

2025-2029



# REGION 6 RESOURCE PARTNERS PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION PLAN



Prepared by:  
Region 6 Resource  
Partners for

Peoplerides

Marshalltown Municipal  
Transit

And Adopted by the  
Region 6 Board on  
8/26/2024

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## Section One: Introduction, Planning Process, and Public Input

### Introduction

Region 6 Resource Partners is the transportation authority for Marshall, Hardin, Tama and Poweshiek Counties in central Iowa. The Region 6 planning region consists of four counties, 45 cities and the Meskwaki Settlement, which is located in Tama County. The Region 6 Resource Partners (Region 6) is one of 18 Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) in Iowa that is required to prepare a Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). The PTP process was created by the Iowa Department of Transportation's (IOWA DOT) Public transit section to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems. The goals of the PTP are to:

- Improve transportation services to Iowans
- Increase passenger transportation coordination
- Create awareness of unmet needs
- Develop new working partnerships
- Assist decision makers, advocates, and consumers in understanding the range of transportation available
- Develop justification for future passenger transportation investments
- Save dollars and eliminate overlapping of services

### Planning Process

The Region 6 Passenger Transportation Plan was researched and prepared by Region 6 Resource Partners staff, including the transit manager and transportation and community planners, to provide a comprehensive and holistic passenger transportation plan. Information was assembled in this plan – including vehicle inventories, meeting minutes with service providers and survey results – as a way to fully represent the region's current transportation services as well as identify unmet needs and a justification for future passenger transportation investments.

The planning process consisted of gathering information from:

- Local social and health services provider group meetings in all four counties over the four-year planning period
- Personal and telephone interviews with service providers
- An online survey administered to service providers
- A paper survey administered to transportation clients
- Public meetings open to all

From these efforts, needs and gaps in service were identified, goals and objectives were prioritized, and actions were identified to meet them. Coordination efforts that occur on a continual basis between service providers and transit providers were reviewed. These efforts were all undertaken to identify more efficient and better transit services to a greater number of clients

## Public Input: TAG

In November and December 2023 Region 6 Resource Partners had a public transportation listening session over Zoom in each of our 4 counties. In June 4 additional meetings were held in each of the 4 Region 6 Counties. Notes and outcomes of those meetings are listed below –

### MARSHALL COUNTY -

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#### 12/12/23 – Marshall County Listening Session Attendees (zoom)

- LeAnn Lynch, Peoplerides
- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Mark Newberg, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Kevin Pigors, MMT
- Nicole Jensen, REM
- Adrienne, Mid-Iowa Workshop
- MTM Training – PHC (4 participants at this location) Shawn with Primary Health Care – requested PPT
- Eleina Rivera (CAPS) - [Eleina@capsonline.us](mailto:Eleina@capsonline.us) - Requested PPT
- Jasmin Bandera (CAPS)

#### GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS -

- Kevin Pigors explained MMT service.
- No comments from attendees.
- Several indicated they would be interested in additional information and meetings in the future.

#### 7/11/24 – Marshall County Listening Session Attendees (in-person)

In attendance:

- Jasmin Banderez -CAPS
- Gissel Garcia – CAPS
- Kevin Pigors – Marshalltown MMT
- LeAnn Lynch, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Mark Newberg, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners

#### GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS -

- CAPS – provides city bus passes to many of the families they help but many families are not eligible for Medicaid.
- Website – says that Peoplerides is free and open to everyone. It's confusing because that is not the case in Marshalltown – people can only ride if they qualify for Paratransit.
- JBS workers – in-town workers involved in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> shift are having to walk to and from home – sometimes 1-2 miles. The city busses are not running at those times.
- Families delivering at Mary Greeley hospital in Ames do not have access to transportation once they are discharged. CAPS has volunteers that sometimes pick these

people up. These are not Medicaid eligible people. Peoplerides can provide this service at \$2.89/mile. A one-way trip from Marshalltown to Ames would be roughly \$125.

- Families are also missing their monitoring appointments when traveling to Mary Greeley during their pregnancy due to lack of transportation to get there.
- CAPS recently started a new youth group for refugees in town. They are needing transportation for certain outings with this group. Staff currently transports them in their own vehicles. MMT was going to follow up on this.
- Talk to the Marshalltown school district – they are short on drivers. There might be an opportunity to partner with the SD to take children in wheelchairs to school. SD does not offer transportation to anyone within 2 miles of the building.
- MMT already providing transit services to 2 summer programs in Marshalltown – St. Francis and Parks and Rec Summer Blast.

## **POWESHIEK COUNTY -**

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### **12/12/23 – Poweshiek County Listening Session Attendees (zoom)**

- LeAnn Lynch, Peoplerides
- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Sharon Mealy – City of Grinnell
- Dan Agnew – City of Grinnell
- Ashley Gruendler – citizen
- Kate Slater – Grinnell Housing Authority
- Melissa Strovers – Grinnell College
- Jennifer Cogley – citizen
- Rachael Kinnick – Grinnell Chamber of Commerce

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Is there any plan to complete the feasibility study – more services across the area? It was discussed around 2020. Is there need? We don't know the need – looking for a survey or some other type of outreach.
- Need for drivers. They see it with the LINK program too.
- Where do you advertise for your driver jobs? Could you put a QR code on it and share it?
- Do we have any Peoplerides pamphlets? Many of their users have the stigma that the service is for the elderly/disabled. We could open up a new market if we can get over that stigma.
- Would like to continue county-specific TAG meetings

### **Poweshiek County Listening Session – 7/10/24 (in-person)**

#### **In attendance:**

- Julie Davis – council member
- Russ Behrens – city administrator
- Susan Sanning – Grinnell College
- Melisa Strovers – Grinnell College
- Katie Snyder – Housing Authority

- LeAnn Lynch, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Mark Newberg, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- What was the demographic data on the client surveys?  
*Here are zip codes for the respondents. There is no other demographic data.*

<b>Zip code</b>	<b>Count</b>	
50112	8	Grinnell
50126	4	Iowa Falls
50158	5	Marshalltown
52342	2	Toledo
50171	1	Montezuma
50173	1	Montour
		New
50206	1	Providence
50601	1	Ackley
50627	1	Eldora
50635	1	Gladbrook
52225	1	Elberon
52577	1	Oskaloosa

- What is the \$50,000 from Grinnell going to?  
*The \$50,000 from the City of Grinnell funds the City of Grinnell service. That service is estimated to cost \$114,000 in FY 24. The City of Grinnell is covering 44% of the cost. The other 56% of the cost is covered with R6 and farebox. We are currently covering about 40-45% of the costs with R6 funds for all services. Farebox is around 5%. So Grinnell is achieving some benefit from surpluses on other services. Prior to FY 24 the City of Grinnell provided about \$15,000 annually for the service. The service could not continue without something close to the \$50,000 of support. We cannot continue our current 1,525 revenue hours for just Grinnell service without city financial help. The Medicaid part of Grinnell rides is another 1,000 or so hours. Medicaid rides are funded at \$15/ride, the same as Grinnell city services. If the external regional Medicaid funding increases substantially we can lower the \$50,000 amount from the city a good amount.*
- Would we be interested in using Grinnell College students to help visualize/map/graph our services?  
*Yes, we would be interested in having at least a conversation about that. Our services throughout the county are demand response not fixed route, so that visualization is not going to be very helpful. Susan will follow up with Julie.*
- General questions and conversations about Grinnell service and genuine interest in where collaboration points are.
- Comment from City of Grinnell regarding the \$500 subsidy for vanpools: None of those vans are currently benefitting Poweshiek County or Grinnell employers. These are

benefitting Tama County and Tama, and neither of those places pay any local support. *We discussed that the cost of the subsidy will be recouped in time with FTA and STA formula funding. The City of Grinnell is generally in support of this IF the cost will be recouped. If it would not be recouped, the City of Grinnell is opposed to this move.*

- Are we reimbursed less for Medicaid than other parts of the state?  
*We discussed how Medicaid rates are set. Our Medicaid reimbursement rate is higher than most of the other parts of the state. It is higher in the NW Iowa Spencer area. Some of the other areas have higher Medicaid Waiver or medical (NEMT) rides.*
- A lot of conversation at the end about how Peoplerides needs to get out there and in resources and Grinnell students need to know about them.
- From the council person: Are you thinking about a rebrand any time soon? Are all of the transit regions call Peoplerides?  
*We discussed that we had rebranded in the last 10 years. She said it really seems like no one knows that this is public transit and suggested that if we are not considering a rebrand, we might consider adding the word “public” somewhere in our name and logo.*
- Questions on the survey slide – what are the services that are not available or unaffordable that you would like to see. We had a discussion about how we have offered trips to DSM metro in the past and discontinued the service. This service was operated and funded by Poweshiek County back in the 1990s. It was discontinued in early 2000s range because of funding concerns. Discussion about medical transportation – more demand than we can meet and we need drivers and equipment to scale up.
- New slide request: Break down how a (local) ride is paid for. Ie: Grinnell in town: Rider cost per ride: \$3, City cost per ride: \$12, Operating cost gap: \$ \_\_\_. *Discussion about how a local ride is actually funded and how it relates to operating cost. An in-town ride in a place like Grinnell, Marshalltown, Tama/Toledo, and Iowa Falls has a \$25/ride value. Region 6 then is covering 40% or \$10/ride. The net local cost is \$15/ride. The passenger covers \$3/ride and the city subsidy is currently at \$12/ride.*
- No one in the college really knows about Peoplerides, many people in town seem to not know about Peoplerides. They want more awareness of Peoplerides in the community. Would Peoplerides be willing to work with local people to be listed in community resource publications, other resources that people are preparing for residents? Americorps members are pulling resources together *Yes*
- What is paratransit? Why is that contract different than our contribution? *Good discussion about paratransit and how it serves people who aren't able to ride fixed route in a larger system.*
- Comment: Grinnell College has really reached maximum capacity for transportation. They are looking for ways to expand at this point. The biggest thing is that the college does not want to city subsidizing their rides; it does not make sense to them. Some follow up needed. This will be part of a future meeting discussion. Before considering a partnership, they would need to do a cost benefit analysis at the college level to see what the cost difference would be to provide the service through the college vs Peoplerides. Many opportunities for collaboration.

**HARDIN COUNTY -**

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**Hardin County Peoplerides Listening Session – 12/14/23 (zoom)**

In attendance:

- LeAnn Lynch, Peoplerides
- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Mark Newberg, Peoplerides
- Tam Ellerding, Hardin County Endowment
- Linn Adams, retired from Central Iowa Community Services

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Would be great to see this information in a news article. General information about the service that is out there and open to everyone.
- There is a Hardin County Helps group event tomorrow and also in August. The families have time to come in and shop for their kids. Then the kids come in and shop for the parents. That event would be a great opportunity to reach those folks.
- Do you have brochures that the community can give out?
- Could also give out Peoplerides materials at weekly community meals.
- Target Timberview and Marion Manor residents (Iowa Falls) – targeted mailings or door hangers.
- Would all of the foreign workers be a market for transportation for Peoplerides? Hardin County has the most foreign workers per capita in all of Iowa. Vanpool program?
- Old driver Marcia help out?
- Monday service is still being provided.
- Can someone figure out how much the City of Iowa Falls is providing to Peoplerides in 2023. The City also has a grant with the Hardin County Community Foundation.
- Have you talked to Senior Life Solutions?
- Can you send the PowerPoint?
- Do the doctors' offices have Peoplerides information?

**Hardin County Peoplerides Listening Session – 6/26/24 (zoom)**

In attendance:

- Cara Ferch, NEI3A
- Tamm Ellerding, Hardin County Community Foundation, Friendship Club
- LeAnn Lynch, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Mark Newberg, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- If there are decreases in Medicaid Waiver riders, what is causing it? Are they not getting into the system or are they choosing not to ride?
- “There is a desert in our area – for home delivered meals (NEI3A), for people to want to attend classes”

- “We are in agreement – non-profits will be cut drastically and Hardin County Foundation funding will have to make up the difference.”
- From Friendship Club: It is so important for timeliness and communication. Communicate if you are going to be late or if you are going to drop riders off early. It’s good to be informed about any changes to the schedule. This is a challenge with driver problems.
- Better training for personnel when covering vacations. This is a challenge due to insufficient drivers.
- Peoplerides is so important to friendship club – those clients do not drive. Central Iowa Community Service is the primary funder for the friendship club and some Medicaid rides. CICS is not a big Peoplerides funding source. The estimated FY 24 cost of the service is \$29,400. CICS provides \$6,100 of financial support. There is no financial support from the Friendship Club. This CICS funding covers about 20% of the cost.

### **Tama County Listening Session 12/14/23 (zoom)**

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#### In attendance:

- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners
- LeAnn Lynch, Peoplerides
- Jessica Eubanks (CIRSI)
- Shannon Zoffka- Tama County Public Health
- Tiffany Alva – Meskwaki Settlement

#### Comments:

- Meskwaki has court hearings for their clients once a month. Could Peoplerides provide transportation to the hearings? That is a known need. Court hearings are in Tama at Tama’s tribal court. Clients could possibly be coming from other areas such as Marshalltown. Their client base may not be 100% from Meskwaki for pickup/drop off.
- In the Tama area, people really are not aware that they can use Peoplerides services. Really need some type of advertising. Flyers? MICA, laundromats, doctors office, library.
- Would be happy to put items with admissions packets or do Facebook posts.

### **Tama County Listening Session – 6/27/24 (zoom)**

#### In attendance:

- Greg Zars – NEI3A
- Jessica Eubanks – CIRSI
- LeAnn Lynch, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Mark Newberg, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Gage Grutz, Region 6 Resource Partners
- Julie Winter, Region 6 Resource Partners

#### Questions and comments:

- How does formula funding work. *Miles, rides, operating cost, and local incomes relative to other systems determine the formula allocation. The operating statistics for year 1 determine revenues for year 3. Ridership and keeping busses filled is a key factor.*
- How do you bill Marshalltown for paratransit services? *\$25/ride to the City for the contract. The passenger pays \$2 and the City \$23/ride.*
- I see that none of the counties give funding. How do we make them aware? *This has been a board discussion item for several years. The Counties are very reluctant to provide support. We also discussed having local conversations with county BOS officials to make them aware of the need for local county funding.*
- NEI3A is happy to support your advocacy. There is a huge gap without Peoplerides. They do not want to use private taxis.
- NEI3A may have some interest in a partnership for special trips (group trips to Des Moines or other areas) or special events transportation (caregiver support groups). Some discussion on the charter rule.
- CIRSI is seeing people wait for FOUR YEARS on Medicaid waiver waiting lists. There are also changes happening to Medicaid starting July 1, 2024 – they may be splitting different waiver reasons up into multiple waiver programs.
- CIRSI: we don't generally want to use taxis either. Often clients would have to get in a car with someone they are not familiar with. It also makes the families worry.
- Shopper service on Wednesday needs to be subsidized or it will go away. We need subsidy of \$12/ride. No comments on that.

### Public Input: Peoplerides Client Survey

During the month of March 2024, Peoplerides provided Public Transit client surveys to riders across the region, with most in Marshalltown, Iowa Falls, and Grinnell. Unfortunately, only 10 riders took the time to complete the survey. Most of the riders who completed surveys were using Peoplerides services for medical trips and/or shopping needs.

When asked about what improvements they would like to see with Peoplerides:

- 2 responded that they would like better prices.
- 3 would like later service hours,
- 7 would like to have services on the weekend.

When asked about currently unavailable trips they would like available –

- 3 responded that they would like affordable trips to Des Moines.

When asked to rate the quality of Peoplerides services on a scale to 1-5 (with 5 being high), the average rating among the 10 surveys was 4.8.

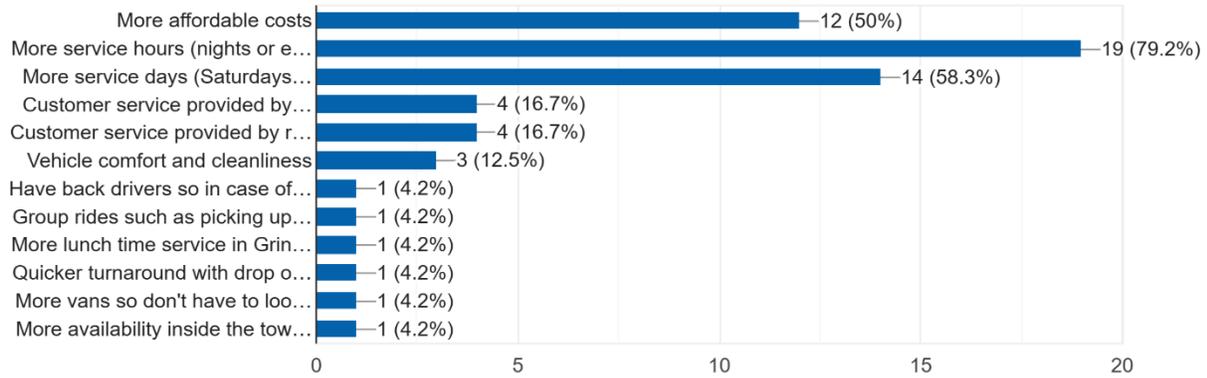
### Public Input: Peoplerides General Public Survey

Region 6 Resource Partners distributed a general public survey to regional Cities, Counties, and various email contacts. We also published it on our Facebook site. This effort was done in March

2024. 28 surveys were completed with this process. The survey questions and responses are noted here.

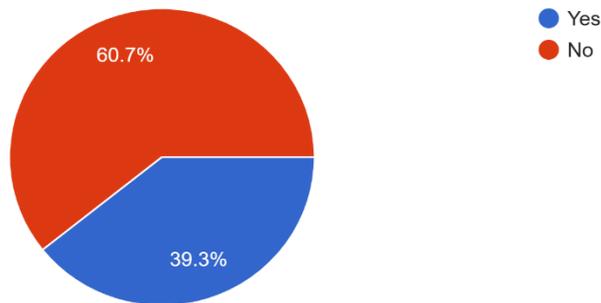
What can be improved with the public transit services in your area? (check all that apply)

24 responses



Do you currently use any public transit services?

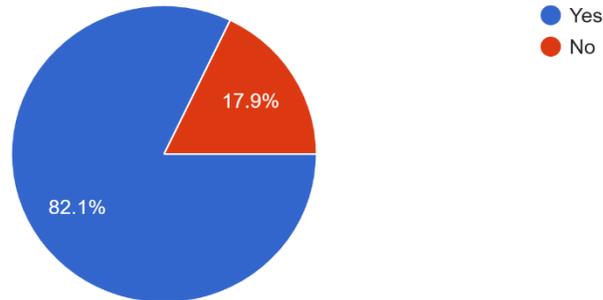
28 responses



Peoplerides service knowledge has been and continues to be large challenge. Our fractured funding system based upon location (Iowa Falls, Marshalltown, limited Tama/Toledo, and Grinnell vs rural county locations) and Medicaid vs non-Medicaid funding adds to these challenges. A ride in these cities is around \$3/ride for the operating hours. A ride outside of these places could easily be more than \$100.

Do you know what services Peoplerides can provide?

28 responses

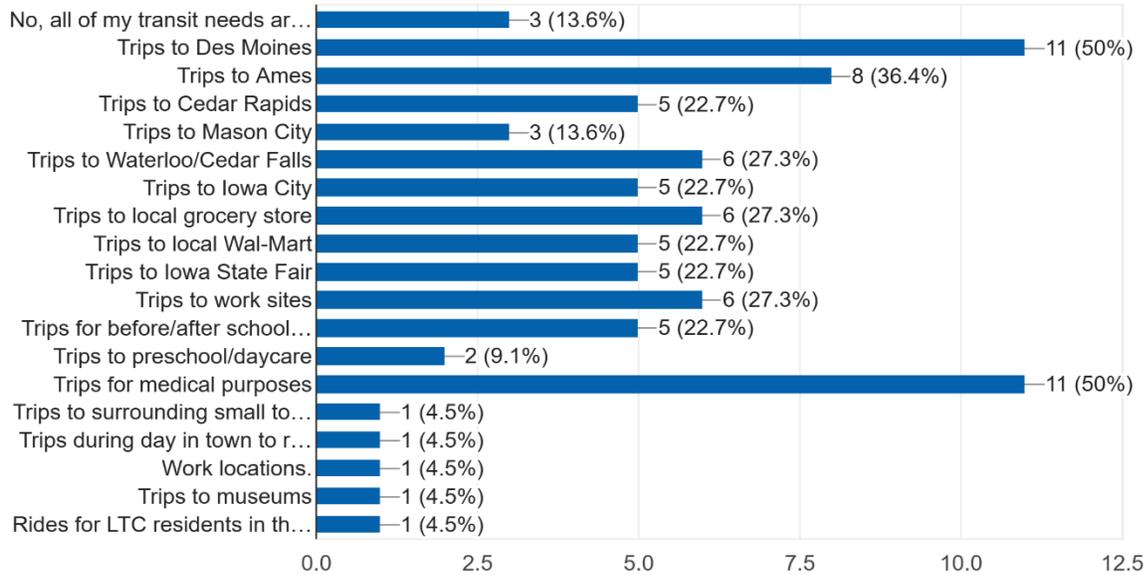


Trips to longer distance medical facilities was a survey respondent interest area. This includes trips to specialized medical facilities out of the area like Des Moines, Ames, Waterloo, and Iowa City. These are very expensive trips for us to provide at the current rate of \$2.89/mile. A trip to Des Moines & Des Moines would be near \$300, Waterloo around \$350, and Iowa City in the \$500-600 range. If a person is in a wheelchair, we are about the only feasible service.

There is some demand for other types of trips too – Wal-Mart, work sites, before/after school, etc. These other trip locations are fair to very good in Iowa Falls, Marshalltown (very good), Tama/Toledo, and Grinnell. Grinnell also has good service 5 days per week. Iowa Falls has service 5 days per week but times are limited. Local funding has a huge impact on our ability to serve some of these needs.

Are there transportation trips you would like to do that are not available or affordable with current public transit services? (check all that apply)

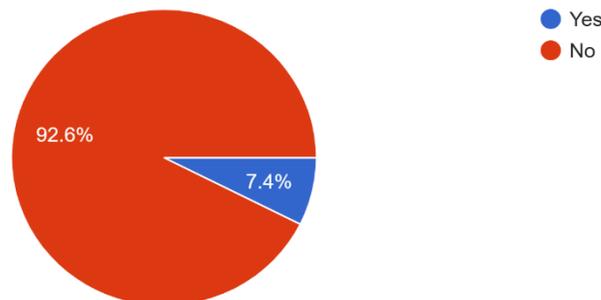
22 responses



Few people (2) have not been able to accept employment due to lack of transportation. There are a large number of adults that have aged out of the K-12 special education system that are likely sitting at home. Probably around 5-10% of the population is in this group and it is increasing, with our Marshalltown Schools transportation director interview. We need to do more research and evaluation to determine how many supported employment jobs cannot be placed due to transportation problems. If transportation is more available for this market, can some of the regional employment unmet needs be reduced. Likely, solving this problem will require either local public funding or volunteer drivers from another place.

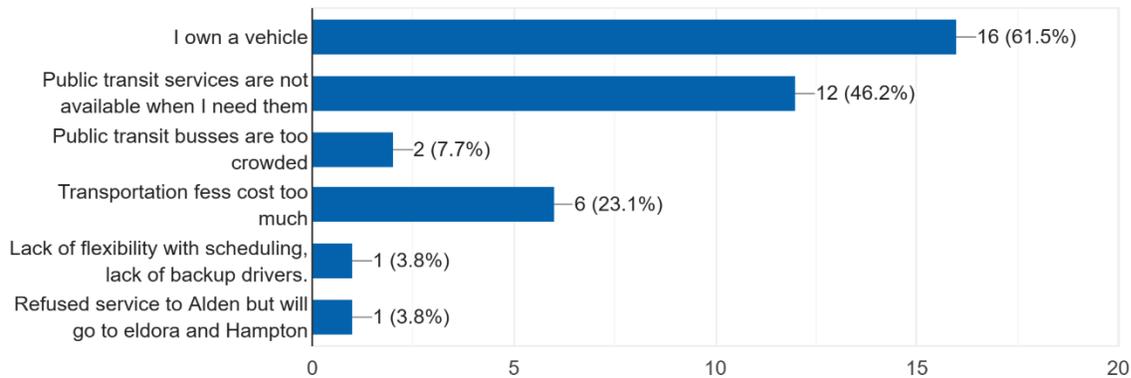
Have you lost employment or could not accept an employment opportunity due to lack of transportation?

27 responses



When asked what factors contribute to reduced or no usage of public transit services the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest response (after I own a vehicle) was public transit services are not available when I need them (12 responses). The next highest response was transportation fees cost too much (6 responses). Many of the plan issues revolve around this transportation fee.

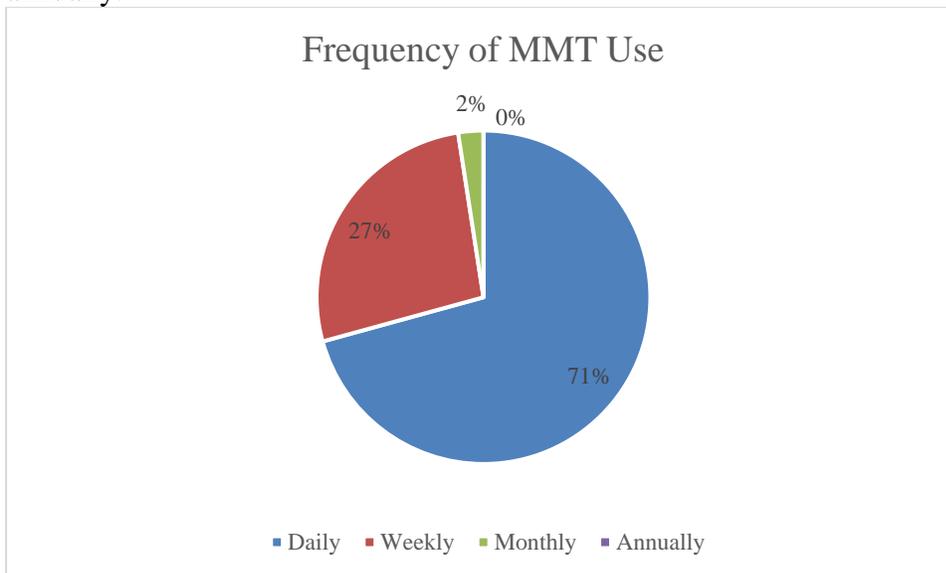
What factors contribute to reduced or no usage of public transit services? (check all that apply)  
26 responses



**Public Input: Marshalltown Municipal Transit Survey**

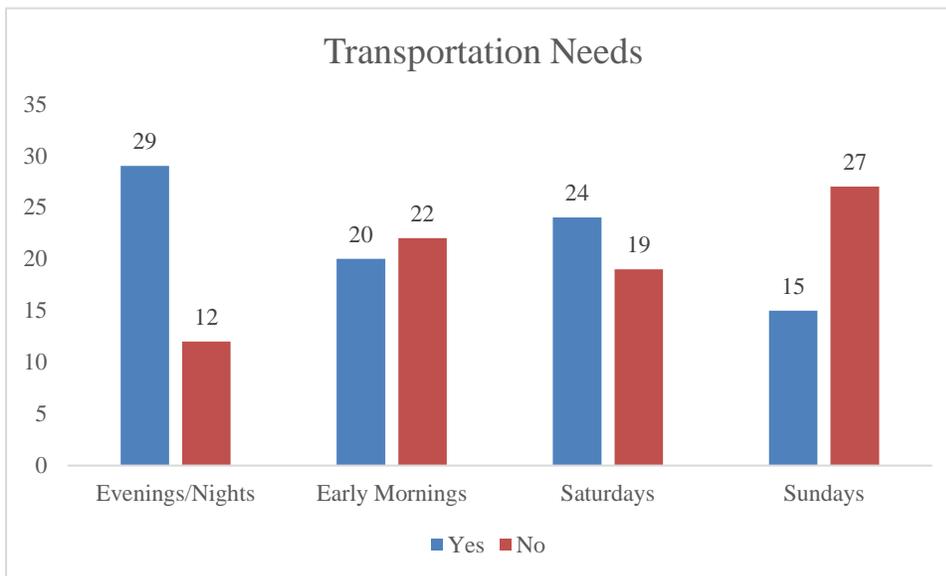
Marshalltown Municipal Transit staff distributed the survey electronically and on the vehicles in March 2024. There were 43 respondents to the survey.

Of the 43 surveys, 29 (71%) of the riders reported that they use MMT services daily, 11 (27%) reported they ride weekly, 1 (2%) reported they ride monthly, and 0 (0%) reported that they ride annually.



Of the 43 surveys, 22 (51%) of the riders reported that MMT busses are available when they want them, 9 (21%) reported that MMT busses are not available when they want them, and 12 (28%) did not answer the question.

Of the 43 surveys, 29 (67%) riders reported that they have transportation needs during the evenings/nights, 20 (47%) reported that they have transportation needs during the early mornings, 24 (56%) reported that they have transportation needs on Saturdays, and 15 (35%) reported that they have transportation needs on Sundays. So these needs are outside of the current MMT operating hours. It will be challenging to meet these needs with operating budgets that are being reduced.



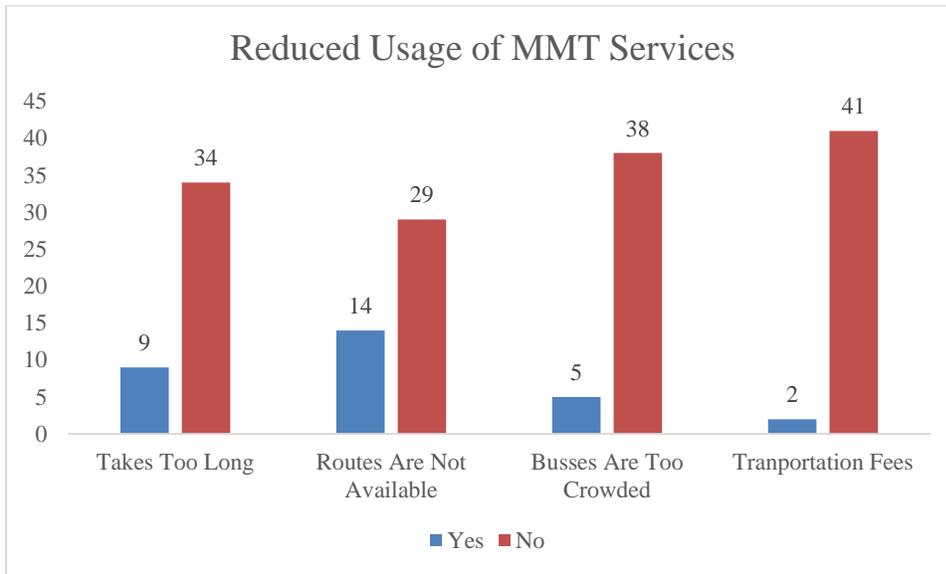
Of the 43 surveys, 13 (30%) of riders reported that they have lost or could not accept an employment opportunity due to lack of transportation and 30 (70%) riders reported that have not lost or could accept an employment opportunity due to lack of transportation. Probably many of the job challenges here are later evening or early morning. Some places across the state have contract arrangements with taxi type companies to partially subsidize the rates for rides that are outside fixed route transit operating hours.

Of the 41 riders who answered this question about reducing MMT hours from 7:00 AM-6:00 PM to 7:00 AM-5:00 PM, 21 (51%) riders reported that it would have no impact on their ability to travel, 12 (29%) riders reported that it would moderately impact their ability to travel, and 8 (20%) riders reported that it would significantly impact their ability to travel. With funding reductions and challenges that way it will be challenging to improve this situation.

Of the 41 riders who answered this question about increasing the MMT service fee from \$1.00 to \$1.50, 23 (56%) riders reported that it would have no impact on their utilization of MMT services, 10 (24%) riders reported that it would moderately impact their utilization of MMT

services, and 8 (20%) riders reported that it would significantly impact their utilization of MMT services.

Of the 43 surveys, 9 (21%) riders reported that it takes too long on MMT buses to get to and from their destination back to their residence, 14 (33%) reported that routes are not available when they need them, 5 (12%) reported that busses are too crowded, and 2 (5%) reported that transportation fees cost too much.



Of the 40 ratings that were provided by riders, 2 (5%) rated MMT services as very poor, 0 (0%) rated MMT services as poor, 5 (13%) rated MMT services as fair, 14 (35%) rated MMT services as good, and 19 (48%) rated MMT services as very good. 83% of riders rated MMT services as good or very good. So the vast majority of people (83%) rated the service quality as at least good.

Below is a summary of client suggestions for improving current MMT services:

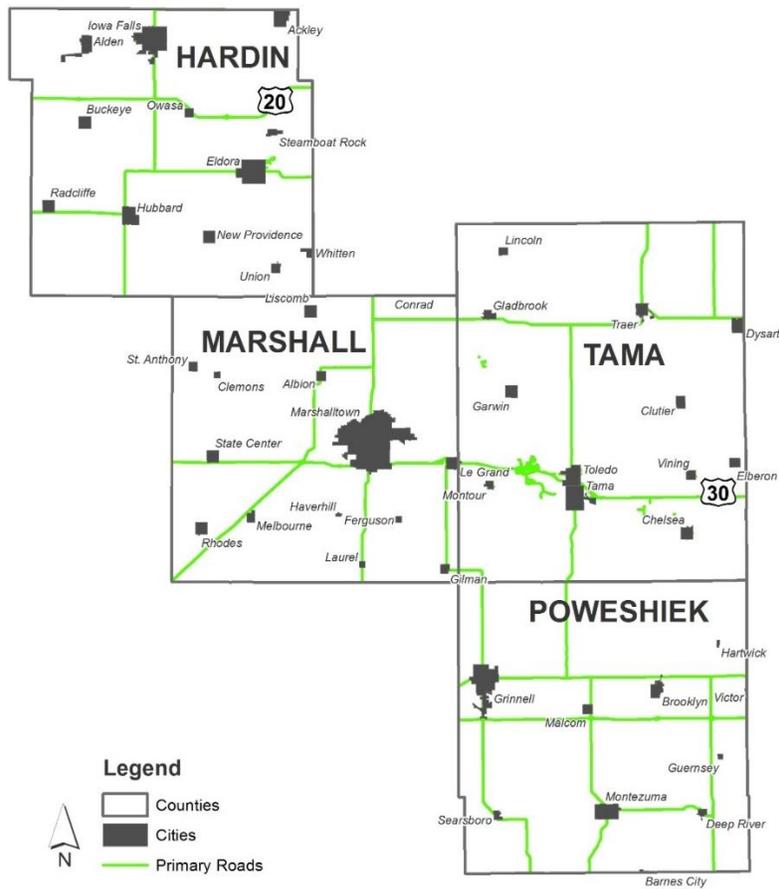
- Weekend service hours – 6 comments
- Evening service hours – 4 comments
- New destinations - Theisen's, Menard's, McDonald's, Culvers, Taco Bell, Meadow Lane Mall, Triumph Center.
- More busses running.
- Packed early morning school bus routes, too crowded.
- Better customer service – 2 comments.

## Section Two: Area Profile

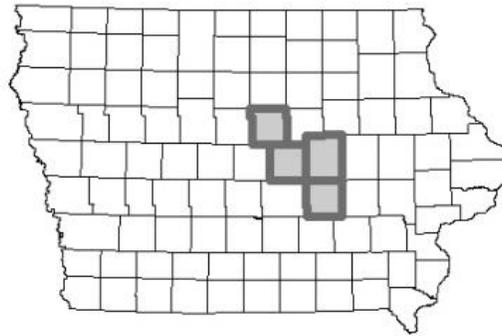
Region 6 includes the central Iowa counties of Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek, and Tama. The region also includes the Meskwaki Settlement, in Tama County. Overall, these 4 counties, 45 cities, and the Settlement form Iowa’s Region 6, which is served by the Region 6 Resource Partners.

The Region 6 Resource Partners serves as both a regional planning affiliate (RPA) for the Iowa Department of Transportation and as a Council of Governments (COG) that provides planning services to the counties, cities, and settlement in the region. The Commission is also the operator of the regional transit system, Peoplerides, which specializes in providing rides to elderly and disabled individuals but is available for everyone.

**Region 6 Service Area**



**Region 6 in the Context of the State of Iowa**



**Hardin County**

Ackley  
 Alden  
 Buckeye  
 Eldora  
 Hubbard  
 Iowa Falls  
 New Providence  
 Owasa  
 Radcliffe  
 Steamboat Rock  
 Union  
 Whitten

**Marshall County**

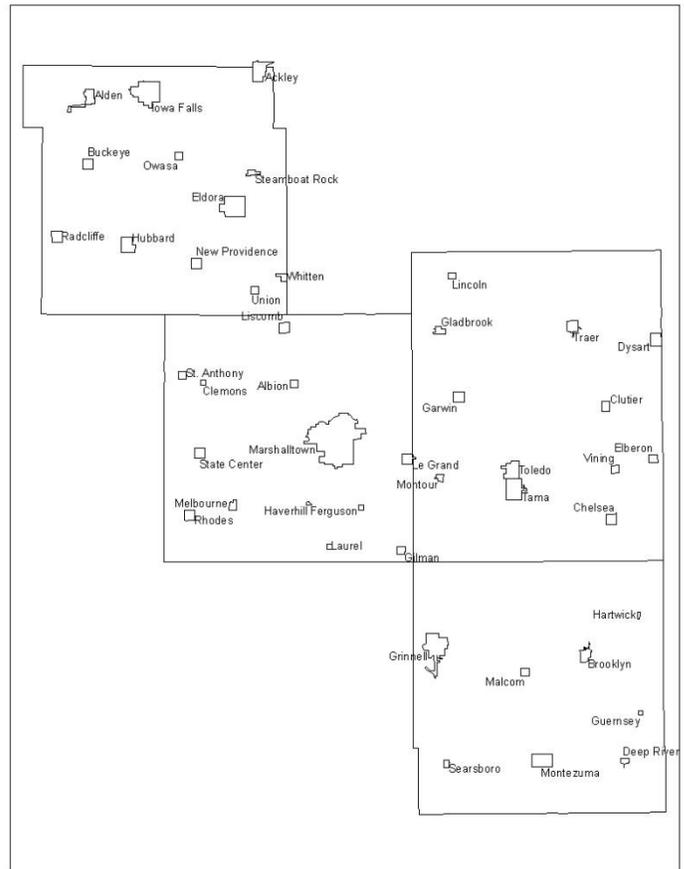
Albion  
 Clemons  
 Ferguson  
 Gilman  
 Haverhill  
 Laurel  
 Le Grand  
 Liscomb  
 Marshalltown  
 Melbourne  
 Rhodes  
 St. Anthony  
 State Center

**Poweshiek County**

Brooklyn  
 Deep River  
 Grinnell  
 Hartwick  
 Malcom  
 Montezuma  
 Searsboro  
 Guernsey

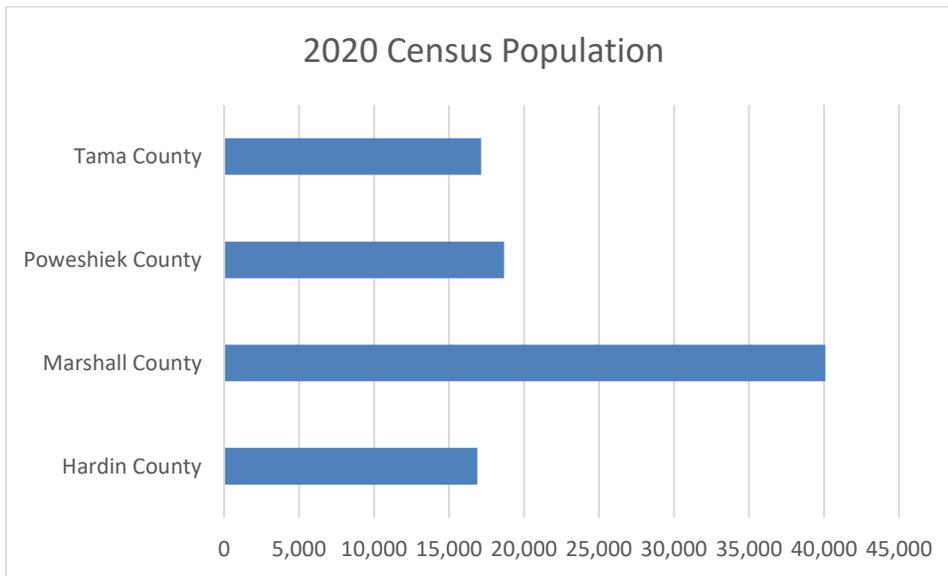
**Tama County**

Chelsea  
 Clutier  
 Dysart  
 Elberon  
 Garwin  
 Gladbrook  
 Lincoln  
 Montour  
 Tama  
 Toledo  
 Traer  
 Vining  
 Meskwaki Settlement

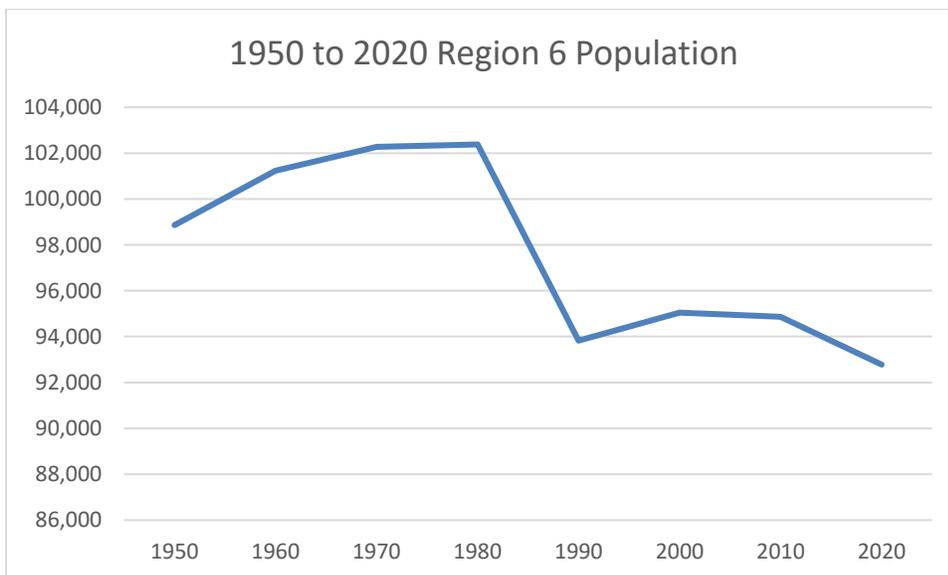


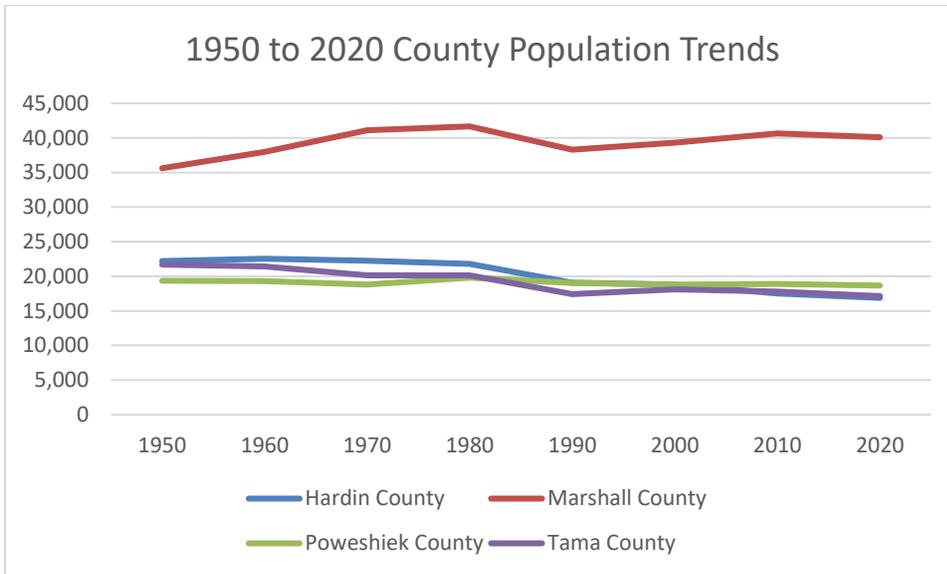
## Population

The Region 6 population is 92,780. This is at the lowest level since 1950. With the large number of baby boomers that are now or close to retirement, and with population loss workforce issues here are acutely challenging. This also greatly affects what public transit can offer. Public transit driver wages have increased significantly. We also cannot easily find people to fill positions. This causes some trip requests to go unfilled.

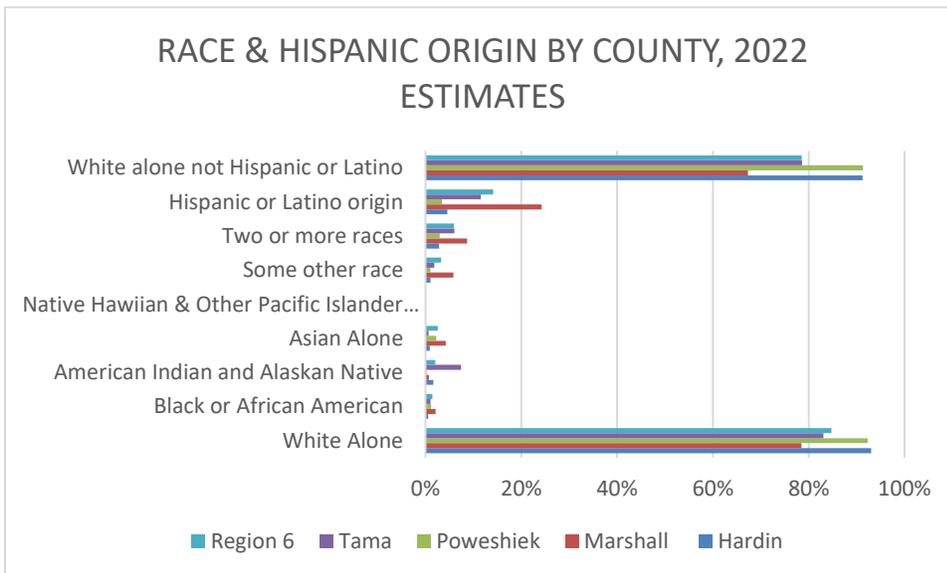


There is no easy solution to the regional population loss. Attracting new immigrants has helped meet the area employment needs and increasing the population. We frequently hear that younger people do not want to live in rural locations like Region 6. Younger people want to live in faster paced urban places.



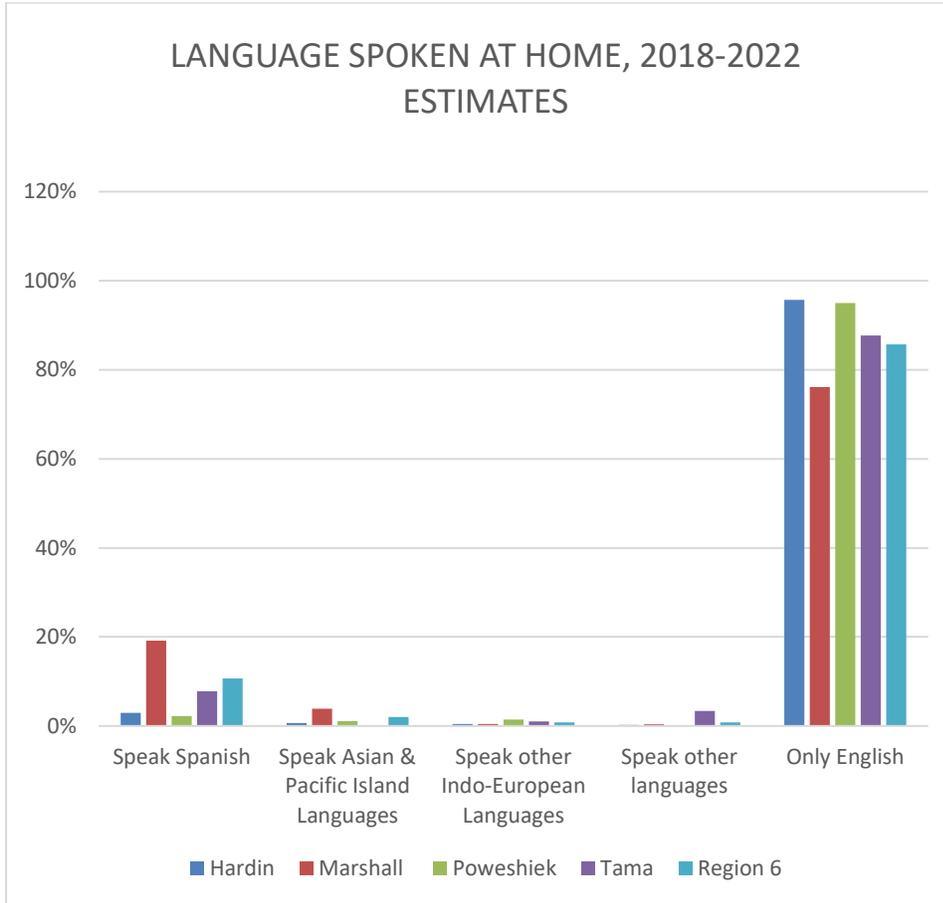


15% of the regional population is non-white. The white percentage is highest in Hardin at 93% and lowest in Marshall at 78%. The Hispanic or Latino origin is the highest non-white group at 14% of the regional population. The highest county percentage is Marshall at 24% and the lowest is Poweshiek at 3%. The next highest non-white group is two or more races at 6%. Asian alone, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and some other race was 2-3%. Black or African American was 1%. The increase in Hispanic or Latino population has happened since 1990. Without this large new group, the population loss for the region would be much higher. This population and other new immigrant groups are critical with meeting regional workforce needs.



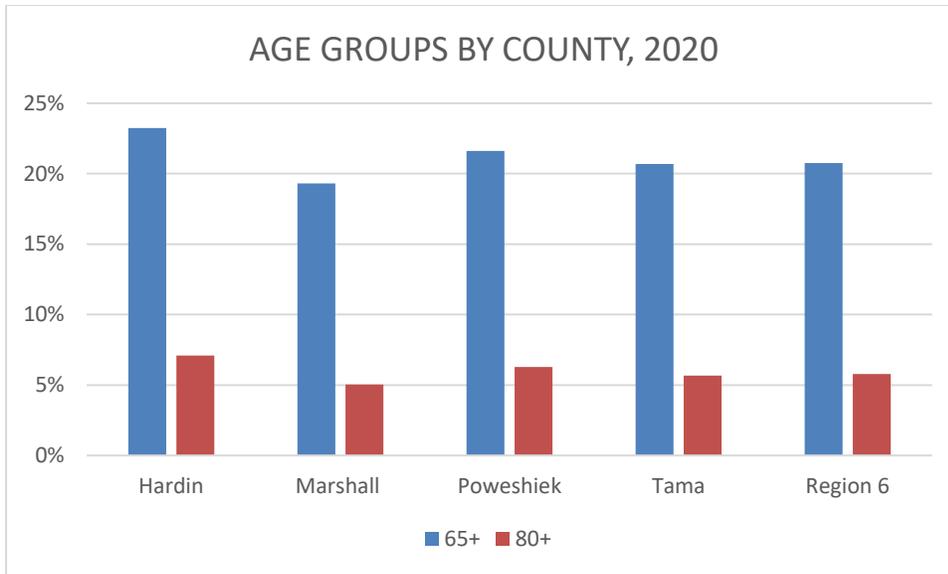
English is the primary language in the region. Like in past centuries and generations, it takes a while for new immigrant groups to pick up English. This historically has taken some groups

generations. More than 9,000 people reported that they speak Spanish at home – 11%. Other reported languages (Asian & Pacific Islander, Other Indo-European, Other) total 4% of families.



### Disability Summary

Older people that may be in frail health are more likely to use some types of public transit service. This includes Paratransit service in Marshalltown, and demand response rides within the region. Some may find that fixed route meet the needs. 20-25% of the population within each county is in these more likely user groups. The around 5% of the population at 80+ are even more likely to need public transit service at some point. This would be demanding response type rides to medical facilities.

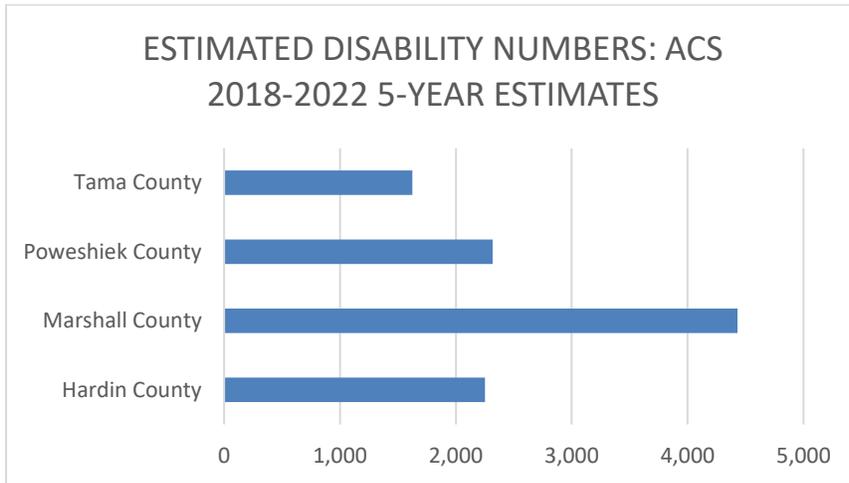


Disabled people represent about 10% of the population. The disabled population earning potential is less than 50% of the non-disabled population. The concern here is that someone that lives in Iowa Falls, Marshalltown, Tama/Toledo, and Grinnell have some limited to good transportation Public Transit at \$3/ride. The 45,000 people that live outside these places have no affordable transportation Public Transit. There are around 2,000-4,000 disabled people across the region that cannot accept employment due to the lack of affordable rides. Transportation in the other 5 places with better services is limited. No early morning, later evening, or weekend Public Transit. Solving this problem will require funding unless there is some source of free or little cost labor.



10,623 people reported a disability in the American Community Survey – 2018-2022. This is slightly higher than the 10% disability “rule of thumb” standard. Maybe half of that number

would not have vehicle licenses or good transportation Public Transit. That is around 5,000 people in the region.



### Layout of the Study Area

Besides employment tending to be concentrated in the larger population centers, essential services such as grocery stores, health care providers, hospitals, and entertainment or activity centers are leaving the smaller rural communities and concentrating in the larger communities. See Appendix of this plan for maps of the service area's key facilities.

Convenience stores like Casey's have begun to pop up around the Region, but they do not offer many healthy food choices, and they are often not an affordable food choice for a normal grocery shopping trip. Few small communities can support a grocery store (ten total grocery stores exist in the Region), leaving them to rely on the convenience stores/gas stations or the local bar. Many of the smaller communities would feel lucky to have even that amenity. A majority of residents in the region must travel to another city that has a market for their food shopping. Food deserts are common in the region, and some of these communities try to fill the gaps with farmers' markets and food pantries. Staff are also noticing a demand for more errand-focused, on-demand transportation, but establishing these services for an affordable price for residents would be challenging.

There are 45 incorporated cities and towns in the Region, but only three have hospitals, eight have dental clinics, and 13 have senior housing or nursing care centers. Although there are a large number of elderly living facilities, nursing homes or assisted living facilities in the Region, the residents of those facilities must be transported to other towns where medical centers are located to obtain needed medical services.

Residents of 16 facilities must be transported out of town for dental services, and residents of 21 facilities require long-distance transportation to a hospital. There are no medical clinics in northeast Tama County, resulting in patients needing transportation to Waterloo in neighboring Black Hawk County. Transportation to hospitals or clinics farther away, such as Ames in Story

County, Waterloo in Black Hawk County, Mason City in Cerro Gordo County, Des Moines metro area in Polk County, and Iowa City in Johnson County, is often required for medical care for this especially vulnerable population.

Mental health care is even more problematic. All of the Region 6 counties are in an underserved area. There is a huge shortage of psychiatrists across rural Iowa. This means that mental health cases have further to go for appropriate treatments. Going long distances for care is not attractive since the people with persistent mental illness generally have low incomes and poor transportation options. If the care is not convenient, people with mental illness will likely either not seek treatment or be unable to get themselves to treatment facilities. The result is that people with persistent mental illness do not receive adequate care.

Affordable transportation to out of town medical services and shopping is critical, particularly for the elderly and disabled and those who do not or should not drive.

### Commuting Patterns

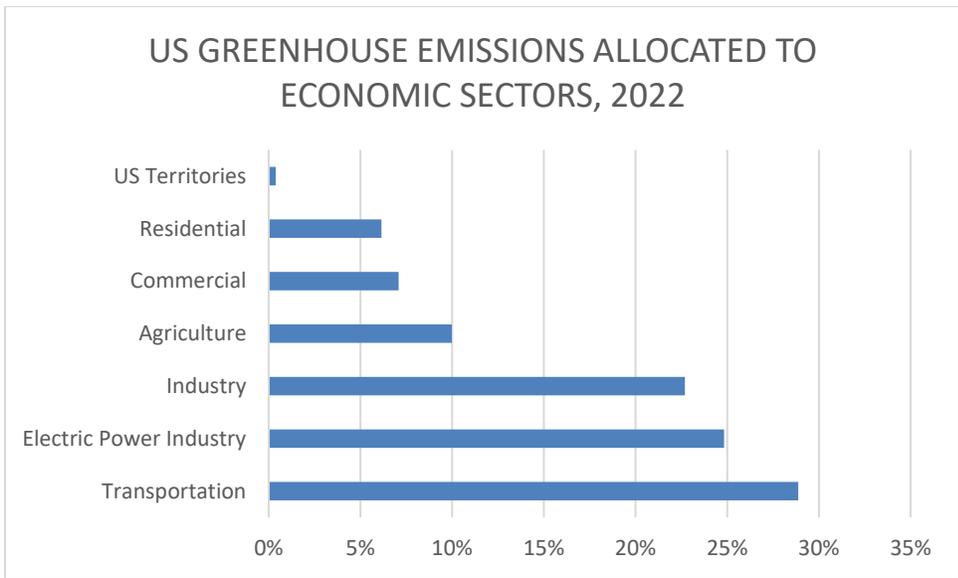
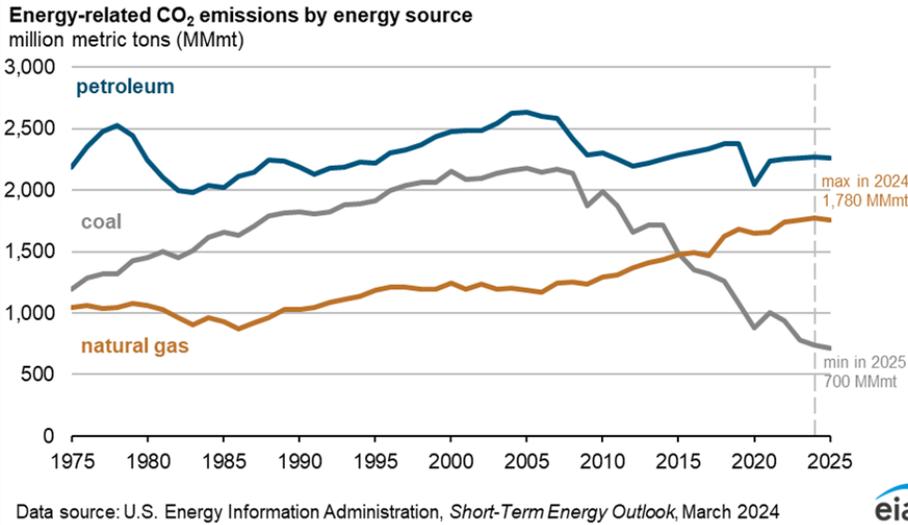
Public transit across the globe has been touted as “green” transportation vs private individual vehicle trips. Transportation contributes the largest amount of greenhouse gases in the US. Electric power and industry are second and third. The US has long been reliant upon personal vehicles for travel. That trend is not likely to change soon. Certainly, if gas prices get incredibly expensive or in short supply that would change things some. The Peoplerides and Marshalltown Transit users are not using public transit due to their concerns about this issue. Our users use the system because – they do not have licenses to drive, no vehicles are available, they do not feel well enough to drive, and no other transportation are available. School trips, disabled work trips, disabled service trips, senior trips, and other frequent user groups fit into these categories.

The Peoplerides and Marshalltown Transit services would need to be greatly changed to be an attractive for most routine transportation trips. Trips would need to be short, quick, inexpensive, and often. Then people still may choose to use personal vehicles because of various factors. Some trips are inexpensive but the short, quick, and often parts are challenging.

Solving this societal issue would also require a major change in funding. Until something changes that forces a big change, the status quo will likely be the best solution.

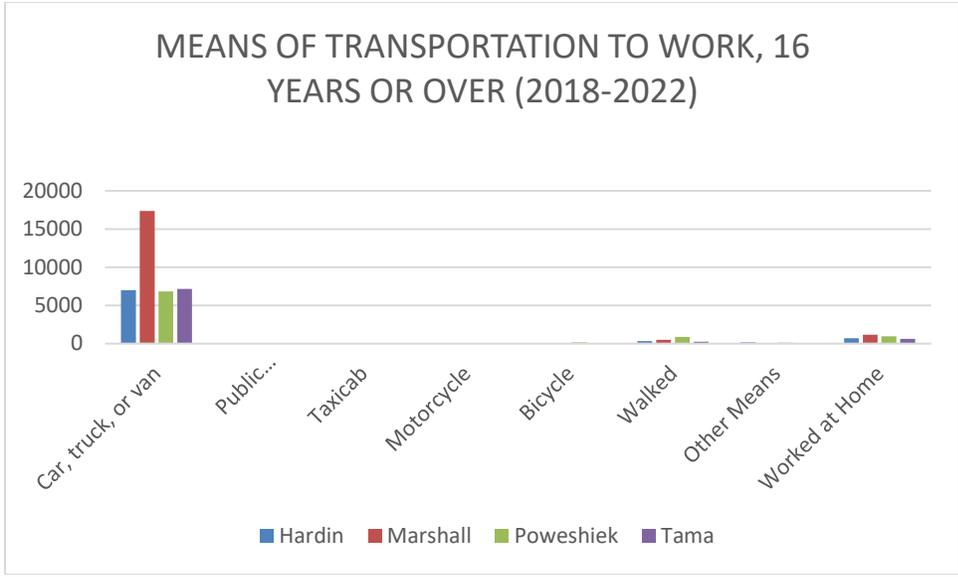
Some systems have had good luck getting largely new immigrant type groups to ride public transit routes to work sites. This is largely in the meat and food processing industries. So far, these regional industries have not been willing to fund these trips. Without a large amount of funding this will not be possible. The likely annual cost would be around \$100,000 for 1 vehicle. More than 50% of that operating cost would need to be supported by the industry. This does not include the cost of purchasing a special vehicle for this type of service.

The graph below shows the US CO2 emissions by energy source. This somewhat corresponds to the greenhouse gas by the sector graph. Petroleum is the largest source of emissions which is largely linked to transportation. Coal use has decreased dramatically since the peak in 2007 range. Natural gas usage continues to increase. The usage is almost 78% higher than in 1990. Natural gas is used in electricity production, home heating, and other chemicals.

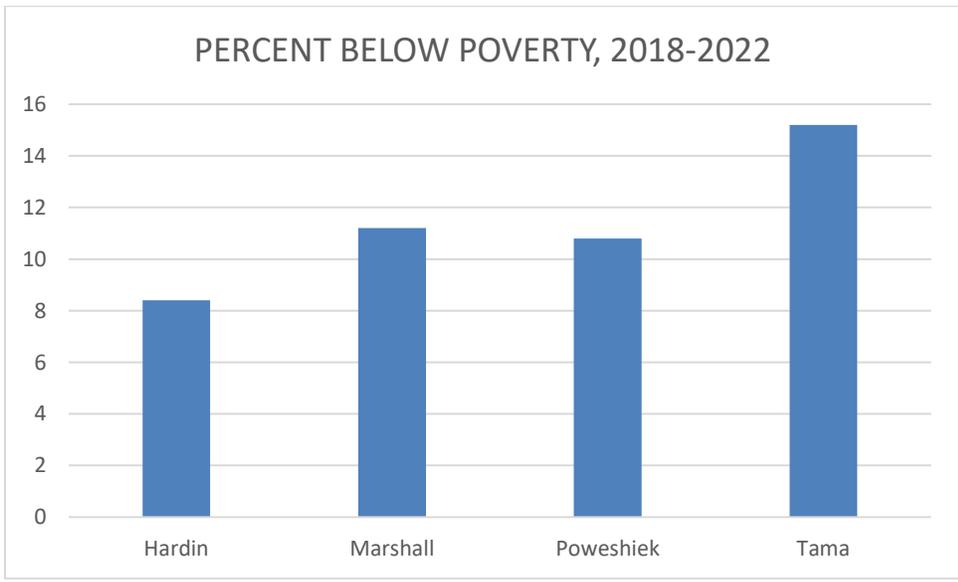


Source: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-02/us-ghg-inventory-2024-chapter-executive-summary.pdf>

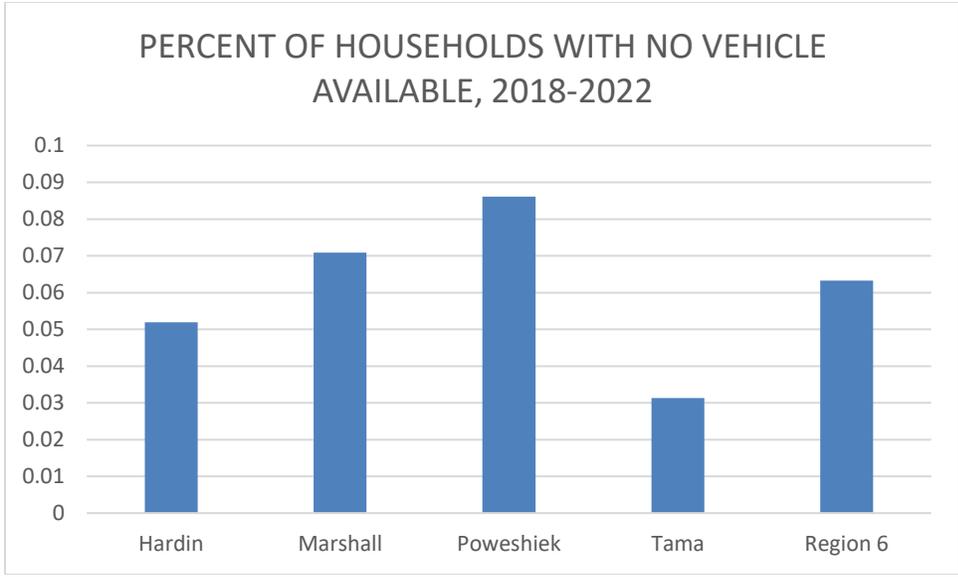
The American Community Survey asks people their means of transportation to work. Public transit in the region is too small a number to even show on the graph. Walked is the only outside of the home mode, besides private vehicles, that shows up on the graph. The regional total was 42 in the public transit sector. 81% of those were in Tama County. Only 3 were reported in Marshall County, 5 in Hardin, and 0 in Poweshiek.



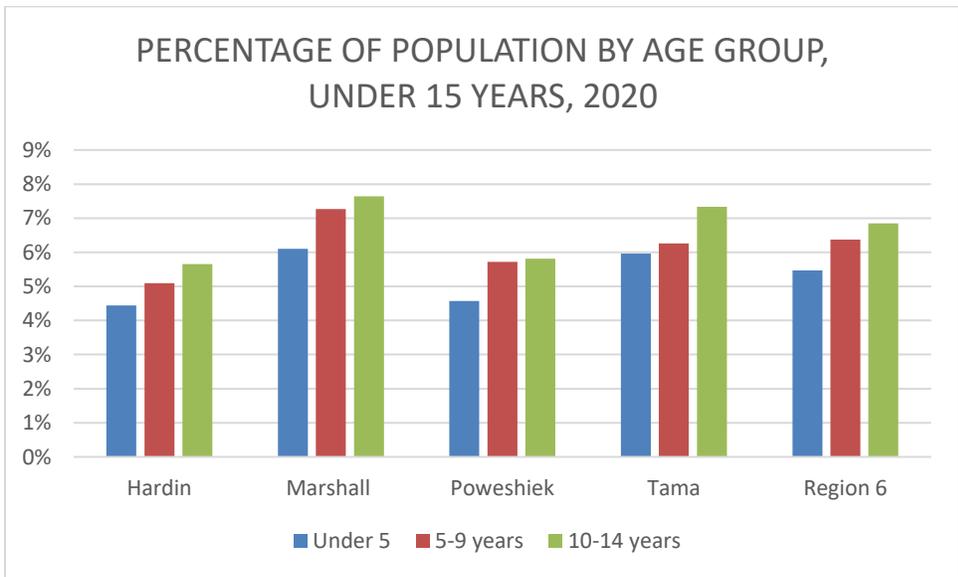
It is very expensive to own and maintain a vehicle. Even after acquiring the vehicle the cost to keep the vehicle going is a high figure. People that are living on minimal incomes are still finding ways to have personal private vehicles. Around 10% of the population is below the poverty line for the region. Very low-income people that do not have a disability where they cannot drive typically have vehicles in the area. As these costs continue to increase maybe public transit will be a more attractive option for families.



There are 2,326 households in the region with no vehicle available. This is 6% of the region’s households. Peoplesrides and Marshalltown Transit together are not seeing 2,326 different households use the transit services. The estimated number may approach half of that number for families with no vehicle.



Several public transit systems across the state are helping smaller towns meet pre-school to daycare transportation needs, transportation needs for special education groups, and smaller town transportation needs to schools. Many of these activities support families. Families do not need to be stressed about how to get a child back and forth in the middle of a work day. This no doubt causes some parents to exit the workforce. About 20% of the regional population is aged 0 to 14 years old (17,347 people). Better meeting this need will also require a funding component.



### Section Three: Inventory of Services

Below is a summary of services and relevant information that we were able to obtain from the agencies that provide transportation services in the Region 6 area. We were unable to obtain detailed information such as ridership numbers or annual operating expenses and revenues for those entities. We were able to provide such information only for Peoplerides.

#### Marshalltown Municipal Transit (MMT) System

Passenger transportation for the general public in the City of Marshalltown is provided by Marshalltown Municipal Transit (MMT). Marshalltown has the only small urban transit system operating within the Region.

Hours of service are 7:20 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Service generally includes two buses operating on four routes with 30-minute headways. The city offers complementary paratransit service with the same hours for disabled people. Express bus routes are offered at peak times, which primarily assist the K-12 schools.

MMT does not provide service on weekends or on seven observed holidays. The MMT fixed route is accessible to persons with disabilities. MMT buses are able to provide a total of 19 wheelchair spaces, depending on the configuration of passenger seat to wheelchair ratio.

MMT has a full-time transit manager, a full-time dispatcher, a full-time mechanic, six full-time drivers and one part time driver. The transit manager often fills in as dispatcher, mechanic, or driver.

MMT partners with Burlington Trailways to offer a “Request Only” stop three times each weekday, which is covered by the route that provides service to the south side of Marshalltown (For more detail, see MMT Inventory in Appendix).

Marshalltown Municipal Transit operates larger heavy-duty vehicles. All of these vehicles have higher replacement costs. The total local match listed below is estimated at \$286,335 or about \$143,000/year.

VEHICLE DESCRIPTION	FLEET ID#	TOTAL COST	YEAR
30' Heavy Duty Bus (replacement)	109	\$608,500	2025
40' Heavy Duty Bus (replacement)	991	\$650,200	2026
40' Heavy Duty Bus (replacement)	013	\$650,200	2026
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,908,900</b>	

MMT monitors and assesses the needs of eligible service populations to determine the need for translation in outreach materials. Currently 23% of Marshalltown families speak a language

besides English at home, according to the 2018-2022 American Community Survey data. Spanish is the highest with 19% and Asian & Pacific Islander at 4%.

MMT has two seasonal bus routes that pickup largely K-12 students and take to K-12 public schools. General public can ride on the routes also. Many of the bus riders are Hispanic youth. They are picked up in the northeast neighborhood, central neighborhood, and the southeast neighborhood. The Marshalltown Community School district busses pick up K-12 students that reside further than 3 miles for the high school and 2 miles for the 5-8 grades. MMT uses old 35' heavy duty buses for these services. The services are well used.

On the regular MMT fixed routes, not many LEP riders use the bus. Most of the new immigrants have their own vehicles or rely upon friends and/or family that have access to a vehicle. Many of these households also live in concentrated neighborhoods in town that are within walking distance of their job.

### **Region 6 - Peoplerides**

Region 6 Resource Partners operates Peoplerides, the only regional public transit system within the four-county planning area. The system operates on a demand response basis. There are currently 23 vehicles in the fleet. All of the vehicles fully comply with all Americans with Disabilities Act standards. All of the vehicles have lifts or ramps to assist persons with disabilities. Region 6 has one full time transit manager, one assistant manager and one full time scheduler/dispatcher.

Peoplerides hours of service are 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday thru Friday. Operating hours for paratransit service for disabled people in Marshalltown correspond with those of MMT (Marshalltown Municipal Transit). MMT's hours of service are 7:10 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.

Over the next 5 years Peoplerides has 10 vehicles that will likely need to be replaced. The replacement values shown below are the estimated 100% cost. Year FY 2026 has a 6% growth factor and the later years 3%. The local match for the vehicles averages \$35,000/year. We have historically set aside into operating rates \$0.10/mile for replacements. This has been based upon higher historical miles – 300,000-350,000 miles. Now we operate at about 220,000 annual miles. So that \$0.10 per mile with current replacement costs is no longer adequate. That value needs to be at \$0.16/mile. That number may need to be adjusted in the future. That local \$13,000 cost increase is another future funding challenge. With all the funding reductions we may also need to evaluate reducing the vehicle fleet. That will need to be with CDL requiring equipment.

Peoplerides will need the new non-CDL equipment to continue basic core services. With the vehicle fleet listed below there are 7 non-CDL vehicles and 12 CDL vehicles. It is incredibly difficult to find drivers. It is not feasible to find a driver with all the proper licensure. So the typical process is to hire with a non-CDL equipment and then eventually transition to CDL equipment in 3-4 months. Our goal is to transition out of CDL equipment, which may cause some disabled service routes to have multiple drop offs. Peoplerides is not alone in this constant driver struggle. Most operators around the state report similar problems.

Agency Id	Location Of Vehicle	Year	Manufacturer	Seating Capacity	Wheelchair Positions	FY 25 ACTIVITY TOTAL COST	FY 26 ACTIVITY TOTAL COST	FY 27 ACTIVITY TOTAL COST	FY 28 ACTIVITY TOTAL COST	FY 29 ACTIVITY TOTAL COST	CDL needed
218	Tama	2018	Glaval Bus	18	3					\$ 127,042	y
114A	Marshalltown	2014	Chrysler Corporation	6	2			\$ 120,413			n
214	Eldora	2014	Chrysler Corporation	6	2			\$ 120,413			n
412	Marshalltown	2012	Nissan	6	2	\$ 110,471					n
117	Grinnell	2017	Glaval Bus	12	3						y
115	Marshalltown	2015	Glaval Bus	14	3		\$ 117,099				y
215	Marshalltown	2015	Glaval Bus	18	3		\$ 117,099				y
121	Marshalltown	2021	Glaval Bus	14	3						y
321A	Grinnell	2021	Glaval Bus	18	3						y
221	Marshalltown	2021	Glaval Bus	14	3						y
120	Grinnell	2021	Turtle Top	10	2						n
220	Eldora	2021	Glaval Bus	14	3						y
116	Marshalltown	2016	Chrysler Corporation	6	2						n
521	Iowa Falls	2021	Glaval Bus	18	3						y
421	Iowa Falls	2021	Glaval Bus	14	3						y
216	Marshalltown	2016	Turtle Top	11	2		\$ 117,099				n
118	Grinnell	2017	Turtle Top	11	2					\$ 127,042	n
217	Iowa Falls	2017	Glaval Bus	18	4				\$ 123,728		y
316	Marshalltown	2016	Glaval Bus	11	2				\$ 123,728		y
						\$ 110,471	\$ 351,298	\$ 240,827	\$ 247,455	\$ 254,083	

The Peoplerides salary package is also \$16.50/start for a driver. This is comparable for the regional transit systems in Iowa. A full-time driver then would make \$34,320/year. This is less than the Marshalltown Transit salary and similar jobs in the private sector. There simply is not sufficient revenue to raise that salary level. Services may need to be discontinued short or long term in the future, due to the inability to staff positions.

Peoplerides, as a partially federally funded agency, takes reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons. The goal of English Proficiency Accommodations by Peoplerides is to find a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on the organization.

The Peoplerides/Region 6 website has incorporated a “translate” button on its webpage. A user can navigate to <https://www.region6resources.org/sign-up-to-ride/> and will find a bright orange “Translate” button in the bottom right corner. This button allows to user to translate into dozens

of languages. The website contains important information about ride scheduling, ride rates, policies and service updates.

Vital documents need only be translated when a significant number or percentage of the population eligible to be served, or likely to be directly affected by the program/activity, needs services or information in a language other than English to communicate effectively. Peoplerides is currently working to have brochures about available services translated into Spanish. It would be impossible, from a practical and cost-based perspective, to translate every piece of outreach material into every language. Title VI does not require this of recipients of federal financial assistance, and EO 13166 does not require it of federal agencies.

Peoplerides provides or has access to translation services in the following ways:

- Peoplerides has partnered with CTS Language Link for over-the-phone interpretation services. Clients who call and have Limited English Proficiency are asked to hold while CTS Language Link is contacted. The automated service allows us to quickly select the language desired for interpretation and to be connected immediately to an interpreter.

Peoplerides monitors and assesses the needs of eligible service populations to determine whether certain critical outreach materials translations into other languages are needed. Currently about 14% of regional residents speak and language besides English at home. The highest percentage by far, is Spanish at 11%. The highest numbers are in Marshall followed by Tama County.

The Marshalltown K-12 Public Schools report that there are more than 30 different languages in the schools. Asian and African languages are on the increase in Marshalltown and places like Tama.

Peoplerides continues to try to be more aggressive in marketing their services and their fees. Disseminating this information to all potential riders is a worthy goal for Peoplerides.

Again, the same limits apply to this source as well. Outreach of this type will require additional personnel and budget.

### **Iowa Veterans Home (IVH)**

The IVH has a fleet of busses and vans. IVH transportation service is limited by state law to only residents of the Home. (According to the transportation manager, this is the only state veterans' home that has that restriction.) Spouses/aides are not even allowed to ride along and must meet the passenger at their destination. This restriction precludes any type of cooperative ride-sharing with other agencies (IVH Inventory in Appendix).

### **Nursing Homes and Senior Housing**

Most nursing home facilities across the region now have vehicles that they have purchased. Many of these vehicles are not used much. With their extreme staffing challenging partnering with them and their vehicles is not feasible. Many of them still rely upon Peoplerides and

Marshalltown Transit for some of the transportation needs. The facilities that use public transit are located in Hubbard, Eldora, Marshalltown, Tama, and Grinnell.

### **K-12 Public Schools**

Only two out of the 15 school district transportation directors that were contacted to complete surveys responded. The two school districts that completed the survey were Marshalltown Community School District and Green Mountain-Garwin Community School District (GMG).

The Marshalltown Community School District has 48 yellow busses, 11 other vehicles, 3 vehicles have wheelchair lifts/ramps, they average around 3,058 daily passengers, they average 9 daily trips that require a wheelchair lift/ramp, their drivers average around 499,810 miles of travel annually, their annual budget is roughly \$1.5 million, and when asked about how Peoplerrides could assist them, stated: “as we work on transitioning students to adulthood, we could look at how to introduce families on how to use People Rides to get around for work experiences or classes at MCC during their Jr and Sr year. This would be a great transition component to their education programing.”

The Green Mountain-Garwin Community School District has 14 yellow busses, 7 other vehicles, only 1 vehicle has a wheelchair lifts/ramp, they average around 300 daily passengers, they average 1 daily trip that requires a wheelchair lift/ramp, their drivers average around 81,350 miles of travel annually, they did not provide their annual budget, and when asked about how Peoplerrides could assist them, stated: “van routes.”

### **Central Iowa Residential Services (CIRSI)**

- Number of vehicles used for passenger transportation: 1
- Estimated miles per year per vehicle: 5,000
- Location: 111 E. Linn St., Marshalltown, Iowa
- Number of vehicles fully ADA accessible (lift and sufficient headroom): 1
- Estimated annual passengers transported with vehicle: 100

CIRSI housing staff members use personal vehicles to drive residents to appointments and necessary activities. Both MMT and Peoplerrides provide daily transportation services for CIRSI programs and clients. CIRSI has a lift equipped non-ADA compliant conversion van. CIRSI recently ran a fundraiser (Galaxy Capital Campaign) to purchase a new wheelchair-equipped van for the Adult Day Services programing FY 2018. They use this vehicle for special outings to visit local facilities and volunteer at the library, food pantry and churches. They also shop for supplies at Fareway, Menards, and Hobby Lobby. This vehicle gets minimal usage. This vehicle does not present many coordination problems, but it is an extra vehicle.

### **Veterans Affairs**

Marshall County and Tama County Veterans Affairs programs have leased minivans through the State of Iowa Department of Administrative Services Veterans Affairs program. Marshall

County has two leased vehicles. Tama County has one leased minivan. Hardin and Poweshiek Veterans Affairs offices do not have vehicles. The annual expenses for these vehicles are paid by the Department of Administrative Services. The vehicle drivers are volunteers; they only transport veterans. This is either a local or federal rule, according to information provided by the local veteran affairs programs. The vehicles are available five days per week. The vehicles are not accessible for disabled riders. Individuals who use wheelchairs must find an alternate transportation provider.

### **Intercity Bus**

The only intercity bus carrier with stops within the region is Burlington Trailways. The only bus stop in the region is in Marshalltown, in Marshall County. MMT partners with Burlington Trailways to offer a “Request Only” stop three times each weekday, which is covered by the route that provides service to the south side of Marshalltown. Annually only 2-3 people request a special trip to this location. The typical person requesting an MMT ride to the bus stop is a low-income person under age 60.

### **Carpool or Vanpool**

Until July 1, 2024 there were no organized carpool or vanpool programs originating from the Region to take residents from their homes in one county or city in the Region to employment located in another county or city in the Region. Central Iowa Rideshare has vans going from places in Region 6 to the Des Moines area with regional residents. This service historically included facilities in Grinnell and Marshalltown. We no longer see vans coming in from Des Moines.

In August 2024 Region 6 starts a new partnership with Enterprise Commute to offer vanpool service to regional employers. For the time period of 8/1/24 to 9/30/25 we will provide \$500/month/vehicle of subsidy for new vanpool programs and up to 6 vehicles. We understand that Iowa Premium in Tama currently operates 5 units. 1 more vehicle is available for this time period.

Some of the Region’s large employers would benefit from public transit program to the facilities. Industries within the region that have similar partially industrial funded bus services include JBS (Marshalltown), Iowa Premium (Tama), Mom’s Meals (Grinnell), and Burke (Nevada). The cost per ride in one part of the state is around \$8/ride. The operating cost breakeven point with that rate is around 25 people riding on a regular basis.

## Section Four: Coordination Issues

### Service Gaps

A summary of the service gaps across the region includes the following. (Note: Most of these needs are applicable to Peoplerides more than Marshalltown Municipal Transit):

- **Grinnell College & Peoplerides Coordination:** Grinnell College in summer of 2022 started a fixed route service with 12 passenger non accessible vehicles for strictly Grinnell College students within Grinnell. This service is fully funded by Grinnell College. The service may have up to around 20,000 annual rides. Currently, this service is not willing to pick up general public students. Peoplerides continues to have some discussion with them about service modifications and coordination to make this service fit into overall general public rides. Maybe something will be feasible in the future.
- **Need vehicle inside storage:** All Peoplerides vehicles except about 3 that are in Marshalltown are stored outside. This is not a major challenge except in the winter time with snow/ice. We have had some vehicles in Grinnell where a local criminal was syphoning off gas. So some non-climate controlled indoor storage would be desirable. Current vehicle storage locations are – Iowa Falls, Eldora, Marshalltown, Tama, and Grinnell. We reviewed some quick Public Transit Sections with the board in FY 24 and the board response was that any cash and operating funds need to be used for operating costs. Indoor storage also will not save much on operating costs. With the 2023 Iowa Legislature property tax bill change, the feasibility of much revenue increase from the Region 6 cities and counties is low also. We do not see this being possible for many future years.
- **Need affordable transportation Public Transit Rides.** Affordability is a special problem for rural rides. Region 6 has similar rates to other systems in Iowa Falls, Marshalltown (largely set by Marshalltown), Tama/Toledo, and Grinnell. Our rates outside of these places are not attractive at \$2.89/mile. At least 5 of the 15 other systems have substantially more attractive rates at around \$4/ride. The rate for regional rides (ride from 1 county to another) is a much more expensive offering. Here that cost is in the \$150/ride estimated level. Four of the 15 other systems are making that ride more affordable at \$15/ride. Another 4 are making that more affordable but still expensive at around \$75/ride. While Region 6 recognizes the need in the region for more affordable trips, we are unable to provide these rates without more subsidy or substantially higher ridership. Reduction in local property tax revenues makes this problem even more significant. Increasing affordability is a longstanding goal.
- **Need expanded transportation service Public Transit Rides to larger Iowa Communities.** The current and past surveys indicate a desire for more affordable transportation services to longer distance medical sites like Ames, Des Moines, Iowa City, and Waterloo. These rates also need to be more affordable than our current \$2.89/mile. So a current estimated round trip to some of these places is \$300. Other rides that are further away are even more expensive. Reducing these rates will either require more surplus with certain services or local public subsidy.
- **Benefit for industrial rides to food and meat processing facilities.** Industries in the area (JBS, Iowa Premium, and Mom’s Meals) have historically reached out to us about

affordable rides to these places from Marshalltown, Des Moines area, and other places. They have not been willing to provide subsidy for these trips however. We do not have available busses or drivers either for these new services. One Iowa region is doing these trips at \$8/ride. The Region 6 estimated break-even point appears to be around 25 people riding on a regular basis. Finding a driver anymore is a huge challenge also. We can potentially try to implement a service but there is risk. If the revenue is based upon ridership, what happens if the numbers decrease significantly?

- The vanpool model would decrease the cost and risk very significantly. Enterprise Commute approached us recently. This cost per vehicle would be \$500-600/month/vehicle. The minimum number of passengers is 4.
- **Need affordable and on-demand transportation services for non-medical trips.** Peoplerides primarily serves clients with disabilities and medical needs. Rides must be scheduled in advanced, and few riders' use Peoplerides service for needs other than access to medical appointment or other necessary social services. For those without alternate transportation, a need exists for affordable transportation for grocery shopping, errands, getting to and from work, getting children to child care, attending education or professional training opportunities, or visiting friends and family. There are thousands of people across the region that are sitting at home because they cannot get places with affordable rides. These individuals and families are not contacting us for service, however. Some of these people could get service industry type jobs. Region 6 does not offer affordable rides for these groups outside of Marshalltown, Iowa Falls, Grinnell, and a very limited extent in Tama/Toledo. Better serving these groups will require some additional funding and likely additional drivers.
- **Need attractive transportation Public Transit Rides to reduce energy dependence and get fragile drivers off the road.** Public Transit Ride rates are not attractive enough to reduce regional energy use. Getting elderly out of their vehicles is a challenge. The primary problems include routes that take too long, are not available, and/or cost too much. Cost is a key barrier to attracting some frail elderly transit riders.
- **Replace and possibly expand the Region 6 vehicle fleet.** Replacing older public transit vehicles will continue to be a public transit need. We will continue to convert vehicles to smaller vehicles that do not require a CDL. It is difficult to find drivers and expensive to go through the CDL training process. The historical standard Federal Transit Administration capital funding has been a good source for these vehicle replacements.
  - If some of the Public Transit recommendations in this plan are implemented there would be a need for more vehicles. The best source for funding would be the Surface Transportation Block Grant funds administered by Region 6 Resource Partners. This funding would support 80% of the vehicle cost for expansion vehicles. It takes about 4 years now to get a vehicle through the programming and acquisition process, so advance planning is needed.

## Status of Previous Recommendations

The 2019 Passenger Transportation Plan action goals are listed below with the description that appeared in the previous plan. The status of each goal since the 2019 update is included in italics.

### Peoplerides

1. **Replace vehicles when they exceed the federal useful life threshold.** *We anticipate that 2-3 vehicles will need to be replaced each year.*
2. **Continue funding operating expenses for current public transit services.** *Federal and state operating support is critical to continue current services. We have benefited greatly with federal pandemic transit support. Once that funding fully runs out at 6/30/25 we may be struggling with funding services, so funding reductions are possible.*
3. **Construct indoor storage facilities for vehicles in Marshalltown, Iowa Falls, Grinnell, and Tama.** *These facilities continue to be a need, especially in the winter. The Region 6 board has emphatically stated that all available funds, including cash on hand, needs to be used to continue operating services.*
4. **Seek funding and opportunities to reduce the \$2.10/mile charge for demand response rural transportation services.** *Our current demand response rate is \$2.89/mile. Lowering this rate and achieving equity with the cities that are funding services (Iowa Falls, and Grinnell) would require some subsidy from the Counties. The current feedback that we are getting from counties & cities is that with the 2023 Iowa Legislature property tax bill that they will be just trying to maintain current services. Many are reducing staff positions.*
5. **Offer more days of service at our \$2.50 bargain day rate.** *There are no services where we currently operate bargain day rates or prices. With current labor rates, vehicle replacement costs, and maintenance costs this is not feasible. Local funding is not available either to help this issue.*
6. **More marketing of available Peoplerides services.** *Marketing is still limited to brochures and word of mouth. We are currently exploring some Public Transit increased social media marketing as a strategy to find part time drivers to better serve the Medicaid NEMT needs. Our historical indeed method is not finding drivers, especially part time people. We think that there are some new retiree types that would like to drive part time routes to better meet NEMT needs.*
7. **Evaluate whether private taxi operators in Marshalltown and Grinnell would have some interest of serving weekend and night services in some places.** *We heard in the last 1-2 months that the Godfrey family in Marshalltown discontinued the Cabs of Marshalltown program. We have not heard that any other family picked that up. We have seen the old minivan running around a little bit since then. There are no other private taxi operators in the region. We have also heard that an individual in Iowa Falls operates a limited uber service.*
8. **Expand the Peoplerides rural demand response fleet of vehicles to accommodate nearly all Medicaid non-emergency rides.** *We are looking at ways to better meet the Medicaid NEMT needs. We hear from passengers that when we turn back NEMT rides that the private operators are late, vehicles are dirty, and the drivers are rude. The riders prefer to have rides with Peoplerides. We evaluated 1 month worth of turned down rides and that amounts to 2,000 rides per year. We would need 3 to 8 part time drivers and some additional vehicles likely to serve these needs. Some of the needs could be met with non-accessible vehicles. Others need accessible vehicles. All of these needs are basically 1 person in the vehicle at 1 time.*
9. **Consider serving the workforce needs of the region through vanpool vehicles.** *We are currently having discussion with Enterprise Commute for vanpool services. There are currently 5 vanpool vehicles going to Iowa Premium in Cedar Rapids – maybe from Cedar*

*Rapids. There is another unit likely starting soon too for another employer. There are likely many employers around the region that would benefit from this – Iowa Premium (Tama), JBS (Marshalltown), Jeld-Wen (Grinnell), Mom’s Meals (Grinnell), and many others. Enterprise has stated that if we want to count these rides for regional transit statistical purposes that the minimum subsidy/vehicle/month is \$500. The Region 6 Board will consider how to best proceed with this new service in summer of 2024. The annual cost per vehicle minimum then is \$6,000.*

10. **Peoplerides maintenance facility and mechanic.** *This would be beneficial from an operational perspective. It would however increase operating costs. We also do not have a facility to accommodate this. All these issues make it not feasible.*
11. **Develop better software that integrates all the public transit data into one system.** *We use Paraplan software for scheduling and billing. We also use a related company for current fleet data. This is working pretty well. One future need may be online booking, but most of our customers are not online types.*
12. **Add or share a public transit driver trainer.** *We continue to do things in house. Most of our new drivers have been hired with non-commercial driver’s license.*

Marshalltown Municipal Transit (MMT) has identified the following priority action goals: The Marshalltown Municipal Transit (MMT) identified the following goals in the 2015 plan. The status of each goal since the 2015 update is included in italics.

1. **Replace vehicles when they cannot serve the public transit needs of Marshalltown.** *Marshalltown desires to replace the large 40-foot vehicles that are used for local transit needs.*
2. **Continue funding operating expenses for current public transit services.** *MMT continues to fund operating expenses for the transit servicers.*

### Coordination Opportunities

Region 6 has identified a few coordination opportunities to increase passenger transportation Public Transit Services. These opportunities include:

- **Collaborate with public schools on special education transportation within Cities where Peoplerides has vehicles and drivers.** This is primarily an issue in Iowa Falls, Grinnell, Marshalltown, and maybe Tama-Toledo. Funding for these trips is a concern, since there is no general Peoplerides subsidy. We have limited capacity in most of these places also.
- **Consider serving the workforce needs of the region through vanpool or Public Transit vehicles.** Possible locations would include Marshalltown-Nevada, Tama-Marshalltown, Grinnell-Marshalltown, Tama-Cedar Rapids, Marshalltown-Ames, Traer-Dysart-Waterloo, and Grinnell-Des Moines.
- **Partner with CIRSI to offer a vehicle at group homes in Iowa Falls, Marshalltown, Tama, and Grinnell.** This would mean that instead of staff using private cars for transportation that leased vehicles would be used. We are currently having discussions about this feasibility.

- **Maybe partner with private providers if compliance standards can be met.** There are currently no private taxi type operators in the region.
- **Ride Coordinator.** We are concerned about the declining numbers of Medicaid Waiver riders. This has been a historical activity that helps support overall operations. We are concerned that there are many families that after K-12 education have adult children that live at home that have no activities.

Addressing these coordination barriers is a very large challenge. State level cooperation would also be needed to achieve substantial changes. Some changes may be feasible with sufficient review.

## Section Five: Funding

Funding for transportation comes from many sources. Following is a list of federal, state and local funds available to public transit. All funds are expected to continue through the next five years with the exception of capital funds; however, amounts may vary. Capital funds are determined annually and based on the age and mileage of the vehicles. It is not known what funding, if any, will be obtained in the next five years.

Funding for Peoplerides, the transit provider based in Region 6 Resource Partners, is listed below. Specific funding for Marshalltown Municipal Transit, which is run by the City of Marshalltown, is provided at the end of this section.

### Federal Programs

**Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning (Section 5304)** - These funds are intended to support transit planning in addition to what is conducted by the individual metropolitan planning organization (MPO). By law, the state is the direct recipient of the funding. Iowa uses these funds, along with 5311 funds set aside specifically for planning, to support a system of regional planning affiliations (RPAs). The RPAs are responsible for local intermodal transportation planning in areas of the state not included in an MPO. Iowa DOT's Systems Planning Bureau serves as the direct recipient of these funds. The combined 5304 and 5311 planning funds are distributed annually to each of the Iowa's 18 RPAs through a funding formula. These funds jointly support regional intermodal planning on an 80 percent federal, 20 percent nonfederal basis.

**Section 5311 - Non-urbanized Area Formula Program** – This federal program supports transit activities in rural areas and communities with less than 50,000 population. These funds are allocated to Iowa based on the number of persons living outside urbanized areas compared to other states. By law, the state is the direct recipient of the funding. Iowa DOT serves as the direct recipient of the funds, through both the Public transit section (PUBLIC TRANSIT SECTION) and the Systems Planning Bureau. The public transit section administers the bulk of the 5311 funding that is provided to small urban and regional transit systems, as well as the 15% of the annual apportionment, that in conformance with federal law, is utilized to support intercity bus services. The Systems Planning Bureau administers that portion of the 5311 funds that are combined with the 5304 funding to support rural transit and intermodal planning activities. In 2019 Region 6 Planning-Peoplerides budgeted \$170,791 in Section 5311 funds to maintain the current system.

**Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) (Section 5311[B][3])** - This federal program provides a source of funding to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance programs and other support services tailored to meet the specific needs of transit operators in nonurbanized areas (less than 50,000 in population). RTAP funds are mainly used to provide local transit agencies training fellowships. The fellowships pay 80 percent of the cost for Iowa's small urban and regional transit systems and their planners to attend Iowa DOT sponsored seminars, as well as transit-related courses or conferences sponsored by other groups. Transit systems may also be reimbursed for training held in-house. A parallel program funded with State Transit Assistance pays for costs incurred by large urban systems and their planners. Region 6

Planning uses some of these funds for training costs. Less than \$800 of these funds were requested by Region 6 Planning-Peoplerides in FY2018.

**Intercity Bus Program (Section 5311[f])** - A minimum of 15 percent of each year's nonurbanized formula funds allocated to Iowa under the 5311 program is required to be set aside to support intercity bus transportation. Private-for-profit companies, private nonprofit corporations, or public entities may apply for this funding. Connections to Amtrak or passenger air service terminals are desirable. Service strictly for commuter purposes is not eligible. Projects may include operating assistance, capital assistance, planning, or administrative costs, such as marketing and insurance. Region 6 Planning-Peoplerides has not historically requested any of this funding.

**Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Grants (Section 5339)** - These funds can finance capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. Each year Region 6 Resource Partners requests funding to replace 2-4 vehicles. Since this funding is limited, we typically get 0-1 vehicles funded through this program. Marshalltown Transit also requests funding sometimes to replace worn out buses. Sometimes those buses score well since they are so old.

**Surface Transportation Program (STP)** - These funds come to the state based on a number of factors, including vehicle-miles of travel, highway lane miles, and the number and size of bridges. The funds can be used for roadway, transit capital projects, pedestrian/bikeway projects, or intermodal planning projects on an 80 percent federal, local basis. In Iowa, a portion of these funds are programmed by local governments acting through metropolitan or regional planning agencies. Since 1995, Region 6 Planning-Peoplerides has programmed \$677,921 of the regionally approved STP funds for transit capital projects.

**Iowa's Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP)** - Iowa does not have any areas in violation of transportation-related federal clean air standards; therefore, the state receives a minimum allocation of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funding that can be used for any purpose for which STP funds can be used and on the same 80 percent federal and 20 percent nonfederal basis. In Iowa, funds are programmed for highways or transit projects through a statewide application process that selects projects based on their anticipated air quality or congestion relief benefits. The Iowa program is referred to as Iowa's Clean Air Attainment Program.

## State Programs

**State Transit Assistance (STA)** - Iowa devotes an amount equal to 4 percent of the fees for new registration collected on sales of motor vehicle and accessory equipment to support public transportation. Most of this money is distributed by the STA formula that is based on each transit system's performance during the previous year in terms of rides, miles, and local funding support. These formula funds are usable for support of any operating, capital, or planning expenses related to the provision of public passenger transportation. In 2025 Region 6 Resource Partners budgeted \$299,380 for STA.

- **STA special projects** - Each year STA funds are set aside to fund special projects. These can include grants to individual systems to support transit services that are developed in conjunction with human services agencies. Grants can also be awarded to statewide projects that improve public transit in Iowa through such means as technical training for transit system or planning agency personnel, statewide marketing campaigns, etc. This funding is also used to mirror the Rural Transit Assistance Program to support individual transit training fellowships for large urban transit staff or planners.
- **STA coordination special projects** - Funds provide assistance with startup of new services that have been identified as needs by health, employment, or human services agencies participating in the passenger transportation planning process.

**Public Transit Infrastructure Grant (PTIG) Fund** - This program is funded annually by the state legislature to fund some of the vertical infrastructure needs of Iowa’s transit systems. Projects can involve new construction, reconstruction, or remodeling, but must include a vertical component to qualify. Projects are evaluated based on the anticipated benefits to transit, as well as the ability to have projects completed quickly. The infrastructure program participation in the cost of transit-related elements of a facility project is limited to 80 percent and cannot, in combination with federal funding, exceed that number. No single system can receive more than 40 percent of the available infrastructure funding in a given year. Region Planning has not used any of these funds.

### Local Funding

Local funding support for transit includes fares or contributions received from riders, revenues from contracts with social service agencies, student fees, and taxes levied by local cities and counties. Cities are allowed under the Iowa Code to levy a dedicated property tax for transit of 95 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation. Other local tax funding comes from general fund levies, and from “trust and agency” levies.

**Passenger Fares** – Fees paid by the passengers is one of the most common sources of local support. This can include monies collected on-board the transit vehicle (usually called “farebox receipts”), as well as prepaid fares from sale of passes or tickets, or fares billed to the passenger after the fact. FTA requires that all passenger revenues be subtracted from the total cost of operating transit service to identify a net operating cost, before eligibility for federal financial support of operations can be calculated. In FY2024, Peoplerides is projected to have about \$80,000 of passenger revenue.

**Contract Revenue** – Human service agencies, local communities, as well as private businesses are often willing to pay a part or all of the cost for certain types of rides provided as part of the open to the public transit operation. Such subsidies are classified as contract revenues and can count toward the required local match on federal projects. Contract revenue is from sources like

- Access 2 Care – Medicaid (Waiver & NEMT riders across the region),
- Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (mainly passengers on the Meskwaki Settlement),
- County Social Services – Tama region,
- Central Iowa Community Services – Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek region,
- Unity Point - Marshalltown,

- Northeast Iowa 3A,
- CIRSI, and
- Access Inc.

The FY2023 revenue from these sources totaled \$464,000.

**Municipal Transit Levy** – Iowa law authorizes municipalities to levy up to 95 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation to support the cost of a public transit system. Most of Iowa’s larger communities levy for support of their urban transit systems. A number of smaller communities use this authority to generate funding used to support services contracted from their designated regional transit system. (This is something that can be implemented with a simple vote from the city council). Only Marshalltown has a municipal transit levy.

**Local Tax Support** – The only City’s within the region that provides funding to Peoplerides are Grinnell and Iowa Falls. Marshalltown funds the required paratransit service. The Grinnell revenues are from a special trust that is designed to serve the worthy poor – the Campbell Fund. Revenue from that source is projected to be about \$50,000 in FY 24. The City of Iowa Falls in FY 24 also will provide up to \$15,000. The City of Marshalltown contracts with Peoplerides for demand response Paratransit rides. That support is estimated to be about \$100,000 in FY 24.

**Other Local Support** – Peoplerides has no other source of funding like United Way, or other donation revenue.

This support helped provide rides for specific identified clients.

Without more outside funding and without local match funding, the best we can hope for at this time is to not have to decrease services.

For specific projects and funding schemes, please see Transportation Goals and Fiscal Impact spreadsheet, which is the final attachment to this planning document.

### **Marshalltown Municipal Transit Funding**

MMT is funded through several sources. These sources are described in more detail above.

Specific amounts of funding for MMT are listed below:

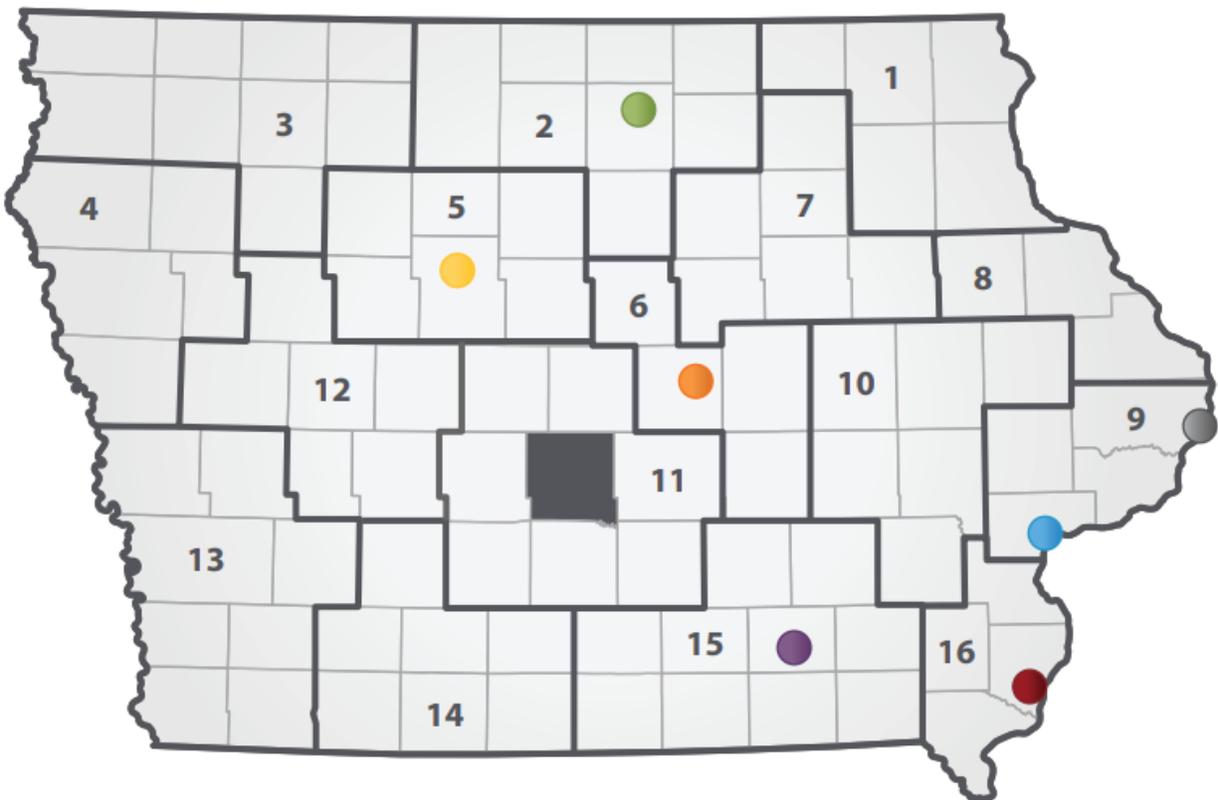
- \$402,312 in Section 5311 (Non-urbanized Area Formula Program)
- \$295,257 in State Transit Assistance (STA) funding
- \$402,312 in local funds. This includes farebox and the local tax support.

## Section Six: Interviews with Iowa Regional Transit Systems

In March 2024 we interviewed all regional transit system managers except for 1 region. That one region – Region 4, was not responsive with phone or email requests. The others were generous with time and responses. The information collected below is somewhat estimated. There are not firm data points for the information in this section. Ridership information is taken from FY 2022-year end reports, and adjusted with comments made at the interview. The information here is not absolutely correct data but provides general information on how each service operates and is funded. The county and city funding data is more than 90% accurate. Ridership by activity is somewhat estimated. Medicaid surpluses is also estimated. Industry and school rides is estimated some.

Ridership & funding for statistics that are counted by other Iowa Transit systems has been excluded where possible. This is principally paratransit rides with the contracted fixed route operators. So the attempt is to provide strictly regional transit data that is counted by each system.

No two towns or regional transit systems offer similar rides or services. Regional transit system statistics and operating details are very different across the state.



## Medicaid

The Iowa Medicaid program is one of the largest sources of revenues for regional transit systems. Access 2 Care is the transportation broker for the Iowa Medicaid managed care organizations. If Medicaid recipient desires a ride they must call the Access 2 Care organization. Then Access 2 Care makes that ride available on their user portal. Regional transit systems, and qualified private providers can accept those trips. There have historically been two Medicaid ride types –

- Waiver Trips: these are typically rides for intellectually disabled or chronically mental ill clients to day hab or workshop type facilities. These services provide a break for care givers, and a positive activity for the users. Some of the users make a small amount of money with tasks, and they are very appreciative. These riders typically go on a known number of days each week. The program hours are also known in advance. There is no cost to the passenger for these trips.
- Non-Emergency Medical Trips (NEMT): these are medical trips that are arranged 1 person at a time. These are trips anywhere within the State of Iowa. There is no cost to the passenger for these trips.

All systems provide Medicaid rides for waiver trips (day hab or workshop) and NEMT (medical) trips to medical appointments. Some areas of the state have much higher waiver trips. Many places reporting that the waiver trips have decreased and nearly gone away. Some have better NEMT ridership. We can potentially increase our market share some with added cost for drivers and vehicles.

### **ESTIMATED REGIONAL MEDICAID DOLLARS THAT ARE GREATER THAN 50% OF SYSTEM OPERATING COST BY ACTIVITY**

- Very High: Region 8 (Dubuque), and Region 15 (Ottumwa).
- High: Region 9 (Davenport), Region 10 (Cedar Rapids), and Region 1 (Decorah).
- Moderate: Region 6 (Marshalltown), Region 7 (Waterloo), Region 12 (Carroll), and Region 13 (Atlantic)
- Low: Region 2 (Mason City), Region 3 (Spencer), Region 5 (Ft Dodge), Region 11 (Urbandale), and Region 14 (Creston).

Some systems with high or greater Medicaid surpluses above can operate the service levels that residents want with no or little city or county funding. This is largely the case with the 5 systems noted above that have at least high Medicaid surpluses.

The Region 6 waiver trips have been declining over the last several years. Historically we have seen few new clients show up for this lane. Either the families or caretakers, or Medicaid care organizations have chosen to not enroll many new clients with this activity. However, K-12 school sources tell us that the number of students with individual education plans (IEP) is increasing. This should correlate with higher rides. More work is yet to be done to determine if a change is possible at the Region 6 level. We provide all group related rides that non-profit groups have historically provided. NEMT Medicaid rides we have turned some of those back with insufficient drivers or vehicles.

The NEMT numbers are the same if not increasing. Many of these riders that Region 6 sees are in wheelchairs and other mobility aids. It is necessary to have vehicles with lifts or ramps.

If a Medicaid client lives in a CIRSI (Iowa Falls, Grinnell, Marshalltown, Tama) or Access (Iowa Falls) group home then CIRSI or Access is responsible for the cost of that transportation. If a person lives in a skilled nursing home, residential care facility, or assisted living facility those facilities are also responsible for the cost of transportation.

The only rides now that qualify under Medicaid are riders that live in independent homes. The amount of Medicaid revenue and Medicaid cost for each region is not a 100% known factor using FY 2022-year end reports. Each regional transit system also receives state and federal transit operating funds. That share of operating cost is currently about 50%. So for the statements below, we are assuming that each system Medicaid cost is 50% covered with state & federal sources. That is not actually the case.

It is also important to note that there are 3-4 different Medicaid reimbursement methods. These include –

- Cost per ride within Cities where vehicles and personnel are based. These tend to be like the county seat or bigger towns.
- Cost per mile service. This is the distance between the clients home location and desired service location. These rates can be from around \$1.71 to \$4.87 per mile depending upon the area within the state.
- Some systems charge a higher in town rate for wheelchairs.
- Some systems charge a load fee in addition to these other charges.

Access 2 Care likely monitors these rates and if a regional transit rate is higher than private providers, the private providers will get the rides. If the regional transit rate is lower than private providers, they will get most of the rides.

We currently understand that our NEMT lane is near the private provider levels. Our NEMT rate is \$2.89/mile and \$15/ride within Cities for ambulatory and \$18/ride for Cities (only Iowa Falls, Marshalltown, Tama/Toledo, Grinnell). The max waiver rates within the region are – \$3.01/mile (Tama), and \$4.00/mile (Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek). Our rates are \$2.89/ride in Tama, and \$3.40/mile in (Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek).

Comments on how to increase funding in R6 –

- More Medicaid waiver rides from rural locations.
- Maybe serving more NEMT medical rides.

The key with Medicaid funding is more miles per person, especially with group type rides. This is true for the Region 1 and 8 areas. Region 6 also notes here that all service lanes, especially city services in Iowa Falls, Tama/Toledo, Marshalltown, and Grinnell have benefited from the Medicaid surplus. This has meant that we have historically been able to do rides there at cheaper amount per ride.

Some systems rely upon Medicaid revenues to support all other regional transit functions, where no city or county subsidy is needed to continue services. These services include –

- Region 1 – Decorah, and
- Region 8 – Dubuque.

In both places they had high Waiver ridership to day hab or workshop type facilities from private homes. This Waiver funding was adequate to support other services within these regions.

The following regions had good Medicaid revenues and limited City or County funding.

- Region 7 – Waterloo, and
- Region 15 – Ottumwa.

Region 7 has limited services besides Medicaid. Ottumwa has lots of services, partially due to lots of higher mileage Medicaid rides.

### City and County Estimated Funding by Region

Region 7 has low city and county support so they are largely providing Medicaid rides today. Region 12 has good local city and county support. They have some good ridership figures.

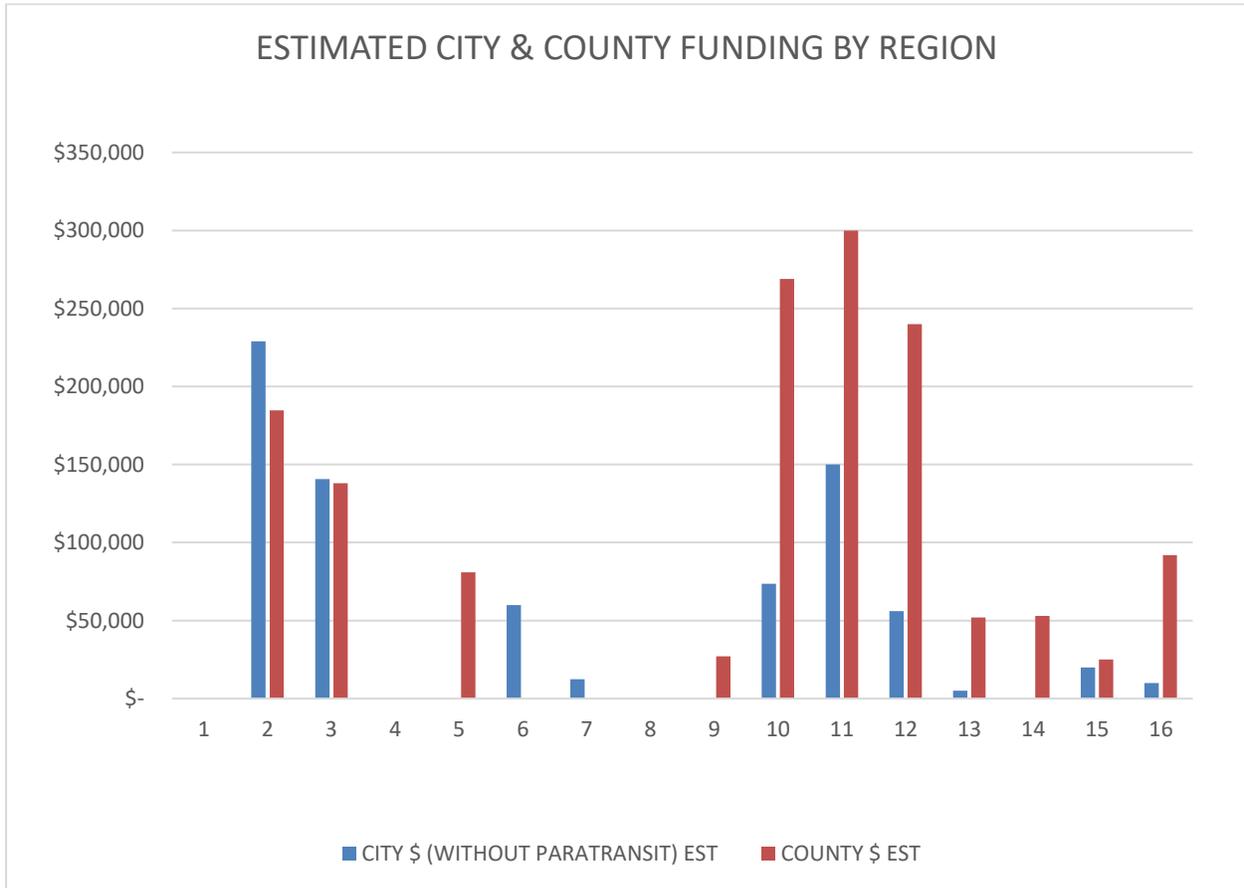
Region 13 has fairly low financial support from cities and counties. However, they are making some decent return on industrial rides. The formula discussion in future slides greatly benefits that system also.

Region 2 has great local city and county financial support. Region 11 has fairly good local city and county support.

About 36 Cities and 71 of the 99 Counties provide financial support for regional transit operations. The city support is from larger cities with more service hours. These are the 1-2 bigger towns within the county, generally but not always county seat towns. Not every place with direct services within the city, provides financial support either. The total amount of City and County funding is estimated at about \$1.9 million. 36% of that is from City sources and 64% from county sources. The city figures do not include paratransit services, that is a required service for fixed route transit services (Mason City, Ft Dodge, Marshalltown, Waterloo area, Dubuque, Davenport, Clinton, Bettendorf, Muscatine, Cedar Rapids area, Iowa City area, Des Moines area, Council Bluffs area, Ottumwa, Burlington, Sioux City). Not every city that has local city services provides financial support. Only about 50% of the cities that have some direct transit service within the community provide financial support. In the places with no financial support the system apparently has enough other revenues to support rides – Medicaid, County funding, school ridership, or something else.

Most of the services within each region, outside of Medicaid, are within these bigger towns within the region. There is very little service in the small towns with a few thousand or less. For the 93 responsive counties there an estimated 80 towns with more significant service levels. About 40% of those places actually provide financial support. These are generally the bigger 1-2 towns per county, which may be the county seat type town.

The average city support per region is \$50,000. The average per town is around \$20,000. Some places have a lot higher financial support – desire more services. The average county support per region is \$80,000. The average level per county is about \$1,000.

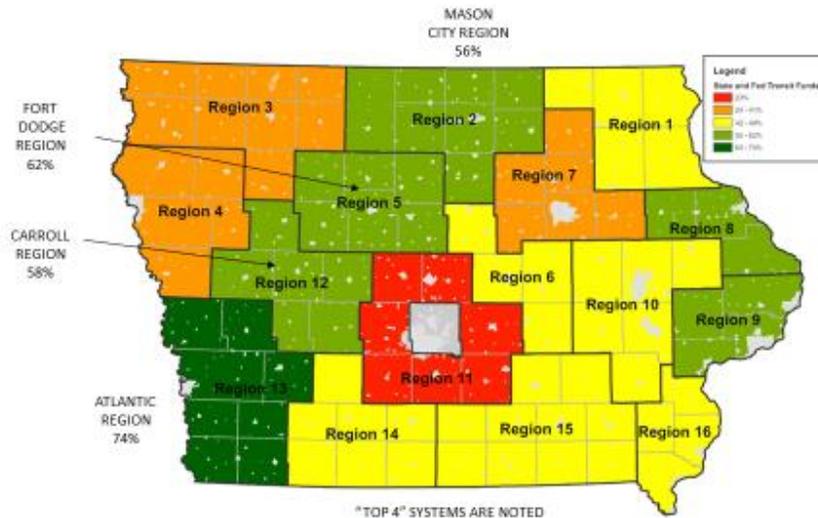


The Region 6 Board reviewed this financial and performance data in May 2024. With the 2023 Iowa Legislative property tax changes, local governments in the area will be struggling to just maintain current local services. Some places are reducing services and laying off or not filling vacancies. This has a large impact on what things are feasible in the future.

## State and Federal Transit Share of Cost

Region 6 historically has roughly 42% of our operating cost covered by state & federal operating costs. The key with increasing this ratio to a higher figure is full busses. The estimated level for Region 13 is 74%. They have full busses operating industrial, commercial, school, and daycare services. The industrial and commercial users are also good funding sources for that region.

## STATE & FEDERAL TRANSIT SHARE OF COST



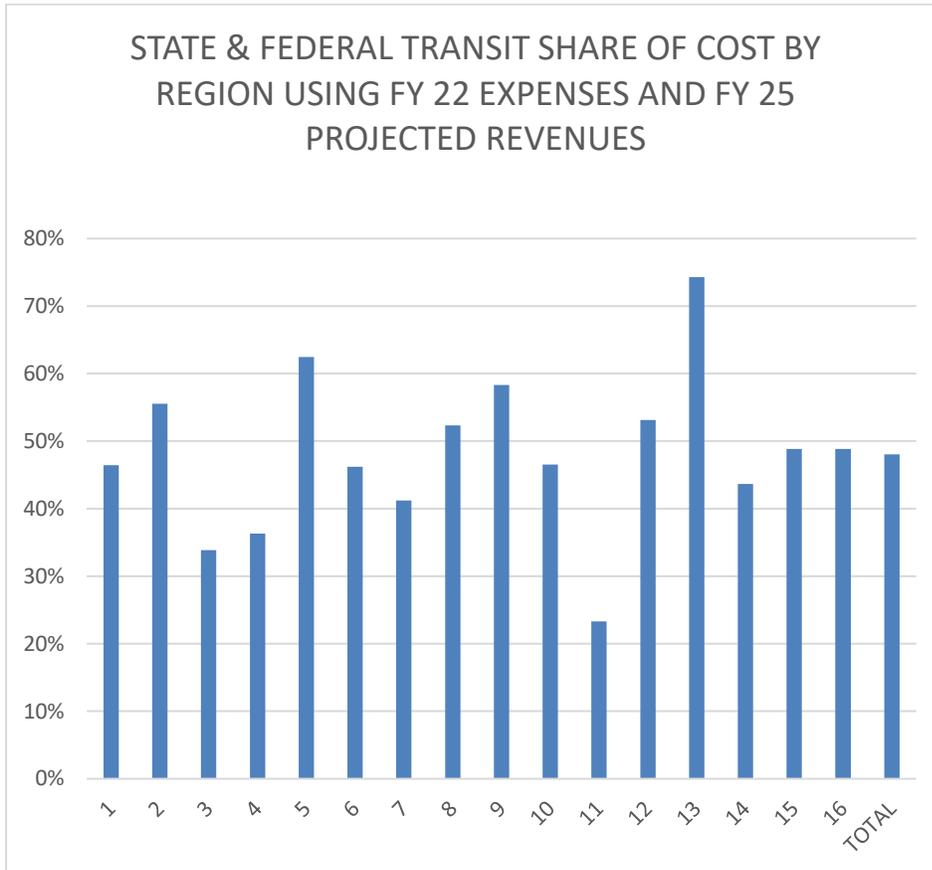
The Iowa Department of Transportation has two formulas for the distribution of State of Iowa and Federal Transit Administration funds to the 35 Iowa public transit systems. The formulas are based around – ridership, miles, operating cost, and local incomes. If a service has a higher percentage of vehicles with high ridership, the formula will benefit these places. Any efficiency type issues will benefit the service too – which may include sharing admin services. Keeping overall expenses down is important, especially if ridership is lower. If there are larger vehicles (more than 15 passengers) with high passenger loads that will also help.

State funds represent 20% of the funding and federal funds 28%. The percentage ranges from 23% to 74% of a regional systems operating cost. The high level is in a place with tremendous industrial, school, and disabled ridership. The Region 6 percentage is in the 46% range. Here are the percentage groups –

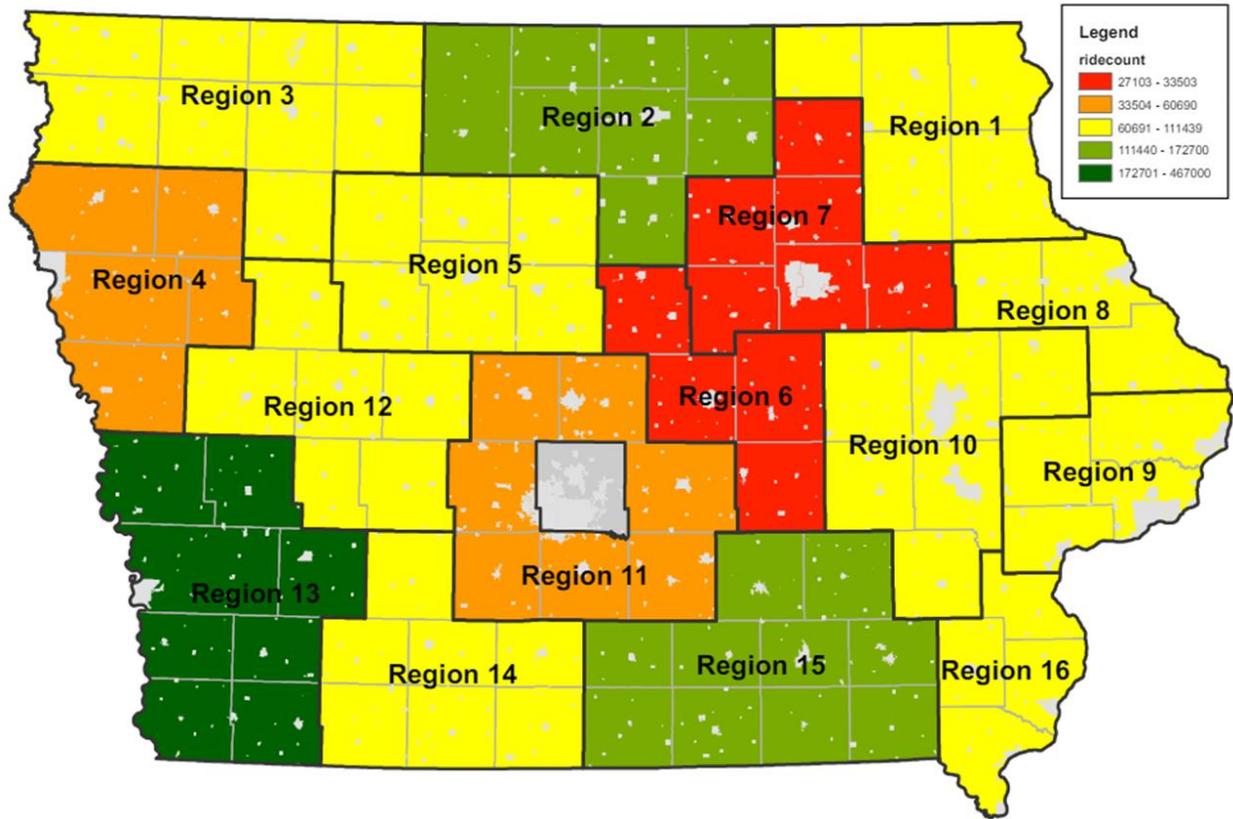
- Under 40%: Region 3, 4, 11.
- 40-50%: Region 1, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 16.
- 50-60%: Region 2, 8, 9, 12.
- 60-70: Region 5.
- Over 70: Region 13.

Other keys with increasing percentage share –

- High ridership density: filling seats on vehicles. Larger number of clients on vehicles. This could be industry, group home, workshop, etc.
- Vehicles/drivers being used – limited down time.
- Higher local funding: contracts (Medicaid, Area Agency on Aging, Workshops, schools), industry, city, and county.

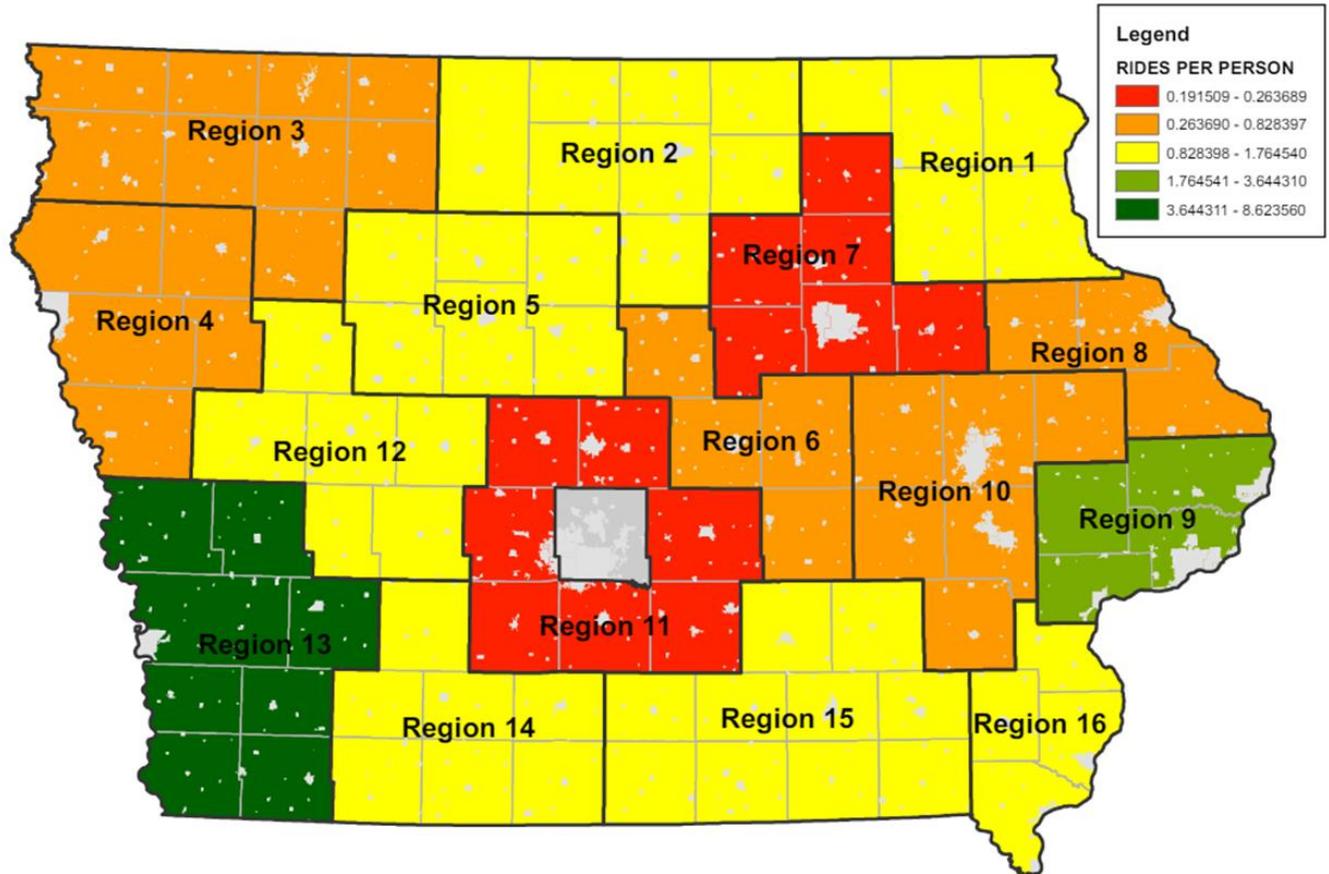


Total Rides Per Region



### Rides Per Person Per Region (Without Paratransit Service)

Region 6 is at the low end of the rides/person category, with the 2022 operating data. Only 2 systems had lower numbers. The star performer is Region 13 with really high industrial, disabled, school, and daycare ridership.



The average rides per person in FY 22 with Iowa regional transit was 1.64 rides/person. Region 6 is at 31% of that level. Taking the really high Region 13 numbers from that and number decreases to 1.17. We are 44% of that value. Region 7 (Waterloo) has a lower number. Region 8 (Dubuque) has a similar number. The keys with increasing the ridership/person number include –

- More ridership to workshop and day hab facilities for intellectually disabled.
- Partnership with an intellectually disabled group home and services agency for rides.
- School ridership – before/after school, special education, in-town trips, preschool to daycare trips, and similar services.
- Industry facility ridership – financial support and ridership from industries to provide rides to these facilities. The possibilities in Region 6 include – JBS (Marshalltown), Iowa Premium (Tama), Mom’s Meals (Grinnell), and possibly Burke (Nevada).
- Partnership with CIRSI for rides from their group homes.

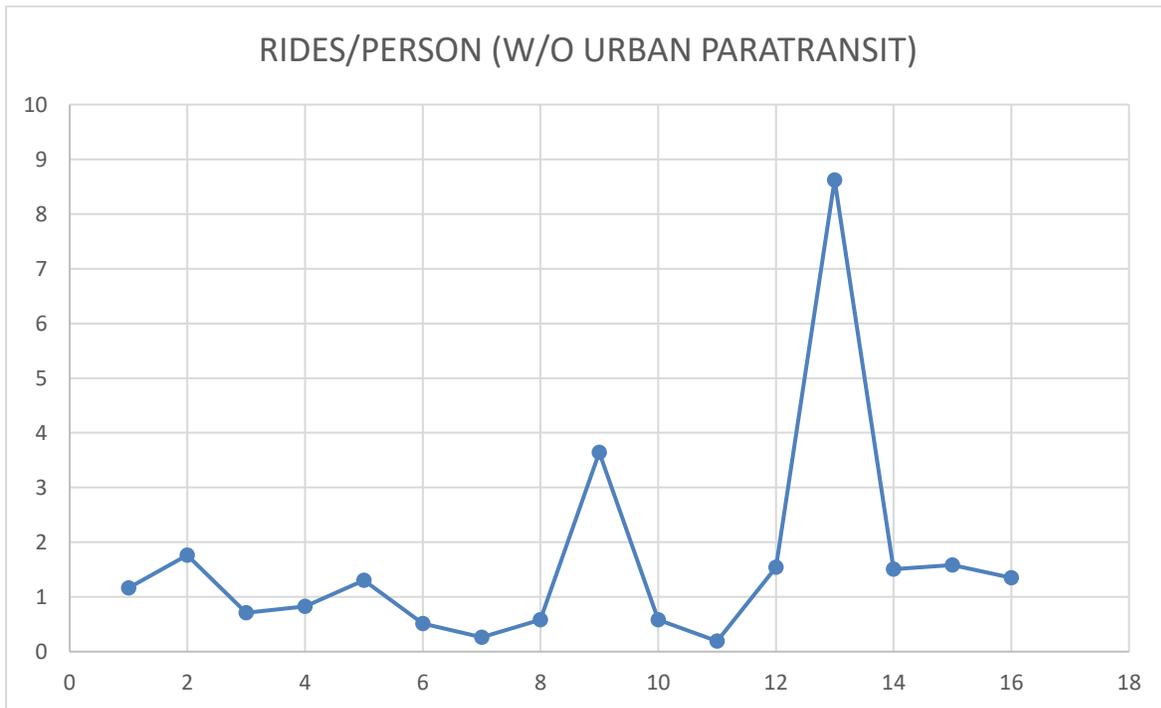
The geography and demographics of certain parts of the state has a good impact on ridership too. This includes the medical geography of providers. In Region 6 there is not a common medical location, unlike Ft Dodge or Mason City. Ottumwa has a lot of rides to Des Moines and Iowa City.

Some locations have better supports in place for intellectually disabled rides within cities.

No two regions seem to be the same with ridership types, funding, or service levels.

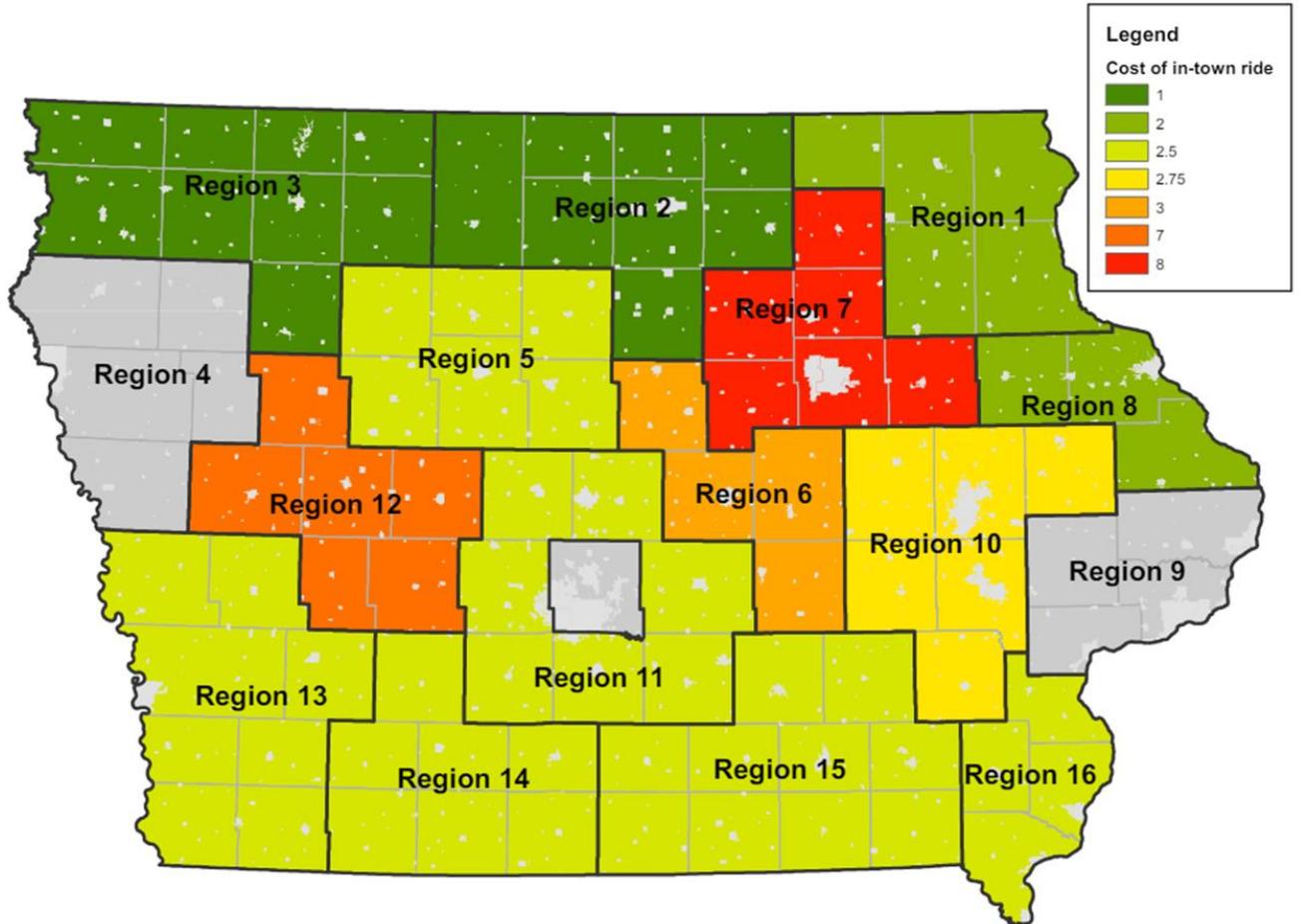
The ridership in each region is listed below. Region 6 is at the lower end. The Region 9 is in the Davenport area so they have lots of rides and services in the metro area. Region 13 is in Atlantic. They have very high ridership with industrial shuttles. They have a large state agency that serves the disabled that has lots of rides. They have a good number of rides with disabled programs around the Council Bluffs market. They are clicking off every ridership box. Region 2 also has high ridership in Cities, disabled groups, daycare, and others.

The key is that each organization and cities/counties within it need to decide what level of service and financial support that they are willing to provide. Some regions have very little city/county support but have really high industrial support. The key is partnerships. Some source needs to be available to cover a good share of the costs.



### Affordability of In-Town Rides by System

One of our system review questions was the cost of in-town rides in Grinnell, Iowa Falls, and Tama/Toledo. We are currently at \$3/ride for those places. This is slightly higher than the average, but still within range for the other systems. City support from these 3-4 cities is a key with the ability to meet the \$3/ride level. Without the city support, these services may be infeasible.



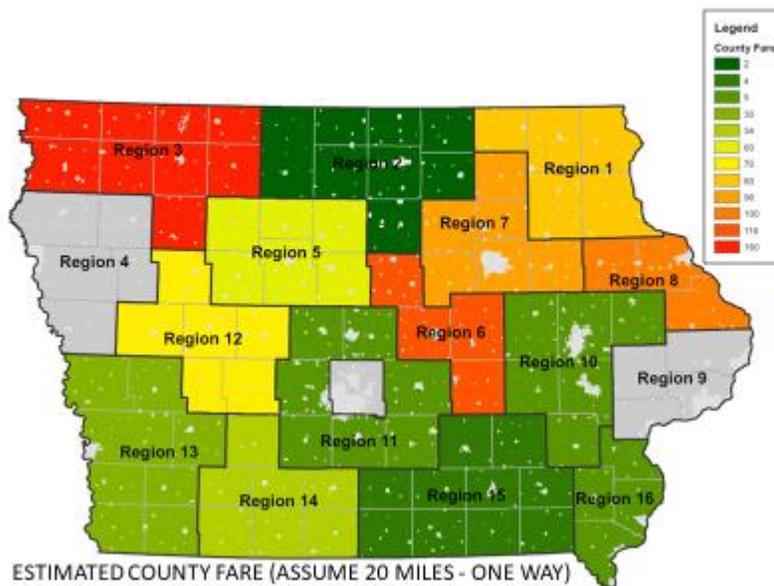
## Affordability of a 20-Mile Ride by System

Region 6 currently has no subsidy source for rides outside of Grinnell, and Iowa Falls. We have no county financial support. Henceforth, rides outside of these places are offered at \$2.89/mile. So, a 20-mile ride in R6 would be \$116 round trip. Most systems are offering more attractive rates. In Region 6 that will take some county subsidy or some other service activity making a sufficient surplus. During our interviews with the other state systems there are not big ridership numbers in this 20-mile group, but it is still a good service to offer.

- **LOW RATES:** Region 2 (Mason City), Region 10 (Cedar Rapids), Region 11 (Urbandale), Region 13 (Atlantic), Region 14 (Creston), Region 15 (Ottumwa), and Region 16 (Burlington). 7 systems.
- **MODERATE RATES:** Region 1 (Decorah), Region 7 (Waterloo), Region 5 (Ft Dodge), Region 12 (Carroll). 4 systems.

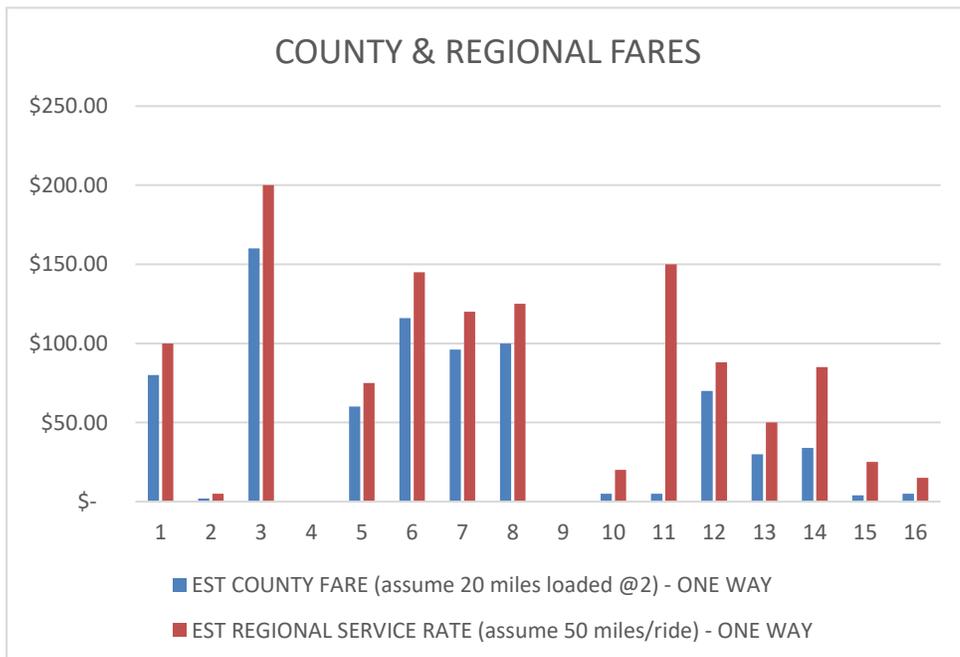
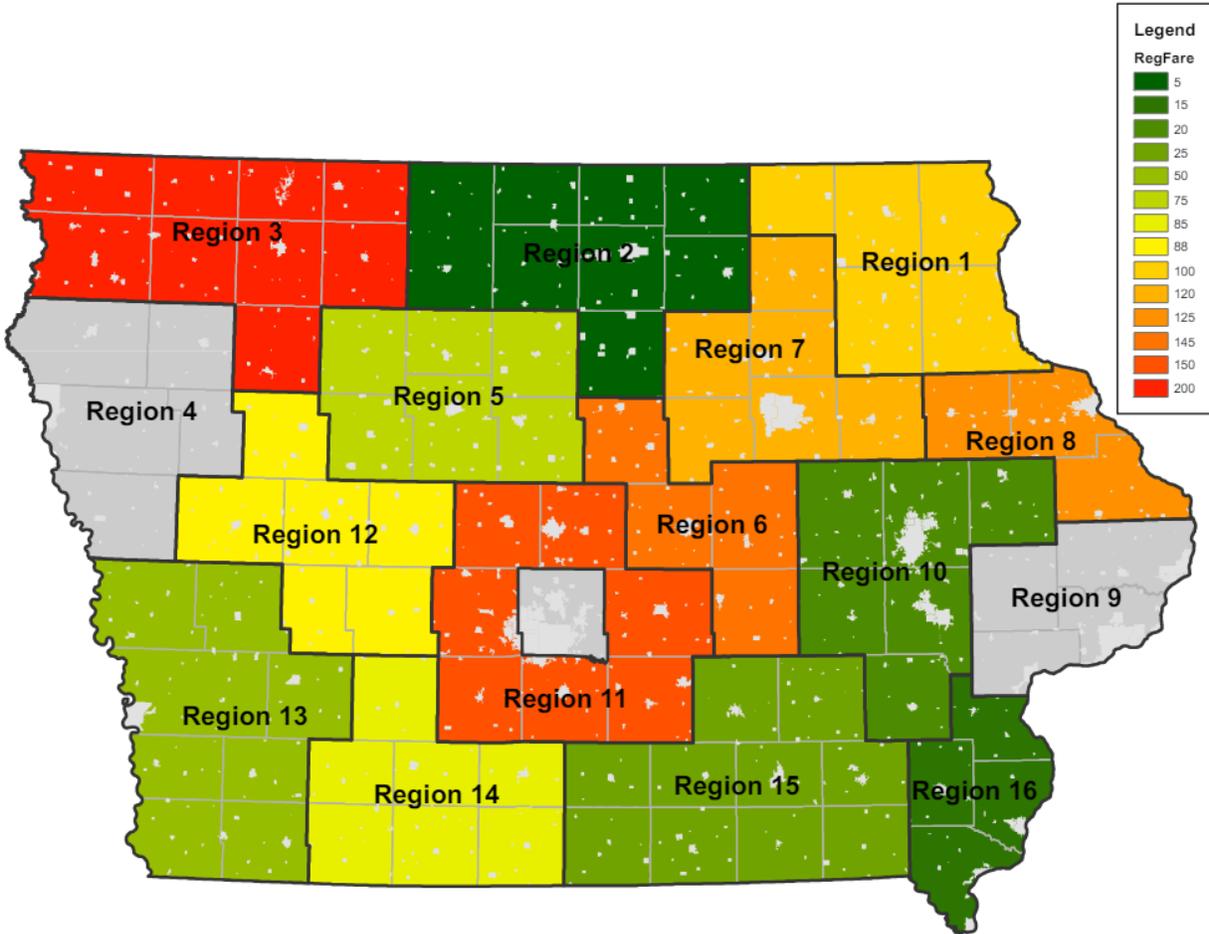
So about 70% of the systems are addressing this need.

## AFFORDABILITY OF A 20-MILE RIDE BY SYSTEM



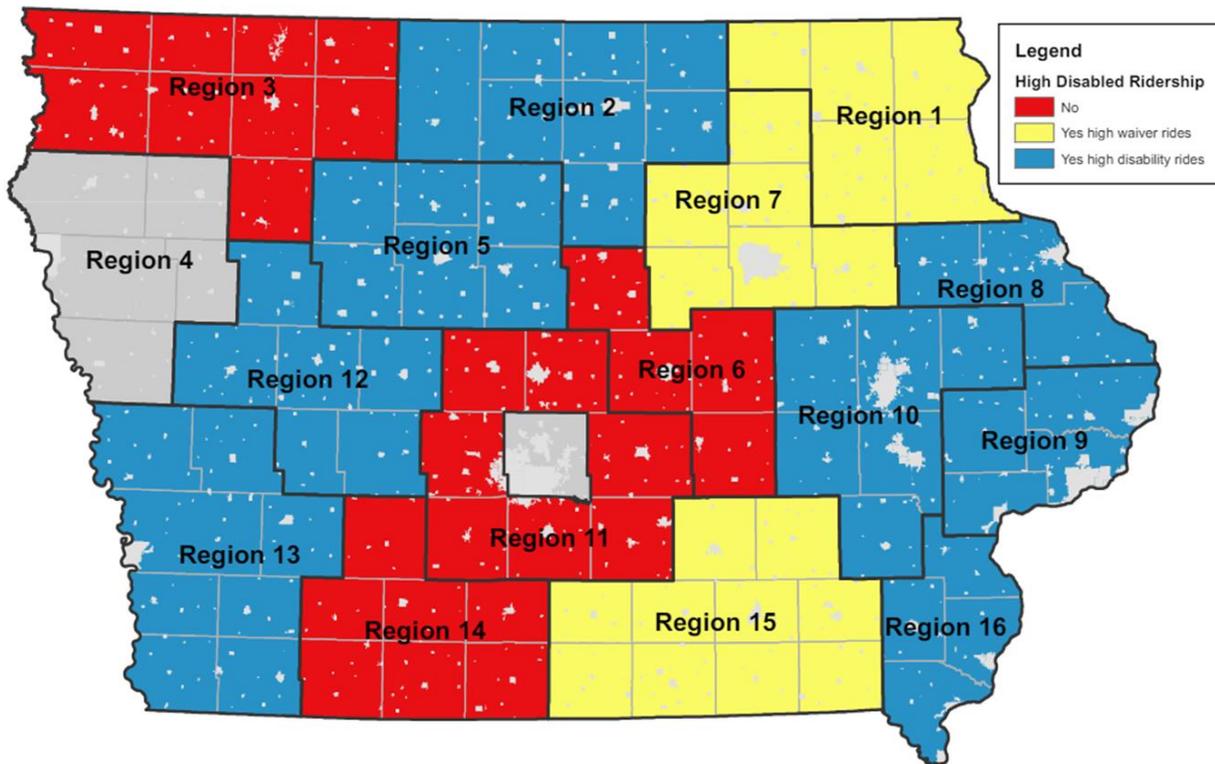
### Affordability of a 50-Mile Ride by System

The same trends and issues with a 20-mile ride in a regional public transit vehicle are the same as with a 50-mile ride. The cost for this ride in R6 is \$289 round trip. Many of the systems have some funding sources to help subsidize this cost.



## Intellectually Disabled Ridership

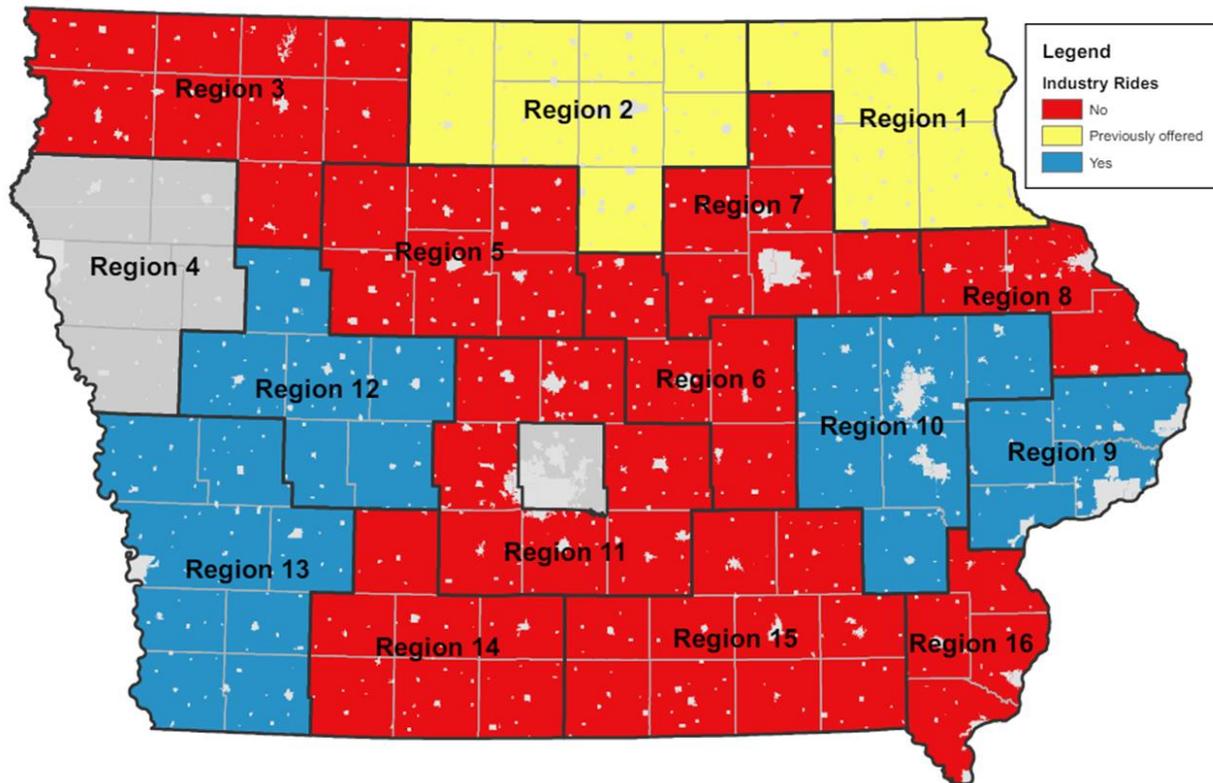
One of the key historical ridership groups for regional transit is intellectually disabled riders to day hab and workshop type services. In the recent past, that has largely been funded by Medicaid. In many regions that ridership activity has drastically gone down. In Region 6 we have also seen that ridership go down significantly. This impacts everyone's ability to provide rides for other people. Some are transitioning to other activities. After reviewing the 2022 ridership we concluded that 4 regions had low intellectually disabled ridership. The others are doing ok. If there is a lot of rural higher mileage Medicaid rides in this group that helps the system operate services.



Some of the regions have really high ridership with some intellectually disabled related services. These include Region 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 16. Our ridership with this activity is 10% of some of the higher levels. In other places like Region 1 this ridership was in the Medicaid group. This ridership is a key factor. The average for the regions was about 27,000. This is about 5 times higher than Region 6.

## Business and Industry Ridership Partnerships

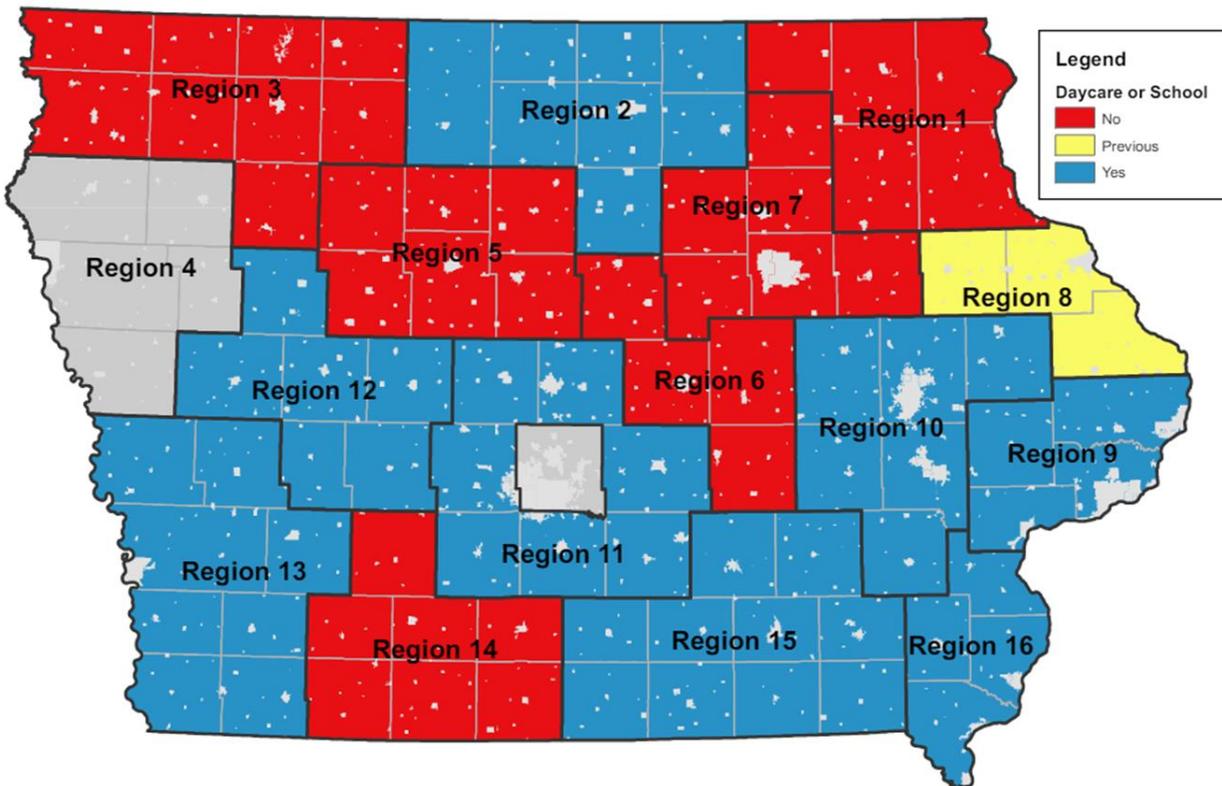
A newer activity for regional transit is business and industrial rides. There are 2-3 larger industries in the Region 12 and 13 areas that are willing to fund worker rides for paid public transit drivers. This is also the case in the Region 9 area – Davenport & Muscatine. Region 10 is achieving some success with the lower cost vanpool model. They are partnering with Enterprise to offer vanpool services to employers. This is a future Region 6 project also.



Industry rides totaled about 173,000 rides. This as a group is only 10% of the rides. Region 9 (Davenport), Region 12 (Carroll), and Region 13 (Atlantic) were the only places with high ridership. The industries include places like meat processing, Amazon, food processing, furniture, etc.

## Regional Transit Ridership for Daycare, Preschool, and School Services

Some regional transit systems are now offering before/after school daycare, preschool to daycare, and even some largely city-based school services. The only challenge is either having capacity for this activity with current funding or potentially needing some funding partnership to offer these services. Roughly 50% of the systems are offering some level of rides for this activity.



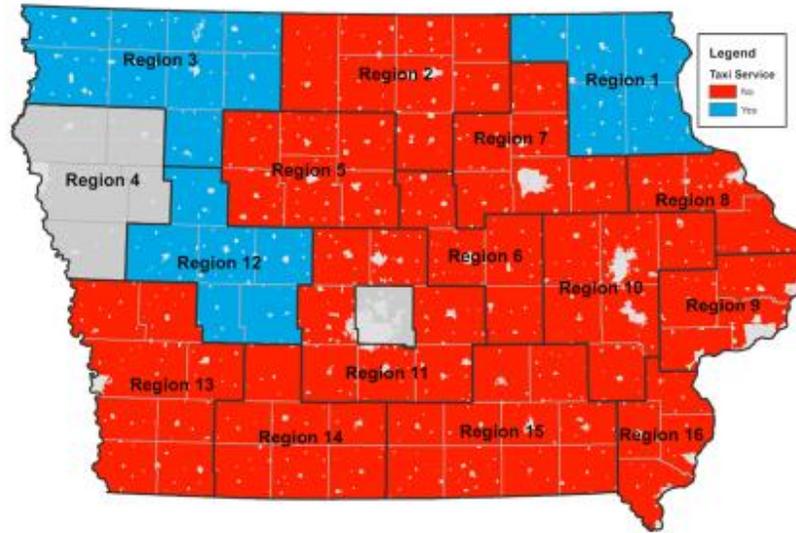
Schools were only a high ridership activity in Region 13 and Region 2 where Atlantic, Harlan, Glenwood, and Red Oak no longer provide in town rides to school facilities. In Region 2 there is high daycare and preschool ridership in Clear Lake, Algona, and Red Oak. Some of the choice here is to make these towns attractive for young families. Parents no longer need to worry about changing schedules or not working to transport kids. Other systems like HIRTA (Des Moines region) are being responsive and have funding resources with this new market.

### Systems Offering Partnerships with Taxi Services by System

In the FY 22 operating year, 3 systems had some operating partnership with private taxi systems. This included services in Decorah, Storm Lake, and a few bigger cities in the Region 12 (Carroll). In Region 6, we heard recently that the Cabs of Marshalltown service discontinued with the Godfrey family. There are no other private taxi services in the Region 6 area. We heard recently that one private person is trying to offer some limited Uber service in the Iowa Falls area.

### SYSTEMS OFFERING PARTNERSHIP WITH TAXI SERVICE TO OFFER RIDES BY SYSTEM

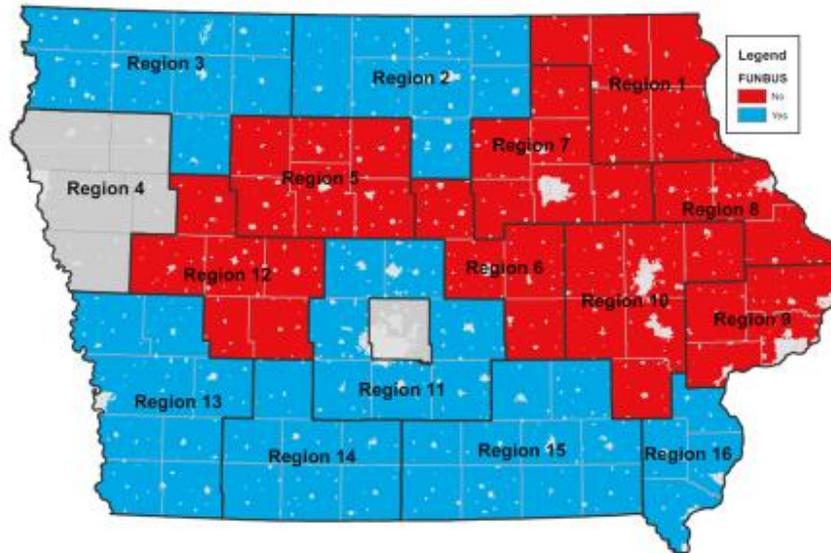
SYSTEM	PLACES THAT FOLLOW THIS APPROACH
Region 1, Decorah	Decorah - 38,000
Region 4, Mason City	None
Region 5, Spaulding	Storm Lake - 17,000
Region 6, Iowa City	NA
Region 8, Tipton Dodge	None
Region 9, Marshalltown	None
Region 7, Waterloo	None
Region 10, Davenport	None
Region 11, Cedar Rapids	None
Region 12, Iowa Moines	None
Region 13, Carroll & Des Moines - Carter	Carroll & Des Moines - 2,500 per town
Region 15, Atlantic	None
Region 14, Creston	None
Region 16, Ottumwa	None
Region 16, Burlington	None



### Systems Offering “Fun Bus” or Summer Service

Roughly half of the systems are offering a “summer fun bus” service in the larger regional cities. The key with this approach is having available capacity for this group. The key approach here is filling busses and filling driver capacity. Not every city or place has capacity.

### SYSTEMS OFFERING “FUN BUS” OR SUMMER SERVICE



## Region 1: Earl Public Transit (Decorah)

### Notes:

1. High ridership in Cresco, Decorah, Elkader, Guttenberg, Oelwein, Waukon, and West Union. 65,000 rides in these places. 9,000-10,000 rides per place average. City fare = \$2/ride. Our City fare = \$3/ride.
2. We average 2,750 Medicaid waiver rides/county. They average 3,300 rides/county.
3. They provide less than 1,000 NEMT rides per county. This is similar to R6.
4. Their rural county rate = \$2/mile and R6 at \$2.89/mile. This is the number set by Medicaid.
5. They made more than twice what we did on the Medicaid rides. This means more rural regional miles. So more of the Medicaid waiver (intellectually disabled) clients live at homes in rural locations.
6. Making money on the Medicaid lane to support other rides. This amount may exceed \$300,000.
7. Limited area agency on aging funding, like R6.
8. No city or county operating financial support.
9. Hometown Taxi (Decorah) – count their rides. This is about 28,000 rides which helps stats for state and federal revenues.

### Keys to success:

1. Make money on Medicaid rides. High mileage clients with low hours.
2. High workshop or day hab riders from homes under Medicaid.
3. Hometown Taxi rides in Decorah.
4. Good rural city ridership.

## Region 2: Region 2 Transit (Mason City)

### Notes:

1. High ridership in Clear Lake, Charles City, Algona, Forest City, Lake Mills, and Northwood. These 6 towns have about 68,000 rides or an average of 11,300 per town. In Clear Lake 40% of the city ridership is daycare related. 25% is daycare related in Algona. Northwood is 60% with daycare. Each City supports 50% of the operating cost. NIACOG supports the other 50%. In most of these places the city staffs the drivers. Financial support from Cities = \$229,000. The range is \$60,000 to \$18,000 with an average of \$38,000. The rate within cities is \$1 to \$3 per ride depending upon the rider details.
2. They have a per capita County rate (\$1.93) for rural services (outside of the above 6 towns). The Mason City population is excluded from Cerro Gordo. This generates \$185,000 of revenue.
3. The county (outside of these 6 towns) fare is \$2/ride. The county-to-county fare is \$3 to \$5 per ride.
4. The Medicaid waiver rides are approaching 5,000 per county. That is nearly twice our level - 2,750/county.
5. They provide less than 1,000 NEMT rides per county. This is similar to our numbers.
6. They have a large group home and workshop or day hab facility with 55,000 annual rides. We have 0 rides for something similar.

Keys to success:

1. Excellent city and county financial support – probably near the best.
2. Daycare and other rides within the bigger rural cities.
3. Large group home facility with high ridership.
4. Region provides paratransit rides for Mason City so more activities to spread admin costs over.

### Region 3: RIDES (Spencer)

Notes:

1. High ridership in Spencer, Storm Lake, Iowa Great Lakes Area, Estherville, Rock Rapids, Sheldon, Emmetsburg, Orange City and Sioux Center. These 9 places have 70,000 rides. This is almost 8,000 rides per town – average. The city fare is \$1 to \$4 depending upon the rider.
2. Revenue from these 9 places totals \$141,000. 8 of the counties provide a total of \$100,000 or an average of \$12,500/county. One county (Iowa Great Lakes area) provides \$38,000 which includes some city service.
3. They provide very few Medicaid Waiver rides but provide nearly 15,000 NEMT rides. This is about 2,000 rides per county. This is 3-4 times some regions. There are few other NEMT providers in that part of the state. The mileage rate on these is \$4-5/mile. This a key element.
4. The regional rate is \$4/mile.
5. They receive \$92,000 of financial support from the Area Agency on Aging. The level here has been less than \$10,000 historically.
6. They count rides from Storm Lake Cab – about 17,000 rides. The statistics on this element provides good benefit to the region. This service benefits other services.

Keys to success:

1. Good city and county financial support.
2. Good NEMT rate for Medicaid rides.
3. High City within the bigger rural cities ridership.
4. Storm Lake Cab rides benefit system.

### Region 4: Siouxland Regional Transit (Sioux City)

No response

### Region 5: MIDAS (Fort Dodge)

Notes:

1. High ridership in Webster City, Humboldt, Clarion, Eagle Grove, Rockwell City, and Lake City. These 6 places have around 63,000 rides or about 10,000 rides/town. There is no city financial support.
2. The Medicaid Waiver rides are only 2,200 rides or about 400/county. This is even less than R6 numbers of about 2,750/county. \$2.50/ride city fare.
3. \$1.50 per mile for county and regional rates. Few rides with that.

4. Medicaid NEMT rides are really low there also – approaching 0.
5. 5 of the 6 counties provide a total of \$81,000. The average is \$16,200/county. The only that no provide support = Pocahontas (very rural).
6. They get fairly good ridership from an intellectually disabled group home, day hab, and/or workshop provider – opportunity living with 12,000 rides. Nothing similar in this area.

Keys to success:

1. Limited hours – similar to R6 hours but over 6 counties.
2. Region also operates the Ft Dodge Transit system so some opportunity to share some admin related costs.
3. Good city ridership values.
4. County financial support.
5. Intellectually disabled group home rides.

### Region 7: On Board Transit (Waterloo)

Notes:

1. Limited service except Medicaid waiver transportation. They average 2,800 waiver rides per county. Our average was very similar. They also average around 300 NEMT rides per county which is lesser than us. The Medicaid program made them money.
2. The only two cities with some demand response service is Independence and Waverly. They had 800 rides in Independence, with \$2,500 of City support. They had 900 rides in Waverly with \$10,000 of city support. The city fare in both places is \$8/ride.
3. They offered rides to the Goodwill retail stores for supported employment. These were financially supported by Goodwill.
4. They offered almost 3,000 rides for chronically mentally ill programming.

Keys to success:

1. Medicaid programs made money.
2. Limiting local services with no or limited local funding.

### Region 8: Region 8 Regional Transit Authority (Dubuque)

Notes:

1. Made good money on Medicaid Waiver trips. This supports other lanes. They have high rural ridership into workshop type programs. Almost three times the ridership of R6 with this activity.
2. High Medicaid NEMT rides. This number is also about 3 times higher than R6.
3. They have high ridership on City level services in these places – Bellevue, Dyersville, Cascade, Manchester, and Maquoketa. The cost per ride is \$2.
4. No funding from Cities and Counties. Make a good margin on the Medicaid services.

Keys to success:

1. Medicaid programs made money.
2. High ridership on workshop or day hab type routes.
3. High Medicaid NEMT medical rides.

## Region 9: River Bend Transit (Davenport)

### Notes:

1. Made some money on Medicaid trips.
2. Many workshop and similar services in metro area – nearly 53,000 rides.
3. Provide some school transportation for special ed students in metro area.
4. Industries provide financial support for rides to their facilities – Heinz, Amazon, Hon, etc.... The financial support from these places is near \$250,000.
5. High density ridership in Davenport and Bettendorf. Keeping busses full with paying riders and organizations.
6. Provide rides to industries, schools, and disabled agencies.
7. County funding – Cedar \$15,000, Clinton \$6,000, and Muscatine \$6,000.

### Keys to success:

1. Made money on nearly every service.
2. Made money on Medicaid services.
3. Ridership density – keeping busses full with a variety of riders.
4. Employer support.

## Region 10: Corridor Rides (Cedar Rapids)

### Notes:

1. All counties directly hire drivers and staff. Each county has somewhat different service stats.
2. High City ridership. Rates \$2 (Linn, Johnson), \$2.50 (Benton), \$3 (Iowa), \$3.50 (Washington). Vinton & Belle Plaine rides – 14,500; Marengo, Amana – 28,000; Anamosa, Monticello – 7,000; Washington 11,200. County funded except City of Washington – about \$74k.
3. County fare - \$2.00 (Johnson, Linn), \$6.00 (Jones), \$7.00 (Benton), and \$8 (Iowa).
4. Benton, Iowa, Jones average 2,600 Medicaid waiver rides. This is similar to R6. However high mileage rides so make more money.
5. Jones County provides \$97k of financial support for 13k rides. 8.6k hours.
6. Linn County – about 18k of rural rides.
7. High ridership in Iowa County with 1 disabled program.
8. Johnson County – 3k of rural rides and 9k of disabled program rides all over county.
9. Benton & Iowa County make money on the Medicaid lane to support other trips. People living in rural locations that ride to services – workshops, day hab.
10. Washington County provides \$270k support for 15k service hours. School and daycare related rides. 39k rides.
11. Really high ridership numbers by county - Benton – 19k, Iowa – 38k, Jones – 13k, Washington – 51k, Johnson 12k, and Linn – 18k. We are averaging around 7k rides/county.
12. Average of 10k hours per county. R6 is about (without Marshalltown paratransit) – 4k.
13. No industry rides.
14. Only school rides maybe – Washington.

Keys to success:

1. Local support for programs.
2. County funds – Jones, Washington, Johnson, and Linn.
3. Good Medicaid funding in Benton & Iowa Counties.
4. High ridership.

### **Region 11: HIRTA Public Transit (Des Moines, Not Including Polk County)**

Notes:

1. 57k rides for system over 7 Counties. 28k revenue hours - 4k/county.
2. About 42k rides in places like Indianola, Carlisle, Norwalk, Waukee, Pella, Knoxville, Nevada, Boone, Newton, Adel, Winterset. This is about 4k rides per town. City fare \$2.50.
3. County fare \$5.00. Not many rides in rural places outside these bigger cities.
4. They have about 10k Medicaid NEMT rides across the 7 counties. Lots of private NEMT providers with sedans and some with accessible minivans.
5. Not making money on the Medicaid lane.
6. The Cities that provide financial support at \$2/person = Norwalk, Newton, Boone, Adel, Waukee, Winterset, and Ogden. They have not pulled services from other places that do not provide financial support. Total funding from this = \$150k
7. County funding stable. Madison \$17k, Story \$108k, Warren \$35k, Marion \$35k, Boone \$35k, Dallas \$35k, Jasper \$35k. Total funding from this \$300k.
8. Funding from area agency on aging = \$195k for 15k rides.
9. Some new United Way funding = \$60-70k.
10. Event bus service with Knoxville Nationals – under 5k rides.

Keys to success:

1. Local county financial support.
2. Some ok city financial support.
3. Outside funding from Medicaid.
4. Area Agency on Aging support.
5. New marketing strategies.

### **Region 12: Western Iowa Transit (Carroll)**

Notes:

1. Making some money on Medicaid trips. Enough rural riders with high miles. Similar number of trips as here but more people living outside of cities.
2. City rides ok in Carroll, Dennison, Jefferson, and other places.
3. 33k rides to industry locations – Midwest Industries (Ida Grove), and Monogram Foods (Dennison). About \$125k of revenue from these places. About 3,500 revenue hours.
4. Good rides with a local group home, day hab, and workshop facility for intellectually disabled.
5. County funding at \$40k/county.
6. City funding at \$56k. From Carroll, Dennison, Jefferson, and maybe others.

Keys to success:

1. Make money on Medicaid.
2. City and County financial support.
3. Industry rides and financial support.
4. Large number of rides for intellectually disabled group.

### Region 13: Southwest Iowa Transit (Atlantic)

Notes:

1. Really high ridership and funding to Industry. \$8/ride. Atlantic to Harlan and Oakland. Council Bluffs to Oakland. 125k rides. \$1 million in industry support.
2. Schools in Atlantic, Glenwood, Red Oak, and Harlan not offer in town transportation. The transit system offers that at \$1.50/ride. These activities have around 35k rides. No funding from schools or much from Cities for this.
3. In town taxi rides high – 26k. This is largely in Atlantic, Clarinda, Sidney, Red Oak, and Harlan.
4. A large group home, day hab, and workshop facility leases vehicles. This has 137k rides. Not much state & federal transit funding allocated.
5. A second large group home, day hab, and workshop facility leases vehicles. This has 40k rides. Not much state & federal transit funding allocated.
6. High numbers of Medicaid waiver rides. They are making money on this lane.
7. Some large state facilities for intellectually disabled with high ridership – Glenwood.
8. Limited city funding – Atlantic at \$5k.
9. Each county at around \$6.5k/county.

Keys to success:

1. High industry rides and funding.
2. Medicaid funding.
3. Large numbers of group home related rides.
4. School in town high rides.
5. High intellectually disabled service provider rides.
6. Filling busses and available capacity.

### Region 14: Southern Iowa Trolley (Creston)

Notes:

1. In town rate - \$2.50/ride. High in town ridership. Primary rides in Creston and Osceola – 64k rides.
2. Few Medicaid Waiver rides. Good Medicaid NEMT rides.
3. Not making much money on Medicaid service lane.
4. No City funding. \$53k of County funding using a ridership and population formula. The high county is around \$16k and low at \$2.5k. The average is \$7.6k.
5. \$50k of Area Agency on Aging funding for 22k rides.

Keys to success:

1. Low driver wages.
2. Rides concentrated in two places – Creston & Osceola.

3. Ok county and area agency on aging funding.

### Region 15: 10-15 Transit (Ottumwa)

#### Notes:

1. High Medicaid ridership – waiver and NEMT. Making good money on this activity. Lots of people riding long distances to medical appointments (Des Moines & Iowa City). The number of waiver rides is about 2x the R6 values. The NEMT is about 3-4 times higher than R6.
2. Large intellectually disabled workshop type facilities in Ottumwa, Fairfield, Centerville, Albia, and Oskaloosa with high ridership. 41k rides. About 8k per facility. This is 2-3 times R6 numbers.
3. Use some small sedans and accessible minivans for rides.
4. Good city ridership in Ottumwa, Oskaloosa, Fairfield, Corydon, Chariton, Albia, Centerville, Bloomfield, and Keosauqua. Oskaloosa & Fairfield provide \$10k/town. None of the others participate.
5. County funding = \$2.5k/county. This is \$25k total.
6. \$70k support from area agency on aging. 15k rides across area.
7. Not many other Medicaid NEMT providers. Work hard to keep others out of market. Take every ride.
8. Do some local marketing with radio and tv.
9. They are also now doing transit service in Ottumwa. This started around 4-5 years ago. This is fixed route service. No funding from the City.

#### Keys to success:

1. High Medicaid ridership and margins.
2. Good area agency on aging funding.
3. Accommodating all rides (NEMT Medicaid especially) and using fuel efficient vehicles.
4. Expanding fleet and finding drivers at modest wages.
5. High numbers of rides to workshop and day hab facilities.
6. Integration with Ottumwa Transit – shared overhead. No funding from City of Ottumwa – concerns about sustainability.

### Region 16: SEIBUS (Burlington)

#### Notes:

1. Good City ridership in Ft Madison, Keokuk, W Burlington – about 30k rides. \$2.50/ride. \$5k from Ft Madison and Keokuk. \$0 from W Burlington.
2. Good County support. \$92k from 4 counties. Excluded the Burlington population from Des Moines County. The average per county = \$23k. This is on a per capita split.
3. High event ridership – Old Threshers in Mt Pleasant (37k rides).
4. Slightly higher Medicaid NEMT rides than R6. Lower Medicaid waiver rides than R6. Making good money on Medicaid activity. High numbers of miles for rides. Likely many rides from area to Iowa City.
5. High ridership with an intellectually disabled group home, workshop, and day hab facility. Some leased vehicles and some transit provided rides.

Keys to success:

1. Medicaid margin and rides.
2. Event ridership.
3. Intellectually disabled facility rides.
4. County financial support.

### Common Keys to Success

1. Fill busses with passengers. Need to be affordable rides if passengers are paying for service. Higher numbers of Medicaid riders help, if feasible. The workshop and day hab services have long been in this lane.
2. Higher numbers of longer distance Medicaid NEMT (medical) rides. For here that would be trips to places like Ames, Des Moines, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, and others.
3. Higher number of rural Medicaid Waiver rides. Higher miles equal greater returns.
4. Some offer industry rides and fill busses. Industry financial support is needed. Some are making good money with this activity. There is some risk also. Finding vehicles and staffing these (including backups) would be a challenge. \$8/ride is what one region is charging.
5. Lease arrangements or direct rides with group homes, workshop, and day hab facilities. They need to put 10k miles per year on vehicle. Someone needs to cover local match for these vehicles – 15 to 20% of \$75k type bus (\$15k). Would need to use R6 STBG funds for expansion vehicles. The facility with the lease would need to do a lease including many compliance expectations.
6. When do not make money on Medicaid and services desired City or County funding. County funding is more common. Some have City support here also.
7. Alliance with local cab companies to subsidize part of the ride cost. The cab company has to agree with lots of compliance standards – drug/alcohol testing and program, ADA accessibility, and others.
8. Fill vehicle availability slots with other rides. Seek other places to fill busses.
9. Summer fun busses at \$1/ride or low levels for in-town city rides if capacity is available.
10. Some now offering before/after school, preschool, and other trips for nominal rates. \$1.50/ride.
11. A few offerings school in town rides after public districts discontinue in town transportation – SW Iowa.
12. A few have really large financial support from the Area Agency on Aging.
13. Few have many general public type rides (seniors, disabled) outside of the bigger regional cities.
14. Seek places (i.e. intellectually disabled group homes) that generate a lot of rides with leased equipment and very low state/federal funding allocation.
15. Use more fuel-efficient vehicles where possible – sedans and accessible minivans or vans.

### Lessons Learned

1. Review turned back Medicaid NEMT (medical) trips to determine additional staffing levels and feasibility of serving. It is difficult to find part time drivers, so is there enough need for a full-time person? What additional vehicles and vehicle types are needed?

2. Exploring an industrial shuttle. 8 hours @ \$60/hour operating cost = \$480/day + \$15,000 of annual capital vehicle replacement cost = \$60/day. If the state & federal transit sources cover 40% of the cost that leaves \$288 + \$60 for capital. At \$8/day like SWITA (Atlantic) we would need 44 rides (22 morning and 22 at night). There is good risk on this. There would need to be some guaranteed revenue. There would be some lengthy delays or outlay of cash for a big enough vehicle also.
3. At this point public K-12 schools are not saying that they are not going to provide in town transportation. If that starts then it is an option for the public transit operators to consider some of these special in town routes. The challenge too is affordability. At 15 people on a bus morning/night at say \$3/day that \$90 revenue. The cost is probably around \$200 (3-4 hours/day). The challenge is finding part time drivers with a split shift or finding other activities for the driver to do.
4. Would like to offer affordable medical rides for people that live outside of Iowa Falls, Marshalltown, Tama/Toledo, and Grinnell. Something in the \$7/ride range. We believe that ridership would be fairly low initially. So, the cost on this could still be in the 500 rides at say \$29/ride (local support needed) = \$14,500. So, the estimated cost of each ride would be \$60 and state/federal sources cover 40%.
5. Some people have long suggested that we offer affordable rides to longer distance medical facilities – Ames, Des Moines, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City. These are expensive trips due to the time involved. The cost of one trip could be the \$200-300 range – 1 hour driving distance. If it is an all-day trip these would cost close to \$400-500.
6. If we have available capacity in some places (Iowa Falls or Grinnell) we could offer a summer fun bus for a low cost - \$1/ride or something similar. We could offer something in Tama/Toledo but someone locally would need to help with the cost – since we only operate there when there is demand and needed funding. \$1/ride does not provide the needed funding. We will need to closely review our capacity in these other places.
7. None of the regional systems had real high driver pay. The average for the 15 respondents is \$16.04/hour range to start. Region 6 is currently at \$16.50/hour. The high level was \$17 and the low was \$14.
8. Consult with CIRSI to see if vehicle leases for group homes or day hab programs is a feasible approach. The challenge is meeting the FTA drug and alcohol rules, and the 10,000 miles per year on a vehicle. The other standards are more workable.
9. Consider available capacity in Grinnell. What can be done with available time slots?
10. Consider purchasing sedan type equipment for some of the NEMT Medical rides.

## Section Seven: Priorities and Strategies

Region 6/Peoplerides have developed the following list of goals for the next five years based on feedback from agency and rider surveys, local knowledge, developments in the region and public input:

1. **Continue to replace vehicles when they exceed the federal useful life threshold.** We anticipate that 2 vehicles will need to be replaced each year. Grant support will be needed to help replace these vehicles. FTA support will be needed for these vehicle replacements.
2. **Continue funding operating expenses for current public transit services.** The current state and federal transit funding is critical with continuing service. That funding will be expected to cover 40-42% of operating cost. Finding the other 58-60% of operating cost is the concern.
3. **Make transportation for medical service more affordable.** The Peoplerides Medicaid agreement is \$2.89/mile for services. A high percentage of agency partners indicate that clients see the cost of a ride as a barrier to using public transit. We would like to offer some rural medical services that would be at a lesser rate. Some local funding would likely be needed to achieve this goal.
4. **Expand the Peoplerides rural demand response fleet of vehicles to accommodate nearly all Medicaid non-emergency rides.** This vehicle and driver expansion would need to be in smaller conversion van or sedan (non-accessible) type vehicles. STBG funds from the region may be needed for this change.
5. **Consider serving the workforce needs of the region through vanpool & larger public transit vehicles.** There are currently 6 vanpool units operating to regional employers. The minimum annual buy in to provide \$500/month/vehicle in subsidy is \$36,000. We also know that there are at least 7 non enterprise commute 10 passenger vans going to JBS. There is a likely market for maybe another 6 or so vehicles. So, there is a tremendous market for this with the food service employers – JBS, Iowa Premium, and Mom’s Meals. There are other regional employers with high commuters that could also benefit – Emerson, Lennox, Jeld-Wen, EPC, Packaging Corp, etc. Providing an incentive here to encourage more of this would be a good employer, employee, and regional transit benefit.
6. **Pursue Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP) funds and maybe State Special Project Funds to continue and expand the Enterprise Vanpool program.** Applications for this will be submitted at roughly 10/1/24 for the ICAAP program. This would be for activities starting at 10/1/25. Region 6 will be using cash on hand to start the Enterprise Vanpool program which will start from 8/1/24 to 9/30/25. This is for 6 initial vehicles. The ICAAP application will be for up to 20 vehicles. The Region 6 initial subsidy is \$500/vehicle/month. The ICAAP application subsidy will raise to \$600/vehicle/month. There are currently (7/18/24 date) 5 vanpool units running from Cedar Rapids area to Iowa Premium in Tama. This is a high priority area for Region 6 Resource Partners since this has been a long term goal. This program will help with local workforce challenges.

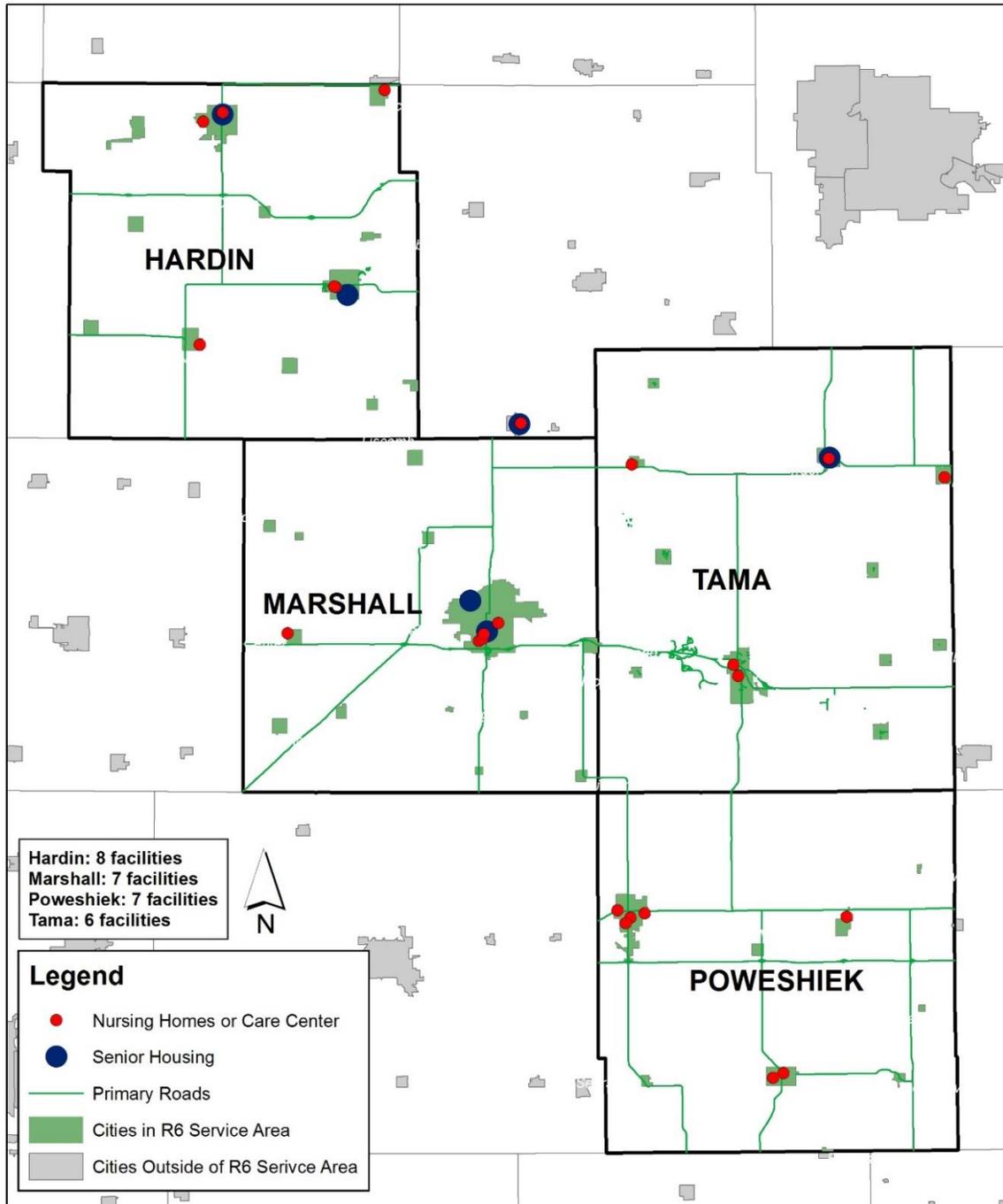
We will continue to work with the Region 6 Resource Partners Board on all the above issues. We will continue to have at least bi-annual county listening session meetings, while there is still attendance. We will consider the feasibility of developing more of a formal transit advisory group, but

Marshalltown Municipal Transit (MMT) has identified the following priority action goals:

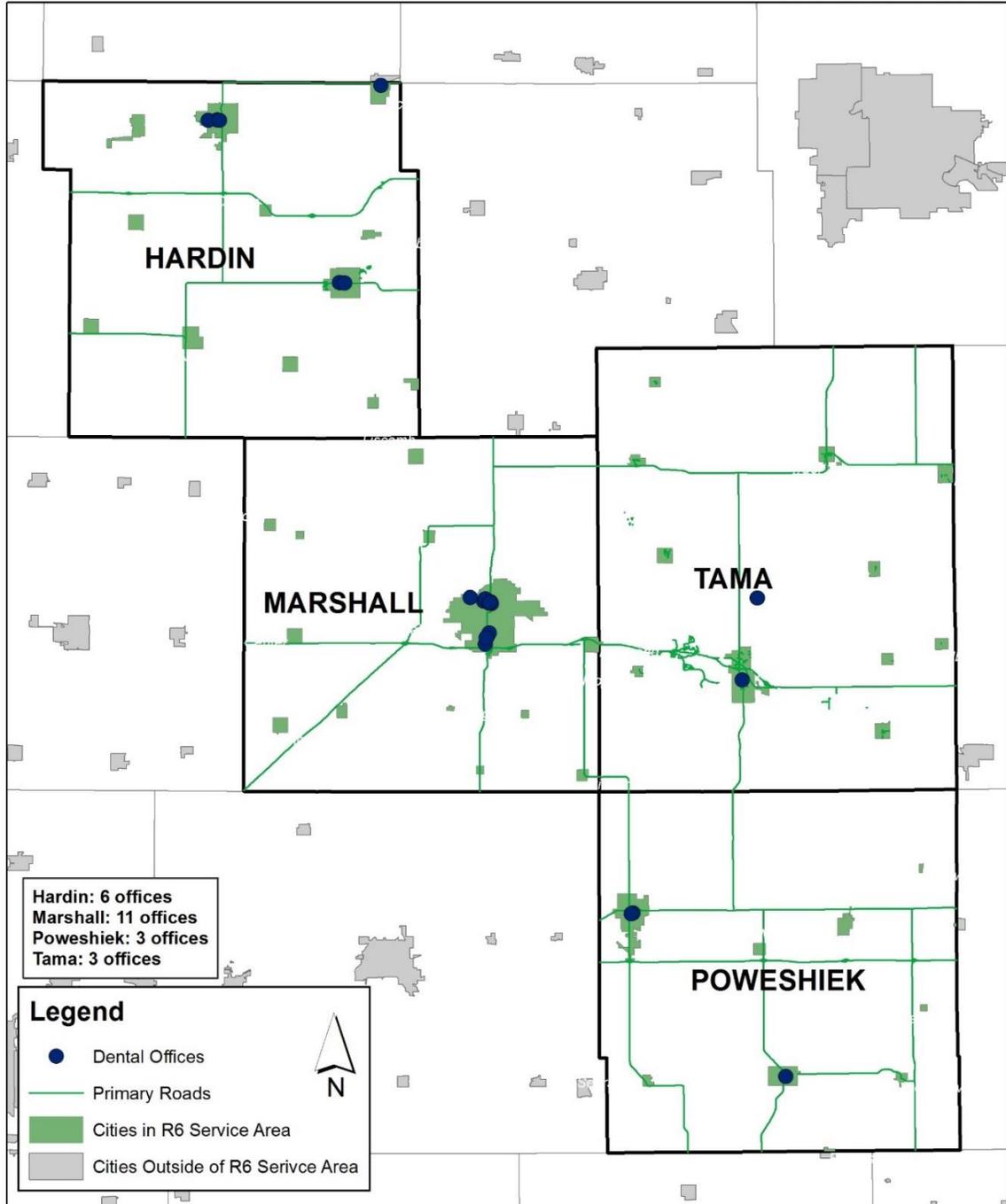
1. **Replace vehicles when they cannot serve the public transit needs of Marshalltown.**  
Marshalltown has 3 large 40-foot busses that need to be replaced.
2. **Continue funding operating expenses for current public transit services.** MMT continues to fund operating expenses for the transit servicers.

### Appendix A: Mapping

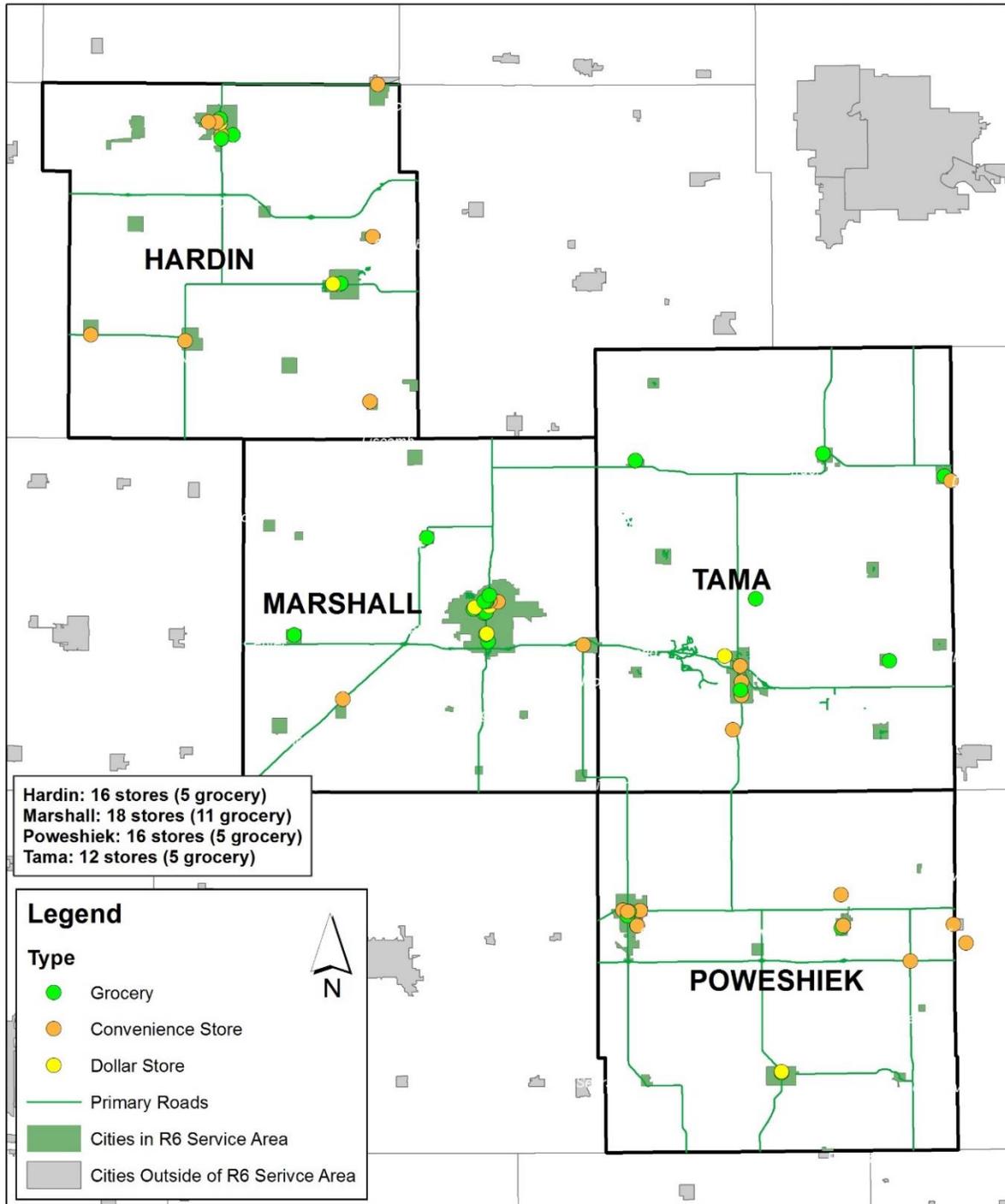
### Region 6 Nursing homes, Care Centers, and Senior Housing



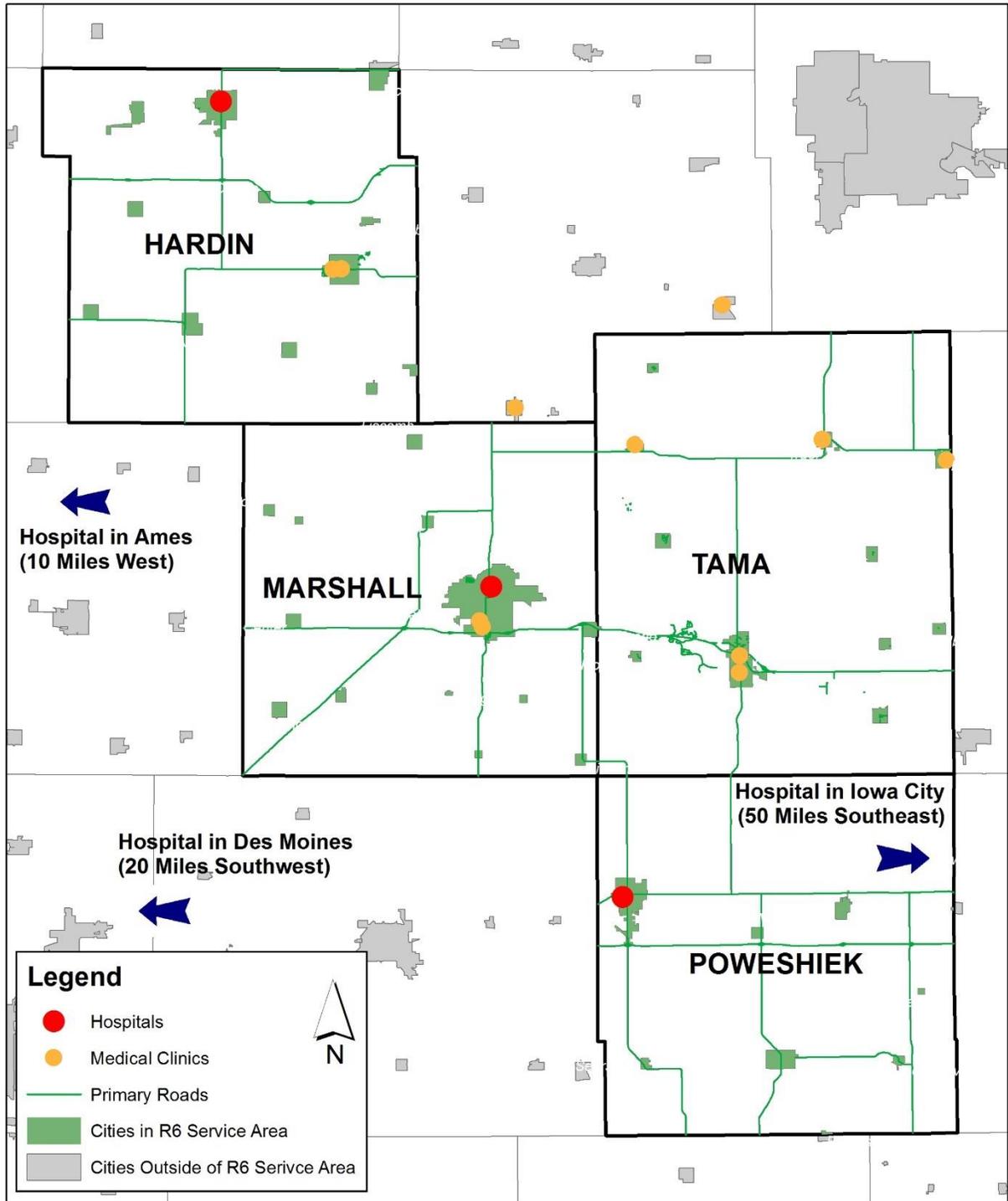
Region 6 Dental Offices



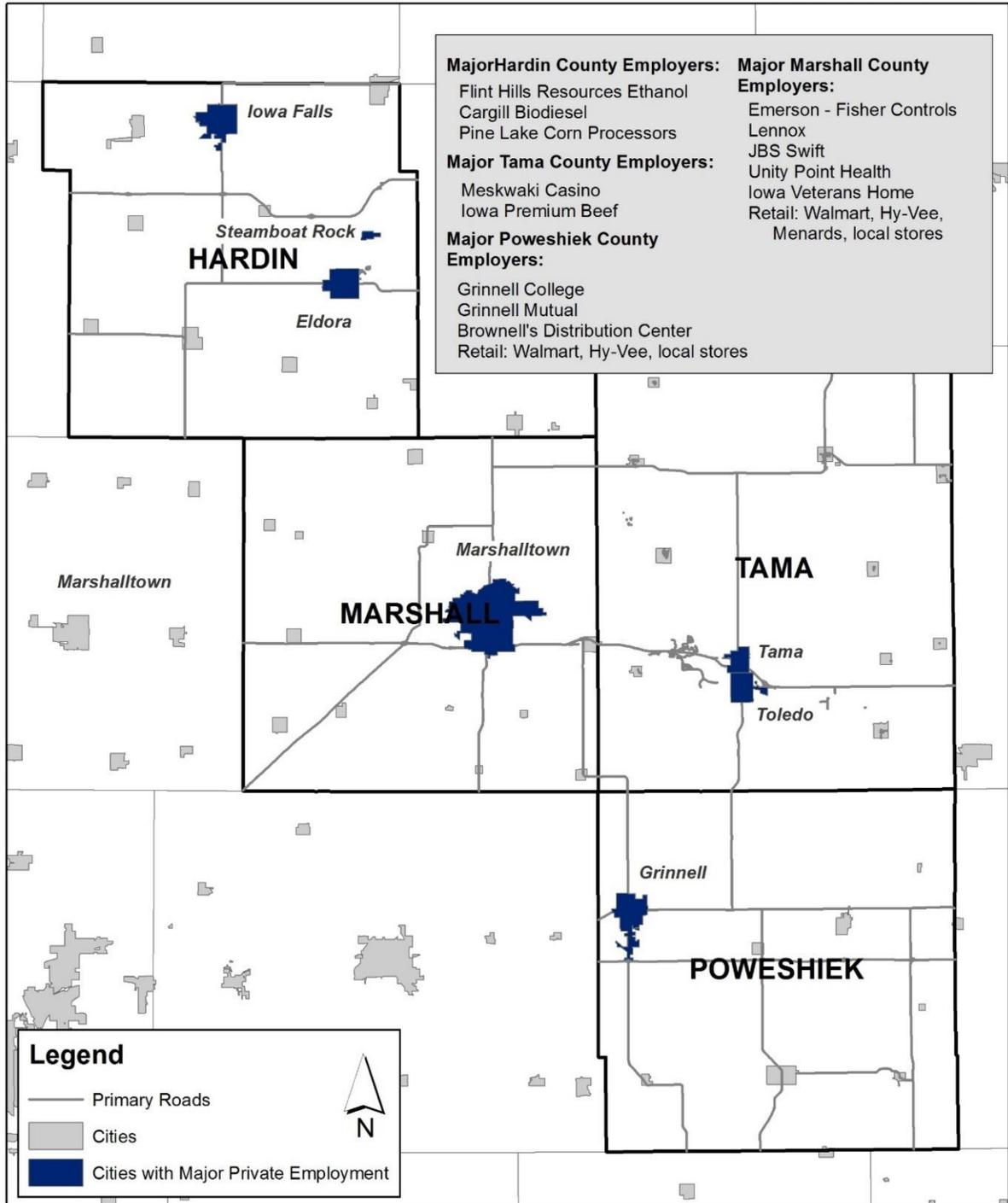
Region 6 Grocery and Convenience Stores



### Hospitals Serving Region 6 Area



Major Employment Centers in and Around Region



## Appendix B: Peoplerides Client Survey



2024 PEOPLERIDES CLIENT SURVEY



The goal of this survey is to collect public input on Peoplerides services in order to make improvements to the services to better meet the needs of the community. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact Marty Wymore at 641-752-0717 or [mwymore@region6resources.org](mailto:mwymore@region6resources.org). Thanks for your input!

**What type of Peoplerides services do you use? (check all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical transportation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment transportation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery/shopping transportation                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Social (family and friends) transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services transportation (CIRSI, Friendship Club, Access, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Work transportation                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____                                   |   |

**What is your zip code?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What can be improved with Peoplerides services? (check all that apply)**

- More affordable costs
- More service hours (nights or early mornings)
- More service days (Saturdays and Sundays)
- Customer service provided by drivers
- Customer service provided by ride schedulers
- Vehicle comfort and cleanliness
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Are there transportation trips you would like to do that are not available or affordable at our current price per mile? (check all that apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Des Moines           | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to local Wal-Mart                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Ames                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Iowa State Fair                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Cedar Rapids         | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to work sites                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Mason City           | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips for before/after school activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Waterloo/Cedar Falls | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to preschool/daycare               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Iowa City            | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips for medical purposes               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to local grocery store  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                              |

**Have you lost employment or could not accept an employment opportunity due to lack of transportation?**

- Yes       No

**Please rate the quality of current Peoplerides services? (please circle one)**

Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

**What other comments, concerns, or suggestions do you have regarding Peoplerides services?**

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## Appendix C: Peoples General Public Survey



### 2024 PEOPLERIDES GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY

The goal of this survey is to collect public input on public transit services in order to make improvements to the services Peoplerides provides to better meet the needs of the community. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact Marty Wymore at 641-752-0717 or [mwymore@region6resources.org](mailto:mwymore@region6resources.org). Thanks for your input!

What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you heard about Peoplerides?  Yes  No

Do you know what services Peoplerides can provide?  Yes  No

Do you currently use any public transit services?  Yes  No

If you answered yes to the previous question, what public transit services do you use? (check all that apply)

- Peoplerides
- Marshalltown Municipal Transit
- DART RideShare (Central Iowa Vanpool Service)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What can be improved with the public transit services in your area? (check all that apply)

- More affordable costs
- More service hours (nights or early mornings)
- More service days (Saturdays and Sundays)
- Customer service provided by drivers
- Customer service provided by ride schedulers
- Vehicle comfort and cleanliness
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Are there transportation trips you would like to do that are not available or affordable with current public transit services? (check all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Des Moines           | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to local Wal-Mart                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Ames                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Iowa State Fair                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Cedar Rapids         | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to work sites                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Mason City           | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips for before/after school activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Waterloo/Cedar Falls | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to preschool/daycare               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to Iowa City            | <input type="checkbox"/> Trips for medical purposes               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trips to local grocery store  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                              |

Have you lost employment or could not accept an employment opportunity due to lack of transportation?

- Yes  No

## Appendix D: Marshalltown Municipal Transit Survey



### 2024 MARSHALLTOWN MUNICIPAL TRANSIT SURVEY

The goal of this survey is to collect public input on Marshalltown Municipal Transit services in order to improve the services to best meet the needs of the community. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Kevin Pigors at 641-754-5719 or [kpigors@marshalltown-ia.gov](mailto:kpigors@marshalltown-ia.gov). Thanks for your input!

**How often do you use MMT services?**

- Daily    Weekly    Monthly    Yearly    Never

**Are MMT busses available when you want them?**  Yes    No

**Do you have transportation needs at these days and hours? (check all that apply)**

- Evenings/nights (5:00 PM to 10:00 PM)    Saturdays  
 Early mornings (5:00 AM to 7:00 AM)    Sundays

**Have you lost employment or could not accept an employment opportunity due to lack of transportation?**

- Yes    No

**In April, MMT will reduce its service hours from 7:00 AM-6:00 PM to 7:00 AM-5:00 PM. How will this reduction in service hours impact your ability to travel?**

- Significantly impact (you would stop using MMT services)  
 Moderately impact (you would reduce your utilization of MMT services)  
 No impact (you would continue utilizing MMT services as you currently are)

**If MMT increased the service fee from \$1.00 to \$1.50, how would this impact your utilization of MMT services?**

- Significantly impact (you would stop using MMT services)  
 Moderately impact (you would reduce your utilization of MMT services)  
 No impact (you would continue utilizing MMT services as you currently are)

**What factors contribute to reduced or no usage of MMT services? (check all that apply)**

- It takes too long on MMT buses to get to or from my destination back to my residence  
 Routes are not available when I need them  
 Busses are too crowded    Transportation fees cost too much  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please rate the quality of current MMT services? (please circle one)**

- |           |      |      |      |           |
|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|
| Very Poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
| 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5         |

**What suggestions do you have for improving current MMT services?**

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## Appendix E: Region 6 Board Minutes for 8/26/24

### REGION 6 RESOURCE PARTNERS BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR 8/26/24

The Region 6 Resource Partners met by Zoom with the call originating at the Region 6 Resource Partners office at 903 E Main Street at Noon on 8/26/24.

Present: Buschkamp, Granzow, Roudabush, Thomas, Schoborg, Scott, and Hibbs.

The first business item is the consent agenda. The consent agenda includes the 6/10/24 meeting minutes, current balance sheet & check register & CD's, and current planning projects. Roudabush made the motion to approve the consent agenda and seconded by Scott. All voted aye – motion carried.

The Passenger Transportation Plan public hearing was the next agenda item. There were no oral or written comments on the plan so Granzow made the motion to close the hearing and seconded by Roudabush. All voted aye – motion carried.

A resolution to approve the Passenger Transportation Plan was the next agenda item. Hibbs made the motion to approve the plan and seconded by Roudabush. All voted aye – motion carried.

A marketing firm for part time drivers and general social media advertising was the next agenda item. Wymore indicated that we received 4 proposals on the marketing strategy to find part time drivers. Hatch was the firm that seemed to have the most experience and most knowledgeable approach. The Hatch proposal was in three components – A. campaign creative concepting \$6k, B. Creative projects \$4k, and C. 3 month advertising campaign \$18k. The board authorized part A the creative concepting for \$6k to see what develops and have firmer ideas. Thomas made the motion to approve this part A activity and seconded by Scott. Ayes – all except Granzow. Nays – Granzow. Motion carried.

The Region 6 Housing Trust Fund contribution was the next agenda item. The 1065 Account is the HFSB Housing Account which is some low income housing historical projects repayments. The Region 6 HTF has the same mission so Wymore recommended transferring the \$3801.11 to the Region 6 HTF and closing this account. Granzow made the motion to close the account and transfer the funds to the Region 6 HTF in the amount of approximately \$3801.11. Hibbs seconded the motion. All voted aye – motion carried.

The Region 6 Code of Conduct and Maintenance Plan was the next agenda item. Thomas made the motion to approve these documents as presented and seconded by Roudabush. All voted aye – motion carried.

The FY 23 audit report was tabled until the next meeting on 10/28/24. It is possible that a special meeting may be needed in September for a few items.

Being no further business the meeting adjourned.

Marty Wymore  
Director