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## Meeting Minutes

### Regional Planning Affiliation 1 (RPA-1) Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) meeting Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

**Members in attendance:** Janna Diehl, NE Iowa Area Agency on Aging; Lori Egan, NEICAC EARL Transit; Spiff Slifka, Howard County Business and Tourism; Shannon Nix, Upper Iowa University.

**Members absent:** Amy Chicos, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Jenna Mockler-Gjerde, Luther College; Clara Muggli-Toyloy, Luther College.

**Others in attendance:** Aaron Detter, UERPC Transportation Planner

#### 1. Welcome

Detter started the meeting off with a welcome at 2:06 p.m. Members did introductions as the group welcomed a new representative from Upper Iowa University, Shannon Nix.

#### 2. Regional Planning Affiliation 1 (RPA-1) updates

Detter notified members that UERPC has consolidated its offices and now all employees and services are located in the Decorah office (no longer an office in Postville).

Detter then provided an update on Regional Planning Affiliation 1 (RPA-1) planning activities and work products. He informed the group that he recently updated the annual Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP), explaining that the document outlines the budget and transportation planning activities for the upcoming fiscal year, and that the Policy Board would be voting to approve it at their meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022. He also noted that he is working on updating the Transportation Improvement Program, which is the list of all state and federally



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funded transportation projects in the region, and that the final TIP is due to the Iowa DOT by July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Detter added that he is working with Decorah City Council and Sustainability Commission on updating the transportation goals and actions of the Decorah Sustainability Plan, and that ADA accessibility targets and performance measures, as well as a circulating shuttle bus in Decorah, are being discussed as part of that update.

Finally, Detter noted that the planning processes to update the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) and Long-range Transportation Plan (LRTP) would begin later this year or early next year, and that the plans are both updated every five years. He added that the PTP update would be complete in 2023, while the LRTP process is more involved and would likely be completed in 2024.

### 3. EARL Transit updates

NEICAC/EARL Transit Director Lori Egan provided updates. She noted that they are currently booking between 250-320 trips per day, compared to 300-400 trips per day before the pandemic.

Egan asked Detter if EARL Transit could potentially partner with RPA-1/UERPC to conduct the public hearings for their consolidated grant application. Detter noted that it could be possible, either at a TAG meeting or a Policy Board meeting. Detter also noted that it may make more sense with other transit agencies in the state who are housed in the same agency as the MPO or RPA.

Egan also brought up the idea of potential efforts to expand the diversity of the TAG membership with outreach to minority groups. Detter noted that it would be really great to have the viewpoint of a person with a mobility impairment or disability as a member of the group.



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Egan also noted that EARL is still dealing with a driver shortage while trying to meet people's needs.

Detter informed the other members of the coordination between UERPC and EARL to look at an electric transit vehicle pilot project.

Diehl asked if Detter or Egan knew what the status of mask requirements on buses was for our five counties. Egan noted that the federal mandate has ended and there are no other requirements that drivers or passengers wear masks at this time. She added that they monitor the case levels in the counties and will make adjustments to their driver and employee mask requirements in specific counties as needed. She added that they can't mandate that passengers wear masks, and that they don't want to put drivers in the position of enforcing masks for passengers.

#### 4. General member updates

Detter noted one outstanding question from the previous meeting. TAG member Amy Chicos had mentioned that Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation offers free ADA training to businesses and Detter was wondering if that service was also available to local governments.

Detter also noted that Decorah was getting an electric scooter sharing system. Members discussed some of the benefits and drawbacks of such a system, with Detter noting that the scooters can provide great connections and mobility options, but that scooters on sidewalks can create safety hazards for pedestrians and that the accumulation of scooters on sidewalks, especially around curb ramps, can block critical access for people with mobility impairments.

#### 5. Floor items

Detter asked Nix about some of the transportation issues or gaps at UIU, and how familiar students are with EARL. Nix noted that they do have some issues with food access and that that is part of the services that her department assists with, providing rides to grocery stores and



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other shopping for students. Nix also discussed the issues experienced with trying to coordinate shuttles to and from airports, especially for international students. She also noted that 80% of UIU students are athletes, which presents lots of scheduling challenges for arranging transportation.

Detter and TAG members also discussed how they feel about continuing to have remote/virtual meetings. Detter noted that it started because of the pandemic and is continuing because of the pandemic, but that it seems to work better for members to not have to travel for the meetings. No decisions were made, and the topic will continue to be evaluated.

6. Discuss next meeting date

Detter noted that the next meeting would likely be in the fall, but reminded members that the group can always convene for a meeting if anyone wants to discuss or work on anything in the meantime.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.