. Additional comments were made by survey respondents (see attached), including the idea of a Transportation “Conference” annually with expert speakers and break-out sessions and encouraging public invite by sharing meeting information in various formats. The meeting attendees reviewed the mission (to identify barriers and problem-solve through partnerships). Kluesner reminded the group of the collaboration’s genesis, arising after public commentary to the City and created to ensure there would not be gaps in service or redundancies. Amber asked if the Collaboration should be more inclusive of MCOs. Mundel noted that Jess Sherzan, former employee at HIRTA, had been starting to make linkages with MCOs prior to the pandemic. Ramsey said that only one broker (Access to Care) contracts with providers, so wondered if perhaps they or the providers would be better suited to attend. No decision was made, though Ramsey said she has relationships and could invite as the Collaboration wishes. Wellik wondered if City Council is ever involved. Mundel noted that numerous City staff are invited (Brian Phillips, Barb Neal, Shari Atwood) and attend as they are able, though no council members at present. Ramsey noted that Deb Schildroth is now the Assistant City Manager assigned; Mundel said she would reach out to Schildroth to see if she would like to be added to our list. Mundel also noted that a Story County Supervisor typically attends; Ramsey noted appointments of new supervisors would be made shortly.
- IV. Consideration of request (by Shari Atwood/CyRide) to have the Transportation Collaboration serve as the Ames MPO’s advisory group
 - a. **Feedback from survey** – A large majority supported this request, with 83% concurring. Additional clarification was provided from Atwood (see attached addendum), as were additional comments from survey respondents.
 - b. **Discussion** – Ramsey noted that the DOT requires submission of agendas and meeting minutes; Mundel noted she had spoken with Schildroth today and understands that this is already occurring, with agendas, minutes, and other information posted at [Transportation Collaboration | City of Ames, IA](#). According to Schildroth, the Collaboration – with United Way as its backbone organization – would not appear to be subject to open meetings requirements as had been suggested by one survey respondent. The collaboration agreed to move forward with this relationship, with the understanding that advisory components would be time-limited in the quarterly meetings and comprehensive feedback (for ex/ for the every-5 year Transportation Plan) be obtained at dedicated and/or alternately scheduled meetings.

- V. **Problem-solving: Need for Vehicle Repair Fund** – Mundel noted that there is a persistent need for a vehicle repair fund in Story County and currently no year-round resource to meet this need. She noted that MICA does apply annually for “Embrace Iowa” (Des Moines Register) funds and can accept applications for car repairs among other needs (this year, through January 29). However, no other ongoing funds exist. DeSio noted that Aging Resources can help with up to \$200 toward vehicle repairs for individuals 64 and older. Kresse noted that United Way used to fund Beyond Welfare’s vehicle repair program, but it was ultimately cost prohibitive. Johnson added that Story County Community Services and Wheels for Work frequently gets request for vehicle repair funds; not only is there a need, but this presents a unique opportunity for partnerships, for example, with community mechanics among others. Mundel noted that the Wheels for Work program could function as one possible model – *Structure*: Nonprofit backbone/sponsor agency (key fundraiser, tax letters, coordinator). Business partner (parts at cost, reduced labor rate). Referral human service agencies. *Eligibility criteria*: 150% of poverty; must be working or in school, child in the home, driving record with no “red flags” in past 2 years (more than 2 moving violations, OWI, suspended or revoked license, failure to restrain child); must have valid DL and insurance. Wellik asked for additional information on Wheels for Work to do some queries. Oren wondered if Cornerstone Church might be a partner as, in the past, they had offered at-cost parts with free labor; he will send contact information to Mundel for follow-up. Wellik asked if DMACC’s Career Academy might be a partner; Mundel said she could reach out. Wellik also shared a [preventative supply give-away](#) co-hosted by DMACC, the Des Moines police, NAPA and others as another possible example. Kresse noted that a process would need to be put in place to vet applicants. Ramsey wondered if HIRTA’s recent nonprofit arm could be utilized for fundraising. Petersen asked about the Transportation Collaboration hosting a fundraising event of sorts and suggested some potential community volunteers. The discussion will be continued at the next meeting.
- VI. Transportation brochure changes: As Atwood was not in attendance, Mundel encouraged providers to ensure their information is current on the [brochure](#) and send updates.
- VII. Updates from partners:

Mainstream Living – Schaeffer shared that Mainstream is conducting their first round of vaccinations; as they have had almost no in-person services since March 2020, this is an exciting and hopeful development.

RSVP – Petersen shared that rider numbers are still down, but their volunteer drivers persist. She said that RSVP is exploring with Heartland Senior Services whether they might do grocery delivery in rural areas. HSS is conducting a survey of its home-delivered meal clients currently to assess needs. Desio said Aging Resources would be happy to partner as well.

McFarland Clinic – Kluesner noted that appointments have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. Presently, staff are getting vaccines (anticipate 80% will be vaccinated shortly across sites), with planning in place for the 69,000 McFarland patients who will need to be vaccinated when sufficient vaccines are available. Kluesner noted that there may be very short turnaround once vaccines are made available; in turn, there may be a surge in patient requests for transportation.

ISU Fleet – Wellik noted this is a “rebuilding” year for the fleet.

HIRTA – Ramsey stated that HIRTA was just selected for a multi-year project by the Federal Highway Administration, the only rural project funded and only one of 5 nationwide; a press release will go out today. Ramsey also noted that HIRTA has been working with public health to have a coordinated effort on vaccines and to advocate for bus drivers being considered essential workers (this has been successful in Boone County, to date).

Story County Community Services, ACCESS, and United Way of Story County declined to give updates given the late hour.

Addendum – Transportation Collaboration 2020 Survey Results (enclosed PDF) *Note: there was some duplication as several respondents took the survey twice.*

2021 Meeting Dates: April 7, July 7, October 6, 1 – 2 pm (via Zoom until notice otherwise)