

**All County Annual Transit Action Group (TAG) Agenda
Wednesday – December 2, 2020 – 11am-1pm
Zoom Meeting**

Meeting Minutes

Present: Margee Woywood (Goodwill Industries), Salley Davies (Clover Ridge Place), Dan McDonald (GDDC), Ann Morris (Crescent Community Healthcare Center), Jacob Ironside (City of Dbq Jule Transit), Katie Alshouse (Penn Center), Peggy Petlon (Delaware Community Services/MHDS), Shirley Helmrichs (Delaware County Board of Supervisors), Kristen Rickey (Super WDCCSD), Michelle Schmitt (Hills & Dales), Mike Steines (Jackson County Board of Supervisors), Ronelle Clark (ONV), Stephanie Sagers (Jackson County Economic Alliance), Ted Strait (Maquoketa Farmers Market), Dave Baker (Dbq County Supervisor), Tom Meyer (Bellevue CSD), Rob Busch (EDCO CSD), Donna Boss (Delaware Economic Development), Bill Stumpf (Parent Advocate), Mindy Meyers (EIRHA), Carolyn Schaefer (ITP), Paula Paider-Licht (United Way), Charity Loecke (Delaware County Public Health), Carol Gebhart (Opening Doors), Greg Zars (NEIAAA), Russ Stecklein (City of Dbq Jule Transit), Jodi Burgin (Delaware RMC), Sreeparna Mitra (IDOT), Kristin Haar (IDOT), Chris Fee (Easton Valley CSD), Chris Hoover (Maquoketa CSD), Stacie Speirs (NEIAAA), Jack Willey (Jackson County Board of Supervisors), Larry McDevitt (Jackson County Board of Supervisors), Tricia Wagner (RTA), Chandra Ravada (RTA)

Welcome & Introductions/Attendance

Delaware County TAG Update, Peggy Petlon, Chair: The Delaware County Connections committee was formed with RTA to secure an FTA grant, awarded in 2017. Committee made up of many city and county representatives, Shirley Helmrichs was instrumental in getting this off the ground. The committee identified a transportation gap for rural residents needing to get to wellness appointments and activities. The grant funding paid for a new van and for the development of a volunteer driver program. 2020 put a damper on the volunteer program, hoping that we can rebuild this in 2021. The gap funding from the County to reduce rates was really needed, as many people couldn't afford the rate before. The continuation of this will be key to the success of the Delaware County Connections program. Those who don't qualify for the United Way vouchers, still find the regular rates cost prohibitive. The free and reduced rates make the RTA affordable for everyone. In response to COVID, members of the Delaware TAG committee connected the RTA with a newly created non-profit, Pay it Forward. Pay it Forward volunteers coordinate online grocery orders at Fareway and refer their clients to RTA to take them to Fareway for curb side pick-up. The committee plans to discuss some new services, such as Farmers Market in Manchester on Saturday mornings and in Hopkinton on Thursday afternoons May-Oct

2021. TAG will identify local funding options to support these new services, and support the RTA on the funding applications. Donna Boss, Vice Chair for Delaware TAG; worked together to help a family get their young children to school in West Delaware SD, utilizing the United Way Vouchers and RTA services.

Jackson County TAG Update, Ronelle Clark, Chair: spent a good part of the 2020 quarterly meetings forming the Technical TAG Committee; very close to finalizing the membership, and just need a member from the Jackson County Regional Health Center, and the Jackson County Senior Center. TAG has continued promoting and distributing the United Way Rides for Wellness Vouchers to those who qualify. TAG members helped to really promote the RTA's free and reduced rates. Really saw an increase in general public rides as a result, including parents scheduling free trips for their children over the summer and hope this wonderful program continues. TAG provided support for the AIM Challenge Grant and provided feedback and suggestions for the scope of the Coordination Project it is funding, and will continue to offer our assistance as the technology is developed. TAG wantw to educate the community that RTA is for everybody, so the plan is to create a You Tube video that shows people of different ages and abilities getting on the bus, and interview dispatchers, drivers and riders. Ted Strait spearheaded the Free Rides to Farmers Market for low-income residents, and created a special space at market for those using the RTA (public transportation).

Dubuque County Update, Michelle Schmitt, Chair: Much of 2020 was spent forming the Technical TAG Committee; still finalizing things. We are looking to recruit representatives from the county, outside of Dubuque city limits such as Peosta or Farley. Also want to add a member from the area hospitals; possibly someone from Dialysis. Dbq TAG Vice Chair is Bill Stumpf. Members have been promoting and distributing the United Way Rides for Wellness Vouchers to those who qualify and promoting the RTA's free and reduced rates to families. Dubuque has seen an increase in general public rides as a result, particularly with parents scheduling trips for their children from childcare to school and back. If this was not free or at a reduced cost not sure if families would continue to use this service as this may be a financial barrier for them. TAG provided support for the AIM Challenge Grant and gave input on what the scope of the Coordination Project should look like. Committee's goal in 2021 is to identify and fill transportation gaps that exist in the areas outside of the Dubuque city limits, by creating surveys and sub committees to help find pockets of people who are in need of transportation; elderly, low-income, Marshallese community, etc. and also to find potential need for rural residents to get to Dubuque Famers Market. The potential for continued County Funding for free and reduced rates will be key in making these new services possible.

Special Guest, IDOT Sree Mitra, Transit Program Manager/Grant Program Administrator: Sree manages funding programs for Federal and State. Develops the transit portion of the

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and manages the Disadvantage Business Program as well as asset management and prioritization process for funding vehicles.

Special Guest, IDOT Kristin Haar, Compliance and Training Officer/Interim Mobility & Transit Administrator: Main role is compliance and training, but also Transportation Coordination Council Chair at state level; works with Department on Aging, Department of Human Services and so forth that come together to talk about statewide transportation needs, similar to a state-wide TAG. Also filling in for Jeremy Johnson Miller as statewide mobility coordinator. Ridership dropped by 20% on average statewide in FY 20. Areas that lost the most were group homes, sheltered workshops, medical and non-essential trips. Suggested TAG looks at what they're doing at the federal level, the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility is sort of the federal level TAG. High level US departments; US Dept of Transportation, HHS, Veterans Affairs etc. all getting together to discuss transportation funding and barriers. They really picked up this past year after being somewhat dormant; created Federal Fund Rating Guide; shows 130 human services transportation funding sources that Feds offer to transit systems; can use to get around the not being able to use federal to match federal funds issue. Have published several reports (sometime around June 2020) that we should take a look at. Kristin will send Tricia the link. Jeremy Johnson Miller is also a good resource for us at his new role at a national level with NADTC.

Guest Speakers, Stacie Speirs & Greg Zars, NEIAAA: one of about 650 area agencies across the county as a network covering every county. NEIAAA covers 18 counties in northeast Iowa. Work with the area transit agencies who offer paratransit. Mostly federally funded. Also offer many other services for older adults, including case management and services for care givers as well. Eligibility is age 60 plus, donation basis. Will not provide services to a member on elderly waiver that MCO's already pay for however. COVID impacting members because they are lonely, missing their loved ones and social interaction. Offering online services and also purchased some devices for members to interact and bridge that technology gap; very simple to use, no internet connection required, uses cellular and sits in a cradle so easy to use, and has really loud speakers. Expanded meal offerings, partnered with RTA to deliver frozen meals in all three counties. Staff are making weekly check in calls with every member. RTA and NEIAAA have worked together to simplify and streamline the intake process. Also partnered with Mom's Meals which allowed them to serve every address in their region for the first time.

RTA Technical TAG Member Appreciation:

Thank *all* of the TAG members for your willingness to be actively involved in the Technical Committee and helping to shape the future of the RTA in your communities. Everyone has been so great about promoting the RTA and sharing out flyers and emails. Just a few examples;

- Stephanie Sagers blasted the Free & Reduced Rates flyer to every contact she has, and she has a LOT! And she, Lynn Bopes and Mike Steines were wonderful about recruiting additional members for the committee.
- Michelle Huseman and Mindy Meyers both sent out flyers on the United Way Rides for Wellness Vouchers and the Free & Reduced rates flyers, in their monthly mailers to their tenants. They also posted the tear off versions in their lobbies.
- Ted Strait spearheaded the Maquoketa Famers Market project, connecting RTA with funding opportunities and promoting the service on KMAQ's Just Talk radio show, and hanging posters and sharing flyers.
- Donna Boss, Peggy Petlon and Shirley Helmricks promoted RTA on KMCH Guest of the Day and shared the Free & Reduced Rates flyers, not to mention they are continuously connecting people with the United Way Rides for Wellness Vouchers. All three of them represented at the Manchester meal site along with a volunteer driver and the Delaware County Connections van, to create awareness.
- Michelle Schmitt mailed the Free & Reduced rates flyers to all of the families their childcare center serves.
- Ann Morris handed out the Free & Reduced rates flyers to their patients.
- The list goes on and on! Thank you to those who have stepped into the roles of Chair and Vice Chair;
 - Dbq - C Michelle Schmitt and VC Bill Stumpf
 - Delaware – C Peggy Petlon and VC Donna Boss
 - Jackson – C Ronelle Clark and VC tbd

Thank you all, your dedication is greatly appreciated!

Next meeting: Quarterly Meetings by County beginning February, 2021