

Transportation Advisory Groups Guidance for Iowa's Transportation Systems



June 2016

Introduction

Iowa's transportation system is ever-changing. Change takes many forms, including demographics, funding levels, environmental, economic, and cultural. These changes often provide a challenging environment for governmental agencies and organizations whose operational and planning activities are built around long-term stability and consistency.

Although these changes can be challenging, they can also provide opportunities. Over the past few decades there has been a national push to plan for and develop transportation systems that can accommodate everyone in the community. The vision for these transportation systems not only relies on the notion that they provide options for individuals who are transit dependent, but also allow the traveling public the opportunity to choose a different form of transportation other than the personal automobile.

With more and more focus on transportation systems as a means for equity, economic vitality, and quality of life, it is important to incorporate stakeholders with key insights into inclusive transportation systems in the planning process. When it comes to major investments in the transportation system, seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, and the service agencies that assist them are, unfortunately, often missing from the core input process.

Through this document, the Iowa DOT will provide planning agencies with optional guidance that will not only help them recognize these opportunities to create a more inclusive and comprehensive transportation system, but also provide them with the organizational tools to seize those opportunities.

Document purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Iowa's planning and transit agencies on sustaining and growing their local Transportation Advisory Groups (TAG), gathering more meaningful and actionable input, and incorporating that input into their transportation planning processes.

According to a recent survey of Iowa's metropolitan and regional planning agencies conducted by the Iowa DOT, many agencies have struggled with sustaining membership in TAGs. Following the passage of MAP-21 in 2012 and the consolidation of New Freedom and Job Access & Reverse Commute funding into other transportation programs, TAGs have found themselves with less dedicated funding for programming projects developed through their planning process.

To help alleviate these issues, this document provides optional recommendations and best practices related to how TAGs can be structured and ways their input can be incorporated into planning agencies' existing transportation planning committees and processes.

1. What is a TAG?

A TAG consists of voluntary members from a diverse range of interests in the human services and transportation sectors. These groups should include, but are not limited to, representatives

of transit or passenger transportation industries, human service agencies, the non-emergency medical transportation industry, the aging population, individuals with disabilities, limited English speaking populations, and low-income populations.

In Iowa, these groups can be a formalized decision-making body in the transportation planning process or a more informal group of individuals and organizations interested in transportation coordination. These groups are one of the primary inputs planning agencies use to form their Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP), explained in the following section.

The primary purpose of a TAG is to provide a forum to discuss transportation issues and identify opportunities to create a more coordinated transportation system that is affordable and accessible to all individuals in the community. Ideally, these discussions generate projects and actionable items that can bring the community closer to this type of transportation system.

Passenger Transportation Plan

The Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is designed to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of local and regional passenger transportation systems.

The goals of these plans are to improve transportation services to Iowans by creating an awareness of unmet needs in the region, discuss opportunities for identifying and coordinating resources for passenger transportation, and provide justification for future investments in the passenger transportation system. Simply put, these documents are meant to assist decision makers, elected officials, planning staff, and transportation agencies in understanding the needs of their current transportation system and identifying strategies for improving it.

2. Structure and Organization Recommendations

TAGs are valuable tools used to involve the public in passenger transportation planning and there are many different ways TAGs can be incorporated into the transportation planning process. As was mentioned earlier, TAGs in Iowa range from formalized decision-making bodies to informal advisory groups. How a planning agency decides to structure their TAG will ultimately depend on several factors, including the nature of transportation planning issues and projects in their area, the dynamics of the organization, and the goals of the TAG itself.

Membership

Ideally, a TAG would have representation from at least these six core groups:

- Transportation/transit providers
- Human service providers
- Senior citizens
- Individuals with disabilities
- Low-income population
- Limited English speaking population

Other groups may also be represented, such as veterans, refugees, healthcare, education, minority groups, businesses/chambers, or other interested members of the public. However, core membership should represent at least the six groups in bullet points above. For a sample list of organizations and agencies to invite to participate in the TAG, please see Appendix A.

Specific individuals from organizations can be invited to participate in a TAG, or community organizations can be asked to appoint individuals. Additionally, TAGs can include or exclude elected officials based on preferred group dynamics.

Meetings

Some planning agencies across the state have struggled with maintaining membership levels in their TAG. Fostering the commitment and leadership necessary to implement long term projects is often difficult to achieve due to limited funding and the complex nature of transportation issues. One recommendation for resolving this issue is to provide orientation information when inviting new members or groups to your TAG. Orientation information can include a brief description of your planning agency, its committees, and the transportation planning and programming process. Many individuals will not have had prior understanding of how a planning agency or the federal/state aid process operates, so an orientation will be important in aiding their understanding of the process and their role in it. For examples of orientation materials, please see Appendix B.

Evaluating the current structure of TAG meetings may result in better attendance and input, and can be critical for a TAG's success. Consider the following areas when determining how to structure your TAG meetings:

- Frequency – How much input do you solicit from your TAG? Set too many meetings and it can be difficult to find discussion items and work for the committee to do; set too few meetings and the group can feel disengaged.
- Time – Who are your TAG members? Is it better to hold meetings during work hours or in the evening?
- Length – Do committee members prefer frequent, shorter meetings or infrequent, longer meetings? Set time limits on agenda items to keep meetings on track.
- Format – Do committee members respond better to a more informal workshop format with a brief overview and then discussion amongst the group, or a more formal presentation followed by questions and answers?

Lastly, creating an executive committee for your TAG may improve overall attendance. Executive committee members could meet more frequently than the full TAG and discuss agenda items with the MPO/RPA. Then, when the full TAG meets, these members can provide recommendations on the agenda topics and the meeting can progress quicker and with more decisive action. Executive committee members could be appointed by the TAG group, planning agency staff, or policy or technical committees.

When it comes to choosing executive committee members or leaders within the TAG, there is often a balance to strike. Choosing representatives that have decision-making authority within

their respective industries or groups may result in more decisive action and coordination on projects. However, these individuals likely have multiple commitments within their community and limited time to spend in meetings. This makes decisions regarding meeting frequency, agenda items, and influence on decision-making processes at the planning agency important components of how your TAG is structured.

Mission Statement and Responsibilities

Regulations and/or guidelines/expectations are often made clear at the committee's first meeting or provided in the orientation packet. This includes things such as meetings, decision-making protocols, and committee member responsibilities. This lays out a clear, concise framework for the TAG's purpose and functionality.

As stated earlier, the TAG functions as a public participation tool to help identify transportation issues, projects and funding, and to advise the MPO/RPA on the public's opinion of transportation planning, programs, and projects. It is important to develop the TAG's mission statement and responsibilities in a way that people not familiar with the transportation planning process can understand the group's role. A mission statement is a formal, short statement of the TAG's purpose. It may be useful to develop a mission statement before soliciting individuals/groups for participation in the TAG, so the significance and expectations of the group are clear. The mission statement and responsibilities of the TAG can be refined over time based on experience and committee input.

Similar to developing a mission statement and responsibilities, the TAG will be a more effective tool if they identify objectives for their work. Establishing measurable objectives can provide a focus for the TAG and assist with selecting projects for implementation. Ideally, the mission statement and objectives for the TAG would correlate directly to the planning agency's long range transportation plan. Conversely, the long range transportation plan's mission and goals should be developed with the TAG's input in mind.

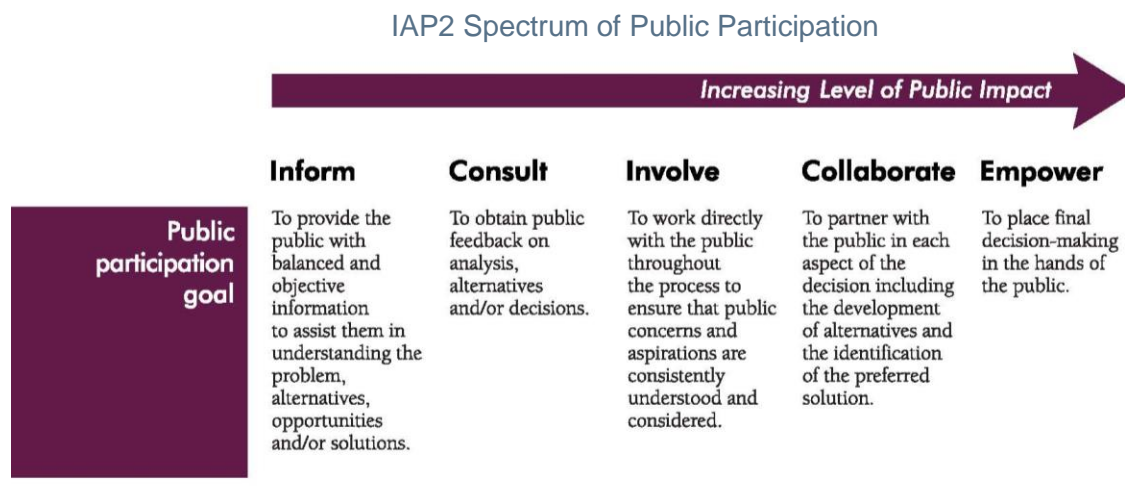
Representation

How the TAG is represented in the decision-making process at a planning agency can play a large part in the overall effect the group has on transportation in their region. It will also affect the mission statement, responsibilities, objectives, and attendance for the group. For many planning agencies across the state, the TAG is a standalone committee, separate from the larger decision-making bodies such as the technical and policy committees.

It is recommended that planning agencies explore ways to incorporate the TAG, or their activities, into these bodies. This can be done by making a TAG representative a voting or non-voting member of the planning agency's technical or policy committee, or having a TAG member 'report out' as a regular agenda item at technical or policy board meetings.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) developed a spectrum of levels of public involvement. Some TAGs fall towards the lower end of the spectrum, "consult", while others have the authority to make decisions "empower." It is important that the TAG

understands where it fits in this spectrum. Ideally, TAGs would be used as a collaborative partner, if not an empowered partner.



Additional Opportunities

Although the core responsibility of the TAG is to assist with developing passenger transportation needs and priorities in the planning area, they can also be utilized for additional transportation planning purposes such as projects that have an environmental justice component. Many of the groups that participate in the TAG are the same groups that often have environmental justice interests.

On Feb. 11, 1994, President Clinton signed into law Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. E.O. 12898 addresses disproportionate adverse environmental, social, and economic impacts that may exist in communities, specifically minority and low-income populations. The order is intended to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs that affect human health and the environment, as well as provide minority and low-income communities access to public information and public participation.

Environmental Justice (EJ) is the term used to collectively describe the uneven environmental and social hardships that disadvantaged groups bear. Within the context of transportation planning, it is important that EJ interests be included in short- and long-range planning and public participation outreach efforts throughout the planning process. Impacts of transportation can be both beneficial (e.g. improved access and mobility) and burdensome (e.g. increased noise and traffic). By identifying the transportation patterns of socially disadvantaged groups (e.g., minority and low-income) and involving them in the public participation process, the needs of these groups can be determined and assessed to guide transportation investment and ensure impacts are distributed as evenly as possible.

Other planning/review opportunities include projects that focus on multi-modal transportation, bicycle/pedestrian accommodations, and safety audits. When these types of projects are being evaluated at planning agencies, there is often a missed opportunity to garner input from the very

groups that rely on these types of infrastructure for accessing work, healthcare, recreation, and daily life activities. Utilizing TAGs in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project review and scoring process and in the Long Range Transportation Plan development process can provide perspectives on transportation that may be missing, but are vitally important to a community's transportation infrastructure.

TAGs are also a great source to utilize for letters of support for grant requests. The organizations involved in the TAG have an established relationship with your organization and most likely will play a part in ensuring the project is a success. As a result, they should be able to provide a more effective letter of support than outside organizations. Unmet needs and potential projects to address these needs are discussed at the TAG meetings; these organizations are able to state that the project was discussed amongst multiple agencies at various meetings and you have their support. Furthermore, TAGs are made up of a variety of organizations from different parts of the community. Letters of support from diverse organizations can strengthen your application. TAG members can also benefit from your organization writing letters of support for their projects.

3. Case Studies and Best Practices

Below are a few case studies of projects or initiatives that can be seen as best practices in the State. Each example provided was the result of TAG activities, and provides a road map to agencies interested in replicating this process in their own communities. In each example, planning and transit agencies leveraged TAG members for input, funding, or support of passenger transportation related investments or initiatives.

The intent of the Office of Systems Planning in identifying case studies and “best practice” approaches is not to recommend that all MPOs/RPAs adopt these ideas; rather, it is to provide information and options to agencies that are struggling with TAG meeting attendance and may be considering a change to their current structure. It is up to the MPOs/RPAs to decide whether any of the examples presented in this section would be relevant to them.

Meetings

Sometimes, no matter how much time/effort is put into establishing a group, group membership and attendance is not what it needs to be to gain valuable input. Below are three examples of agencies that have adapted their TAGs over time to better fit the needs of their agencies.

Initially, there was one regional TAG that served the Des Moines Area MPO and RPA 11 (CIRTPA) region. The TAG began as a group of participants representing agencies that work with the elderly, persons with low income, and persons with disabilities. Eventually, the TAG grew to include other organizations that expressed an interest in public transportation/human service coordination. However, TAG attendance declined as individuals and agencies in the more rural areas of the region felt under-represented in the regional TAG.

In order to increase attendance and input from agencies located outside of Polk County, the regional TAG split into individual county TAGs. There are now eight county TAGs that meet monthly. The Polk County TAG is chaired by the mobility coordinator at DART, while the surrounding counties are chaired by the mobility coordinator at HIRTA. The MPO and the two mobility coordinators get together to determine agendas and develop materials for the meetings. Even though there is coordination among the three entities, having individual TAG meetings allows for each TAG to choose their own goals and projects to focus on. All TAGs have input on projects and project implementation, although to varying degrees. There are two regional TAG meetings held each year to allow county TAGs to come together and share information on projects and for collaboration on region-wide issues. This format has increased TAG attendance and participation as it allows agencies to focus on issues and solutions on a more local level.

The next two examples show agencies that have utilized established human service agency groups to provide transit related information and to seek input from the human service agencies.

The Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) utilizes the Story County Human Services Council (SCHSC) as their TAG. Initially, AAMPO established a separate TAG group, but after the first year discovered that the SCHSC already existed and decided not to duplicate efforts and dissolved their standalone TAG. SCHSC has been the official TAG of AAMPO since 2007. The SCHSC is a group of representatives from human service agencies, businesses, and

organizations providing services in Story County. The SCHSC is composed of approximately seventy-four organizations, with 30-35 members regularly attending meetings. Meetings are held monthly May through September, and provide AAMPO a great way to get information out through their robust email system and with a standing spot on the agenda. While the main focus of the group is networking with other members, the meetings generally have a program of interest, agency spotlights, and sharing organization's events/information with the group. AAMPO discusses the PTP update with the group and updates the group on specific transit issues throughout the year.

In 2007, United Way of Story County (UWSC) began the Transportation Collaboration (TC) which provides a smaller forum for human service agencies and transportation to discuss transportation issues. Twelve different organizations participate on the TC which meets periodically throughout the year and only discusses transportation issues.

MIDAS Council of Governments also utilizes human service providers meetings for their TAG meetings. MIDAS had a standalone TAG (Mobility Action Plan TAG), but over the years membership dwindled to only two people regularly attending meetings. MIDAS decided to do away with MAPTAG and attend area human service provider meetings to gain input. There are four different human service provider meetings in the MIDAS region: Calhoun County holds four meetings a year; Pocahontas County meets quarterly; Webster County meets every other month; and Hamilton, Humboldt, and Wright Counties combined into one provider group and meet three times a year. At each provider's meeting, everyone in attendance has a chance to discuss projects, events, and issues they may have. MIDAS tries to attend each meeting of the four regional service providers. The draft PTP is emailed out to all service provider members who attend these meetings for review and comment. MIDAS sent out provider surveys to these groups as part of the inventory gathering process needed for the PTP. It should be noted that attendance at these meetings can sometimes be low, and that some of the agencies who should be attending do not due to budget cuts, workloads, or disinterest.

For both AAMPO and MIDAS, the human service meetings are not coordinated by the planning agency. In AAMPO's region, SCHSC has four rotating officers from the participating organizations, and the TC is led by United Way of Story County. In the MIDAS region, Calhoun County and Hamilton, Humboldt, and Wright Counties are led by public health, Pocahontas County is led by local churches, and Webster County is led by United Way. AAMPO has a standing spot on the agenda to provide information to their group; MIDAS does not, but is able to provide information to their groups through the roundtable format.

Another meeting option is holding a transportation summit. Transportation summits are a great way for planning agencies to provide an engaging forum to discuss transportation issues and opportunities within their region. Several planning agencies across the state have hosted transportation summits to discuss passenger transportation and provide organizations with an opportunity to learn more about the transportation resources and solutions already at their disposal.

Many agencies have worked with local mobility coordinators to plan and facilitate these summits. The format for these transportation summits usually includes main speakers,

discussion panels, and a group activity. The speakers and panels are usually local agencies and organizations involved in transportation coordination that have specific insights into barriers and issues facing the community. Example panel topics include healthcare, jobs, aging, and individuals with disabilities. For examples of summit agendas, please reference Appendix D.

The Iowa DOT offers State Transit Assistance (STA) Special Project funding for any planning or transit agency interested in hosting a transportation summit. These funds cover up to 80 percent of the total cost for the event. The application is open year-round for immediate funding. For more information on how to plan a summit, contact the Iowa DOT Office of Public Transit.

Mission Statement and Responsibilities

A well-defined mission statement helps clarify and communicate the TAG's purpose. When developing a mission statement, it is important to ask the following questions

- What do we do?
- For whom do we do it?
- What is the benefit?

Below are some examples of mission statements:

- To bring human service agencies and transportation providers together for the common objective of improving mobility options for individuals in need. – DMAMPO
- To advocate for passenger transportation needs and services for all residents in the Tri State Area. – ECIA
- To increase the mobility of individuals with disabilities, low income individuals and older adults through the coordination of Health/Human Service Providers, Private Transportation Providers, Transit Agencies, and Local Government. – SIMPCO
- Work to establish an environment which energizes members and provides an opportunity for collaborative efforts and advocacy for human needs. – SCHSC
- Identify the transportation challenges individuals and families face daily and work to develop the partnerships to help address these needs. – Story County Transportation Collaboration
- This committee shall be an advisory committee to the Board of Directors on policy matters relative to transportation services and facilities affecting the District. – Yolo County Transit District (CA)
- The goal of this committee is to help SamTrans plan a transportation system that is safe, efficient, cost-effective, energy-efficient, environmentally responsible, and is responsive to the needs of the broadest range of citizens and transit users in San Mateo County. – San Mateo County Transit District (CA)

Objectives/Responsibilities

TAGs were initially established as a way to provide input for the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). Today, these groups are the primary source agencies use to identify unmet needs, coordination issues, potential projects, and to document fleet inventory for the PTP. The overall goals of the PTP are as follows:

- Improve transportation services to Iowans
- Increase passenger transportation coordination
- Create awareness of unmet needs
- Develop new working partnerships
- Assist decision-makers, advocates, and consumers in understanding the range of transportation options available
- Develop justification for future passenger transportation investments
- Save dollars and eliminate overlapping of services

Goals are generalized statements that describe a desired end result. The goals listed above state what the PTP process should accomplish, but does not state how to get there. Objectives are specific steps that can be taken to achieve a goal. TAGs may find it useful to identify objectives to help achieve the goals of the PTP, especially if they have a more involved role in determining project implementation. When determining objectives, referring to both your organization's and Iowa DOT's Long Range Transportation Plan objectives will result in a more coordinated and comprehensive planning effort.

MAPA's TAG, the Coordinated Transit Committee (CTC), has established bylaws to help guide the committee. These bylaws were approved by the CTC, the TTAC, and the Board of Directors. The bylaws specifically state the roles and responsibilities of the Coordinated Transit Committee, related sub committees and those components involved in the transportation planning process:

1. Reviewing and making recommendations related to transit planning and policy
2. Determining methodology for the evaluation and selection of grant funding applications
3. Assisting with the maintenance and updates of the MAPA Coordinated Transit Plan
4. Working to coordinate transit service in the MAPA region.
5. Carrying out duties as directed by the transportation technical advisory committee
6. Assisting in the preparation of the Annual MAPA Transportation Improvement Program
7. Assisting in the preparation of an Annual Report
8. Assisting in the preparation of an Annual Unified Planning Work Program
9. Assisting in the preparation of updated Long Range Transportation Plans
10. Ensuring that the social, economic, and environmental impacts of transit projects are considered during the planning process.

MAPA also created a chart that summarizes the roles and responsibilities for the Council of Officials, Board of Directors, Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), and the

Coordinated Transit Committee (CTC). This allows TAG members to quickly identify what their responsibilities are and how that fits into the organization as a whole.

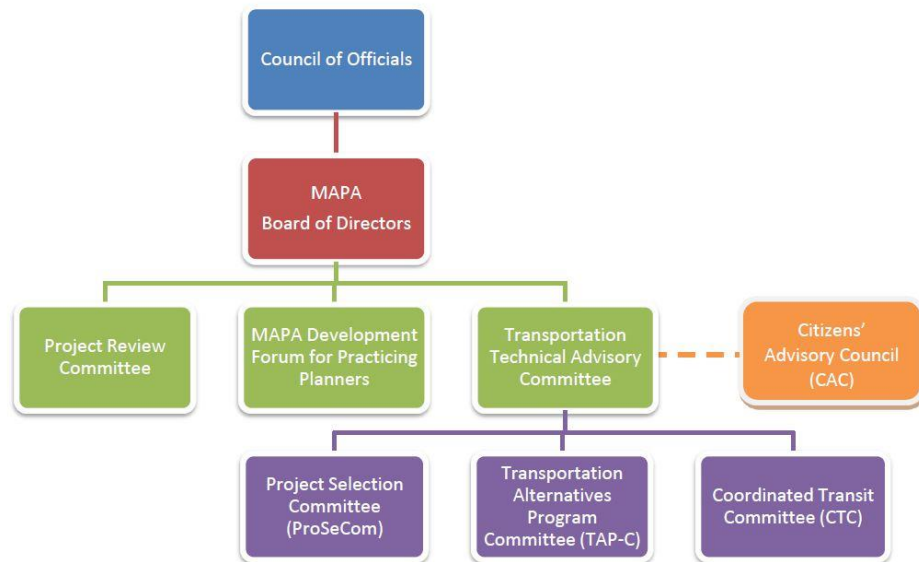


Representation

The Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) provides an example of a TAG that is involved in the decision-making process. MAPA's TAG, known as the Coordinated Transit Committee (CTC), is a sub-committee of the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (an organization chart detailing the committee structure at MAPA can be found on the following page). The CTC usually meets monthly and consists of 11 to 21 voting member agencies. Nonvoting members are also able to participate in the CTC meetings. Committee members are appointed by the chair of Transportation Technical Advisory Committee for a period of one year, and are eligible to be reappointed with no term limits.

The CTC is actively involved in the selection of 5310 projects. In the first year, a taskforce was assembled to discuss potential scoring criteria for 5310 funds. In subsequent years, the CTC has identified any updates they would like to see from the previous year's criteria. After the CTC establishes 5310 project scoring criteria, it is sent to the TTAC and Board of Directors for final approval. MPO staff scores the 5310 projects based on the approved criteria, and ranks the projects (specific project scores aren't provided to the CTC for privacy reasons). The CTC discusses the projects and prioritizes them, which is not always in agreement with the project rankings, and sends the prioritized projects to the TTAC and Board of Directors for final approval and inclusion in the TIP.

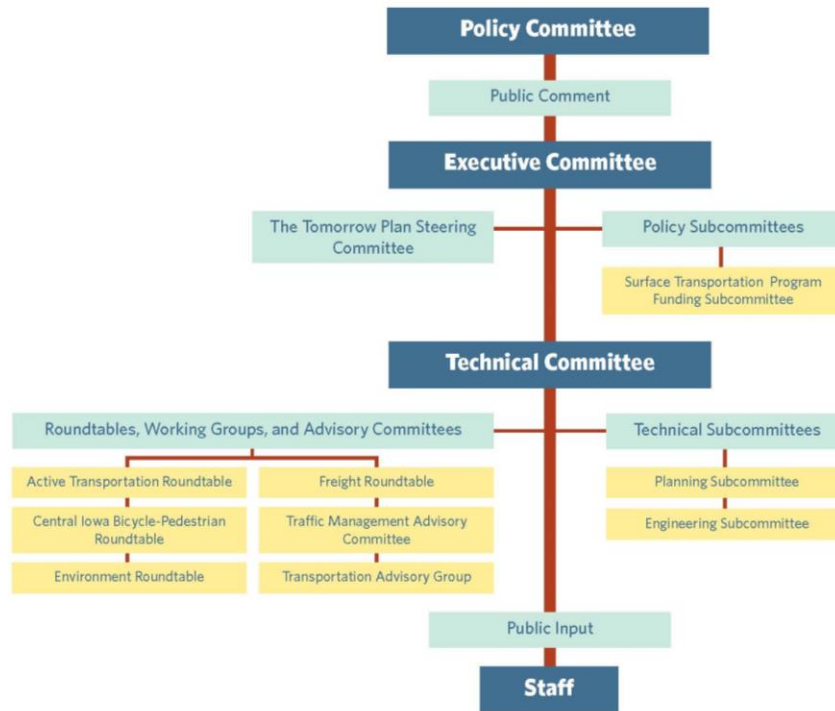
Figure 1.4: MAPA Committee Structure



Another MPO that has integrated the TAG into the planning process is the Des Moines Area MPO. The Des Moines Area MPO has three designated committees that form the structure of the MPO: the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC), the Executive Committee, and the MPO Policy Committee. The MPO also establishes and supports other subcommittees, roundtables, working groups, and advisory committees on an as-needed basis. These groups, including the TAG, address various transportation-related issues relevant to the MPO's responsibilities.

Overall, the MPO utilizes the TAG as a sounding board, outreach network, and a way to ground-source transportation problems. MPO staff takes the information gathered from the TAG to the Transportation Technical Committee, Executive Committee, and Policy Committee for further discussion.

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization



Project Implementation

A successful TAG requires community education and engagement. Truly great public transit systems rely on their communities for input and guidance on future projects. There are many great examples from across the State, a few of which are featured below.

AAMPO – Transportation Brochures

The Transportation Collaboration facilitates conversation between CyRide, HIRTA Public Transit, and various human service agencies from around Story County. Through surveys, the group realized that many scheduled medical/mental health appointments were missed simply due to the fact that someone didn't have a way to get there. In 2014, this group secured funding from STA Special Project funds from the IDOT Office of Public Transit, with United Way of Story County providing the matching funds, to produce a transportation resources brochure. All transit options are listed, including cabs, intercity bus, and public transit. This brochure was most recently updated in May 2016, with United Way of Story County providing funds for printing the brochures.

The group assigned committee members to visit agencies throughout the community (specifically those who serve elderly, disabled, and low income individuals) to distribute the brochure and educate workers, call-takers, and discharge staff on transit options available for their clients. Then, workers would identify clients with transportation barriers and simply ask "Do you need a ride to your next appointment?" prior to scheduling any follow-up appointments. If

the answer was “yes”, they would offer their client the brochure letting them know about the different transportation options available to them. Over 15,000 brochures have been distributed to date. In addition, the TAG created, and regularly updates, the Story County At-A-Glance Transportation Provider Services worksheet as a supplemental document to the brochures to help providers determine the type of ride best suited for their client. This has helped decrease the number of no shows to medical/mental health appointments and promotes that public transit is for everyone. The brochure and the At-A-Glance Transportation Providers Services worksheet can be found in Appendix C.

NEICAC-T (Region 1) - Rebranding

Another collaboration example came about through a grant provided by Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), which enabled Northeast Iowa Community Action Corp (NEICAC) to gather community members into a learning session about public transit. Together, they worked with CTAA to discover the true needs of the community – performing surveys, attending events, and talking to local employers. Consequently, they found a gap between the rural communities and employment hubs throughout the northeast Iowa region, and also found that many people were not aware that this transit service was available for their use.

NEICAC utilized local funding to design new routes for workers to easily get to work. Along with this coordinated effort, NEICAC underwent a rebranding and is now known as EARL (Easy, Affordable, Reliable, Life-changing) Public Transit, which is easier to remember, and more visually appealing. It was the efforts of their local TAG that lead to many great changes in the region.



Region 2 Transit – Commuter Shuttle

The North Iowa Commuter Express (NICE) is a commuter shuttle between Mason City and Forrest City, Iowa. Initially, the service started to get employees from Mason City to the Winnebago plant in Forrest City; however, the service has grown to include other manufactures in Forest City including 3M and CDI. When conducting a regional survey, it was discovered that there were a handful of Winnebago employees interested in a vanpool. In conversations with Winnebago Industries, Region 2 Transit found that the employer had problems with employee turnover due to a lack of available or reliable transportation options. The topic was brought to the regional TAG, where a member, the local United Way, offered to provide some funding for the implementation of a commuter service. The transit agency then applied for STA Special Project funding offered through the Office of Public Transit for a van pool service.



Initial NICE shuttle

The van pool never materialized due to a lack of volunteer drivers, but the shuttle service, in which Region 2 provided the driver, was very successful. Since beginning in August 2013, the shuttle service was near capacity most of the time. The TAG saw how successful NICE shuttle was and wanted to expand the service. The

TAG determined how many riders would be needed to sustain the NICE shuttle with only fares and no outside financial support due to STA Special Project funds only have a two-year commitment. The Office of Public Transit was able to award additional STA Special Project funds to Region 2 Transit for partial funding of two (2) medium duty buses. Each bus is able to carry 30 passengers, the ridership needed, as determined by the TAG, to become a self-sustaining shuttle. For FY15, the NICE shuttle reported 5,036 rides. In March 2016, the NICE shuttle set a new monthly ridership record of 822 rides.



New medium duty bus

Through the TAG, Region 2 Transit was able to implement a new service, and assist local area employers by providing transportation options to individuals who otherwise would not have been able to make the commute.

RPA 15 – New Services

After holding a regional TAG meeting, a TAG member expressed interest in setting up a shopping shuttle in Fairfield. RPA 15 facilitated meetings in Fairfield for further discussion on this idea along with 10-15 Transit, Jefferson County, local businesses, and health and human service providers to gauge their thoughts on the matter. Hy-Vee was supportive and agreed to pay for the shuttle service. The Fairfield Shuttle operated on Wednesdays, and provided 1,857 rides in FY15. Later, a similar service was implemented in Ottumwa. At a RPA 15 TAG meeting, a TAG member learned about the shopping shuttle in Fairfield and expressed interest in setting up a similar service in Ottumwa. 10-15 Transit staff was able to use the knowledge from the success of the Fairfield shuttle to implement something similar in Ottumwa. On October 31, 2014, the Ottumwa North Hy-Vee shuttle service began. This shuttle operates on Fridays from 8 am to 8 pm and is available to anyone living in Ottumwa. In FY15, the Ottumwa Shuttle provided 1,037 rides. Efforts are currently underway to expand this shuttle service out to the smaller communities in Wapello County.



Oskaloosa Rides, a fixed-route bus system, also came about because of TAG meetings. After a regional TAG meeting, TAG members approached RPA 15 about implementing a fixed-route transit service in Oskaloosa. RPA 15 facilitated several meetings in Oskaloosa and provided information about what implementing a fixed-route transit system entailed. Funding through the STA Special Projects grant was identified to help start new

transit service. United Way spearheaded gathering local funds, including their own, to provide the 20% local match needed for the grant. Local health and human service agencies determined the route and stops with assistance from 10-15 Transit and RPA 15. Meetings have occurred since implementation to discuss issues and successes with the route. Topics included slight route changes and talks of expanding the service. Oskaloosa Rides began in June 2014 and operates Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9am-5:30pm. The cost is \$1 for a one-way trip

(under 18 is free) and the bus stops at sixteen locations throughout Oskaloosa. In FY2015, Oskaloosa Rides provided 4,421 rides and collected \$1,541 in passenger revenue.

Conclusion

As this document shows, there is no one single approach that will result in having a successful, engaged Transportation Advisory Group. Rather, this document provides agencies with ideas and examples of how to better utilize their TAGs. Generally it was found that TAGs are most effective when:

- The TAG has a clear role/purpose/responsibilities
- Orientation is provided for new members
- The decision-makers take the TAG's recommendations seriously
- The TAG plays an active role in the decision-making process

It is important to have TAG members evaluate the effectiveness of the TAG. Evaluations play a key role in helping identify areas for improvement, as well as strengths. The evaluations could let you know if the meeting structure is working, if members know the TAG's purpose and responsibilities, if members feel their input is incorporated into the decision-making process, or just how they feel about the overall TAG process. Evaluations can provide a meaningful way for TAG members to help guide the process, and may provide the agency with suggestions and ideas to result in a more effective TAG.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Sample List of Organizations to invite to participate in TAG meetings

AARP

Alzheimer's Association

American Cancer Society

Area Agency on Aging

Association for the Blind

Cab or taxi companies

Centers for Independent Living

College or universities

Community Action agencies

Community Foundations

Convention and Visitor Bureau

Council for the United Blind

Department of Aging

Department of Education (AEA)

Department of Human Services

Department of Public Health

Dialysis clinics

Disability and rehabilitation services

Domestic violence services

Easter Seals

Employment training agencies

Epilepsy Foundation

Food banks or pantries

Goodwill Industries

Health care facilities or clinics

Homeless shelters or services

Interstate bus services (Trailways, Mega-Bus)

Iowa Workforce Development

Local employers

Medical transport/Ambulance services

Nursing or rehabilitation facilities

Prison facilities or industries

Private Transportation providers

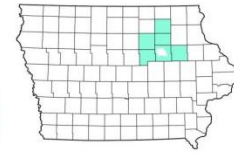
United Way (31 in Iowa)

Veteran support organizations



APPENDIX B: Sample Orientation Packet Information

Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)



Who we are...

There are a total of 18 Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) throughout the State of Iowa. The role of an RPA is to oversee transportation planning and policy to ensure that existing and future expenditures on transportation projects are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process.

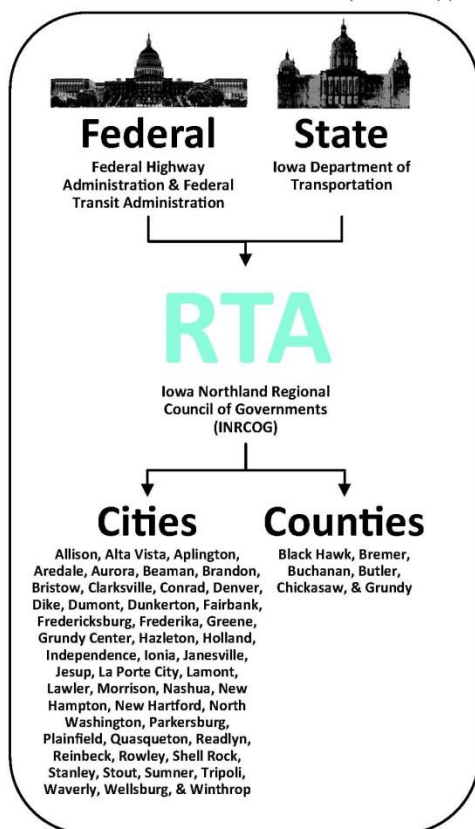
RPA 7 is the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). This includes all of Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties, as well as the areas of Black Hawk County not covered by the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Iowa's nine MPOs are the urban counterparts to the state's RPAs.

The Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) provides staffing and support for both the MPO and RTA. INRCOG is a regional planning agency that also assists local governments with comprehensive, economic development, land use, and housing planning. INRCOG also operates the Regional Transit System, which provides transit service in the RTA. Furthermore, INRCOG staff often represent the MPO and RTA in transportation studies, interact regularly with State and Federal agencies, and write grant applications for various transportation-related projects in the region.

While INRCOG provides staffing and technical support, the decision making and programming authority of the MPO and RTA rests within their two branches, the Policy Board and the Technical Committee. The Policy Boards consist of local elected officials and are responsible for the adoption of the five planning documents outlined below. The Policy Boards also work with the Iowa DOT Commission to ensure continued support for the area. The Technical Committees consist of city and county planners, engineers, and interested parties. The Technical committees have extensive

knowledge of the area's transportation and advise the Policy Boards, but do not vote on policy issues.

The RTA generally meets monthly, and meetings are open to the public. The RTA meets the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. at the INRCOG Center (229 E Park Ave, Waterloo).



What we do...

The RTA serves as a liaison for federal funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) that goes to local entities including cities, counties, and public transit systems. Currently, the RTA receives approximately \$2,524,000 for the Surface Transportation Program (STP), Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), and TAP Flex.

STP funds are primarily used for major new construction or reconstruction projects on federally functionally classified roads. The RTA receives approximately \$2,340,000 in STP funds annually (including \$57,000 in TAP Flex).

TAP funds are used for projects such as trails, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and historic transportation-related projects. The RTA receives approximately \$184,000 in TAP funds annually (including \$48,000 in TAP Flex).

The MPO and RTA are each responsible for the development and maintenance of these five documents:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)
- Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)
- Public Participation Plan (PPP)



MAPA – Passenger Transportation Plan Development Process

MAPA created a diagram that shows the planning process for the PTP. This allows TAG members to easily see the format for the PTP and could help them understand the planning process better.



APPENDIX C: Story County Transportation Resources Brochure



DES MOINES AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (DART) RIDESHARE
(515) 288-RIDE(7433)
WWW.RIDEDART.COM/SERVICES/RIDESHARE


Connects commuters who live and work near each other so they can share rides.
RideShare provides a carpool and vanpool matching database for residents of Central Iowa at RIDESHARE.RIDEDART.COM.



Register, enter your commute information and find carpool and vanpool matches. You can call or email individual matches to form carpools; formal vanpools are organized and maintained by DART RideShare staff.

Van drivers ride free, passenger rates are calculated based on number of passengers and daily roundtrip miles. RideShare provides the van, gas and maintenance; you enjoy the ride!

Ames Intermodal Facility
Connecting you to regional transportation



Connect with three regional transportation providers at the Ames Intermodal Facility (AIF) located at 129 Hayward (Hayward/Chamberlain) on the west side of ISU campustown to travel outside of Ames! For more information visit: AIF-PARKING.SWS.IASTATE.EDU

AIRPORT SHUTTLE: Provides shuttle between Ames, Boone, Nevada, or Story City to/from the Des Moines International Airport with services up to 14 times a day, 365 days/year, 7 days/week.
Reservations are Required! Small group private charters and same day package delivery is also provided.

EXECUTIVE EXPRESS
(888) 522-9899
WWW.EXECUTIVEEXPRESS.BIZ


INTERCITY CARRIERS: Provides connections throughout Iowa and the Midwest to connections nationwide!

JEFFERSON LINES
(800) 451-5333 or (515) 232-2404
WWW.JEFFERSONLINES.COM

BURLINGTON TRAILWAYS
(888) 522-9899
WWW.BURLINGTONTRAILWAYS.COM

TAXICAB SERVICES

FITZ'S TAXI
(515) 451-8769
FITZSTAXI.WEEBLY.COM



CYCLONE CAB
(515) 233-3324
WWW.TAXISERVICEAMES.COM

Brochure developed by:
United Way of Story County's
Transportation Collaboration Committee

*"Please share this transportation brochure with others in an effort to reduce transportation barriers and improve quality of life for others."
—The Transportation Collaboration*







To become involved in the Transportation Collaboration, please contact
United Way of Story County
unitedway@uwstory.org

Online Brochure available at
www.cyride.com/sct

For additional brochures, contact CyRide at
cyride@cyride.com OR (515) 292-1100

Do You Need A Ride?
STORY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION

Revised: May 26, 2016
(Information subject to change)

More Brochures Available at:
www.cyride.com/sct
or by calling CyRide at (515) 292-1100

Medicaid Transportation

NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICE TRANSPORTATION: If you are an 'eligible' Iowa Medicaid Member approved for non-emergency medical transportation OR Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and need to schedule a trip, call the following organizations under your Managed Care Organization (MCO):

	NON-EMERGENCY	HCBS WAIVERS
AMERIHEALTH CARITAS (MCO)	Access2Care 1-855-346-9760	HIRTA 1-877-686-0029
UNITED HEALTH CARE (MCO)	MTM 1-800-464-9484	HIRTA 1-877-686-0029
AMERIGROUP (MCO)	Logisticare 1-844-544-1389	Logisticare 1-844-544-1389

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN VETERANS ONLY

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN (DAV)
WWW.DAV.ORG/VETERANS/I-NEED-A-RIDE/
1 - (641) 421-3085

FREE ride to VA Hospital in Des Moines for ambulatory Veterans (no attendants) for "scheduled" medical appointments only.



Days of Operation: Monday-Thursday
(Schedule rides 48 hours in advance of trip)

Pick-up Location:
Kum & Go (2801 E. 13th St., Ames, IA 50010)
Cost: FREE (Veteran's only)

Central Iowa RSVP Connecting People to Purpose MEDICAL & ESSENTIAL APPOINTMENTS ONLY

RSVP VOLUNTEER DRIVER TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
WWW.RSVPVOLUNTEER.ORG
(515) 292-8890 or (515) 733-4917

Provides safe and reliable transportation to medical appointments and other essential services for ambulatory individuals living in Story County. All clients must fill out an application and be approved (subject to background check) prior to receiving trip. This service is provided entirely by volunteers using their own vehicles and is funded by United Way of Story County, Story County and the City of Ames.

Days of Operation:
Monday-Friday 8:00 am — 4:00 pm
(Appointments can be made within this timeframe)

Reservations Hours:
Monday-Friday 8:30 am — 4:30 pm
(Schedule rides 48 business hours in advance)

The suggested donation* for an in-county trip ranges from \$3-\$12*.



*Contributions are used to offset the cost of reimbursing volunteer drivers, unless otherwise specified by the donor.



HIRTA

HEART OF IOWA REGIONAL TRANSIT AGENCY (HIRTA PUBLIC TRANSIT)
WWW.RIDEHIRTA.COM
1 - (877) 686-0029 erides@ridehirta.com

Provides general public door-to-door transportation within Ames and Story County. Trips provided on specific days to Iowa City University of Iowa's Hospitals & Clinics (UIHC).

All buses are wheelchair accessible.
(Schedule rides 24 hours in advance of trip)

Days of Operation:
Weekdays (Story County): 7:00 am — 5:30 pm
Weekdays (In Ames only): 6:00 am — 8:00 pm
Saturday (In Ames only): 7:30 am — 6:00 pm
Sunday (In Ames only): 8:30 am — 6:00 pm
Tuesday (Trip operated to Iowa City UIHC)

HIRTA's Riders Guide is available online at <http://www.ridehirta.com/how-to-ride> or upon request.

	General	Senior
Cost (one-way):	Public	60+ yrs.
In-Town (Ames):	\$2.00	\$1.00 (suggested*)
In-County (Story):	\$4.00	\$2.00 (suggested*)

* Depends on Eligibility

Iowa City: \$10.00 Roundtrip

HIRTA PROVIDES RIDES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC WITHIN THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES:
STORY, BOONE, DALLAS, JASPER,
MADISON, MARION & WARREN



AMES TRANSIT AGENCY (CYRIDE) (Ames only)
WWW.CYRIDE.COM
(515) 292-1100

Provides general public transportation to Ames residents and visitors 359 days/year, (closed on holidays), 7 days/week. All buses are wheelchair accessible & equipped with bike racks.

Cost: \$1.25 for one-way trip. Discounts available to seniors, Medicare/Medicaid cardholders, K-12 and passengers with disabilities. For more fare options call CyRide or visit www.cyrider.com.

DIAL-A-RIDE (ADA PARATRANSIT) (Ames only)
1 - (877) 686-0029 (FOR SERVICE)
(515) 292-1100 (FOR APPLICATION)

Provides door-to-door transportation to eligible passengers as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) within the Ames city limits. Dial-A-Ride (DAR) operates the same hours/days as CyRide's fixed-routes. To be eligible, a passenger must be unable to use CyRide's fixed route buses due to the following reasons:

- Unable to get to/from the bus stop at the point of origin or destination
- Unable to board a bus stop
- Unable to independently recognize the destination and disembark the bus
- If a trip involves a transfer, unable to disembark the bus.

Cost: \$2.00 one-way trip (Must be ADA Eligible)
\$5.00 one-way trip (East of Skunk River - weeknights and all day on weekends)

Story County At-A-Glance Transportation Provider Services (as of 8/27/2015)							
Provider	HIRTA	Dial-a-Ride	CyRide	Access2Care	RSVP	Taxi	Executive Express
Service Focus	Story County Public Transit	Bus Transit for Individuals with Disabilities	Ames Public Transit	Non-Emergency Transportation contracted provider for Medicaid Clients	Volunteer drivers, priority of medical trips	Taxicab Services	Airport Shuttle
Service Area							
Ames Only		x	x				
All of Story County (including Ames)	x			x	x	x	
Des Moines	x			x	x		
Iowa City (Medical)	x			x			
DSM Airport Shuttle						x	x
Other Outside County Trips	x			x	x		
Client Criteria							
Open to the General Public	x		x			x	x
Story County Resident					x		
Must be Ambulatory (able to board without assistance)					x		
Application/pre-approval required		x		x	x		
Medicaid Clients Only				x			
ADA Eligibility Required		x					
Extent of Services							
Door-to-Door	x	x					
Curb-to-Curb Only					x	x	
Wheelchair Accessible	x	x	x				
Fixed Routes/Designated Stops			x				
Senior/Disability Discounts	x	x	x				
Schedule and Availability							
Need 24 hours notice	x	Day Before; by 4:30pm		x			x
Need 48 hours notice					x		
No Notice Needed			x			x	
M-F Only (Daytime Hours)				x	x		
7 Days a Week (Hours Vary)	x	x	x			x	
Some Holiday Limitations*	x	x	x		x		
24 hours/day; 7 days week						x	x
*HIRTA, CyRide, and Dial-a-Ride's holidays are New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas							
<i>There is a wide range in trip costs depending on the provider and available discounts. Hours of operation also vary greatly. Please call the appropriate provider to access this information.</i>							

APPENDIX D: Sample Summit Agendas



Iowa Passenger Transportation Summit: *Coordination Works!*
Iowa Valley Continuing Education, Conference Center
3702 South Center Street, Marshalltown, Iowa
May 14, 2015

Agenda

- 9:00 a.m. Registration
- 9:30 a.m. Welcome and Introductions
- 9:35 a.m. Passenger Transportation in Iowa
- 9:55 a.m. Iowa Public Transit Association Greeting
- 10:00 a.m. Recap of 2014 Passenger Transportation Summit
- 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:30 a.m. Coordination Success Stories: Health Care
 - Hugh Lively – Regional Transit Authority (RIDES)
 - Shelley Horak – Dallas County Public Health
 - Angie Gibbs – Davita Dialysis Center, Marshalltown
- 11:00 a.m. Coordination Success Stories: Employment
 - Brent Paulsen – Iowa Department of Transportation
 - Kevin Kramer – Region 2 Transit
 - John Clark – Des Moines Area Regional Transit (DART)
 - Lanae Greene – Iowa Workforce Development
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch
- 12:15 p.m. Keynote Speaker
 - Andrew Evans, *National Geographic Traveler*
- 1:30 p.m. Break
- 1:45 p.m. LifeLong Links Update
 - Donna Harvey, Director, Iowa Department on Aging
- 2:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions: TAG, you're it!
- 3:30 p.m. Future Focus: Breakout Session Ideas and Opportunities
- 4:15 p.m. Adjourn

Sponsored by:



Office of Public Transit

www.iowadot.gov/transit/

www.facebook.com/IowaDOTPublicTransit

DMAMPO/HIRTA

DMAMPO/HIRTA involves the TAG heavily when developing topics and speakers. The mobility matters conference is on the TAG agendas several times before the conference is held. TAG members are encouraged to identify and reach out to speakers, rather than the agencies having to contact everyone.

MOBILITY MATTERS 7

November 3, 2015
Mercy Medical Center East
Tower Auditorium
1111 E. 6th Ave. Des
Moines, IA 50314

The Road to Successful Partnerships

Agenda

- (8:00—8:30) Welcome
Sign In
Name Tags
Breakfast
- (8:30—8:45) Introduction to Mobility Matters 7
- (8:45—10:30) Health Care Transportation
Cindy Voss: After Hours Transportation in
Spencer (8:45-9:30)
BREAK
Michele Meadors: Mercy NCMM grant;
cross-sector education (9:45—10:30)
- (10:30—11:45) State Transit Systems Updates
LUNCH(11:45—12:30)
- (12:30—2:15) Community Partnerships
Shannon Bardole: United Way of Story County; taking
the community further (12:30—1:15)
BREAK
Eric Burmeister: Cross-sector collaboration; how it's
done, and what it does (1:30—2:15)
- (2:15—3:00) Breakout Sessions
- (3:00—3:30) Wrap-up

MIDAS

MIDAS developed the workshop agenda and then took it to the human service providers meetings to see if they had any comments or suggestions on topics and/or speakers.



PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION WORKSHOP

Fort Dodge Public Library
November 18, 2015

- 8:30 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome
- 9:15 a.m. Passenger Transportation Plans/IDOT Funding
- Kristin Haar, Compliance & Training Officer, Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Public Transit
- 9:45 a.m. Public Transit
- Jay Kammerer, Transit Manager, MIDAS Regional Transit Authority/DART
- 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:30 a.m. Human Service Provider Panel
- Kim Motl – Upper Des Moines Opportunities
 - Amy Bruno – United Way
 - Jamie Ferguson, Children and Families of Iowa
 - Jill Matthes – LifeWorks Community Services
 - Jennifer Wuebker – Webster County Health Department
- 11:15 a.m. Economic Development and Passenger Transportation
- Alissa Reinholdt, Humboldt County Economic Development
 - Pam Anderson, Calhoun County Economic Development
- 11:45 p.m. Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions
- Transportation Issues
 - Transportation Solutions
 - Possible Funding Resources
- 1:45 p.m. Break
- 2:00 p.m. Breakout Reports
- 2:30 p.m. Adjourn

Sponsored by:



MIDAS Council of Governments
602 1st avenue South
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
(515) 576-7183
www.midascog.net

Corridor MPO

Corridor MPO sent out a survey to the TAG asking what transportation topics they'd like to see covered at the forum.

TAG 2014 Transportation Forum Agenda

Friday, September 19, 2014, Mercy Medical Center, Hallagan Education Center

8:30 – 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 am	Welcome, State Senator Rob Hogg
9:10 – 10:00 am	Ed Redfern, National Transportation Advocate Status of Funding for Transit and What's Happening in Transit Around the United States
10:00 – 10:30 am	Josh Byrnes, State Representative What a Gas Tax Increase Would Mean For Iowa
10:30 – 10:45 am	Break (Coffee/Juice/Water/Pastries/Fruit)
10:45 – 11:15 am	John Dobies, HNTB Iowa Commuter Transportation Study
11:15 – 11:45 am	PANEL (Cherie Clark, Tom Hardecopf, Tom Brase) Disability Transportation Challenges in Eastern Iowa
11:45 – 12:30 pm	Lunch Buffet: Fajita Bar Including a brief presentation on the new CR Transit APP
12:30 – 1:15 pm	Scott Bogren, CTAA National Health Care Trends and the Business Case for Expanded Health Care Transportation Partnerships (Via Skype)
1:15 – 2:00 pm	PANEL (Gina Johnson, Mercy Medical, Diane Sorensen, Eastern Iowa Health Center, Renee Yeisley, Dialysis Patient and Andria Fisher, Mercy Dialysis) Health Care Transportation Challenges in Eastern Iowa
2:00 – 2:15 pm	Break (Beverages/Cookies/Trail Mix)
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Kay Fisk, NTS Iowa Employment Rides Initiative: Status and Plans
2:30 – 3:15 pm	Breakout Sessions (Three Groups – Leaders: Mike Barnhart, Ann Hearn, Tom Hardecopf)
3:15 – 3:30 pm	Drawings/Evaluation/Close