

# **AMES DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE**

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



**NOVEMBER 2014 – JANUARY 2015**



# AMES DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE DISCUSSIONS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ames Demand Response Service Discussion was a process improvement project to identify, better understand, and develop improvements for human service agency/organization concerns regarding door-to-door transportation services provided for the elderly, disabled and general public in Ames (as opposed to the Dial-A-Ride service provided to ADA-eligible disabled individuals only). A task force was created to oversee this process. A series of four meetings with human service agencies/organizations and transportation providers and one general public comment meeting were held during the months of November 2014 through January 2015.

Through the series of meetings, task force members continued to stress the importance that demand response service in the community was a partnership and the success of its operations was dependent upon open, quality dialog between all parties for the benefit of customers. The specific recommendations of this effort were twofold: A Demand Response Service Action Plan and Communication Plan. Each is briefly discussed below.

### **Demand Response Service Action Plan**

The Demand Response Service Action Plan identified 23 actions that the task force members recommends be taken to improve demand response service for human service agencies/organizations and their clients to utilize service within Story County. These actions (in alphabetical order), the categories of improvement and four priority actions (denoted in red) identified by the task force are briefly summarized on the next page.

### **Communication Plan**

To continue critical communication between human service agencies/organizations and transportation providers, the task force members recommend that the following actions be taken by the parties involved:

- Establish a Formal Complaint Process
- Establish Response Timeframes
- Schedule Quarterly Meetings
- Establish Formal Transportation Liaison Representatives (within the human service agencies/organizations)

With the completion of these two plans, the Demand Response Service Action Plan will be distributed to local funding agencies (Story County, City of Ames) and to the Transit Board of Trustees (CyRide) for possible future implementation considerations. The plan will also be shared with the United Way's Transportation Collaboration Committee.



## Demand Response Service Action Plan Summary

Category	Action
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	Explore more effective short term and long term solutions for the use of resources with partners (i.e. ISU, taxi's, assisted living facility and agency/organization vehicles)
	Mutually agree that transportation is a partnership and everyone will work collaboratively together to resolve issues
	All partners hold each other to the same expectations for mutually beneficial relationship
	Involve all partners upfront in program development
	Improve physical condition of buses
	Incorporate enhanced technology in buses/vans for safety and passenger satisfaction
<b>Infrastructure Improvements</b>	Employ and retain staff/drivers
	Explore the possibility of having a wheelchair on every bus
<b>Internal Modifications for HIRTA</b>	Implement a process improvement program and make changes as appropriate
	Set and monitor performance standards
	Provide a person to address passenger's failed trip needs
	Dedicate a telephone line for the agencies/organizations to contact that would have direct access to a staff person for immediate concerns
	Improved efficiencies in telephone and email system for passengers
	Increase use of personal care attendants/ride-alongs with passengers
	Provide training on passenger context/needs for HIRTA staff and drivers
	Set and monitor passenger standards
	Establish method(s) to provide driver/staff with additional information regarding passenger needs so that their trip is enjoyable and safety is enhanced
	Localized reservation system
<b>Partner Role Clarity</b>	Develop a Passenger and Caregiver User's Guide for use to establish expectations, educate passengers and passenger families on transportation services
	Share information on federal law interpretation related to transportation/passenger relationship (i.e. funding requiring community inclusion of passengers)
	Discuss and solve issues at the grass roots level with the people directly involved in the issues
	Discuss and solve issues at the management level with manager that are directly involved in the actions
<b>Service Improvement</b>	Dedicate one bus each day (unscheduled) to address unforeseen operational issues to ensure smoother operation of service

# AMES DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE

## DISCUSSIONS



**NOVEMBER 2014 – JANUARY 2015**

## **DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE DISCUSSIONS**

### **HISTORY AND PURPOSE**

Demand Response Service (DRS), defined as door-to-door transportation within Ames and Story County, excluding services provided as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), has been provided to the community since 1981 by the Heart of Iowa Transit Agency (HIRTA). This service was provided under contract with a local non-profit agency within Story County (Heartland Senior Services) until July 1, 2012, when, at that time, HIRTA began directly operating this service with individuals employed by their agency.

This structural change, combined with modified fare and agency policies, created challenges for DRS passengers and the agencies/organizations that support their needs. As a result, the Ames City Council and Story County Board of Supervisors funded a facilitated discussion process with human service organizations/agencies within Story County, with this group being called the “Demand Response Service Task Force.” The final charter for this task force is included in the Appendix A. (The charter was updated from its original draft to reflect the meeting topics covered as the task force members accomplished their charge).

The purpose of the task force meetings was three-fold:

- Identify barriers to using DRS
- Determine expectations for DRS
- Identify solutions to improve service delivery - to be documented in an Action Plan

### **TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP**

Human service agencies/organizations within the City of Ames, serving a large number of DRS passengers, were asked to participate in these discussions with the understanding that these groups represent most demand response users. These agencies/organizations were:

- ARC of Story County
- Foster Grandparents
- Heartland Senior Services
- Lutheran Services of Iowa
- Mainstream Living
- Mary Greeley Medical Center
- McFarland Clinic

Also available at the task force meetings were representatives from the three major transportation providers within the community – HIRTA, CyRide and RSVP. An Iowa DOT representative was also at task force meetings to provide clarification on the roles and

responsibilities of a demand response provider using federal funds to support the service. The representatives also provided clarification and necessary information to the task force on federal transportation responsibilities throughout the process. The charter sponsors, Story County and City of Ames, as well as United Way of Story County and CyRide were present for the meetings.

### **SCHEDULE**

The originally developed schedule included a two-month process to begin in November 2014; however, with the addition of a public input process and the difficulties in scheduling meetings in December and early January, it was completed in late January 2015. The schedule was:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Purpose</b>	<b>Task Force Members</b>
November 19, 2014	<b>Meeting #1 –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a list of challenges/constraints currently facing the agency's/organization's passengers</li> <li>• Develop a list of DRS improvements</li> <li>• Develop a vision for DRS</li> </ul>	Human Service Agencies/Organizations Only
December 3, 2014	<b>Meeting #2 –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Human Service Agencies/organization's challenges/constraints and opportunities for improvement</li> <li>• Identify Transportation Provider challenges/constraints and opportunities for improvement - Brainstorm solutions</li> <li>• Discuss resources</li> </ul>	Transportation Providers Only
December 18, 2014	<b>Meeting #3 –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a draft Action Plan</li> </ul>	Human Service Agencies/Organizations and Trans. Providers Together
December 29, 2014 – January 9, 2015, extended to January 17, 2015	<b>Public Comment Period</b>	N/A
January 5, 2015. Rescheduled to January 17, 2015 due to inclement weather	<b>Public Comment Session</b>	N/A



Date	Meeting Purpose	Task Force Members
January 19, 2015	<b>Meeting #4 –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review public comments</li> <li>• Modify the Action Plan, if appropriate</li> <li>• Prioritize Action Plan solutions</li> <li>• Develop a Communications Plan</li> </ul>	Human Service Agencies/Organizations and Transportation Providers

### **MEETING SUMMARY'S**

#### **Meeting #1 -**

The first meeting was held on November 19, 2014 at the Story County Human Services building with the human service agencies/organizations, sponsors, and CyRide's Director. The sponsors opened the meeting by presenting the charter, purpose of the meetings and schedule. The Iowa DOT representative provided a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of a demand response provider; contrasted with the American's With Disabilities Act roles and responsibilities as provided for Dial-A-Ride passengers. The Iowa DOT representative also discussed the numerous funding sources supporting service in the Ames community and the provider accountable for the delivery of DRS services. The facilitator asked a series of questions of the task force members as outlined in the "Overview of November 19, 2014 – Meeting #1 (Task Force Members)" notes included in the Appendix B. The Iowa DOT representatives presentation entitled, "Meeting #1 Iowa DOT PowerPoint Presentation" is included as Appendix C.

#### **Meeting #2 –**

The second meeting was held on December 3, 2014 at the Ames Transit Agency (CyRide) building with HIRTA, CyRide and RSVP transportation providers, sponsors and Iowa DOT representative. The sponsors opened the meeting discussing the charter, purpose of the meetings and schedule. The facilitator then asked a series of questions of the transportation providers, similar to the questions asked of the human service agencies/organizations in the first meeting, as outlined in the "Overview of December 3, 2014 – Meeting #2 (Transportation Members)" notes included in the Appendix D.

#### **Meeting #3 –**

The third meeting was held on December 18, 2014 at the Ames Public Library building with all task force members present (human service agencies/organizations, transportation providers, sponsors, Iowa DOT). The sponsors opened the meeting, providing an overview of the work completed to date, and the Iowa DOT representative guided the task force members through a fact sheet entitled, "Fact Sheet for ADA Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response

Services in Ames and Story County,” which is included in the Appendix E. The Iowa DOT representative shared with the group that the fact sheet provides a factual basis and reference guide for discussions regarding the development of an Action Plan. The facilitator led the process to review a draft Action Plan developed by the sponsors, facilitator, CyRide and Iowa DOT representatives summarizing the solutions identified by the task force members at DRS meetings #1 and #2, and the addition of actions steps and responsibilities for the organization/agencies, transit providers and government representatives. The task force was divided into four representative working groups to provide feedback on the draft plan. As a result of these discussions, additional solutions were identified as well as changes to actions/responsibility statements. The task force ended the meeting with a discussion on next steps regarding the public input process and next meeting scheduled for January 19, 2015. No formal notes were recorded for this meeting as noted in Appendix F.

#### **Public Comment Session/Input –**

A public comment session was originally scheduled for January 5, 2015; however, was cancelled due to inclement weather on that day. This meeting was rescheduled for Saturday, January 17, 2015 from 8:30 – 10:30 am in the City Council Chambers. The purpose of this meeting was to record the public’s comments regarding the Demand Response Action Plan. Verbal comments were received from nine individuals and recorded by task force members. The public comment period was also extended to January 17<sup>th</sup> with five comments received electronically. These combined public comments can be briefly described by three themes:

- **Need for Improved Communication** – i.e. customer and agency challenges in getting trips scheduled, cancelled, etc., especially after hours as well as general phone concerns
- **Need for Consistent Driver Professionalism** – i.e. perception of speeding, swearing, either training issues or willingness to help customer (not consistent among drivers)
- **Need for Improved Service** – i.e. need for more weekend rural service, out of county destinations

A copy of the notes for each comment provided at the public comment session and written input received is included in the Appendix G entitled, “DRS Public Input”.

#### **Meeting #4 –**

The final meeting was held on January 19, 2015 at the Ames Public Library building with all task force members present: human service agencies/organizations, transportation providers, and sponsors. The Iowa DOT representative was unable to attend. The sponsors opened the meeting with a brief recap of the public comment session as described previously in this document. The members then developed a list of their top priorities to begin implementation

of the Action Plan. The group identified the four action steps on the following page as priority actions.

**Action Plan Item #2 – Mutually Agree That Transportation Is A Partnership And Everyone Will Work Collaboratively Together to Resolve Issues**

**Action Plan Item #6 – Incorporate Enhanced Technology In Buses/Vans For Safety And Passenger Satisfaction**

**Action Plan Item #7 – Employ and Retain Staff/Drivers**

**Action Plan Item #13 - Improve Efficiencies in Telephone and Email System for Passengers**

Action Item #2 is within HIRTA/Organizations/Transportation Providers current charge and funding. The remaining three items identified as priorities require expansion of the transportation providers funding and/or charge.

The DRS task force members then volunteered to work on one or more subcommittees to begin addressing the action items.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the communication plan (described in further detail on the next page) and completing a brief evaluation survey on the DRS plan and process.

This meeting represented the final task force meeting as outlined in the charter with all criteria of the charter met, except for identification of resources and a financial plan for each action. This was not possible due to the limited time available to complete the process. A description of how this work will be accomplished is included in the “Next Steps” section of this document.

No formal notes were recorded for this meeting as noted in Appendix F.

### **ACTION PLAN**

The final version of the recommended Action Plan is included in the Appendix H and contains 23 actions. Each action includes a description of the solution, the specific action(s) to be taken; responsibilities of the human service agencies/organizations, transportation providers and governmental bodies; the task force’s priority ranking; and whether each solution can be accomplished with current resources or whether additional resources are needed. Additionally, the solutions are categorized into one of five categories as follows on the next page:

- Community Partnerships
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Internal Modifications for HIRTA
- Partner Role Clarity
- Service Improvement

### **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

In order to improve communications among human service agencies/organizations and transportation providers in Ames/Story County, the DRS task force discussed ways that the respective parties could continue healthy discussions regarding demand response service. Four processes were identified as follows on the next page:

- **Establish a Formal Complaint Process** – Identify a process that the respective parties could agree upon that would allow for discussions at the appropriate level within their organizations and an appeal process if agreement was not received by the parties involved.
- **Establish Response Timeframes** – Develop a standard that all parties would adhere to in responding via telephone, email or other electronic formats.
- **Schedule Quarterly Meetings** – Schedule quarterly meeting with task force members for the subcommittees to share the progress made on the action plan. This could possibly be added to the United Way organizations’ Transportation Collaboration Committee agendas.
- **Establish Formal Transportation Liaison Representatives** – The human service agency/organization could formally establish a Transportation Liaison/Coordinator within their agency/organization that could be the conduit with HIRTA, as well as distribute information within their organization.

### **NEXT STEPS**

#### **Action Plan –**

This document and the Action Plan will be shared with governing bodies that have oversight and funding responsibilities for the Ames DRS program. These governing bodies are:

- Ames City Council
- ASSET
- Iowa DOT
- Story County Board of Supervisors

Upon receiving the recommended action plan, each of the governing bodies will consider the solutions and priority action for enhanced DRS services and take actions appropriate within their funding programs. Additionally, this information will be shared with the Transit Board of Trustees (CyRide Board) for possible application on the ADA-required, Dial-A-Ride services program provided within the city as well as with the HIRTA Board of Directors.

**Action Plan Implementation -**

Upon concurrence with governing bodies regarding the DRS Action Plan and priorities, the DRS task force will begin work to develop specific steps to be taken, implementation timelines, finances and resources needed to implement the actions, beginning with the four priority actions identified by the group.

Upon approval of this Action Plan by its governing bodies, the DRS task force will re-form into subcommittees to begin work on implementation plans for the final, priority Action Plans approved.

# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A

### DEMAND RESPONSE TASK FORCE CHARTER

<b>Focus:</b>	Demand Response Service (Non-ADA Door-to-Door Transportation) in the City of Ames
<b>Project:</b>	Identify barriers for human service agencies/organizations assisting the elderly and disabled, expectations for and solutions to demand response service in the community.
<b>Facilitator:</b>	Nancy Franz
<b>Sponsors:</b>	Melissa Mundt and Deb Schildroth
<b>Members:</b>	<p><b>Task Force</b> - One representative from each of the following agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream Living – Steve Gelsen</li> <li>• Lutheran Services of Iowa – Amber Suckow</li> <li>• Heartland Senior Services – Laurie Lybarger</li> <li>• McFarland Clinic – Roger Kluesner</li> <li>• Mary Greeley Medical Center – Karen Kiel Rosser</li> <li>• ARC of Story County – Tricia Crain</li> <li>• Foster Grandparents – Anna Vaughn</li> </ul> <p><b>Transportation Providers</b> –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIRTA – Julia Castillo, Brooke Ramsey</li> <li>• CyRide – Sheri Kyras, Barbara Neal</li> <li>• RSVP – Arti Sanghi</li> </ul> <p><b>Other</b> –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iowa DOT – Kristin Haar</li> </ul>
<b>Meetings/Tasks:</b>	<p><b>Meeting #1</b> – Presentation on transportation requirements (Iowa DOT representative), discuss the group's purpose, develop a list of challenges/constraints currently facing the agencies/organization's clients in using demand response service in the Ames community, categorize the challenges/constraints into opportunities for improvement and develop a vision for demand response transportation service. (Task Force)</p> <p><b>Meeting #2</b> – Review challenges/constraints and opportunities for improvement and place into categories such as: legally not able to accommodate, can be accommodated within current charge/budget, improvements above current charge/budget. Brainstorm solutions, identify resources needed. (Transportation Providers)</p> <p><b>Meeting #3</b> – Develop a draft Action Plan that identifies potential solutions, responsibilities and whether current resources can accommodate the proposed solutions or if the solution is legally possible. (Task Force and Transportation Providers)</p> <p><b>Public Input Process</b> – The draft Action Plan will be published for review and comment by the general public. A public meeting will be held and written input received during a comment period. (Sponsors)</p>

**Meeting #4** – Review public comments received, modify the Action Plan based on these comments, if appropriate, and prioritize the solutions for implementation. Finalize the resources needed for implementation in a financial plan with expenses and revenues identified. Develop a communications plan on how agencies/transportation providers can ensure meaningful dialog in the future. (Task Force and Transportation Providers)

<b>Importance for Customer's:</b>	Increase awareness of agency needs and transportation provider requirements/constraints so that solutions can be developed that may be accomplished in the delivery of demand response service in the community.
<b>Boundaries and Parameters:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task force meetings will be held bi-weekly over three months.</li><li>• Challenges, solutions and expectations will be consensus driven and achievable by the transportation providers.</li><li>• A global perspective will be maintained when making decisions.</li><li>• Discussions will be respectful of all individuals and organizations and focus on the challenges and not personalities.</li></ul>
<b>End Product:</b>	<p>Report that identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current transportation challenges/constraints experienced by human service agencies/organizations assisting the elderly and disabled</li><li>• Categorization of challenges/constraints into opportunities for improvement</li><li>• Action plans to address the opportunities for improvement</li><li>• Identification of costs/resources for action plan activities that are above the transportation providers current charge/budget</li><li>• Identification of transit provider expectations</li><li>• Development of a communications plan that addresses the protocol for future discussions</li></ul>
<b>Starting and Ending Dates:</b>	The task force start date is November 15, 2014 with recommendations prepared on or before January 30, 2015.



# APPENDIX B

## Story County Demand Response Services Task Force Overview of November 19, 2014 – Meeting #1 (Human Service Members)

**Project: Identify barriers for human service agencies/organizations assisting the elderly and disable, expectations for and solutions to demand response service in the community.**

### **Meeting Process:**

- Welcome, introductions and purpose
- Presentation-ADA Complementary Paratransit & Demand Response Services (DRS) in Story County
- DRS Conversation with User Groups

### *Conversation Summary themes*

### **Expectations of Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Authority (HIRTA) by Users**

#### **Strong Customer Service**

- Available when needed
- Customer needs met
- Flexibility due to passenger context/needs
- Quality
- Reliability/timeliness
- Understand customers

#### **Passenger Safety and Support**

- Correct destination at the correct time
- Consistency and quality of customer care
- Follow laws and regulations
- Good transfer of care (door to door)
- Review safety/industry protocol of leaving the engine running when driver is not on bus
- Turn off engine and remove keys when driver not in vehicle

#### **Organizational Efficiency**

- Agreement between HIRTA and users on consistent and reasonable pick up times, wait times, and drive times
- Billing consistency
- Delayed or lack of follow through
- Effective ways to handle complaints
- Hours of peak service match peak user times
- Reasonable wait time for answering phone calls and emails

## **Barriers to Effective and Efficient DRS by Users**

### **Limited services don't meet customer demand**

- Peak time
- Days of Operation

### **Programming Challenges**

- Clients may not reach their goals
- Funding endangered or lost due to inability to get clients to services and jobs
- Increased or redirected resources from internally providing provision of transportation for clients
- Unrealized or reduced program outputs and outcomes

### **Passengers are Not Supported**

- Caregiver's jobs compromised by inefficient transportation
- Disregard for passenger comfort and context/need

### **Poor communication between HIRTA and users/passenger**

- Drivers lack or fail to use important information about passengers
- Drivers fail to alert organizations about passenger issues
- Drivers need training about users and their drop-off locations
- Long response time to phone calls and email
- Passengers/organizations do not receive updates when ride is delayed or cancelled

### **Poor professionalism of drivers and office staff**

- Disrespectful of passengers and organizations
- Drivers complain to passengers about their organizations and/or complaints made
- Driver's speed
- Schedulers and drivers aren't working together to create efficient routes

## **Solutions to Meet DRS Expectations and Remove Barriers**

### **Conduct systems reviews for efficiencies and make changes accordingly**

- Improve communication systems between the HIRTA office, drivers, passengers, and organizations by creating a client classification system, appropriate number and quality of passenger response staff, and increase dedication to reasonable response times
- Improve passenger safety with improved system of driver communications about passenger issues with the HIRTA office, that then informs the organization
- Match supply and demand of services by increasing the number and quality of drivers, the number and quality of buses running, and reducing pick up waiting and drive times
- More long term drivers who care about customer service and passenger comfort and safety by making salaries competitive and the position more appealing
- Dedicated phone line for organizations and ensure adequate staffing
- Increase funding for better service (more quality drivers, more hours, more availability during peak demand times, reliable buses)
- Increase use of personal care attendants and volunteer ride a-longs
- Organizations need to educate clients and client families on transportation services
- Organizations provide training on client context/needs for HIRTA drivers and staff
- Set and monitor standards for phone and email response times
- Work towards having the same rules for all partners

**One Thing Users Would Change to Improve DRS:**

- Training – properly and regularly
- Consistency in pick up and drop off times
- More drivers
- Pick-Up on Demand
- Quick phone contact/analyze & monitor phone system performance
- Additional management to focus on hiring drivers

**Strengths of DRS:** “It is a wonderful service when it works”, some drivers and the director care about service/passengers, this service prevents life in institutions for passengers, and very needed services.

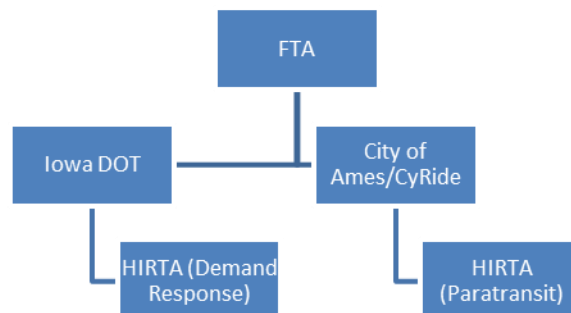
**Value of this Conversation:** Clarity on peak hours of usage/need for service, good candidness, depth of discussion, and common themes/issues, participants are interested in working towards DRS changes, participants believe DRS improvements are possible, and participants expressed comfort that they all shared similar DRS challenges.

# APPENDIX C

## MEETING #1 IOWA DOT POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

### ADA Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response Services in Ames and Story County (November 19, 2014)

- **Why the comparison?**
  - Both the ADA complementary paratransit for CyRide and demand response public transit services in Ames are provided by one provider, the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTa)
  - Important to know the services have distinct requirements
- **Role of Iowa DOT**
  - CyRide is a direct recipient of FTA funds and reports directly to FTA
  - FTA has oversight responsibilities of CyRide
  - For small urban and rural systems, Iowa DOT is the direct recipient of FTA funds, therefore HIRTa reports to Iowa DOT
  - Iowa DOT has oversight responsibilities of HIRTa
  - Iowa DOT monitors HIRTa's expenditure of state and federal funds
  - Iowa DOT conducts compliance reviews of HIRTa every three years covering state and federal transit regulations
  - FTA has a similar role with respect to oversight of CyRide



- **Complementary Paratransit Defined**
  - Transportation service required by the ADA for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transportation systems. This service must be comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system and meet the requirements specified in 49 CFR Sections 37.123-137.133. The complementary services must be origin-to-destination service.
  - Source: Adapted from National Transit Database Glossary
  - AKA Dial-a-Ride

- **Demand Response Defined**

- A transit mode operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who then dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations.
- A demand response operation is characterized by the following:
  - a) The vehicles do not operate over a fixed route or on a fixed schedule except, perhaps, on a temporary basis to satisfy a special need, and
  - b) Typically, the vehicle may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different pick-up points before taking them to their respective destinations and may even be interrupted en route to these destinations to pick up other passengers.

Source: Adapted from National Transit Database Glossary

- **HIRTA**

- HIRTA is the designated demand response public transit system for Iowa DOT's Region 11, the seven counties around Polk, including Story County

- **Service Requirements**

Paratransit	Demand Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Must be ADA eligible</u> or in a wheelchair*</li> <li>• <u>Must apply to qualify</u></li> <li>• Next day reservation</li> <li>• <u>Fares no more than double</u> the regular fixed route fare</li> <li>• Service provided for origins and destinations within Ames city limits**</li> <li>• Service hours <u>must match fixed route hours</u></li> <li>• May not charge for "no shows"</li> <li>• * ADA only requires Paratransit service for those unable to access or use fixed route; CyRide qualifies any person using a wheelchair</li> <li>• ** ADA requires service only within ¾-mile of the fixed route; CyRide offers service to Ames city limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone can ride</li> <li>• <u>No application/qualification</u> necessary</li> <li>• 24-hour advance reservation</li> <li>• Fares based on <u>costs to operate service, funding sources</u></li> <li>• Service provided in Story County, including Ames, and beyond</li> <li>• Service hours <u>set by transit agency</u></li> <li>• May charge for "no shows"</li> </ul>

## Origin-Destination Service Requirement

- ADA Complementary Paratransit must provide origin-destination service
  - If the passenger is able to get to the curb to board the bus, that is the service provided
  - If the passenger requires assistance getting from the exterior door of the origin location to the exterior door of the destination location, that is the service to be provided
  - The driver is not required to go into a home or business to pick up or drop off a passenger
- Demand Response allowed to offer curb-to-curb service
  - No requirement to assist to/from the door
  - HIRTA provides door-to-door Demand Response service
  - Good for customer service, but decreases efficiency and increases liability issues
- **Public Transit Driver Requirements**
  - Public transit drivers must:
    - Possess a Commercial Driver's License
    - Be trained to proficiency in operating the vehicle, lift, and securing mobility devices
    - Assist passengers in navigating the transit system (assist with directions, recognize persons with disabilities to ensure they are on the proper vehicle, etc.)
  - Public transit drivers are not:
    - Health care or social workers
    - If a passenger regularly requires medical attention during public transit trips, a Personal Care Attendant may accompany the passenger for free to attend to those needs
- **Trip Scheduling**
  - ADA Complementary Paratransit:
    - Trip scheduling may be negotiated within one hour on either side of the requested time
    - Rides may be scheduled up to 14 days in advance
    - Rides cannot be excessively long when compared to a similar ride on a fixed route
  - Demand Response:
    - Trips scheduled on a space available basis as close to the desired time as possible
  - Both are shared ride services, not taxis
    - When scheduling, passengers should account for time to stop for other riders during the trip
- **Fares**
  - Multiple funding sources fund CyRide and HIRTA
    - Examples: Federal Transit Administration, State Transit Assistance, Local City/County, Iowa State University, Area Agency on Aging, Medicaid, etc.
  - For CyRide's ADA Complementary Paratransit, the fare can be no more than double the fixed route fare

- HIRTA's Demand Response service, however, does not have a mandated maximum fare and fares may vary based on a passenger's funding source
  - The same passenger may pay different fares for different trips depending on the trip purpose or funding source
- Many variables may factor into a passenger's demand response fare:
  - Is the person over age 60? The Area Agency on Aging (Aging Resources of Central Iowa) contributes to HIRTA, allowing donation-only fares
  - Is the person on Medicaid? If it's a medical trip, it may be paid for as a Medicaid benefit
  - Is the trip outside Ames' city limits? This trip requires more time, miles, and fuel and therefore the fare is higher, \$4
  - Is the trip inside Ames? The fare is lower, \$2, because these trips likely can be grouped with others and the time, miles, and fuel required are lower than a longer trip
- **Summary**
  - HIRTA is one transit system providing two types of service
  - The Dial-a-Ride or paratransit service provided for CyRide has many more regulations than HIRTA's demand response service
  - HIRTA must balance the needs of the paratransit clients with the needs of the demand response passengers
  - Like agencies with clients using HIRTA's transit services, HIRTA's responsibility is to the passenger, ensuring they get where they need to go
- **Questions?**
- **Contact information:**

Kristin Haar  
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# APPENDIX D

## Story County Demand Response Services Task Force (DRS) Overview of December 3, 2014 – Meeting #2 (Transportation Members)

Project: Identify barriers for human service agencies/organizations assisting the elderly and disable, expectations for and solutions to demand response service in the community.

### **Meeting Process:**

- Welcome, introductions and purpose
- DRS Conversation with transportation providers
- Present summary of meeting #1

### *Conversation Summary themes*

### **Expectations of DRS**

#### **Efficient Service**

- Everyone works well together as a team-passengers/clients, transportation providers, and agencies/organizations
- On time

#### **Provide Needed Transportation**

- Must have medical, pharmacy, and grocery trips, and may have other trips
- Provide trips to everywhere in the community

### **Barriers to Effective and Efficient DRS**

#### **Communication**

- Agencies/organizations, passengers, and HIRTA need to be educated about each other
- HIRTA considers passengers to be their clients and not the agency/organization's client. Agencies/organizations have become a broker for passengers.
- Local policy makers need to be educated about the transportation/agency/passenger relationship facts and laws and make decisions accordingly
- Set policies about customer service standards, report on them internally, and compare them to other systems across Iowa

#### **Infrastructure**

- Capacity challenges between transportation program (i.e. Dial-A-Ride, ADA)
- Continued driver shortage
- Funding silos prevent optimum effectiveness
- HIRTA main office located in Urbandale, not in Story County so non-local scheduling process occurs
- Limited technology in buses for passenger and driver safety (i.e. security cameras)
- No funding for bus updates or expansion
- One of the oldest bus/van fleets in Iowa
- Trips outside of Story County discontinued due to lack of drivers (Iowa City, Des Moines)



## **Partnerships**

- Agency/organization expectations sometimes conflict with passenger expectations
- Increase support and networking
- RSVP (Voluntary Transportation Program) is striving for a safe environment for drivers and passengers (i.e. one-on-one environment)

## **Solutions to Meet DRS Expectations and Remove Barriers**

### **Improve Infrastructure**

- Better buses
- Dedicate one bus each day to only take care of just-in-time transportation issues (i.e. mobile dispatch)
- Incorporate enhanced technology in buses/vans for safety and customer satisfaction
- More drivers

### **Improve the relationship between transportation/passenger/organizations**

- Add personal care attendants and/or volunteers to ride on buses and support passenger needs
- Discuss and solve DRS issues from the grass roots with the people who are directly involved with the issues
- Explore more effective use of resources with partners (i.e. DRS with ISU and assisted living facility buses and drivers when they are not in use)
- Involve all three partners more often in joint activities (i.e. training of drivers and agency/organization staff, program development planning upfront)
- Overcome past issues and move ahead collaboratively with the common goal of supporting passengers/clients
- Provide facts/information on actual usage and performance of DRS to partners and that transit has been performing above and beyond what the law requires
- Share more information on federal law interpretation related to the transportation/passenger relationship (i.e. funding requires community inclusion of clients)

**One Thing Users Would Change to Improve DRS:** communications including public, customer, and organization education that complaints are down and buses are running more on time; change the culture from one of providing human services to one of providing transportation; operating more smoothly; educate riders/agencies on transportation program

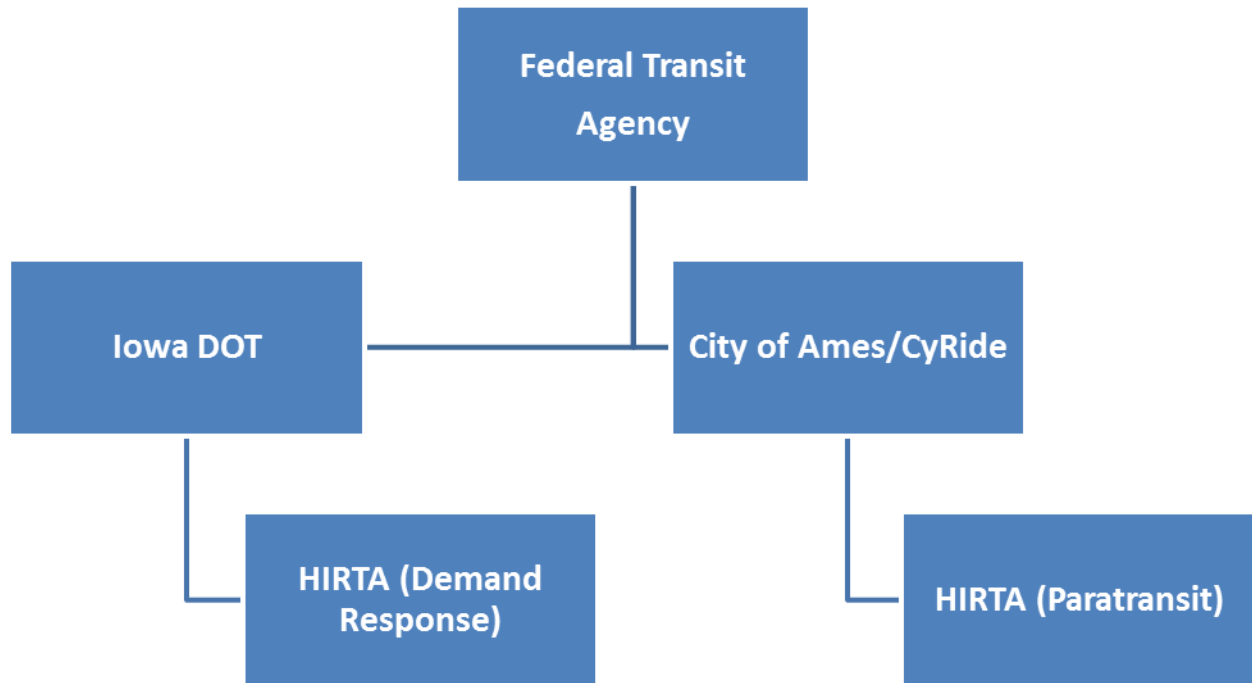
**Strengths of DRS:** It is a great service with passionate drivers, a cost effective service-fare is down and use is up

**Value of this Conversation:** Overall commonalities on issues, especially communication. A better understanding of the system. The need to put the past issues away and move ahead.

Reviewed and updated December 9, 2014

**APPENDIX E**

**FACT SHEET**  
**FOR**  
**ADA Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response Services**  
**in Ames and Story County**



Complementary Paratransit Facts

Transportation service required by the ADA for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transportation systems is called Complementary Paratransit. In our community it is known as Dial-A-Ride.

Complementary Paratransit drivers may provide assistance getting to exterior door of location to exterior door of destination. Drive is not required to go into a home or business to pick up or drop off a passenger.

## Demand Response Transportation Facts

Demand Response transportation service operates in response to calls from passengers or their agents. Vehicles may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different pick-up points before taking them to their respective destinations. Vehicles do not operate over a fixed route or on a fixed schedule except on a temporary basis to satisfy a special need.

Demand Response allows curb-to-curb service. There are no requirements to assist to/from the door.

- HIRTA provides door-to-door Demand Response service.

## Public Transit Driver Facts

Possess a Commercial Driver's License

Be proficient with operating the vehicle, lift, and securing mobility devices.

Assist passengers in navigating the transit system (assist with directions, recognize persons with disabilities to ensure they are on the proper vehicle, etc.).

Public transit drivers are not health care or social workers.

If a passenger regularly requires medical attention during public transit trips, a Personal Care Attendant may accompany the passenger for free to attend to those needs.

## Fare Facts

Dial-A-Ride fare can be no more than double the fixed route fare.

HIRTA's Demand Response service does not have a mandated maximum fare and fares may vary based on a passenger's funding source.

## Miscellaneous Facts

Both Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response are shared ride services, not taxis, and passengers should account for time to stop for other riders during the trip.

HIRTA is the designated demand response public transit system for Iowa DOT's Region 11, the seven counties around Polk, including Story County.

HIRTA is one transit system providing two types of services.

HIRTA Ridership Facts (source: Iowa Department of Transportation)

FY 2014 RIDES

Aging Resources/Title IIIB	13,624
Foster Grandparents	577
CyRide/Paratransit	10,715
TMS (only non-emergency medical transportation)	426

FY 2015 First Quarter RIDES

Aging Resources/Title IIIB	3,197
Foster Grandparents	188
CyRide/Paratransit	2,761
TMS (only non-emergency medical transportation)	94

**RVSP Service**

Program started in 2010

42-45 volunteer drivers

110-115 clients

Cannot provide service to individuals needing to use a wheel chair, but can handle clients with walkers

Client has to fill out a form, so they can be matched with a driver

Drivers are age 55 and above, however younger people are welcome to drive, including ISU students

Minor clients must be accompanied by an adult

48 hours notice is required for a ride

Cost: Donation - suggested \$3 for within 10 miles

**HIRTA**

serves 7 counties that surround Polk County, started in 1971 as a subcontracting agency

started direct serves in 2010, when funding became an issues for some of their subcontracted agencies

HIRTA provides Dial-A-Ride or paratransit service in Ames

Story County is their most populated County they serve

24 hours notice is required for a ride for demand response services

Ridership is up almost 8,000 in Story County since they took over direct service, 2,500 in 2014 (???)

Passenger fares were \$5.75, but were reduced to \$2 per trip in Ames and \$4 in the County

Run service from ~6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in Ames, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the County

Paratransit service for Ames was up 25% last year

### **Cy-Ride**

7 million rides are estimated for this school year on its fixed route system

~135 drivers

Run service from 6 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. and 3 a.m. on weekends

## **APPENDIX F**

**Story County Demand Response Services Task Force (DRS)  
Overview of December 18, 2014 – Meeting #3 (Human Service & Transportation Members)**

**NO FORMAL NOTES WERE COMPLETED.**

**Story County Demand Response Services Task Force (DRS)  
Overview of January 19, 2015 – Meeting #4 (Human Service & Transportation Members)**

**NO FORMAL NOTES WERE COMPLETED.**

## **APPENDIX G**

### **DRS Public Input**

**(December 29, 2014 – January 17, 2015)**

#### **Respondent #1 -**

- It appears that smaller communities are getting the better buses;
- Riverside is having trouble getting residents to doctor's appointment; dedicate a bus to Riverside;
- I understand there is a camera in one bus;
- I agree with internal modifications listed in the plan; I have concern that the plan does not address the timing of rides - need to be somewhere at 3 pm;
- Communicate with individual passengers - she gives HIRTA her own phone # but not those who don't have a phone then HIRTA calls the main line at Riverside;
- Need to have dispatch available on weekends to schedule rides or to answer questions if something goes wrong (she does have someone's number)

#### **Respondent #2 -**

- It appears that smaller communities are getting the better buses;
- A cab would be an option for me but I couldn't take alone because of expense; if there was a voucher program could help subsidize the ride;
- I feel HIRTA should be able to force some passengers to have an attendant; sees things happen on the bus and feels that the driver needs to pay attention to the road and should be able to write up when (MSL) kids misbehave (has witnessed this and would be willing to testify);
- I would take a call if the bus is running late but sometimes I am waiting outside when it is nice;
- I am concerned that the office doesn't open until 8:30 a.m. ; communications is bad - they don't understand Story County;
- Doesn't appear that there are enough buses; changing the process for the manifest to be more efficient; understand mistakes happen, but when you add up the errors on all sides the problem grows;
- Sees that more passengers (Mainstream Kids are a problem); some drivers understand the dynamics of clients; takes longer at Mainstream Living so other passengers just sit and watch;
- I don't understand why my ride has to take me so far out of the way;
- Concern they are losing some good drivers; hiring some bad ones;
- I would agree on the improvement on the phones; open dispatch earlier - save money someplace else; make sure the dispatch know how many wheelchairs; need reservations in Ames; need someone in the Ames office all the time to take care of emergency;
- I feel like the driver is speeding but can't prove it;
- I agree the unscheduled bus is a good idea;

- Why can't they let drivers have the option to sell books on the bus instead of ordering more or create a better system to get vouchers purchased;

#### **Respondent #3 -**

- I am no longer able to drive a car; takes 3 trips a day - \$6 everyday;
- Does the \$20 college bus...discount of a \$1 then? I told him I don't know; concerned that now
- It is a good service - excellent service no complaints on his driver very courteous - good guy; problems with his leg - sometimes hard to get over the curb when it is icy; rest is good

#### **Respondent #4 -**

- The Midwest is not getting their fair share; come cities are buying buses on their own and not looking for the feds to purchase - could the county purchase buses; could the city purchase buses; if we wait for the state/feds to fund buses we won't get one;
- Tablet technology is getting affordable - may be an eligible ;
- Looking at wages for drivers - tie to bureau of labor (average wage rate) adopt a policy fair wage; problem in Story County with employment; increase the cost so we have to be prepared to cover cost; if we don't invest money we will continue to get the same lousy service;
- Extra unscheduled bus makes a lot of sense - HIRTA should be doing this already; don't know enough about HIRTA's internal; small vans - (look at Lincoln, NE for contracting for paratransit services) one-on-one type of trips - modified vans - this driver could also be the on demand driver) non-emergency medical - good model to look at - much bigger than Story County; Osh Kosh, WI does public transit uses software that caller id and pulls up the last 5 last trips and plugs in trips;
- At the April (2014) public meeting – HIRTA staff was very rude to the customers present and insensitive and condensing - treat them with respect - sets the tone for everything else, people didn't feel they were being listened;

#### **Respondents #5 & #6 –**

- Supportive of calling caregivers when late
- Pick up time 6:30am-7:30am and would like to see that reduced to a specific time with a leeway of 10min either way.
- Inconsistency of pick up time. Given Blake's direct number but wouldn't return phone calls. DSM number – put on hold; talk w/ HIRTA Director and Operations Director and they didn't seem to know what was going on. Left msg for HIRTA Director prior to Christmas to talk about mom's issues and still waiting for return call/email.
- Supportive of use of personal care attendants.
- Supportive of wheelchairs on busses (someone may fall and need the chair until further assistance is provided).
- Supportive of localized reservation system.



- Long bus ride (2 hours) not acceptable, but that has improved. When passenger dropped off, other passengers assisting her w/ seat belt, getting down the steps of the bus, etc.
- Different drivers do things differently. Training needed – driver doesn't comprehend the seriousness of dropping passenger off at wrong door (passenger has dementia)
- Lack of training of bus/van equipment (getting ramp down).
- Rolling Green – has talked about providing local transportation to medical appts, etc (they have 2 busses) ; form a partnership to do this?
- Concerns about communication occurring only b/t agencies and HIRTA, need to communication w/ public, too. Future meetings need to be open meetings.
- Dates for Action Step #1- best interest for the public to keep this moving quickly. Appoint a couple of public people to attend; maybe general HIRTA riders and non-agency riders.
- #2A-Strong communication back to HIRTA about accountability; maybe hold (ASSET) money if not meeting expectations.
- #3A - spell out "call ALL passengers" to ensure public understands; concerns that there's an emphasis on meeting transportation needs of agency clients vs. general public; access to transportation is impacted due to shortage of drivers, etc
- #5 - concerns that there's an emphasis on meeting transportation needs of agency clients vs general public; access to transportation due to shortage of drivers, etc; Rewrite bullet point under organizational responsibility. Concerned that this reads that agencies have to find transportation.
- #6 - supportive of improved technology; can ASSET help with this?
- #7 - HIRTA should give more frequent financial reports to public – maybe quarterly at Story Co Board of Supervisors meetings? Per HIRTA Director at July HIRTA Board meeting there was a \$227,000 profit at end of FY 14; convert money to give more service? Money placed in reserve? Where is money going?
- #9 - Add public to this; come before public boards
- #12 - Phone line should be given to EVERYONE; include public. This seems preferential to just agencies b/c it's mainly agency clients that HIRTA is serving right now
- #13 - PR campaign committee and outreach
- #23-If local resources are used to support a dedicated bus, we need to make sure it stays in the county. Quarterly update to include the use of this bus, miles, etc.

#### **Respondent #7 –**

HIRTA's automated system still sent msg even though cancelled rides for 2 weeks. Called HIRTA to cancel notifications

- Inconsistencies with where to access information. Passenger receives notifications about dressing warm for bus, but have to watch TV or go to the HIRTA website for service cancellations
- Customer service needs improvement

- When calling Urbandale office between 7am-4pm – sometimes wait 20 mins on hold; get message to press a number to be connected to someone in Story County. Limited ways to leave a message.
- No dispatcher in office during earlier hours to cancel a ride. Leave messages, but not communicated and drivers show up anyway.
- Supportive of localized reservation system
- Safety – tie downs are laying on the floor and creating a trip hazards
- No heat in bus on 1/12/15
- Good relationships with bus drivers, but problems always get put back on the rider. Problems come from HIRTA management.

This respondent also provided written comments as follows:

1. Not able to make an appointment for Monday after Friday at 4:00 PM
2. Still receive reminder messages after rides have been canceled
3. Rides are changed and there is no notification other than the phone message. Then when the ride is changed back the message is not changed back. This makes us either late or waiting.
4. I am still periodically late for work
5. Buses arrive with mechanical problems. (no heat or making odd noises)
6. Bus drivers are so push for time, they don't have time to put away the tie downs where I trip on them
7. Bus drivers don't tell me when someone else is on the bus, so I sit on them
8. We are told there is not any available times available
9. Messages are left on answering machine in Ames before the office opens(early in the morning) AM then the bus still arrives (8:00)and I need to run out to the bus to tell the driver I canceled. This is not fun when I am sick in bed, and makes an unnecessary trip for the bus
10. No one in either office after 4:00, so any problem after 4:00 (late bus, cancellation) is not addressed
11. When I talk to Sherri at CY-Ride to address a problem, I am always told that that is someone else's area, like the internal functions of HIRTA. Well when you hire a contractor to do work, and the hire a subcontractor. When there is a problem with the job, you don't call the subcontractor; you call the contractor
12. Problems are addressed one incident at a time, and not looked at why they keep happening

#### **Respondent #8 –**

- Rides HIRTA as Dial-A-Ride every day and night
- Having issues with drivers. Two weeks ago, around the end of December, she was going to church and driver picked up a man and started to talk to him. The driver swore eight times and the other passenger swore as well. Felt it was very offensive as no one wants to hear swearing first thing in the morning. Drivers also speed. Speeding is a safety issue. Respondent was concerning with a specific driver. Respondent does not like this driver taking her to church on

Sunday's. Respondent also shared that she is afraid the driver will hit someone and is concerned about being in an accident. She has emailed HIRTA about her concerns. Respondent is also concerned that driver does not take her to the front door of the church if there is deep snow as the driver would need to back out and the driver does not like doing this. She indicated she can tolerate the drop off location. Respondent indicated that there are other options like George White's parking lot.

- One time she had a 12:30 pick up time, but was not picked up until 12:55, she was late for her appointment. Sometimes they are pretty late. They are not polite when they are late to pick you up. They should be more professional. About 50% are polite and there are a few that are very nice and professional.
- Respondent does not like having to call the Des Moines office. It has been a long time since she has been able to call Ames. Ames HIRTA office should be the main number, for instance, if she has to cancel. It is a nuisance to have to call Des Moines. Respondent uses HIRTA so she can ride at night, but has to use it to get to CyRide sometimes too.
- Respondent has talked to HIRTA about the driver, but indicated HIRTA said they would have to talk with the driver, but nothing changes. The language and speeding. They need to monitor drivers. Some have the music playing really loud as well as the HIRTA radio. There are times she can hear the radio coming out of the building. This is not as bad as the swearing and speeding.
- When she has to look for money in her pockets, it frustrates drivers when she cannot find it right away. They are rude to her when she cannot find the money right away. To her they are saying "come on where is the money". Respondent may also have to count the money, if she does not have correct change. It might take a few minutes. This really bothers her. Other drivers park and are nice about it. It depends on the driver. One of the new make drivers is really nice and will help her if the weather is bad. Respondent indicated that he takes her arm and helps her on to the bus. Respondent would like all the drivers to be like him. He can play the radio loud, though. It makes it hard to be calm on the bus.
- In December 2013, a car hit the bus and this makes her scared.
- She has called to schedule a trip at the main number in Des Moines and they don't understand the location. They do not understand Ames. This is frustrating as respondent hates talking on the phone, especially to HIRTA.
- HIRTA really helps her get around.

#### **Respondent #9 –**

- Under community partnership asked which agencies would be contacted. Would like NAMI to be on the list.
- Like the idea of doing a "You Tube" training video for riders and care providers – think about the order and the options being part of the video.
- Consider the way the information is shared, in multiple forms. Have someone that is not familiar or not as familiar review it or try to use it. People value being listened to about their concerns or problems. Face to face is great as well. Some groups are not as good with morning or for that matter communicating, so HIRTA needs to reach out in multiple ways.
- Respondent suggested that HIRTA work with ASSET agencies to distribute HIRTA's annual survey. Agencies could help them get the feedback. The shorter and simpler the more likely people are able to do it. Provide a comment section and a place for people to put name and phone number. Then you could look back at the records and open up dialog for that customer. Respondent really emphasized that HIRTA needs to look at variety of ways to communicate. Cell phones are a new way to reach people. Texting is very good too...

- She likes the idea of a dedicated phone line for agencies. She also liked the idea of having a wheel chair on every bus.
- Ask the bus drivers what issues they need help with to do their job better.
- If you have to have assistance in your home, you should probably have a person with you on the bus. Or they should be connected with other resources to help them being able to get places. Timely is important as well as a safe ride, so they need to address the difficult customers. HIRTA needs to document difficult riders. Like a safety contract that NAMI has with its clients.

**Email #1 –**

They come to early sometimes and later sometimes and when they say don't run in Nevada after 5:00 pm and I have seen them in Nevada after 5:00 pm and not running in Nevada on Saturday and Sunday

**Email #2 –**

Dear Whom it may concern

I believe there needs to be inexpensive way for someone to go from Ames to Des Moines a few times a week. The only service that I know that goes from Ames to Des Moines in the Executive Express which is very costly for someone on a fixed income. I also believe that the Hirta office needs to have a location in Story county. I also feel that the dispatcher from Hirta needs to be more familiar with Story county. There have been times during my exxperiance that drivers have a hard time finding locations throughout Story county. I also have had experiances with Hirta that their drivers will make me late to my appointment. I have also had experiances with Hirta where it takes them awhile to pick me up from the appointment. I have also had some experiances where it is very hard to get a hold of their office when someone has a problem with their services. I have also had experiances with Hirta where my ride to Ames and Des Moines wasn't the same as other riders. I believe Hirta should hire more drivers to make sure that they can meet the demands of their ridership. Thanks for reading all my input on this matter.

**Email #3 –**

We would like to see some free non-permanent passes available to those who have very little or no income.

We will give you an example. We have been involved with a single mom for a few years who has bad health and after several attempts over a period of years finally got disability. During this time she was unable to work and had very little income. We and others provided transportation and quite often money for food. She could not afford to pay for buses.

It could be a 6 month pass rather than permanent because situations change for people.

We know of no simple way of knowing who those people are but it is definitely a need.

**Email #4 –**

I live south of Ames in the country. I do not start as early as the first bus that I would have to catch. I do not drive. I have not been able to make HIRTA work for my doctor appointments.

**Email #5 –**

Public Input:

First of all, thank you to the City of Ames, Story County, and partner agencies for their efforts to develop the draft plan *Demand Response Public Transit Service Action Plan for Story County* and for their openness to stakeholder input. Affordable and accessible public transportation options in Story County are critical!

Second, I would like to identify a present gap in public transportation. (Perhaps it is a gap of which you are already aware? I have communicated previously with the Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees and worked with RSVP to offer stop-gap transportation.)

I coordinate DMACC's Ames Adult Education & Literacy program. Our program offers free high-school equivalency classes (HiSET, formerly called "GED") and non-credit English-as-a-Second-Language classes during day and evening hours. As of summer 2014, all of our classes are offered at the DMACC Hunziker Center. Starting on January 20, 2015, we also will be offering High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) finals at the DMACC Hunziker Center testing center on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

Many of our students rely heavily on public transportation. However, at present, many struggle to get to and from DMACC Hunziker. CyRide #4 (Gray route) does not run to DMACC mid-day at all. In fact, there is a gap from 10:28 am until 2:51 pm. Furthermore, CyRide does not have any evening service to DMACC Hunziker, with the last bus passing by at 4:51 pm. We have referred students to HIRTA; while some do ride HIRTA, the driver-shortage has meant that others were unable to secure regular or timely transportation this fall. As a result, we also referred students to RSVP Transportation. We were very grateful to Arti Sanghi and the RSVP volunteers for transporting several of our students this fall. Yet, we know that they, too, face a driver shortage, particularly during the winter months.

In closing, I welcome your draft plan that clearly seeks to improve public transportation options in Ames and Story County more broadly. I am hopeful that these proposed solutions will make it easier for current Adult Education & Literacy students – and prospective students who rely on public transportation – to participate in our program.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please let me know. Furthermore, if it would be helpful, I would be happy to be involved in any subsequent discussions or partnership meetings.

## APPENDIX H

Page 1

**FINAL**

### Demand Response Public Transit Service Action Plan for Story County

**Goal: Improve transportation efficiency and effectiveness of demand response public transit service through enhanced communication and relationships across partners as well as improved transportation infrastructure.**

Action #	Category or Theme	Solutions	Action*	Organization Responsibility and Resources	Transportation Responsibility and Resources	Government Responsibility and Resources
<b>Community Partnerships</b>						
1	I	Explore more effective short term and long term solutions for the use of resources with partners (i.e. ISU, taxi's, assisted living facility and agency/organization vehicles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule a meeting with human service agencies/ organizations and transportation providers to discuss current gaps and capacity in transportation services</li> <li>Complete a trial period for group's recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide appropriate staff to attend meeting(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide appropriate staff to attend meeting(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule meeting and provide staff support for discussions</li> </ul>
2	A	Mutually agree that transportation is a partnership and everyone will work collaboratively together to resolve issues	All members will agree to move forward in a positive manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate human service agency/organization staff on discussions and communication plan for the future</li> <li>Mutually agree upon definition of who is responsible for passengers and when</li> <li>Provide caregiver with HIRTA contact information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate HIRTA staff on discussions and communication plan for the future</li> <li>Mutually agree upon definition of who is responsible for passengers and when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include and hold all parties accountable to agreement</li> </ul>

\* Timelines for each action will be developed by subcommittees charged with implementing the action

NL - Legally not able to accommodate

A - Can be accommodated within current charge/budget

I - Improvements that are above current charge/budget

HIRTA – Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency

Action #	Category or Theme	Solutions	Action*	Organization Responsibility and Resources	Transportation Responsibility and Resources	Government Responsibility and Resources
Community Partnerships						
3	A	All partners hold each other to the same expectations for a mutually beneficial relationship	Set a meeting to establish joint expectations that will allow for timely service and/or implement communication plan, if appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set policies such as: Get passengers to door of facility 10 mins. prior to pick-up time</li> <li>Educate passengers/caregivers on need for timeliness</li> <li>Educate staff on appropriate door to pick up passengers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set policies such as: Call passenger/care-giver/program director if bus will be more than 10 mins. late</li> <li>Pick-up/drop off passengers at appropriate door</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate meeting</li> </ul>
4	A	Involve all partners upfront in program development	Establish a formal communications process to discuss human service agency/organization policy/program changes at the planning stage, that will impact transportation needs of passengers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify policy/program changes that may have an impact on transportation</li> <li>Establish a meeting between agency/organization/ transportation provider to address issue</li> <li>Human Service Council will provide an update at least annually on transportation issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willingness to work with human service agency/organizations, to the greatest extent possible, to meet the needs of passengers at their programs</li> </ul>	None

\* Timelines for each action will be developed by subcommittees charged with implementing the action

NL - Legally not able to accommodate

A - Can be accommodated within current charge/budget

I - Improvements that are above current charge/budget

HIRTA – Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency

Action #	Category or Theme	Solutions	Action*	Organization Responsibility and Resources	Transportation Responsibility and Resources	Government Responsibility and Resources
Infrastructure Improvements						
5	I	Improve physical condition of buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate HIRTA's plan to update buses to partners</li> <li>Develop grass root support for an adequately-funded bus replacement program</li> <li>Determine if newer, used buses are available for purchase to reduce their fleet age</li> <li>If feasible, develop a used bus purchasing program for vehicles outside of Iowa to systematically improve fleet conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share with local, state and federal officials, the need for funding a bus replacement program and how this could impact their human service agency/organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share with local, state and federal officials, the need for funding a bus replacement program and how this impacts their passengers</li> <li>Research the market to determine if used buses, similar to its current bus fleet, are available from non-Iowa systems</li> <li>If feasible, work with HIRTA Board to develop a plan incorporating used buses into the fleet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share with local, state and federal officials, the need for funding a bus replacement program and how this could impact their city/county</li> </ul>
6	I	Incorporate enhanced technology in buses/vans for safety and passenger satisfaction	Research need for and cost of equipping all Story County buses with communication and safety technology	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide research and cost estimate to funding agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be open to discussions regarding funding increases that allow HIRTA to implement technology</li> </ul>

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HIRTA – Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency



Action #	Category or Theme	Solutions	Action*	Organization Responsibility and Resources	Transportation Responsibility and Resources	Government Responsibility and Resources
<b>Infrastructure Improvements</b>						
7	I	Employ and retain staff/drivers	Identify creative approaches to fully staff (employ and retain) its driver positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist transportation providers in marketing open positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate human service agency/organizations on driving qualifications</li> <li>Provide copies of job description to agency/organizations</li> <li>With HIRTA Board direction, identify strategies to fully staff (employ and retain) drivers and engage partners as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be open to discussions regarding funding increases that allow HIRTA to attract drivers/staff</li> </ul>
8	I	Explore the possibility of having a wheelchair on every bus	Complete an analysis of if/how wheelchairs can be purchased and secured on each vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If feasible, help develop a plan and identify resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If feasible, implement driver training and secure equipment on vehicle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be open to discussions regarding funding for this program</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Modifications for HIRTA</b>						
9	A or I	Implement a process improvement program and make changes as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the systems to be reviewed</li> <li>Report to HIRTA board at completion of changes, with copies to funding agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide suggestions on system changes that would benefit agency/organization passengers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop system changes, monitor perform. and adjust policies to meet desired service level</li> <li>Annually report to partners any process improvements implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review report to HIRTA Board</li> </ul>

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Internal Modifications for HIRTA						
10	A	Set and monitor performance standards	Develop a report and standards for system performance, such as average length of telephone calls, average hold time, email response time and establish a formal, written complaint system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agencies/organizations help transportation provider adhere to standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop report and standards</li> <li>Provide copies of report to funding agencies</li> <li>Modify policies when there is a pattern of standard not being met</li> <li>Annually report to partners on actual performance and updated standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review performance report</li> </ul>
11	A	Provide a person to address passenger's failed trip needs	Better utilize the Mobility Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report when passengers needs are not met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to decrease failed trips</li> </ul>	None
12	I	Dedicate a telephone line for the agencies/organizations to contact that would have direct access to a staff person for immediate concerns	Modify the telephone system to accommodate additional line and develop internal structure to answer in a timely manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate staff on HIRTA contact information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new phone line and dedicate staff to respond in a timely manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support this modification by providing funding to implement this change</li> </ul>
13	I	Improved efficiencies in telephone and email system for passengers	Examine current systems for improvement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage passengers to communicate with HIRTA on challenges with the current system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modify systems as appropriate</li> </ul>	None

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Internal Modifications for HIRTA						
14	I	Increase use of personal care attendants/ride-a-longs with passengers	Identify a support system of personal care attendants/ride-a-longs that can ride with passengers who are unable to be responsible for their safety & comfort during their transit trip; identify cost for program i.e. explore who could be volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with government agencies to develop a system of personal care attendants/ride-a-longs for individuals unable to be responsible for themselves during transit trip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the personal care attendant/ride-a-long process that is developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in the process as necessary</li> </ul>
15	A	Provide training on passenger context/needs for HIRTA staff and drivers	Review current HIRTA staff training and develop systems to “fill in the gaps” so that HIRTA staff provide polite and passenger-focused transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with HIRTA to understand current training programs</li> <li>Provide input on other resources available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review training opportunities concerning issues expressed by the task force</li> <li>Implement additional training, if deemed appropriate by the HIRTA Board including agency/organization resources</li> </ul>	None
16	A	Set and monitor passenger standards	Develop a system to classify appropriate response to passenger behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist HIRTA to classify passengers as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement passenger standards</li> </ul>	None

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<b>Internal Modifications for HIRTA</b>						
17	A	Establish method(s) to provide drivers/staff with additional information regarding passenger needs so that their trip is enjoyable and safety is enhanced	By _____, review current software program to determine if additional information could be accommodated within role/context of HIRTA/personal care attendant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide HIRTA with a list of information that would assist in passenger's transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review liability issues to determine what types of information HIRTA can/should be responsible for</li> <li>Work with HIRTA board to balance human service agency/organization desires and liability concerns</li> <li>Develop a referral form with basic passenger need information that can be easily updated</li> </ul>	None
18	I	Localized reservation system	Determine whether reservations for Story County could move from Urbandale to Ames	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the feasibility of moving reservation process to Story County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be open to discussions regarding funding of this change</li> </ul>
<b>Partner Role Clarity</b>						
19	I	Develop a Passenger and Caregiver User's Guide for use to establish expectations, educate passengers and passenger families on transportation services	Develop a written document that identifies policies, expectations, rider tips, contact information, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review document for clarity, concerns from the agency/organization's perspective, etc.</li> <li>Share with passengers/caregivers</li> <li>Implement a "Do You Need To Ride" campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practices</li> <li>Develop the documents</li> <li>Distribute to all passengers and agencies/organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist with researching ways to fund printing of the document</li> </ul>

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<b>Partner Role Clarity</b>						
20	A	Share information on federal law interpretation related to transportation/passenger relationship (i.e. funding requiring community inclusion of passengers)	Annually, the Transportation Collaboration Committee will hold a meeting on transportation program changes with agencies/organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send appropriate staff to the meeting</li> <li>Adjust agency/organization's program to allow for changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist government representatives with how regulations impact HIRTA service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of regulation changes that affect passenger transportation</li> </ul>
21	A	Discuss and solve issues at the grass roots level with the people directly involved in the issues	Mutually agree to respect the chain of command in respective agencies/organizations and resolve issues at the lowest level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When issues arise, direct staff on who and how to address concerns</li> <li>Only involve outside agencies/elected officials when resolution is not possible at the grass roots level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat agency/organization staff with respect, patience and in a timely manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer concerns to appropriate staff to resolve issues</li> </ul>
22	A	Discuss and solve issues at the management level with managers that are directly involved in the actions	Meet to resolve issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send the appropriate managers to the meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send the appropriate managers to the meeting</li> </ul>	None
<b>Service Improvement</b>						
23	I	Dedicate one bus each day (unscheduled) to address unforeseen operational issues to ensure smooth operation of service	Hire adequate driving staff and secure a vehicle to implement service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help generate revenue or other resources to support operation of the bus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide funding agencies with a cost estimate to provide additional service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be open to discussions regarding funding increases that allow HIRTA to add a bus</li> </ul>

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