

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: HIRTA ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING**

**BACKGROUND:**

At the March 3, 2015 City Council meeting, City Council received the final report outlining the Ames Demand Response Service Discussion. This process identified 23 actions that HIRTA—the demand response transportation service provider for Story County—could pursue to improve service delivery in the Ames/Story County area.

During that meeting, City staff noted that the task force had identified four priority action steps, and that the next step would be developing an action plan to implement those four action steps. These priority action steps are as follows:

- Mutually agree that transportation is a partnership and everyone will work collaboratively to resolve issues
- Incorporate enhanced technology in buses/vans for safety and passenger satisfaction
- Employ and retain staff/drivers
- Improve efficiencies in telephone and email system for passengers

The task force group is prepared to initiate the next phase of this process, which is to develop a plan to implement these action steps. Since the original scope of the facilitator arrangement has been fulfilled, the task force facilitator has developed a proposal to see the development of the action plan for these priority items through to completion. This involves a series of four task force meetings from April through September, with solutions presented back to the County, HIRTA Board, and City Council in October. The facilitator proposes 30 hours of time for preparation, meeting time, and follow-up for the four meetings, at a rate of \$100 per hour, for a total of \$3,000. This cost would be split equally between the City and Story County (\$1,500 each).

The City Council has already spent \$1,250 for the facilitator to guide the development of the initial report. City staff proposes that, like the initial facilitator funding, the \$1,500 could be taken from the Local Option Sales Tax fund balance. The justification for this in the previous round of facilitation was that in the last fiscal year, \$43,700 in allocated ASSET funds were not drawn down from that fund.

The Story County Board of Supervisors is considering this request on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, no details about the County's contribution to this process are available as of the time of this writing.

There was lengthy discussion regarding whether the initial meetings should be open to the public. The City Council should note that since the conversation has turned from specific cases and challenges to action steps and improvements, the four proposed action plan development meetings are anticipated to be open to the public, should any member of the public be interested in attending.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Allocate up to \$1,500 from the Local Option Sales Tax fund balance to support facilitating the development of action plans for the four priority steps indicated in the initial Demand Response Services report. This action would be contingent on Story County providing an equal contribution.
2. Do not approve funding to facilitate development of action plans for these four priority steps.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The initial Demand Response Service discussions were helpful to clarify the challenges faced by users, human services agencies, and the service provider. Now that these challenges have been identified and categorized, work remains to establish how they will be carried out. This component is critical to ensure that HIRTA and the other responsible organizations can undertake the changes needed to improve service to all users.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.