

Passenger Transportation Plan

FY 2012 Annual Update



Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority

Black Hawk County Metropolitan Area
Transportation Policy Board

Prepared by the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
May 1, 2011

**RESOLUTION OF THE BLACK HAWK COUNTY METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD**

WHEREAS, the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Area Transportation Policy Board has been designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Black Hawk County urbanized area, and

WHEREAS, the Policy Board in cooperation with the state is conducting a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process pursuant to 23 CFR 450.114 (c), and

WHEREAS, the FY 2012 Annual Update of the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is a product of this on-going planning process, and

WHEREAS, the Policy Board has included the open participation of the general public in the development of the PTP in conformance with the Board's approved Public Participation Plan, and

WHEREAS, the PTP was developed as a result of, and in accordance with, the passenger transportation planning process set forth by the Iowa Department of Transportation,


NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Area Transportation Policy Board hereby approves the final FY 2012 Annual Update to the Passenger Transportation Plan.

Passed and adopted this 10th day of March, 2011.



John Miller, Chair

ATTEST:



Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Director of Transportation & Data Services

**RESOLUTION OF THE
IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has been designated as the Regional Planning Affiliation for Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties, and

WHEREAS, the RTA in cooperation with the state is conducting a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process pursuant to 23 CFR 450.114 (c), and

WHEREAS, the FY 2012 Annual Update of the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is a product of this on-going planning process, and

WHEREAS, the RTA has included the open participation of the general public in the development of the PTP in conformance with the RTA's approved Public Participation Plan, and

WHEREAS, the PTP was developed as a result of, and in accordance with, the passenger transportation planning process set forth by the Iowa Department of Transportation,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority hereby approves the final FY 2012 Annual Update to the Passenger Transportation Plan.

Passed and adopted this 20th day of April, 2011.



Stanley Perkins, Chair

ATTEST:



Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Director of Transportation & Data Services

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The preparation of this document was financed in part through federal funding provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and/or the Federal Transit Administration.

Background

This document is the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 update to the *2010-2013 Passenger Transportation Development Plan* (PTP), which was finalized on May 1, 2009. The PTP will be referenced throughout the document. It can be viewed online at http://www.inrcog.org/pdf/Final_10-13_PTDP.pdf. Last year's document, the FY 2011 Annual Update, will also be referenced. It can be viewed online at <http://www.inrcog.org/pdf/FY2011PTP.pdf>.

As discussed on page 2 of the PTP, this planning process has been required by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) as a method to incorporate federal regulations for coordinated planning with local decisions regarding passenger transportation. As such, it has been a work in progress, as guidelines have evolved over the past few years. Providing that a planning agency's PTP meets the criteria outlined in the Iowa DOT's guidance, a full update of the document is only required every five years. In between full updates, an annual update of coordination efforts and the status of projects is required. This FY 2012 annual update will outline coordination efforts and public input from the past year, the status of projects recommended in the PTP, and an update of projects recommended in the next four fiscal years.

Public Input and Coordination Efforts

This section briefly reviews prior public input and results of that input. These topics are outlined fully in the PTP. This section also discusses public input from the past year, specific meetings that involved discussions of the PTP and coordination efforts, and recent developments related to coordination.

Review of Prior Public Input

Public input regarding passenger transportation has been gathered in a variety of ways in the past few years. Since 2006, a Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) has met to discuss projects and issues. As discussed on page 5 of the PTP, the TAC consists of transit users, human service organizations, representatives of local governments, and transportation providers. The TAC is the main sounding board for passenger transportation planning issues, and has played an integral role in the development of the PTP. In addition to the TAC, a Transit Providers group, which includes the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Black Hawk County (MET), the Regional Transit Commission (RTC), and Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI) meets monthly to discuss coordination issues. Also, MET and RTC each have Advisory Committees that meet regularly.

Input from throughout the region has been received through provider fact sheets, which were sent out each year from 2007-2009 in an attempt to gather information from potential service providers such as hours of operation and types of vehicles used. Pages 8-21 of the PTP discuss these efforts. The data gathered through the fact sheets showed that there are many agencies in the region that are involved with passenger transportation in some manner, such as providing service, helping fund it, or advocating for it. Service needs that were emphasized in

survey results include a lack of service on weekends and the difficulty of many agencies in providing affordable transportation services.

Surveys and public meetings have also been utilized to obtain public input on transit services, as discussed on pages 29-30 of the PTP. In 2006, students from Wartburg College in Waverly conducted a survey of residents and businesses, which resulted in recommendations to fund new transit service in Waverly. In 2008, three public meetings were held in conjunction with the update of the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Area's *Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP). While these meetings dealt with all modes of transportation, the most comments were received regarding MET's service. Comments focused on the need for increased evening and weekend service, bike racks on buses, and more bus shelters. An online survey conducted for the LRTP also resulted in many comments related to public transit.

A unique form of public input came through the *Iowa Passenger Transportation Funding Study* that was completed in 2009. This study gathered input through public meetings around the state, including one in Waterloo. There were a variety of needs identified through these meetings, including inadequate funding, the need for more service in terms of hours, frequency, and routes, the need for more intercity service, and the need for more education and marketing of passenger transportation services. These are all needs that have been echoed through local public input.

Results of Prior Public Input

In response to public input and identified needs, several initiatives have occurred in the past few years. With the high demand for weekend service, MET extended its Saturday service to start two hours earlier. MET also installed bike racks on all of its buses to help meet rider demand. In response to the Waverly study, RTC has attempted to utilize New Freedom funding to expand the service available in Waverly. Unfortunately, this service was not successful. Another service that was identified as a need but was not successful was an RTC route from Hudson into the metropolitan area. This route was attempted in early 2009, but had few riders. RTC would still try to offer the service if requested.

Public Input and Coordination Efforts in FY 2011

The majority of public input in the past year has come through meetings of the groups discussed above, as well as instances where MET or RTC met with local governments or human service agencies. Provider fact sheets were not sent out as they were distributed three years in a row with mostly the same organizations responding each year.

A new coordination effort that has been underway the past year involves the Bremer County Accessible Transportation Coalition (BCATC). This group includes community members and entities such as RTC, the City of Waverly, Bremer County, the Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging, and the United Way. The vision statement for this initiative is "to develop and promote an affordable, flexible, reliable, inclusive transportation system that meets the needs of Bremer Co. residents." The focus areas for the coalition include conducting a needs assessment for the county, looking for funding sources, and increasing the accessibility and affordability of

transportation options. RTC has participated in the BCATC meetings, and did gain a rider through one of the group's public hearings. RTC has also been working with a group of churches in Waverly that are trying to determine how to transport individuals to community meals.

One other form of public input specific to the Waverly area came through an online survey administered for Waverly's Comprehensive Plan update. This survey was available during December, 2010 and January, 2011, and generated 228 responses. One of the questions in the transportation section asked what types of public transportation improvements are needed in Waverly. Many comments related to the need for improved transportation for the elderly. There were also several suggestions of some type of loop or route that would traverse the main commercial areas of town, as well as the potential for college students to utilize some type of transit service. There were also quite a few comments about the need for a taxi service. Another question on the survey asked what the survey taker's awareness of RTC was. While over half the respondents were aware of what RTC is, 43% responded by stating that they did not know what RTC is. This shows the need to improve and increase marketing in the region, which is discussed further later.

The most recent public input and coordination efforts in the region have come from several key meetings utilized to discuss the PTP process and coordination efforts. On December 16, 2010, the PTP was included as an agenda item for the RTC Advisory Committee meeting. The Transit Providers group spent a portion of two meetings discussing the PTP in addition to ongoing coordination issues. These meetings occurred on December 17, 2010, and January 20, 2011.

The Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) met on January 20, 2011 to discuss coordination efforts and projects (meeting minutes are attached as *Appendix 1* at the end of this document). Representatives from the following organizations were present: MET, RTC, INRCOG, North Star Community Services, Butler County, Grundy County, Black Hawk County Community Services, EPI, Cedar Valley United Way, Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging, and Goodwill of Northeast Iowa. The meeting was very well attended, and there was a good discussion of the projects from the PTP and what resulted in them being successful or unsuccessful, as well as other coordination activities and opportunities in the region. The TAC ultimately affirmed the projects to be included in this annual update.

Other FY 2011 Developments

The needs identified in the PTP have largely remained the same over the past year. There have not been significant demographic shifts or changes in the locations and user groups most in need of transportation services. At the direction of Iowa DOT, MET and RTC have formulated a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Analysis, which is included as *Appendix 2*. The aim of the LEP analysis is to help identify where LEP populations may be in the region, and how to better serve them.

Outlined below are the main developments related to passenger transportation in the region in FY 2011. These include an effort by RTC to expand service, as well as a couple of ongoing

coordination challenges that MET and RTC have been dealing with. In addition, the new Medicaid Brokerage system has had an effect on local transportation providers.

Waverly and Independence are the largest cities in RTC's service area, and additional service has been a known need for both communities. RTC has traditionally had two buses based in each city. RTC has attempted to utilize New Freedom funding to extend service in Independence and Waverly the past few years, but has been unable to get the project going. This is due to several factors, including difficulties maintaining drivers, and the issue that the new service only spread existing riders out over the extended hours – it did not add new riders. The challenges associated with New Freedom funding, including its reimbursement basis and the increased administration and operating costs associated with it, have also prevented that service from being successful. RTC decided to try to increase service without using New Freedom funding, and has recently added a third bus to each city. The new bus in Waverly will help take stress off the other Waverly buses and be able to better accommodate North Star Community Services trips. The additional service will also enable a bus to travel to the Waterloo area a couple times a week. The new bus in Independence will be a Monday-Wednesday-Friday route focused on dialysis. This will help free up the other buses to better serve Independence and Buchanan County.

A coordination challenge for the region has involved the creation of a mobility manager/marketing position. In April 2009, a Special Project grant request was made to the Iowa DOT's Office of Public Transit (OPT) to help fund a mobility manager/marketing position, which was a top priority for the TAC, as outlined in the PTP (pages 41-42, 68). The grant was anticipated to pay 80 percent of the cost of the position for the first year, with a 20 percent local match. The application was approved, however, the OPT would not allow grant funds to be used for administrative costs, making the local match of the grant approximately 50 percent of the cost. This amount of funding was not available in MET and RTC's budgets. As a result, this position has not been created. Recently, OPT has set aside a portion of New Freedom funding for these types of positions, and has suggested that the funding could be utilized for administrative costs. A mobility manager/marketing position is still considered a need for the region, and RTC and MET may apply for funding for such a position at some point in time. However, it was decided at the TAC meeting not to pursue funding for the position at this time. Reasons for this include the challenges of New Freedom funding (such as the fact that it is a reimbursement program), uncertainty of what exactly that funding can pay for, and the experiences of other agencies who have hired mobility managers and had less than optimal outcomes.

A coordination issue which had a successful outcome this past year involved the painting of EPI buses to match RTC's color scheme. As discussed in last year's PTP update, RTC and EPI have a history of coordinating service, with EPI contracting through RTC and RTC handling the waivers and billings for EPI. The issue was that some of EPI's buses were yellow school buses. The Iowa DOT requires that RTC signage be on all contracted buses. The Iowa Department of Education (DOE) does not allow such signage on yellow school buses. To resolve this issue RTC asked for, and received, a Special Project grant for the painting of EPI's buses to match RTC's color

scheme. Twelve buses were painted, and this should ensure that RTC and EPI are able to continue their coordination.

A development this year that has affected both MET and RTC has been the Medicaid Brokerage, run by TMS Management Group. TMS handles transportation coordination for individuals with Medicaid insurance, and RTC and MET contract with TMS for the rides they are able to provide. While the new system has been working well for some agencies, RTC has found it to be challenging, as the rides that have come out of it have often been too expensive to provide. Both MET and RTC hope that this system will be a positive development, and that Medicaid individuals will be able to receive the transportation they need.

Current Projects

Projects that were recommended in the *FY 2011 PTP Annual Update* are discussed below. Please refer to the PTP and the FY 2011 update for original project descriptions. This section will detail what has happened with each project in the past year and whether it remains a need. A summary table is provided at the end of this section.

The projects listed below were recommended for FY 2011.

- ◆ **MET JARC Route** – This project was funded for FY 2011. MET has applied annually for JARC funding for Route 9, which is in Cedar Falls. This route connects many residential and employment areas and the University of Northern Iowa. This route has continued to see large increases in ridership, and remains one of MET’s top performing routes. MET will be reapplying for JARC funding for FY 2012 in order to keep this important service going.
- ◆ **Prime Time Pass – JARC** – This project was funded for FY 2011. Prime Time Pass remains an important service in the metropolitan area, as it enables people to get to and from work outside of MET’s service hours. MET will be reapplying for JARC funding for FY 2012 to ensure that this program continues to serve workers of second and third shifts.
- ◆ **MET Ambassador Program** – MET and the Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging (HVAAA) had planned to develop this program, which would involve training seniors on how to ride MET’s system. These individuals could then train others on how to ride the bus. For now the project is on hold; it was thought that the new marketing person could spearhead this, but that position has not been created. There were also plans to utilize RTC’s Hudson route as an opportunity for this type of training, but that route did not get off the ground. This will remain as a potential project for the future, as education for riders who are new to transit is a recognized need.

- ◆ **RTC Expanded Service in Waverly and Independence – New Freedom** – RTC has asked for New Freedom funding in the past several years for this service but has been unable to utilize the funding. The service that was implemented seemed to spread ridership out over more hours, but not increase ridership itself. Rather than try to utilize New Freedom funding, RTC has created two new routes that are increasing ridership. One is a dialysis route in Independence which runs Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. This takes pressure off the other Independence buses and enables them to better serve the city and the rest of Buchanan County. The other new route is in Waverly and helps cover the city and Bremer and Butler Counties. One of the Waverly buses also comes to Waterloo twice per week. Reasons that RTC is not trying to utilize New Freedom funding for this service include that it is a difficult program to administer, and the fact that it is reimbursement-based, which makes it difficult to utilize. The end result is an increased cost to riders. RTC may still consider asking for New Freedom funding if it can determine a better way to utilize the program.

- ◆ **Mobility Manager/Marketing Person** – This has been an issue discussed at previous TAC meetings and Transit Providers meetings, and is recognized as one of the region’s greatest needs. As discussed previously, INRCOG submitted an application to the OPT for a Special Project grant to fund a mobility manager/marketing person to work for both RTC and MET. However, the OPT would not allow the grant to pay for administrative costs, which made the local match too expensive for RTC and MET. Recently, OPT has suggested that administrative costs may be an eligible expense, but the potential difficulties of utilizing New Freedom funding, as well as the experiences of other agencies that have created similar positions, has caused MET and RTC to delay creating this position. It remains a need for the area, and RTC and MET may consider applying for funding for the position should conditions change.

- ◆ **University of Northern Iowa Multimodal Facility** – The Multimodal Facility (MMF) is complete and open. MET’s Cedar Falls routes shifted to include a stop at the facility. A component of the project included installation of Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) and electronic fare boxes on all of MET’s buses. A digital message board was installed at the MMF to inform riders of when buses are expected, and one of these will be installed at MET’s Central Transfer Station in downtown Waterloo soon. The electronic fare boxes provide a wealth of information and allow for more fare options, such as one day unlimited passes and monthly passes that do not go into effect until the user takes their first ride. MET will also have the technology to enable riders to text their location to MET, and get a text message back with how long it will be until the bus is there.

- ◆ **Driver Recruitment and Retention** – This is an ongoing issue at both transit agencies. While MET has noticed an improvement in its recent hires, this remains one of RTC’s largest issues. One of the challenges for RTC is that the service area is large and spread over several counties, with some routes based in smaller communities. Also, some drivers live quite a distance from where their buses are based. These facts, combined with down time in the middle of the day, lead to difficulties in finding drivers. The Iowa

DOT has been working with community colleges and trying to tailor some programs to skills needed in the current job market, such as driving buses or trucks. This effort could result in more qualified job applicants in the future.

- ◆ **Vehicle Replacement** – Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided a boost to bus replacement. Roughly half of RTC’s fleet was replaced through ARRA funding and FY’09 and ’10 replacements. MET’s fleet is also in decent shape following ARRA, and MET will be receiving three State of Good Repair funded buses later this year. Bus replacement will become a major issue a few years from now, when the ARRA-funded buses begin to need replacement. There is also a great deal of uncertainty about the future of bus funding, as the earmarking process currently used may be changed. MET is considering switching to biodiesel in the future. RTC has switched from diesel to gasoline on its new buses. RTC is looking at the possibilities of new radios or cell phones for drivers, as its current radio system is not performing well. RTC is also considering installing video surveillance systems on its buses. MET has found its video surveillance systems to be a great benefit in reviewing incidents and complaints.
- ◆ **Painting EPI Buses** – RTC applied for, and received, a Special Project grant in the spring of 2010 to paint 12 EPI yellow school buses to match RTC’s color scheme. This project resolved the conflict between Iowa DOT and Iowa DOE regulations discussed earlier. This has enabled RTC and EPI to continue their coordination efforts, which results in service for many of the area’s individuals with disabilities. This project is complete and can be removed from the program.
- ◆ **MET New Freedom Project** – An opportunity for MET to utilize New Freedom funding to help address mobility needs came to light in April, 2010. MET had a contract for the purchase of five 29’ buses, with delivery expected in August, 2010. As ordered, each bus would have been equipped with two securement locations for persons with disabilities who travel with a mobility aid. MET has experienced an increase of riders who use mobility aids, and capacity has become an issue. There have been several instances that service has been denied due to both securement locations being occupied. For this reason, MET determined that three securement locations are needed on certain routes. In addition to an extra securement location, a ramp rated at 950 pounds, which exceeds the ADA requirement of 600 pounds, was desired to further accommodate MET riders. With the bus order MET had, adding an additional securement location was not an option on 29’ coaches due to the loss of seating capacity. Therefore, MET requested and received New Freedom funding to upgrade two of the 29’ coaches to 35’ coaches with three securement locations each and upgraded wheelchair ramps. This project is complete and can be removed from the program.

The remaining projects were not anticipated to occur in FY 2011, but were included in the four year sketch plan of the PTP update.

- ◆ **An Additional MET JARC Route in the Metropolitan Area** – Another JARC route is possible in the future, but nothing definite is planned at this time. Growth in the north industrial park area and around U.S. Highway 63 may increase demand in those areas. There is difficulty in finding a funding source for the local match, as JARC funding requires 50 percent. While this project is not anticipated to move forward in the next fiscal year, it remains a future potential initiative.
- ◆ **Vanpools to the Metropolitan Area** – This is a potential future project as it is believed that the demand for such service exists. It will take some time to develop a vanpool program, and it is not anticipated to get going in the next fiscal year.
- ◆ **Possible RTC Expansion in Western Butler County, Grundy County, and Chickasaw County** – These are all potential expansion areas. Issues with expansion include timing, as many facilities do not allow clients to be dropped off early or stay late, and duplication of service, as private organizations or individuals may already be providing some services and may not want RTC to begin offering the same service. There is a new dialysis unit at the hospital in Grundy Center, so there may be an opportunity for increased service there. Service in Chickasaw County has declined over the past couple decades. While there were some recent discussions with the County about service, nothing has materialized. The new third route in Waverly should improve service to Butler County as the buses have more flexibility.
- ◆ **MET Extended Service Hours** – Additional evening hours are still a need for MET, but funding them is a challenge.

The table on the next page provides a summary of the projects detailed above. The table lists all projects included in the FY 2010-2013 PTP, as well as the FY 2011 PTP Update. It also shows which projects will remain in the program for FY 2012.

Summary of the projects that have been included in the FY 2010-2013 PTP and its annual updates

Project	Description	When Project was added to PTP	Status in FY 2010	Status in FY 2011
MET JARC Route	JARC funding for route 9, in Cedar Falls. This route connects many residential and employment areas and the University of Northern Iowa.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Funded Stays in Program for FY'11	Funded Stays in Program for FY'12
Prime Time Pass – JARC	Prime Time Pass enables people to get to and from work outside of MET's service hours.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Funded Stays in Program for FY'11	Funded Stays in Program for FY'12
MET Ambassador Program	This program would involve training seniors on how to ride MET's system, so in turn they can train others. Project would be in conjunction with HVAAA.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	On hold Stays in Program for FY'11	On hold Stays in Program for FY'12
RTC Expanded Service in Waverly and Independence – New Freedom	There is a need for expanded service in these cities, particularly for the elderly and persons with disabilities.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Funded but not utilized Stays in Program for FY'11	Not applied for in FY'11 Stays in Program for FY'12
Mobility Manager / Marketing Position	This position would involve mobility and marketing related tasks for both MET and RTC.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Special Project Application not funded at full amount; position was not created. Stays in Program for FY'11	On hold Stays in Program for FY'12
University of Northern Iowa Multimodal Facility	Construction of a Multimodal Facility at UNI, including automobile, bicycle, and transit elements. Project also includes ITS elements such as automatic vehicle locators and electronic fare boxes for MET buses.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Facility is open. Project stays in Program for FY'11 as ITS elements are completed.	Facility is open. Project stays in Program for FY'12 as ITS elements are completed.
Driver Recruitment and Retention	Recruiting and retaining qualified drivers.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Ongoing challenge Stays in Program	Ongoing challenge Stays in Program
Vehicle Replacement	Replacing vehicles when they reach the end of their useful life.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Ongoing challenge Stays in Program	Ongoing challenge Stays in Program
Additional MET JARC Route	Another JARC route is possible in the future. Growth in the north industrial park area and around U.S. Highway 63 may increase demand in those areas.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Potential future project Stays in Program	Potential future project Stays in Program
A Special Needs Route in Waterloo	This would be a route in southern Waterloo connecting hospital, senior living centers, grocery stores, etc.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	No longer likely Drops out of Program	
Vanpools to the Metro Area	This would be a vanpool program targeted at people who work in the metropolitan area but live outside of it.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Potential future project Stays in Program	Potential future project Stays in Program
Expanded Service in W. Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties	These are all potential expansion areas for RTC as they are currently underserved.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Potential future project Stays in Program	Potential future project Stays in Program
Expanded MET Service Hours	Additional evening hours for fixed route and paratransit service.	In FY 2010-2013 PTP	Potential future project Stays in Program	Potential future project Stays in Program
MET New Freedom Project	Upgrading two 29' coaches to 35' and adding an extra securement location and upgraded wheelchair ramp.	Added in FY 2011 PTP Update	New project for FY 2011	Funded and complete Drops out of Program
Painting of EPI Buses – Special Project Application	Painting 12 EPI yellow school buses to match RTC's color scheme.	Added in FY 2011 PTP Update	New project for FY 2011	Funded and complete Drops out of Program

New Projects

No new projects were recommended by the TAC at its January meeting. Given the current status of federal transportation funding, the focus is on maintaining the status quo, and improving coordination and service whenever possible.

Program of Recommended Projects

Other than the removal of two completed projects, the TAC felt the project list should stay the same for FY 2012 as it was in FY 2011, with updated costs and information as appropriate.

Projects anticipated to receive federal funding in the next four years correlate with the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) that both MET and RTC submit to INRCOG. The TIPs are updated annually with new targets and projected costs. The draft TIPs for both MET and RTC have been attached to this document. Projects that are not included in the TIPs but which may be considered in the near future are outlined below. While the timing, costs, and funding sources of these initiatives are mostly unknown at this point, they are important projects to try to implement in the future to meet the needs of the region. The projects included in the both draft TIPs and the table below were approved by the TAC at its January 20, 2011 meeting. The MPO Policy Board approved the projects at its March 10, 2011 meeting. The RTA Policy Board approved the projects at its April 20, 2011 meeting.

Potential Coordination Projects for the Iowa Northland Region

Provider Name	Project Description	Type*	Total Estimated Cost	Estimated Fiscal Year	Recommended Funding Source(s)
RTC/MET	Mobility Manager/ Marketing Position	O	\$80,000	Undetermined	Undetermined
MET	Additional MET JARC Route	O/C	Undetermined	Undetermined	JARC
MET	Expanded MET Service Hours	O	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined
MET/HVAAA	Ambassador Program	O	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined
RTC	Expanded Service in W. Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties	O/C	Undetermined	Undetermined	New Freedom
RTC	Vanpools to the Metro Area	O/C	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined

*O = Operations; C = Capital

MET Transit
Draft 2012 Transit Program
(Filtered)

INRCOG (37 Projects)

Fund	Sponsor	Transit # Expense Class Project Type	Desc / Add Ons / Addnl Info		FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
5307	Waterloo MET	1168 Operations Misc	General Operations/Maintenance/Administration/Planning	Total	4,000,000	4,200,000	4,400,000	4,600,000
				FA	2,000,000	2,100,000	2,200,000	2,300,000
				SA				
5316	Waterloo MET	1169 Operations Expansion	JARC project	Total	350,000	375,000	400,000	425,000
				FA	175,000	187,500	200,000	212,500
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1942 Capital Replacement	Minivan Unit #: 501	Total	42,000			
				FA	34,860			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1951 Capital Replacement	Minivan Unit #: 602	Total	42,000			
				FA	34,860			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1954 Capital Replacement	Minivan Unit #: 603	Total	42,000			
				FA	34,860			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1955 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 973	Total	367,000			
				FA	304,610			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1956 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 937	Total	367,000			
				FA	304,610			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1957 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 9206	Total	367,000			
				FA	304,610			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1959 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 2003	Total	367,000			
				FA	304,610			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1960 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 922	Total	367,000			
				FA	304,610			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1962 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 923	Total	367,000			
				FA	304,610			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1963 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 975	Total	367,000			
				FA	304,610			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1964 Capital Replacement	Medium Duty Bus (29-32 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 9901	Total	165,000			
				FA	136,950			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1965 Capital Replacement	Medium Duty Bus (to 28 ft.) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 2005	Total	153,000			
				FA	126,990			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1966 Capital Replacement	Medium Duty Bus (to 28 ft.) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 2006	Total	153,000			
				FA	126,990			
				SA				

INRCOG (37 Projects)

Fund	Sponsor	Transit # Expense Class Project Type	Desc / Add Ons / Addnl Info		FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
5309	Waterloo MET	1967 Capital Replacement	Medium Duty Bus (to 28 ft.) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 2004	Total	153,000			
				FA	126,990			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1968 Capital Replacement	Medium Duty Bus (to 28 ft.) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 2007	Total	153,000			
				FA	126,990			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1969 Capital Replacement	Medium Duty Bus (to 28 ft.) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 2008	Total	153,000			
				FA	126,990			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1970 Capital Replacement	Medium Duty Bus (to 28 ft.) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 2009	Total	153,000			
				FA	126,990			
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1971 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 933D	Total		378,010		
				FA		313,748		
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1972 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 303	Total		378,010		
				FA		313,748		
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1973 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 302	Total		378,010		
				FA		313,748		
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1974 Capital Replacement	Heavy Duty Bus (30-34 ft.) Deisel, UFRC, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 301	Total		378,010		
				FA		313,748		
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1976 Capital Replacement	Minivan Low Floor Unit #: 801	Total		43,260		
				FA		35,906		
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1977 Capital Replacement	Minivan Low Floor Unit #: D209	Total		43,260		
				FA		35,906		
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1978 Capital Replacement	Minivan Low Floor Unit #: 109	Total		43,260		
				FA		35,906		
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1979 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Hybrid Unit #: 709	Total			91,238	
				FA			75,727	
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1980 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Hybrid Unit #: 708	Total			91,238	
				FA			75,727	
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1981 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Hybrid Unit #: 710	Total			91,238	
				FA			75,727	
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1982 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Hybrid Unit #: 711	Total			91,238	
				FA			75,727	
				SA				

INRCOG (37 Projects)

Fund	Sponsor	Transit # Expense Class Project Type	Desc / Add Ons / Addnl Info		FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
5309	Waterloo MET	1983 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 906	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1984 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 904	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1985 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 905	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1986 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 908	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5309	Waterloo MET	1987 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) Deisel, VSS, Low Floor Unit #: 907	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5310	Waterloo MET	1990 Capital Expansion	Bus Shelters/ADA Enhancements	Total	63,500			
				FA	57,150			
				SA				
5303	Waterloo MET	2128 Planning Other	Planning	Total	54,666	56,306	57,995	59,735
				FA	43,733	45,045	46,396	47,788
				SA				

Regional Transit Commission

Draft 2012 Transit Program

(Filtered)

Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (15 Projects)

Fund	Sponsor	Transit # Expense Class Project Type	Desc / Add Ons / Addnl Info		FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
STA, 5311	INRTC	1377 Operations Misc	General Operations/Maintenance/Administration	Total	1,567,083	1,636,151	1,685,235	1,720,000
				FA	300,580	306,429	315,622	320,000
				SA	270,233			
5309	INRTC	1382 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 9711	Total	86,000			
				FA	71,380			
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1383 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 301	Total	86,000			
				FA	71,380			
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1384 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 302	Total	86,000			
				FA	71,380			
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1385 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0501	Total		88,580		
				FA		73,521		
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1386 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0502	Total		88,580		
				FA		73,521		
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1387 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0601	Total			91,238	
				FA			75,727	
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1388 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0801	Total			91,238	
				FA			75,727	
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1836 Operations Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 303	Total	86,000			
				FA	71,380			
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1838 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0503	Total		88,580		
				FA		73,521		
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1841 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0901	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1842 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0902	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5309	INRTC	1843 Capital Replacement	Light Duty Bus (176" wb) LD 176-14/2 (A) Deisel, VSS Unit #: 0903	Total				93,975
				FA				77,999
				SA				
5317	INRTC	1844 Operations Other	New Freedoms Independence and Waverly Extended Hours	Total	20,000			
				FA	10,000			
				SA				
5311	RPA-07	1390 Planning Misc	RPA Transportation Planning	Total	32,564	33,541	34,548	35,571
				FA	26,051	26,833	27,638	28,457
				SA				

**PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION PLAN
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR
THE IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2011

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Present were:

Mark Witmer	North Star Community Services
Karl Nelson	Butler County
Mark Little	MET Transit
Todd Rickert	Grundy County CPC
Koleen Schipper	Black Hawk County Community Services
Tami Moody	Exceptional Persons, Inc.
Chris Sparks	Exceptional Persons, Inc.
Sheila Baird	Cedar Valley United Way
Lou Stockdale	Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging
Kelly Cook	Goodwill of Northeast Iowa
Kevin Blanshan	INRCOG
Brian Schoon	INRCOG/RTC
Ed Holm	INRCOG/RTC
Andrea White	INRCOG

White welcomed the group and explained the Transit Advisory Committee's (TAC) role in passenger transportation planning in the region and the development of the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP).

The next item on the agenda was a summary of recent transit providers meetings. White explained that MET Transit, the Regional Transit Commission (RTC), and Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI) meet monthly to discuss transit operations and coordination issues. Schoon discussed a coordination project that emerged from this group in the past year, which involved painting 12 EPI yellow school buses to match RTC's color scheme. RTC applied for and received a Special Projects grant from the Iowa DOT, and RTC and EPI split the local match. The project allowed the buses to stay under contract to RTC, which enables subsidized service. Sparks noted that the project improved the fleet's appearance and resulted in vehicles better suited for transporting adults. The buses also serve as a more visible advertisement for RTC.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the projects that were included in the FY 2011 PTP update to determine their status and whether the need to continue the project exists. Projects included:

- **MET JARC Services – Route 9 and Prime Time Pass:** MET will be reapplying for JARC funding for both services. Route 9 in Cedar Falls has seen significant increases every year since it began in 2004, and remains one of MET's top performing routes. Prime Time Pass remains an important service in the metropolitan area, as it enables people to get to and from work outside of MET's service hours.

- **Ambassador Program:** MET and the Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging had planned to develop this program, which would involve training seniors on how to ride MET's system. For now the project is on hold; it was thought that the new marketing person could spearhead this, but that position was not created. There were also plans to utilize RTC's Hudson route as an opportunity for this type of training, but that route did not get off the ground.
- **RTC Expanded Service in Waverly and Independence:** RTC has asked for New Freedom funding for the past several years for this service but has been unable to utilize the funding. The service that was implemented seemed to spread ridership out over more hours, but not increase ridership itself. Rather than try to utilize New Freedom funding, RTC has created two new routes that are increasing ridership. One is a dialysis route in Independence which runs Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. This takes pressure off the other Independence routes and enables them to better serve the city and the rest of Buchanan County. The other new route is in Waverly and helps cover the city and Bremer and Butler Counties. One of the Waverly routes also comes to Waterloo twice per week. Reasons that RTC is not trying to utilize New Freedom funding for these routes include that it is a difficult program to administer, and the fact that it is reimbursement-based, which makes it difficult to utilize. The end result is an increased cost to riders.
- **Mobility Manager** – This has been an issue discussed at previous TAC meetings and transit providers meetings. INRCOG submitted an application to the Office of Public Transit (OPT) for a Special Project grant to fund a mobility manager/marketing person to work for both RTC and MET. However, OPT would not allow the grant to pay for administrative costs, which made the local match too expensive for RTC and MET. Recently, OPT has set aside a portion of New Freedom funding for positions such as this, and has suggested that administrative costs may be an eligible expense. It is not yet clear if this is for certain, and also whether there would be additional challenges with utilizing the funding since it is from the New Freedom program. A mobility manager/marketing position is still identified as a need, but it is not certain whether RTC and MET will apply for funding for the position.
- **University of Northern Iowa Multimodal Facility:** The Multimodal Facility (MMF) is complete and open. MET's Cedar Falls routes shifted to include a stop at the facility. A component of the project included installation of Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) and electronic fare boxes on all of MET's buses. A digital message board was installed at the MMF to inform riders of when buses are expected, and one of these will be installed at MET's Central Transfer Station in downtown Waterloo soon. The electronic fare boxes provide a wealth of information and allow for more fare options, such as one day unlimited passes and monthly passes that do not go into effect until the user takes their first ride. MET will also have the technology to enable riders to text their location to MET, and get a text message back with how long it will be until the bus is there.
- **Driver Recruitment and Retention:** This is an ongoing issue at both transit agencies. While MET has noticed an improvement in its recent hires, this remains one of RTC's largest issues. One of the challenges for RTC is that the service area is large and spread over several counties, with some routes based in smaller communities. Also, some drivers live quite a distance from where their buses are based. These facts, combined with down time in the middle of the day, lead to difficulties in finding drivers. The Iowa DOT has been working with community colleges and trying to tailor some programs to skills needed in the current job market, such as driving buses or trucks. This effort could result in more qualified job applicants in the future.
- **Funding Sources:** This is also an ongoing issue at both transit agencies.

- **Vehicle Replacement:** Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was a boost to bus replacement. Roughly half of RTC's fleet was replaced through ARRA funding and FY'09 and '10 replacements. MET's fleet is also in decent shape following ARRA, and MET will be receiving three State of Good Repair funded buses later this year. Bus replacement will become a major issue a few years from now, when the ARRA-funded buses begin to need replacement. There is also a great deal of uncertainty about the future of bus funding, as the earmarking process currently used may be changed.
- **Vanpools to the Metropolitan Area:** This is a potential future project as it is believed that the demand for such service may exist. It will take some time to develop a vanpool program.
- **Additional MET JARC Route:** Another JARC route is possible in the future, but nothing definite is planned at this time. Growth in the north industrial park area and around U.S. Highway 63 may increase demand in those areas. There is difficulty in finding the funding source for the local match, as JARC requires 50%.
- **MET Extended Service Hours:** Additional evening hours are still a need for MET Transit, but funding them is a challenge.
- **RTC Expansion in Western Butler County, Grundy County, and Chickasaw County:** These are all potential expansion areas. Issues with expansion include timing, as many facilities do not allow clients to be dropped off early or stay late, and duplication of service, as private organizations or individuals may already be providing some services and may not want RTC to begin offering the same service. There is a new dialysis unit at the hospital in Grundy Center, so there may be an opportunity for increased service there. Service in Chickasaw County has declined over the past couple decades. While there were some recent discussions with the County about service, nothing has materialized. The new third route in Waverly should improve service to Butler County as the buses have more flexibility.

Additional discussion focused on the different challenges related to urban and rural transit. Rural transit is particularly difficult to provide. There have been efforts on the parts of counties to encourage transit-dependent individuals to move into cities when possible to increase their mobility. There are other known gaps in transit service, such as the lack of availability on Sundays for people wishing to attend church. Another topic of discussion was charter laws, and the unintentional outcome that has resulted, which is limiting service options for persons and organizations wishing to utilize a charter. If an out-of-state company offers to run a charter for an excessive fee, the local public transit provider cannot offer the service, even though it is not feasible for the consumer to pay for the out-of-state provider. Situations like these have occurred locally, and the end result is that no service is provided.

The final agenda item was to discuss new projects for the PTP update, but there were none suggested beyond the continuation of those previously discussed. Given the state of federal transportation funding and its uncertain future, the main theme for passenger transportation providers right now is maintaining the status quo. It was moved by Little, seconded by Nelson to approve the projects for the FY 2012 PTP update as discussed. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Limited English Proficiency Analysis – MET Transit and Regional Transit Commission

The purpose of this Limited English Proficiency analysis (LEP) is to outline how MET and RTC identify persons who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available. As defined in Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. MET and RTC have always worked informally to meet the needs of LEP individuals; the following analysis gives a more detailed view of the LEP population in the region and ways to assist that population. This analysis is based on MET’s adopted Limited English Proficiency Plan, and RTC’s continuing LEP efforts.

This LEP analysis will utilize the framework of the U.S. DOT’s four-factor LEP analysis, which considers the following elements:

1. *The number or proportion of LEP persons in the region who may be served by public transportation or are likely to encounter a public transportation program, activity, or service.*
2. *The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with public transportation programs, activities, or services.*
3. *The nature and importance of programs, activities, or services provided by public transportation providers to the LEP population.*
4. *The resources available to public transportation providers and overall costs to provide LEP assistance.*

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the region who may be served or are likely to encounter a public transportation program, activity, or service.

The 2005-2009 American Community Survey estimates were utilized to determine what percentage of the area’s population could be considered LEP. For the purposes of this analysis, persons who speak another language and speak English less than “very well” are considered to be LEP. The following table shows the number and percentage of people for each county that speak another language and speak English less than “very well”.

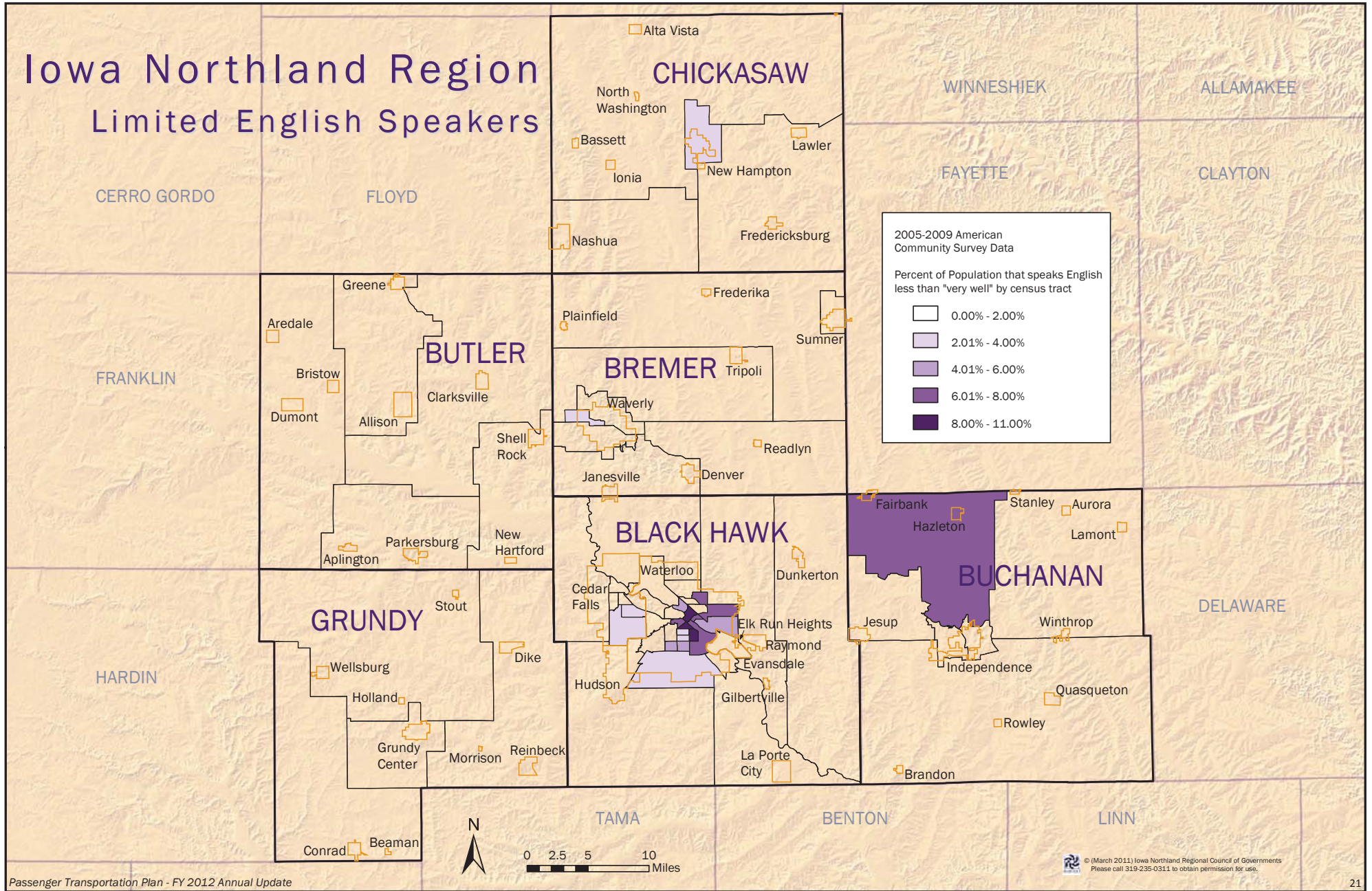
Iowa Northland Region – Population Speaking English

	Black Hawk	Bremer	Buchanan	Butler	Chickasaw	Grundy	Total
Total Population	119,026	22,111	19,324	13,714	11,405	11,501	197,081
Speak only English	111,392	21,442	18,066	13,400	10,950	11,161	186,411
Speak another Language, but speak English “very well”	4,631	422	946	244	284	254	6,781
Speak another Language, and speak English less than “very well”	3,003	247	312	70	171	86	3,889
Percent that speak another Language, and speak English less than “very well”	2.7%	1.1%	1.7%	0.5%	1.6%	0.7%	1.97%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

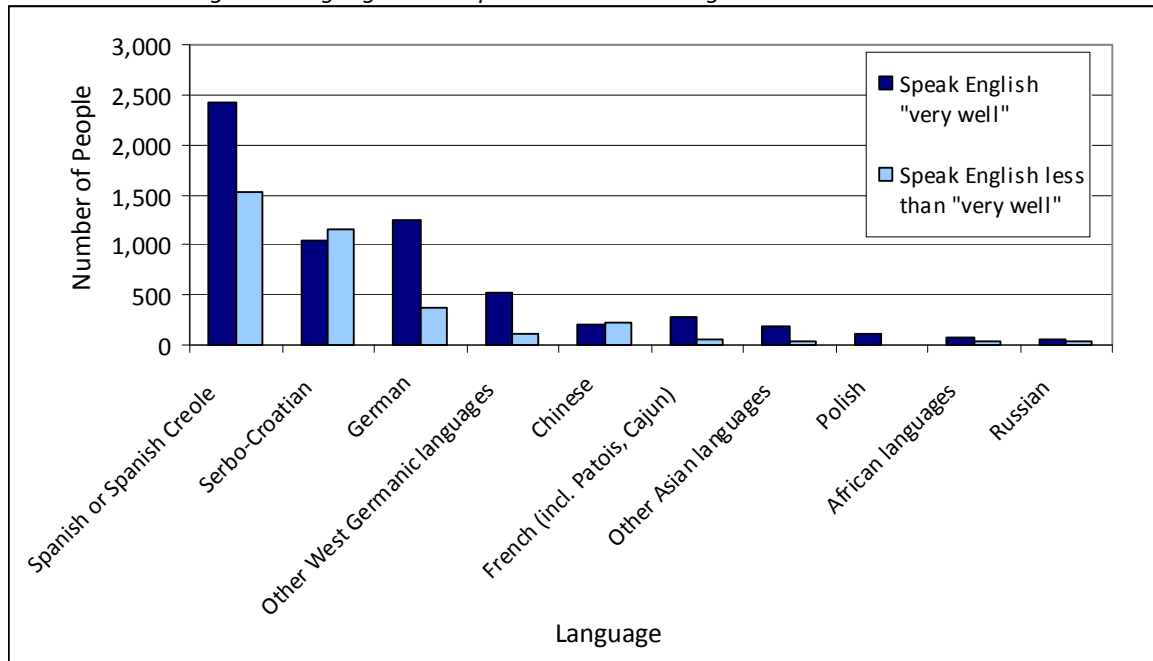
The map on the next page shows the percentage of people who speak another Language and speak English less than “very well” by census tract.

Iowa Northland Region Limited English Speakers



The chart below shows languages other than English spoken in the region by at least 100 people, as well as the number of people for each language that speak English “very well”, and less than “very well”.

Iowa Northland Region – Languages Most Spoken Other Than English



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

As shown on the table, map, and chart, the number of LEP persons in the region is very low. Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, and German are the most likely languages to be spoken by LEP persons in the region. The map on the previous page shows the concentrations of languages other than English in the region. The metropolitan area shows the most diversity, and the majority of the languages other than English are Spanish and Serbo-Croatian. The New Hampton area also shows a larger percentage of LEP persons than the region as a whole, and Spanish is the predominant language among those persons. The small increase in LEP persons in Waverly is likely associated with Wartburg College. Finally, the increased percentage of LEP persons in Buchanan County is mostly German and other West Germanic language speakers, associated with the area’s Amish population.

2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with public transportation programs, activities, or services.

MET and RTC have assessed the frequency with which staff and drivers have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries and surveying vehicle operators. Staff and vehicle operators have had very little to no contact with LEP persons. To date, neither MET nor RTC have had requests for interpreters or for translated documents in the service area.

3. The nature and importance of programs, activities, or services provided by public transportation providers to the LEP population.

There is no large geographic concentration of any type of LEP individuals in the INRCOG region. The overwhelming majority of the population (193,192 of 197,081 people, or 98%) speak only English, or speak another language but speak English “very well”. As a result, there is a lack of social, service, professional, and leadership organizations within the MET and RTC service areas that focus on outreach to LEP individuals. Services provided by MET that are most likely to encounter LEP individuals are the fixed route system which serves the general public and the paratransit [dial-a-ride] system which serves primarily senior and disabled persons. Service provided by RTC that is most likely to encounter LEP individuals is its demand-response service, which is open to the general public but primarily serves senior and disabled persons.

4. The resources available to public transportation providers and overall costs to provide LEP assistance.

MET and RTC have considered their available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance, including how much a professional interpreter and translation service would cost on an as-needed basis, which of their documents would be the most valuable to be translated if the need should arise, and taking an inventory of available organizations that MET or RTC could partner with for outreach and translation efforts. The amount of staff and vehicle operating training that might be needed have also been considered. Based on the needs and costs identified by the four-factor analysis, MET and RTC have developed the following guidelines for identifying and assisting LEP persons.

A. Identifying LEP Persons

How MET and RTC staff may identify an LEP person who needs language assistance:

1. Examine records to see if requests for language assistance have been received in the past, either at meetings or over the phone, to determine whether language assistance might be needed at future events.
2. When MET or RTC sponsor an event, have a staff person greet participants as they arrive. By informally engaging participants in conversation it is possible to gauge each attendee’s ability to speak and understand English.
3. Have Census Bureau Language Identification Flashcards available at MET or RTC events near the registration table. Individuals self-identifying as persons not proficient in English may not be able to be accommodated with translation assistance at the event, but it will assist the sponsoring agency in identifying language assistance needs for future events.
4. Have Language Identification Flashcards on transit vehicles to assist vehicle operators in identifying specific language assistance needs of passengers. If such individuals are encountered, vehicle operators will be instructed to try to obtain contact information to give to the transit system manager for follow-up. Dispatchers and schedulers may also be instructed to obtain contact information from LEP individuals they encounter, either in person or over the phone.
5. Vehicle operators and other front-line staff, such as dispatchers, may be surveyed annually on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.

B. Language Assistance Measures

MET and RTC may incorporate the following measures:

1. Have Language Identification Flashcards available.
2. Consider adding a feature to MET and RTC websites that would allow an LEP person to contact staff via email indicating his/her native language and the type of assistance needed.
3. Include a statement on all documents, agendas, and meeting notices that assistance is available for LEP persons. When an interpreter is needed, in person or on the telephone, staff will attempt to determine what language is required and then access language assistance services. Documents will be translated into other languages upon request.

C. Outreach Techniques

Due to the very small local LEP population, MET and RTC do not have a formal outreach procedure in place. Translation resources are also very limited in this region. However, when and if the need arises for LEP outreach, MET and RTC may consider the following options:

1. When staff members prepare a document or schedule a meeting for which the target audience is expected to include LEP individuals, then documents, meeting notices, flyers, and agendas may be printed in an alternative language based on the known LEP population.
2. Bus schedules, maps, and other transit publications may be made available in an alternative language when and if a specific and concentrated LEP population is identified.

D. Monitoring and Updating LEP Efforts

MET and RTC will update their efforts to accommodate LEP persons as required or needed. The following elements will help MET and RTC determine if their LEP efforts are adequate, or if additional steps may need to be taken:

1. The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually.
2. How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
3. Determine the current LEP population in the service area.
4. Determine whether the need for translation services has changed.
5. Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.
6. Determine whether the transit system's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
7. Determine whether MET and RTC have fully complied with their LEP goals.
8. Determine whether complaints have been received concerning the agency's failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals.