

Passenger Transportation Plan - Regional Planning Affiliate 1, UERPC
Transportation Advisory Group Meeting Notes
March 28, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - 325 Washington Street, Decorah, Iowa

Present: Dee Hosek (Howard Cty. VA), Sherry Buchheit (Workforce Specialist), Fern Rissman (IowaWORKS), Spiff Slifka (Howard County Business and Tourism), Troy Vande Lune (NICC), Karn Pankow (NEICAC Transit), Jenna Sutton (NEICAC Transit), Earl Henry (NEICAC Transit), Stratis Giannakouros (Luther College), Greg Zars (NEI3A), Lynda Springer (DHS), Karla Organist (UERPC)

1. Introductions & recap of last meeting – Welcome to new Mobility Manager, Jenna Sutton!
2. Job Access Mobility Institute Update:
 - Commuter route: The three “anchor” partners have provided work schedule information to Karn/Jenna and they have been working on schedules and routes. NICC and the Winneshiek Medical Center’s schedules mesh well together, but Featherlite’s main interest is a shift that starts earlier than what will work at this time. However, they will be asking Featherlite to promote the service that they do get started with the hopes that some shifts will use the service. Spiff offered to make a connection with Donaldson’s too
 - Image revamp: Hired a firm (Metre from La Crosse, WI) to develop a few logo/marketing ideas. Metre will be meeting with Earl and Jenna on April 9th to share some image ideas. They plan on selecting two to take to the board for a decision at their meeting on April 28th.
 - CTAA TA: NEICAC should be hearing from Charlie at CTAA within the next couple of weeks to start this technical assistance program. CTAA will be reviewing and evaluating transit’s operation and be making recommendations for improvements and/or efficiencies.
3. Updates on PTP TAG Projects:
 - Mobility Manager Update:
 - Wheels for Work program is slowing down a little. Will be doing a little more marketing now that Jenna is on board and has had some training. The fund is winding down and more money is needed to capitalize it. Committee members offered ideas for building the fund: donation requests from bankers, dealers and larger car corps (they sometimes have foundations, etc.)
 - Marketing: Have hired Iowa Solutions to put the site together and get it up. Will be NEIowago, with several versions of that all leading to the site.
 - Collaborations/Stakeholder Outreach: Discussed “Days on the Hill” – Karla and Greg talked about the days they attended. Fern suggested that all stakeholders make an effort to attend community coffees as our legislators make their rounds. Karla also gave an update on the federal level activities she received at the RPA meeting held on the 27th. MAP-21 Reauthorization bill has started with a 67% increase to the FTA (Federal Transit Agency), to hopefully bring back bus purchases. It also increases TIGER by 100%. The President’s new transportation bill includes 7 concepts to target transportation funding – one of which was “ladders of opportunities” which will focus funds toward job access and improved workforce. Wraps four programs into a “Transportation Trust Fund” – highway, mass transit, rail and multimodal. Highway and Mass Transit will still have the dedicated funds from the gas tax and “repatriated” money is supposed to pay for rail and multimodal projects. Given the climate in DC – it is hard to tell if any of this will actually go anywhere.
4. Items from committee members:
 - Spiff shared information about Howard County’s initiatives: Cresco and the county have been part of the Mayo Clinic’s DMC (Destination Medical Center) conversations; the Grow Howard County initiative is still going strong and it is expected that the county will be selected for the Home-based Veteran’s Program.
 - Kay Fisk’s bill has a number now and she asks that we contact legislators with our support: SF2292
 - Transit’s public hearing will be held on Monday, March 31 at 10:00 am – all are invited to attend.
 - Dee announced that she has taken a new position and will no longer be serving on the committee – we wish her the best and will miss her commitment to our group.
5. The next meeting was set for July 18th at 9:00 a.m. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.