

Story County Transportation Collaboration

(Works to identify the transportation challenges members of the county face daily and to develop the partnerships to help address the needs)

Wednesday, April 7, 2021, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Present: Stacey Hensley (Cornerstone-Home For Awhile), Shari Atwood (CyRide), Abra Dougherty (MICA), Emily Randall (UWSC), Roger Kluesner (McFarland), Josie Stahlin (MICA), Rachal Glenn (ACCESS), Latifah Faisal (Story County Board of Supervisors), Melissa Pearson (Cornerstone), Lisa Heddens (Story County Board of Supervisors), Kalen Petersen (Central Iowa RSVP), Nick Sorensen (Ames Chamber and AEDC), Kathy Johnson (Story County Community Services), Kim Eastman (Mainstream), Shane Kelley (Cornerstone), Jodi Stumbo (The Bridge Home), Kathy Wellik (ISU Transportation Services & Project Search), Anneke Mundel (UWSC)

I. Introductions

- a. Welcome to several new participants: Rachal Glenn (ACCESS), Latifah Faisal & Lisa Heddens (Story County Board of Supervisors), Nick Sorensen (Ames Chamber), Emily Randall (United Way), Jennifer Ellis (Friendship Ark)
- b. Welcome to guests: Shane Kelley, Stacey Hensley, and Melissa Pearson (Cornerstone). Glen “Butch” Hansen (ISU) was out ill and sent his regrets.
- c. Update on City Manager office participation – Mundel noted that Deb Schildroth, Assistant City Manager, said she would be happy to attend when able or have her designee attend (Management Analyst – position currently vacant). This year, the TC meetings conflict with the ASSET Administrative Team meeting (first Wednesday of the month). Mundel suggested we might shift the 2022 meetings back to the second Wednesday of the quarter.

II. **Review January 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes** – No comments were made; minutes accepted as written.

III. **City Website for Story County Transportation Collaboration** ([Link](#)) - Mundel noted that she, Atwood, and Kresse had recently made some updates to the Transportation Collaboration webpage, hosted on the City of Ames website. She asked collaboration members to review this and let her or Atwood know of additional updates needed. Mundel also welcomed collaboration members to provide links to transportation resources offered by their agencies if they are not already included. – Mundel also showed the collaboration members where the [Transportation Brochure](#) can be found. Atwood noted that while there are several print copies in the CyRide and City offices, the intention was for partners to print and share with their clients/participants. Again, any updates to the content on this brochure should be emailed to Atwood: <satwood@cyride.com>

IV. **Problem-solving: Vehicle Repair Fund** – Mundel reminded attendees that several partners had identified a need for a vehicle repair fund. This had been discussed in detail at the January meeting.

- a. **Update on actions since last meeting:** Mundel said that she had discussions with several mechanics following the meeting (Butch Hansen of ISU, thanks to a connection from Kathy Wellik, and Ben Noland formerly of the “Mechanics Ministry” at Cornerstone, who connected her with Shane Kelley). She noted that there seems to be a cadre of local mechanics who are willing to volunteer some time to this effort. Mundel also attended a webinar on the “CORE Grants” available through Iowa Women’s Foundation as transportation is one of their focus areas. (Deadline of April 30, 5 pm.) She said she also reached out to a number of partner agencies to think through the logistics of such a Fund and to try and find a “home” agency for this effort. Mundel thanked Kathy Johnson of Story County Community Services for her valuable insights, as well as Josie Stahlin and Abra Dougherty of MICA for entertaining the possibility of being the “home agency.”

- b. **Presentation by MICA** - Josie Stahlin stated that MICA is willing to function as a “home agency” in terms of accepting and processing applications for a Vehicle Repair Fund, at least for a pilot period as they determine how much staff/administrative time is needed. She noted that MICA is supportive of the idea and wants to be a community partner. Stahlin also said that MICA has experience and some processes already in place given that they currently participate in administering the Des Moines Register’s annual “Embrace Iowa” funds (can be used for vehicle repairs). She stated that, if they move ahead with the Vehicle Repair Fund, they could see utilizing a point system to rank applications, for example. Stahlin said that MICA would not, however, have the bandwidth to fundraise for the Fund and asked if the Transportation Collaboration might be willing to take that on collectively.
- c. **Next steps** – Wellik said that she thinks the idea of sponsorships could work (ex/ business or realtors who commit seed money and get their businesses associated with our Fund). She noted that Hansen had other ideas as well. Kelley noted that Cornerstone Church would likely be interested in providing some financial support as this fits with their mission of serving single moms in particular. Kelley stated that he sees it as key that MICA would be willing to take on the administrative pieces as that was the bottleneck they experienced in the past with the “Mechanics Ministry” (currently paused). He said that it was logistically complicated for the mechanics to have to work with auto-part stores and the clients directly. Kelley felt that having an intake agency would provide a needed “degree of separation.” Sorensen asked if it might be useful to work with mechanics throughout the county. He noted that this might be a way of saving on towing costs and simplifying logistics as well. Faisal felt this was a good idea and suggested that having more mechanics would help distribute the labor. Mundel said that that the trick would be finding mechanics who would be willing to volunteer their labor or provide it at a very reduced rate. Mundel noted that prior to engaging mechanics, the TC would need to determine if fundraising would be feasible. She asked if anyone would be interested in discussing and exploring this further. Wellik, Hansen, Kelley, Sorensen, Stahlin, Dougherty, and Mundel agreed to meet.

V. Updates from partners:

- **HIRTA** – Mundel noted that Brooke Ramsey was unable to attend but had provided an update by email: (1) HIRTA and CyRide continue to partner on serving Ames residents. “We will have some internal discussions to determine if rides to Ames residents will have to be restricted to meet some of the funding limitations. We have attempted to get some folks moved over to the DAR program, unfortunately only 36 people appeared to qualify based on info in HIRTA’s system. Of those, about 6 have completed the application. We are working with the others to complete it but people do not want to do the paperwork. We have an additional 77 people over the age of 60 who ride on a donation basis and 90 who are just considered general public.” (2) HIRTA was awarded an Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative (ACTI) grant from Iowa DOT and Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council to undergo an unmet needs assessment across our region. “These are federal funds so things moved very quickly and the project has to be wrapped up by the end of September.” Mundel noted that she participated in two days of the ATCI so far (4/05 & 4/06) and that the coalition is working on three primary goals: expanding transportation options, hours, and geographical reach; building same-day service capacity; and building partnerships. She said that the TC members are very welcome to participate. Meetings will be held monthly, 2nd Monday of the month, 1-2 pm, via Zoom. Interested individuals should email Brooke Ramsey BRamsey@ridehirta.com or Danny Schnathorst <DSchnathorst@ridehirta.com>
- **MICA** – Stahlin said the Transportation Brochure looked extremely helpful, and she will make sure staff are aware of it and share with families. She also noted MICA will be participating in some discussions regarding transportation with Region 6 resource partners who cover all of our counties but Story; she therefore was very interested in the ATCI effort.
- **CyRide** –Atwood noted CyRide has been meeting with HIRTA monthly and working to develop promotional materials to distribute to explain Dial-A-Ride services, reduced fare options, and more. Atwood explained that Dial-A-Ride is the ADA para-transit program that serves Ames area. Atwood said that they are not currently expending their allotment of funds, so they welcome additional referrals to Dial-A-Ride (call CyRide). Atwood also note that they received funding that will enable the replacement of 6 mini-buses this summer, LED signage fleetwide, and the launching of an app that confirms bus capacity.

- **Ames Chamber and AEDC** – Sorensen stated that internet connectivity matters to access transportation, employment, and more. As such, he encouraged all to take and share the current [Central Iowa Broadband Survey](#).
- **Central RSVP** – Petersen noted that they have recently simplified their application for rides to more easily accommodate the one-time riders for coronavirus vaccine appointments. She also stated that RSVP recently recruited some volunteers to assist CyRide and HIRTA in conducting phone surveys. (Atwood noted this had increased the number of survey responses.) Finally, Petersen said RSVP continues to be in conversation with Heartland Senior Services on grocery delivery, particularly for seniors in rural areas.
- **The Bridge Home (formerly ERP)** – Stumbo noted both that their call volume has been up dramatically and that The Bridge has a new phone system that enables callers to leave messages. Stumbo asked providers to encourage participants to leave messages; The Bridge Home staff are working hard to return calls within a day. She also noted that the new Supportive Housing Program is now up and running.
- **ACCESS** – Glenn noted that calls from survivors are up at ACCESS as well. Mundel noted that Glenn’s colleague, Josh Oren, is also part of the Wheels for Work collaborative and had connected the TC with Cornerstone’s “Mechanics Ministry.”
- **Cornerstone/Home For A While** – Hensley shared that Cornerstone runs a 90-day transitional living program, with 3 apartments in Ames. Applicants must have dependents to be eligible. Hensley noted their Board reviews applications once a month. For more information, visit [Home for Awhile — Cornerstone Local Missions \(cornerstonelife.com\)](#) – Pearson added that she coordinates the Benevolence Requests at Cornerstone.
- **McFarland Clinic** – Kluesner noted that vaccines are offered at their South location. This was selected as it is on the CyRide route. Kluesner noted that CyRide and HIRTA transportation have been critical to getting patients to vaccine appointments.
- **Mainstream** – Eastman said there are not many updates on their residential programs currently. However, they have re-opened some day services and are working with transportation providers for covid-safe rides.
- **ISU Fleet** – Wellik said that services are returning to normal, somewhat, as more of the staff are vaccinated.
- **United Way of Story County** – Mundel said that the [Wheels for Work program](#) (collaborative initiative of Ames Ford Lincoln and UWSC, with 4 intake partner agencies) is going well: 4 vehicles were given away in the past quarter, with another 3 donated. There is currently no wait list, so she encouraged applications to the program. Eligibility criteria include earning 150% of federal poverty or less, having a dependent in the household, having a valid driver’s license, having no more than 2 moving violations in the past 2 years, no OWI’s in the past 2 years, etc. Mundel also noted they are in dire need of a van for a working family with 4 children under 5. – Mundel also noted the [LIVE UNITED Food Drive](#) is coming up April 26-May 6, a hybrid model (nonperishables and monetary donations), and welcomed involvement of all.

The meeting adjourned at 2:08 pm.

2021 Meeting Dates: July 7 & October 6 (*Zoom format until otherwise announced*)

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.