

IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

MINUTES

Durant called the meeting of the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 10:01 AM.

Meeting Attendees:	Lisa Sesterhenn	Black Hawk County Public Health (Online)
	Aric Schroeder	City of Waterloo (Online)
	Todd Rickert	County Social Services
	Nicole Ericson	Exceptional Persons, Inc.
	Lisa Skubal	Grow Cedar Valley
	Norman Coley	Hawkeye Community College
	Lon Kammeyer	MET Transit Board (Online)
	David Sturch	MET Transit
	Janna Diehl	Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A)
	Shannon Bass	Northeast Iowa Foodbank (Online)
	Shelli Panicucci	Otto Schoitz Foundation (Online)
	Cathy Showalter	Otto Schoitz Foundation
	Megan McKenzie	R.J. McElroy Trust
	Erin Tink	Waterloo Community Foundation
	Nick Fratzke	INRCOG/OnBoard Public Transit
	Aldina Dautović	INRCOG (Secretary)
	Kyle Durant	INRCOG

The first item was to review and consider approval of the agenda. It was moved by Diehl, seconded by Tink to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Next was to review and consider approval of the minutes for the May 23, 2023 TAC meeting. It was moved by Fratzke, seconded by Diehl to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Next was Discussion Items:

MET Transit Restructured Routes and Transit Study

Sturch said two public meetings have been rescheduled to gather additional public input on the restructured MET Transit fixed routes. The meetings will take place at Central Transfer on Tuesday, February 27th at 11 AM – 1 PM and at 3 PM – 5:30 PM. SRF Consulting Group is currently analyzing MET Transit’s facility and conducting a zero-emission plan. Tink asked how many changes were made to the proposed fixed routes after the consultant analyzed them. Sturch said minimal changes were made based on public comments. The restructured routes have been pushed back to incorporate upcoming public feedback and are expected to go live this coming spring or summer. The Transit Study will be wrapping up this spring. Once completed, an executive summary of the study will be available. Major changes to the restructured routes include an out-and-back system instead of a loop as well as additional transfer points where routes intersect. A new route map and public educational component will be conducted to familiarize the public with the updated routes. The group discussed the importance of a comprehensive public educational component, suggesting creating a “How-to-Ride” graphic with multiple translations. Dautović asked about the possibility of creating a “How-to-Ride” video, and the group discussed potential collaborators for the project. INRCOG staff will follow up on helping to develop materials. Durant suggested developing a comprehensive interactive bus route map that includes all bus routes simultaneously. Sturch was asked to teach the group how to formally purchase a ticket and ride the MET Transit system once the new routes are live. McKenzie asked about MET Transit’s flag down service, and Sturch said riders may flag down a bus driver at any intersection, before the intersection, to get onto a bus.

National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) Grant

Fratzke said the grant is focused on providing transportation services for disadvantaged youth between the ages of 8 and 18, such as providing transportation options to get to after-school activities, a job, and home. The grant is funded by the Federal Transit Administration. INRCOG has been collaborating with NCMM to gather input and identify specific barriers in the region. Roughly 30 interviews with youth and parents were conducted in December. Feedback from the interviews included limited parental and youth access to transportation options, and some parents being uncomfortable with children riding public transit. Fratzke said the interview feedback is currently being analyzed for upcoming workshops that will take place in early February. Potential solutions include a combination of services such as MET Transit and the Go Bus.

Commute with Enterprise

Fratzke said rural transit services have a contract with Enterprise for a vanpool commute program. The focus is on transportation barriers to areas of employment and employment opportunities. Funding would be supplemented to decrease the cost for employers and/or riders. Fratzke said details are still being sorted as Enterprise needs to know how many riders will participate in the program. A challenge to the program is the initial startup cost for the transit agency.

OnBoard Public Transit, Scheduling Software

Fratzke said INRCOG will be acquiring scheduling software for OnBoard Public Transit which currently utilizes a call-in and radio service system for both staff and riders. A Request for Proposal is currently being developed. Tink asked how many riders utilize the service. Fratzke said between 2,500-3,500 one-way rides are provided per month. The service is for rides going in or out of the metro region.

Next was General Discussion:

Durant shared an update from Jan Heidemann, Mental Health/Development Disabilities Coordinator from Bremer County: the East Central Region is looking into utilizing Uber Health for individuals in the nine-county region needing transportation services to medical, behavioral health, and other health-related appointments. The [Transportation Gaps Analysis study](#) conducted by the University of Iowa is being considered for additional recommendations for the region. Fratzke said staff put together a [Letter of Support](#) encouraging Iowa to rejoin the [Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission \(MIPRC\)](#). MIPRC joins leaders from across the region to advocate for passenger rail improvements and opportunities. Iowa used to be a member but left in recent years. The letter encourages Iowa to rejoin to have the opportunity to partake in the economic and social benefits of a multistate passenger rail system. Fratzke shared physical copies of the letter and encouraged the group to sign and share. Durant noted that another TAC meeting will need to be held before July 1st. Additional meetings may be held if needed. The group agreed to discuss conclusions from MET's Transit study and following steps at the next meeting.

There being no further business, Durant declared the meeting adjourned at 11:22 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Aldina Dautović
Secretary