



United Way
of Story County

**Story County Transportation Collaboration
Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2024 @ 1 pm via Zoom**

Present: Kalen Petersen (RSVP), Basil Heintzman (HeartCorps), Shari Atwood (CyRide/Ames Area MPO), Danny Schnathorst (HIRTA), Beth Lucht (Friendship Ark), Jana Larsen (MICA), Nikki Fischer (Ames Chamber), Linda Van Holten (RSVP), Jenni Talbot (McFarland), Sherry Zook (Story County Public Health), Karen Kiel Rosser (MGMC), Andrew Collings (Des Moines Area MPO), Kyle Thompson (City of Ames/AAMPO), Grant Olsen, Chelsea Flack (Story County General Assistance), Cari McPartland (GNEA), Bill Stodden (GNEA), Marcy Ryken (Heartland), Lisa Heddens (Story County BOS), Traci Miner (Mainstream), Anneke Mundel (United Way)

- I. **Introductions** - Newly participating are Jana Larsen (Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health Coordinator, MICA), Kyle Thompson (Ames Transportation Planner), and Andrew Collings (Des Moines Area MPO). Marcy Ryken is in a new role, as full-time outreach staff at Heartland of Story County.
- II. **Review October Meeting Minutes** – Minutes were accepted as written.
- III. **Changes to Collaboration convening** – Mundel said that United Way has convened the Story County Transportation Collaboration since 2007 (16 years!) As the community needs around transportation have changed, it makes sense to have transportation “experts” leading the charge. Going forward, Danny Schnathorst and the HIRTA team will be convening the quarterly meetings. Please send any additions/removals to the distribution list, agenda items, etc. to: DSchnathorst@ridehirta.com
- IV. **Works to identify transportation needs and address them:**
 - a. **Story County BOS** – wish to include/better meet the needs of non-Ames Story County residents (Updates from Lisa Heddens and HIRTA team)
 - i. **Outreach Events** – Schnathorst said that there was good attendance at the Colo Outreach Event in December and at a related “Coffee Chat” (with around 20 attendees at that portion alone). He said there have been additional outreach events, including at MGMC Senior Health Clinics. Atwood asked if the SC Transportation Brochure could be shared alongside HIRTA materials; Schnathorst said he would provide those.
 - ii. **Survey Updates** – Schnathorst said that Lisa Heddens and Julia Castillo met and developed survey questions. The survey will be released shortly.
 - b. **HIRTA’s “Driving Inclusivity” Event (Dec. 2023)** –Schnathorst said HIRTA was approached by US Aging about hosting this event. Held at Reiman Gardens, the event featured Lisa Heddens as the keynote speaker and a panel of individuals, including Anneke Mundel from United Way. Schnathorst said that US Aging provided stipends for riders and community members to attend, paid for refreshments, etc. HIRTA learned of some additional needs which staff are exploring how best to address.
 - c. **The Salvation Army’s “Story County Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Fund”** –Kathy Pinkerton was unable to attend. Mundel stated that the need is outpacing the funds available, so TSA was happy to receive a grant from Story County to supplement funds received previously from Cornerstone Church. TSA has applied for funding through ASSET and, if approved by the funding bodies, is slated to receive some funding support in FY25.

- d. **AAMPO Passenger Transportation Plan** – Atwood reviewed a summary of the Passenger Transportation Plan (see attached) and noted that there will be a 30-day public comment period from February 13-March 14. She welcomed any additional ideas for strategies or projects. *Atwood then moved, seconded by Petersen, to recommend that the AAMPO include 4 projects in its plan: Dial-A-Ride, DAR LD Bus, Shelters/LED Signage, Preventative Maintenance. Motion carried.*

V. Seeks to educate about transportation challenges:

- a. **Action plan** – Individual stakeholders are educating the public already. A collective plan will be developed if needed. Still tabled.

VI. Provides information/resources about transportation services available:

- a. **Transportation Brochure** - Thanks to Jenni Talbot, McFarland Clinic, for recent updates (addition of a Medicaid provider). Reminder to regularly review this brochure and send any updates to satwood@cyride.com
- b. **HIRTA Vanpool with Enterprise** – Schnathorst stated this is a new initiative which began January 2024. More information can be found at: <https://www.commutewithenterprise.com/content/commute/en/partners/hirta.html>
- c. **“Story County At-A-Glance Transportation Provider Services”** –Basil Heintzman, HeartCorps member through August, updated this handout per a previous suggestion from Petersen and other TC members. She stated the intent is for providers to be able to identify an appropriate provider for clients, with a comprehensive list. Bill Stodden asked if there is transportation available to/from Des Moines. Heintzman said there is an airport shuttle as one option. Schnathorst said that HIRTA can provide transportation as well if drivers and vans are available; the cost typically ranges from \$10-\$25 depending on the ride request. Atwood asked for more information on JoshProvides and I-Smile. Heintzman shared that JoshProvides is a national charity which provides funds for Uber and/or gas vouchers for epilepsy patients to get to medical appointments. I-Smile is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and is intended to assist with transportation for children’s dental appointments. Please contact Heintzman with any other questions or feedback: Basil.Heintzman.HeartCorps@heart.org . Many thanks to Basil for her efforts!

VII. Updates from partners:

- **Aging Resources** – No updates; Sharee Huffer was unable to attend.
- **Ames Chamber** – Fischer stated that they have launched a new, 3-part workshop series, “Untapped Workforce.” The first roundtable will be February 8, 7:30 – 9 am, and is on employing justice-involved individuals. Please [RSVP](#) if possible.
- **City of Ames** – Thompson stated that they are working on budgets, so watch for public input opportunities. The City also launched a new website for the AAMPO: www.aampo.org . Check out the new page for the Transportation Collaboration at <https://www.aampo.org/tc.php>
- **Friendship Ark** – Lucht said they do not have any updates.
- **Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance** – Stodden said that they continue to offer \$30 HyVee gas vouchers, every 90 days if needed. He noted that these vouchers are only for housed residents of Story County; individuals who are unhoused or in transitional living situations are not eligible and should instead be referred to The Bridge Home (515-232-8075) or Story County General Assistance (515-663-2930). Stodden also said they provide CyRide tickets,

- with the cold weather driving up demand in December and January. Finally, he noted that they hear of needs for transportation to/from Des Moines at least a few times per month.
- **Heartland of Story County** – Ryken said that the new 60-Forward building is scheduled to open this spring (late March/early April) at 205 South Walnut Ave (previous location, new building).
 - **Heart of Iowa Regional Transit (HIRTA)** – Schnathorst shared a photo of new HIRTA buses with a new slogan meant to dispel misconceptions (“For anyone for any reason”) and design features.
 - **ISU Transportation Services** – No one was present to give updates.
 - **Mainstream Living** - No one was present to give updates. (Traci was on but then off before update time.)
 - **MGMC - Story County Public Health** – Zook said that they are excited for the 60-Forward center as they will provide programming there. She added that the collaboration with HIRTA Outreach has been very fruitful and welcomed additional participation by HIRTA in upcoming rural clinics or childhood immunization clinics.
 - **MGMC** – Karen Kiel Rosser stated that she is attending as an observer as they are always looking for transportation options for hospital patients.
 - **McFarland Clinic** – Talbot had no updates today.
 - **MICA** – Larsen said that many MICA clients have transportation barriers, so she and other MICA staff benefit from this forum to hear about available services.
 - **Primary Health Care Inc.** - No one was present to give updates.
 - **RSVP (Central Iowa)** – Petersen reminded everyone that RSVP’s transportation depends on volunteer drivers using personal vehicles; as such, they have some limitations (ex/ they cannot transport individuals in wheelchairs). She stated that RSVP continues to add 4-5 new clients each month. Prospective clients can sign up for services at www.rsvpvolunteer.org . Additionally, Petersen said that the RSVP Ames office will be moving to the 60-Forward Center this spring.
 - **Story County BOS** - Heddens has been helping with HIRTA outreach as her schedule permits.
 - **Story County General Assistance** – Flack stated that they can provide either gas and oil or a bus ticket for transient individuals. Bus tickets are to transport individuals to the “first stop” past the state line.
 - **The Arc of Story County** - No one was present to give updates.
 - **The Salvation Army** - No one was present to give updates.
 - **Des Moines Area MPO** – Collings said that they serve an 8-county area, including part of Story County. Like the Ames Area MPO, they have started the budget planning process. They also received a “Safe Streets” grant and will be conducting public input sessions in spring/summer 2024 in Story City, Nevada, and Huxley; watch for those invites.
 - **United Way of Story County** – Mundel said that Ashley Thompson is UWSC’s new President and CEO; she and Jean Kresse are working together until March 1 for a smooth transition. Mundel also said that Wheels for Work continues to search for vehicle donations; they have 8 individuals on the wait list and have only awarded 2 Wheels for Work vehicles this fiscal year.

Planned 2024 Meeting Dates (*4th Wednesday of the quarter, via Zoom*): April 24, July 24, October 23 – all at 1 pm. Watch for updated calendar invites and agendas from Danny Schnathorst.