

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF FUNDS FOR FACILITATION OF HIRTA RELATED ISSUES

BACKGROUND:

At the City Council's request, staff presented a report regarding HIRTA Services at the May 13, 2014 Council meeting. At that meeting, several Council members expressed concerns that had been shared by constituents and human service agencies regarding the delivery of HIRTA services within the community. One specific request that resulted from this meeting was a desire to gain input from these agencies to better understand their challenges and to determine if there were solutions that could be identified to address these concerns.

After discussions with ASSET's administrative staff, HIRTA and CyRide, it was determined that a facilitated conversation needed to be held with impacted organizations. Staff sought out a facilitator that understands human service agency operations and individual rider needs, as well as the challenges associated with HIRTA services. Utilizing the skills of such a facilitator should allow for a more successful outcome of the conversations around HIRTA services and provide staff with direction to improve the community's demand response transportation services provided by HIRTA.

The amount of time required for these facilitated conversations is estimated to total 20-25 hours for meeting preparation and facilitation of four meetings. The structure of these meetings would be as follows:

- Human service agencies that work with a significant number of individuals using demand response service will be invited to these meetings to discuss what is currently working and their challenges with existing HIRTA services.
- Transportation providers will examine the challenges and place the challenges into categories such as: either cannot be accommodated for regulatory/legal reasons, can be accommodated within existing resources/budget, would require additional resources/budget.
- Agencies and transportation providers would work together to develop a joint action plan identifying responsibilities and tasks for each action.
- Review a draft document of the action plan steps and develop a future communication plan to successfully address challenges in the future.

The estimated cost to facilitate the above tasks is \$2,500. The Story County Board of Supervisors will be considering a proposal to fund half of this cost at their October 28, 2014 meeting. The City has available funding to cover its half of this cost from

unallocated ASSET dollars in fiscal year 2013/2014. In 2013/14, ASSET organizations did not draw down \$43,700 of the \$1,084,978 available.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve half of the funding required to facilitate HIRTA service discussions in the amount of \$1,250, to be secured from ASSET funding previously budgeted by the City Council.
2. Approve full funding required to facilitate HIRTA service discussions in the amount of \$2,500 to be secured from ASSET funding previously budgeted by the City Council.
3. Do not approve funding for facilitation of HIRTA service meetings.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discussions regarding HIRTA transportation service within the City of Ames have become a challenging topic with varying perspectives on how and what could be accomplished to modify these services. Facilitated discussions for those involved could assist in finding steps to improve the delivery of these services within the community.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving up to \$1,250 for facilitation of demand response service discussions from ASSET funding previously budgeted by the City Council.