

**IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

MINUTES

Oriakhi opened the meeting of the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) at 10:02 a.m. Following that, attendees introduced themselves.

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Title	Representing
Thom Weintraut	Planner III	Cedar Falls
Lisa Sesterhenn	Public Health Planner	Black Hawk County Public Health
Aaron Reinke	Epidemiologist	Black Hawk County Public Health
Rachel Mayer	Nutrition Health Planner	Black Hawk County Public Health
Heidi Witt	Community Benefit Coordinator	Mercy One
Kristin Schaefer	Director Business Development	Allen Hospital
Trista Hill	Family Service Worker	Tri-County Head Start
David Sturch	Manager	MET Transit
Norman Coley Jr.	Dean of Students	Hawkeye Community College*
Terrence Hollingsworth	Community/Youth Advocate	Community /Youth Advocate*
Mindy Benson	Coordinator	BHC Emergency Management*
Erin Tink	Executive Director	Waterloo Community Foundation
Cathy Showalter	CEO/Executive Director	Otto Schoitz Foundation
Emily Hanson	Executive Director	BHCGA
Megan McKenzie	Executive Director	McElroy Foundation
Sanzida Rahmatu Setu	Transportation Planner II	INRCOG
Oghogho Oriakhi	Transportation Planner I	INRCOG

**Attended Online*

Actionable items

The first item was approval of the agenda. It was moved by Sesterhenn, seconded by Sturch, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Next was to review and consider approval of the minutes for the July 9, 2025, meeting. It was moved by Weintraut, seconded by Showalter, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Next was the Discussion Items

1. Work Session for the Draft Section 4 of the FY 2026-2030 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP).

a. Finalize goal prioritization

Oriakhi thanked members of the committee for their commitment to ensuring the exercise of prioritization and assigning lead agencies towards the FY 2026-2030 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) was progressive. Having finalized the goal prioritization in July, the August meeting aims to assign lead agencies based on the evaluation and collective agreement by the committee. Oriakhi introduced Reinke as the lead facilitator for the work session.

b. Assign lead agencies

Reinke stated that the goal of the work session was to assign lead agencies based on a rubric they have utilized in the past, which focuses on accountability. Project initiatives 17, 24, 33, 15, 19, 9, & 16 were keenly discussed with MET and INRCOG, sitting as key stakeholders and lead agencies for these goals. Also, Hawkeye College, UNI, Boys & Girls Club, Homelessness task force & Grow Cedar Valley were identified as additional key lead agencies for the project initiatives 15, 19 & 7. Sesterhenn emphasized the need to establish a workgroup or subcommittee for various significant project initiatives to enable follow-up and accountability from the lead agency.

Hanson raised the possibility of having ridership data for MET Transit and RTC provided to the TAC committee. Sturch responded that ridership data is an ongoing activity that is collected and updated monthly, as well as by route. Oriakhi added that INRCOG is required to provide a historical record of ridership for RTC and how ridership is being impacted. Ridership data is a significant aspect of the data representation process in both the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) and the Long-Range Plan (LRTP). McKenzie requested the possibilities of having an annual report to the TAC committee on ridership.

Tink stressed the importance of direct routes for the free summer rides program, noting parents may be reluctant to have children transfer buses between Brynes and Gates Park or future destinations. McKenzie added that data from the program could inform future planning and encouraged MET to provide a record, if available, to support strategic decision-making.

Erin asked about MET Transit's workforce development and retention challenges, particularly regarding driver incentives. Sturch explained that MET's funding structure limits flexibility in offering incentives, and drivers typically progress from paratransit to fixed-route service before moving into management roles. He also noted existing funding gaps. Oriakhi added that RTC drivers often provide care and assistance to seniors, which some new hires find beyond their expectations. He also cited competition from higher-paying transit agencies as a major factor in turnover. Oriakhi added that, based on past conversations with Fratzke, exploring partnerships with school districts to recruit recent high school graduates for training and licensure could help address workforce gaps, as the role is currently limited to certain demographics of drivers.

Sturch added that there is an emergency support/disaster plan that outlines how Transit is engaged during events of flooding, fire, or other disasters. Benson noted that work is ongoing to update the county's emergency operations plan in collaboration with INRCOG, local jurisdictions, and agencies such as MET, RTC, and Public Health, among others, who will be consulted as part of the process. Rahman Setu asked whether there is a specific emergency operations plan for transit. Benson clarified that there is no dedicated emergency operations plan solely for transit.

General Discussion

Overall, the committee assigned lead agencies for Goals 17, 24, 33, 15, 19, 9, and 16, and agreed to develop strategic objectives for their implementation. Goals 18, 31, 26, 11, 32, and 1 will be addressed at the September TAC meeting.

There being no further discussion, the motion was moved by McKenzie, seconded by Weintraut. Motion carried unanimously. Oriakhi declared the meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Oghogho Oriakhi
Secretary

