

Passenger Transportation Plan - Regional Planning Affiliate 1, UERPC  
Transportation Advisory Group Meeting Notes  
January 16, 2015, 9:00 a.m. - 325 Washington Street, Decorah, Iowa

Present: Spiff Slifka (Howard County Business and Tourism), Troy Vande Lune (NICC), Jennifer Roberts (Iowa DOT), Carol Keune (CSS-Fayette), Greg Zars (NE Iowa Area on Aging), Mike Isaacson (NE Iowa Area on Aging), Fern Rissman (IowaWorks), Curt McNew (NEICAC Transit), Jenna Sutton (NEICAC Transit), Michaela Collins (UERPC), Karla Organist (UERPC)

1. Committee reviewed the notes from the November 21, 2014 meeting.
2. Introductions: Jennifer Roberts from the Iowa DOT was welcomed as a special guest from the state, and Mike Isaacson was attending as a guest of Greg's
3. Jennifer shared some items from the state:
  - The TMS contract will be awarded on Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> – will be revising the mileage reimbursement rule so there is no more “2 business day” approval in advance rule (2 days will still be needed to arrange transport)
  - The new Park & Ride plan is available: [http://www.iowadot.gov/iowainmotion/park\\_ride.html](http://www.iowadot.gov/iowainmotion/park_ride.html)
  - The Passenger Transportation Summit is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup> in Marshalltown
4. Mobility Manager/Transit Director Update:
  - Commuter route: Launched on January 5<sup>th</sup> - no riders the first week. Approximately 4 riders the second week. Troy mentioned that the students were not back to school yet on the first week.
  - EARL Rebranding: “like” EARL on Facebook and follow him on Twitter! Jenna is also working on an EARL stand-alone website. There has been a lot of good press about EARL and the commuter route – now it just needs to translate into riders
  - Wheels for Work still has funding available
  - Curt will be making visits to the businesses along the route. At Jennifer's suggestion, he will check with Kristin Haar about the availability of STA funds for the commuter route project
5. Passenger Transportation Plan:
  - Michaela presented the Draft PTP to the group. After a review of the plan, a motion was made by Rissman, seconded by Zars, to approve the submission of the draft to the DOT, all approved. Michaela will be making a few small tweaks, if anyone notices any errors or unclear wording, please send these to Michaela by Friday January 23<sup>rd</sup>. [mcollins@uerpc.org](mailto:mcollins@uerpc.org)
6. Legislative Days on the Hill – each organization shared their issues and how transportation is a barrier for clients:
  - Share EARL commuter route brochures if it makes sense
  - Talk about increasing the institutional capacity of transportation
  - NEI3A: Mike shared information on LifeLong Links initiative – a one-stop shop for the aging and their families. LifeLong Links serves as a resource to make the connections for clients and their families ([www.lifelonglinks.org](http://www.lifelonglinks.org)). They note that those that need public transportation really do need it – they most likely have no other option. Their message is related to Iowa's push to be a “retirement destination” and the need for infrastructure and “quality of life” transportation. They are also seeking to be a resource as the state goes to a “managed care state” in 2016.
  - NICC: Troy reported that the priority issue they are taking to the legislature is their concern about the “performance-based funding” that rewards the colleges that have Iowa students more than those that pull in students from outside of Iowa. There is fear that this will result in fighting over students, with community colleges being hardest hit.
  - Social Services: Carol reported that more and more is being put on the county's plate (and budget) in the area of mental health. With the closure of institutions, individuals are being placed in communities and become the

responsibility of the county. They are also facing a shortage of psychiatrists, and while tele-health options are available, that doesn't work for all clients.

- IowaWorks: Fern reported that skills gap funding is a major need for workforce. They will be making their case for maintaining/funding the remaining rural offices and boundaries. WIA is going away and is being replaced by WIOA – there will be some listening posts around the state as this rolls out.
- Regional Transportation: Karla reported that there is hope (again) that something will get done at the state to increase road and bridge funding at the state level.
- Spiff reminded committee members that we have several local people as appointees: Roxann Ryan (Howard-Winn grad) was just appointed as the head of the Dept. of Public Safety. Also the director of the Iowa DNR, Chuck Gipp, is from Winneshiek County. Conrad Clement from Cresco is Chair of Natural Resources. We have three local people representing department heads in the state – gives us a strong connection to Des Moines and people we can reach out to if needed.

7. Other items from committee members:

- Spiff gave an update on their broadband initiative. The Superintendent of Howard-Winn was invited as one of only 100 Superintendents to meet with President Obama at Capitol (Dec 2014) regarding educational issues and was also invited to Cedar Falls to meet again with Obama as he came to CF Utilities (Jan 2015) to further speak about strengthening broadband accessibility for rural America. Howard County's goal is to have 1G throughout the entire county.

8. The next meeting was set for April 17, at 9:00 a.m. in the UERPC Decorah offices. Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.