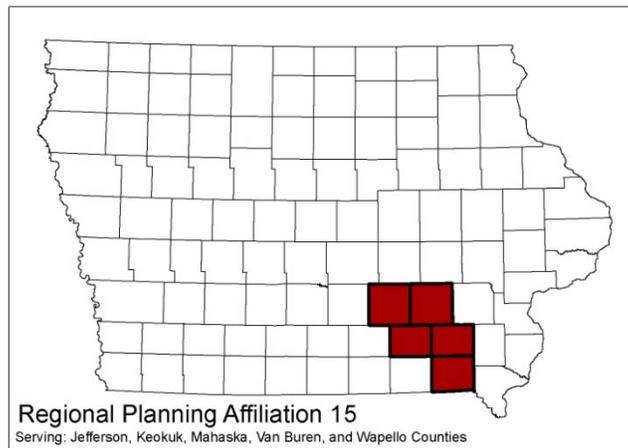


# **RPA 15 FFY2016-2020 Passenger Transportation Plan**



Prepared by the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 1110  
Ottumwa, IA 52501  
(641) 684-6551

This plan was prepared with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, and in part through local matching funds of the RPA member governments.

## Adopting Resolution

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE RPA 15 PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION PLAN AS THE OFFICIAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15

WHEREAS, the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission did prepare a Passenger Transportation Plan which identifies the existing passenger transportation services and the needs for REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15; and

WHEREAS, it is a requirement of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) of 2012 that the transportation planning process and long-range planning be continued, and that passenger transportation be included in this process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15 adopts the RPA 15 Passenger Transportation Plan as the official transportation plan for the region.

Passed this 23rd day of May, 2015.



Chairperson

Regional Planning Affiliation 15

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# **Section One: Introduction and Process Discussion**

## **What is a Passenger Transportation Plan?**

The Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is a process created by the Iowa Department of Transportation for the Regional Planning Affiliations and Metropolitan Planning Organizations that is designed to promote coordinated and joint planning for passenger transportation that improves local and regional passenger transportation systems.

The goals of the PTP are to:

- Improve transportation services to lowans.
- 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 options available.
- Develop justification for future passenger transportation investments.
- Save dollars and eliminate overlapping services.

The Passenger Transportation Plan provides an inventory of the passenger transportation services and discusses the demographic characteristics of the region. The plan discusses coordination issues within the region, including; an assessment of needs, review of previously recommended priorities and strategies, identification of any other developments affecting coordination, and input received on needs and coordination. It also proposes priorities and strategies for the next five years to address the identified needs and lead to projects. Finally, the plan provides an overview of funding sources available for improvements, discusses the funding that is achievable during the life of the plan, and identifies sources that will be sought out to make improvements. The PTP is updated every five years in order to take into account new and changing needs and priorities. This document will cover federal fiscal years 2016 to 2020. During the years between updates, a minimum of two transit advisory group (TAG) meetings will be held to continue to improve services and coordination. This enables the PTP to stay current with passenger transportation needs.

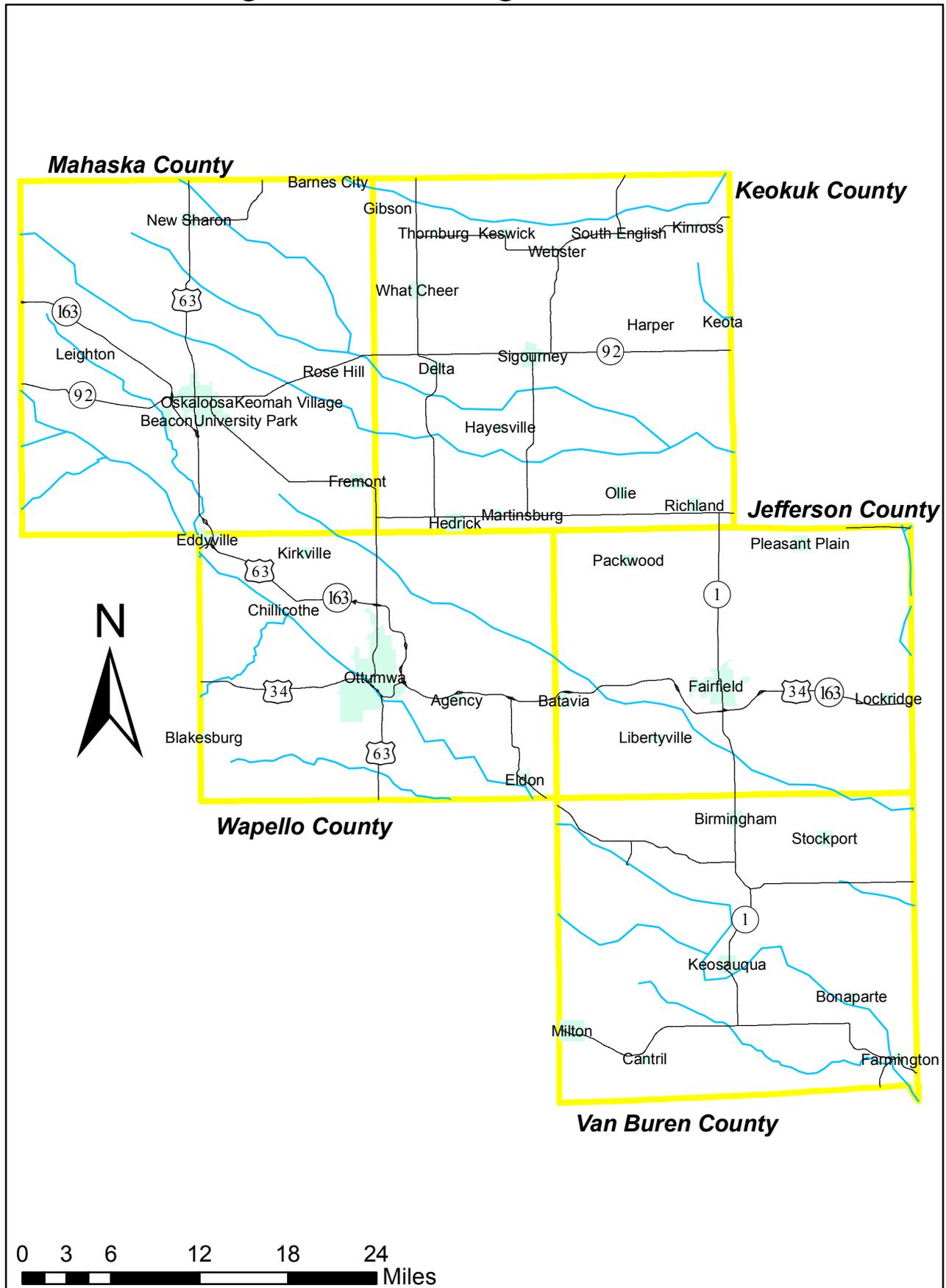
## **The Regional Planning Affiliation 15 Region**

In 1994, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act changed the way federal aid funding was allocated. The existing FAS and FAUS systems were eliminated along with specific requirements for allocations to the local or state systems, and the Surface Transportation Program was created. The STP program gave each state the discretion to determine how to allocate funds, and the Iowa Transportation Commission made the decision to allocate a significant portion for local programming through Regional

Planning Affiliations. This decision led to the formation of RPA 15 that same year. Today, the Iowa DOT delegates some transportation planning activities and the programming of certain projects receiving federal aid to the RPAs. RPA 15 provides transportation planning assistance to the following five southeast Iowa counties; Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren, and Wapello and the cities within them. The RPA involves citizens of the region in the transportation planning process. It also coordinates transportation planning efforts between these entities and with other local, state, and federal government agencies.

The PTP process was started in 2006 with a series of Mobility Action Planning Workshops that were held across the state by the Iowa Department of Transportation. The purpose of these meetings was to highlight the strengths and weakness of passenger transportation services within each area. The Iowa DOT then made each Regional Planning Affiliation or Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for passenger transportation planning process in their area which included facilitating Transit Advisory Group meetings and creating and maintaining a plan. This resulted in the 2007 Passenger Transportation Plan, or the Passenger Transportation Development Plan as it was called then. The RPA revised and updated this document in 2008, 2009, and 2010. In 2011, RPA 15 switched to the current format where the plan would be updated every five years with meeting summaries or minutes being submitted to the DOT during the four years between updates.

# The Regional Planning Affiliation 15 Area



## **The PTP Process**

RPA 15's Passenger Transportation Plan was developed by the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission following the guidance from the Iowa Department of Transportation, using input obtained from transportation providers and users, and an analysis of transportation and demographic data.

Input for the PTP was gathered through a survey, Transit Advisory Group meetings, and individual discussions. Transportation and demographic data was obtained from passenger transportation providers and the US Census Bureau.

A Passenger Transportation Services survey was sent to public and private passenger transportation providers and health and human service agencies. This survey asked if the organization or agency provided passenger transportation services or contracted with another organization for service. Information obtained through the survey was used to develop the discussion of current transportation services in Section two. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Two Transit Advisory Group meetings have been held to gather input. The input obtained from the first meeting was used to develop the needs, priorities, and strategies discussed in Sections three and four. The second TAG was held to provide an opportunity for the draft Passenger Transportation Plan to be reviewed, including the needs, priorities, and strategies identified at the first meeting. Members of the TAG were able to provide their recommendations on any changes to the document and its approval. Copies of minutes from the Transit Advisory Group meetings can be found in Appendix B.

After the draft plan has been completed, the document will be sent to the Iowa Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and the two public transit agencies for review. It will also be sent to the Transit Advisory Group and made available on the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission website. After review and comment, the plan will be revised and presented to the RPA 15 Policy Board for approval.

## Section Two: Inventory and Area Profile

### Inventory

There are thirty-three organizations that provide passenger transportation services within Regional Planning Affiliation 15. This includes two providers of long-distance intercity transportation, two public transit agencies, two private taxicab companies, ten health and human service agencies, and seventeen school districts. The table below summarizes the services provided by the public and private transit organizations and the health and human service agencies. The information on the table includes; type of service provided, eligibility requirements for service, hours and days available, approximate annual miles, and the number and type of vehicles operated. A table containing information on the school districts can be found later in this section.

<b>Passenger Transportation Providers</b>					
Provider	Service Type	Eligibility	Hours	Miles	Vehicles
AMTRAK	I, FR	A	AA	n	x
Greyhound	I, FR, T	A	AA	n	n
Burlington Trailways	I, FR, T	A	AA	3,600,000	34BL, 3B
Ottumwa Cab	DR	A	AA	200,000	1VL, 4V, 1C
R & B Taxi	DR	A	WD, WE, D, E, N	55,000	2V
Ottumwa Transit	FR, P	A, M	WD, D, E	265,000	10BL, 4VL
10-15 Transit	FR, DR, P	A, M	WD, WE, D, E	795,000	34BL, 2VL
Jefferson Co Health Center	DR	CL, M	WD, D	36,000	2VL
ADDS	DR	CL, F	WD, D	5,000	1V
Country Life Health Care	DR	CL	V	35,000	1V, 1C
Crisis Center	DR	CL	V	17,000	2V
Tenco	DR	CL	V	n	2VL, 15V, 3C
Ottumwa Job Corps	DR	CL	AA	248,000	1BL, 3B, 6V
Ottumwa Residential Facility	DR	CL	AA	5,000	1V, 2C
Penn Pl & Sylvan Woods	FR, DR	CL	WD, D	n	1BL, 1v
First Resources	DR	CL, I	V	n	2VL
Love INC	DR	CL, I	WD, D	n	n

*Key: Service Type- I=Intercity, DR=Demand Responsive, FR=Fixed Route, CT=Client Transportation, T=Charter/Tours, P=Paratransit*

*Eligibility - A=Anyone, C=Client, I=Income requirement, M=Medical requirement*

*Hours - AA=all hours, all days, WD=weekdays, WE=weekends, D=daytime, E=evening, N= night, V=varies*

*Vehicles - B-bus, BL- Bus w/lift, C-Car, V-Van, VL-Van w/lift*

*Other - x=not applicable, n=not provided/not known*

Intercity rail transportation is provided by AMTRAK, which has a station in Ottumwa. AMTRAK operates the California Zephyr through the region, which runs from Chicago IL to Oakland CA, and includes stops in Omaha, Denver, and Salt Lake City. The AMTRAK station in Ottumwa is served by two passenger trains each day, an eastbound train to Chicago which stops at 9:09am, and a westbound train to Oakland which stops

at 6:53pm. Connections to other AMTRAK routes can be made in Chicago and Sacramento, allowing passengers to reach any destination AMTRAK serves.

Greyhound Lines provides intercity bus transportation to cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Within the region, Greyhound has regularly scheduled stops in Fairfield and Ottumwa. The stops in both of these cities allows passengers to travel to approximately 3,800 cities in North America that Greyhound provides service to. Greyhound also provides charter services to groups and organizations. Greyhound Lines operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The bus service operates 1,200 buses and averages over 5 billion miles per year.

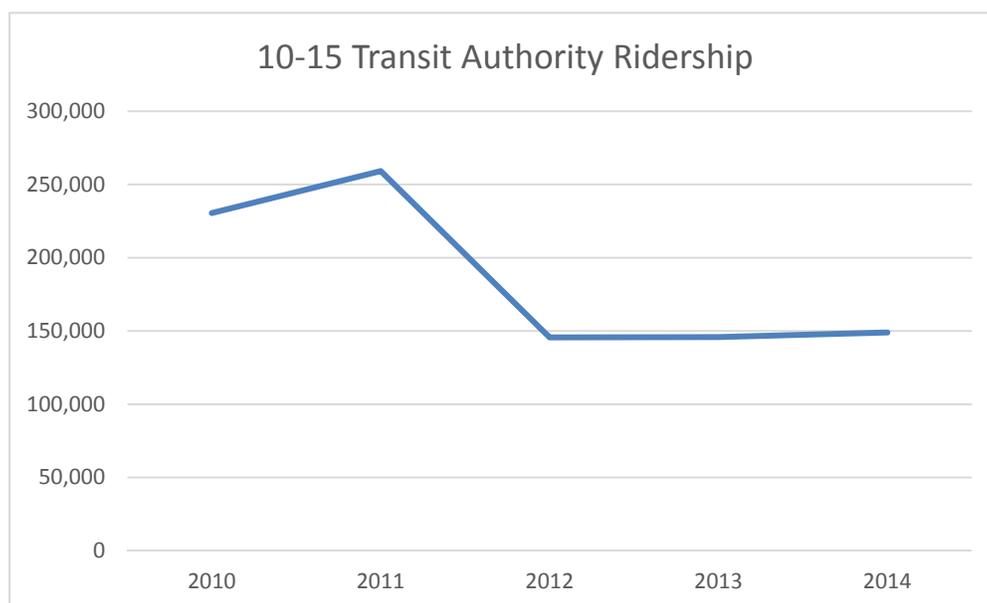
Burlington Trailways provides intercity bus transportation to cities in Iowa, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Nebraska. This is provided through regularly scheduled daily stops in both Fairfield and Ottumwa. From both of these cities, passengers can travel to the six other states Burlington Trailways provides service to. In addition, passengers can travel to other cities across the United States by transferring to other Trailways or to Jefferson or Greyhound bus services. Burlington Trailways also provides charter services to groups and organizations as well as escorted tours for the public. Burlington Trailways operates thirty-seven buses on its routes, and thirty-four of the buses are equipped with lifts. The bus service operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and averages approximately 3.6 million miles per year.

Ottumwa Cab provides taxicab services to the City of Ottumwa and surrounding counties, and can provide transportation to locations anywhere in the State of Iowa or in neighboring states. Passengers can call Ottumwa Cab to request a ride when needed or service may be contracted and schedule in advance. In addition to taxicab services, Ottumwa Cab also provides non-emergency medical transportation. Ottumwa Cab operates a total of six vehicles; one minivan with a lift, four minivans, and one sedan. Taxicab service is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and the company averages about 200,000 miles per year.

R & B Taxi provides taxicab services to the City of Ottumwa and the surrounding area, its taxis can provide transportation to locations anywhere within the state. R & B Taxi provides transportation to both passengers who call in and request a ride, and service that is contracted or scheduled ahead of time. R & B Taxi operates two minivans and averages about 55,000 miles per year. Service is available during the following hours; Monday through Thursday 7am until 12midnight, Friday and Saturday 7am until 2am, and Sunday 9am until 9pm.

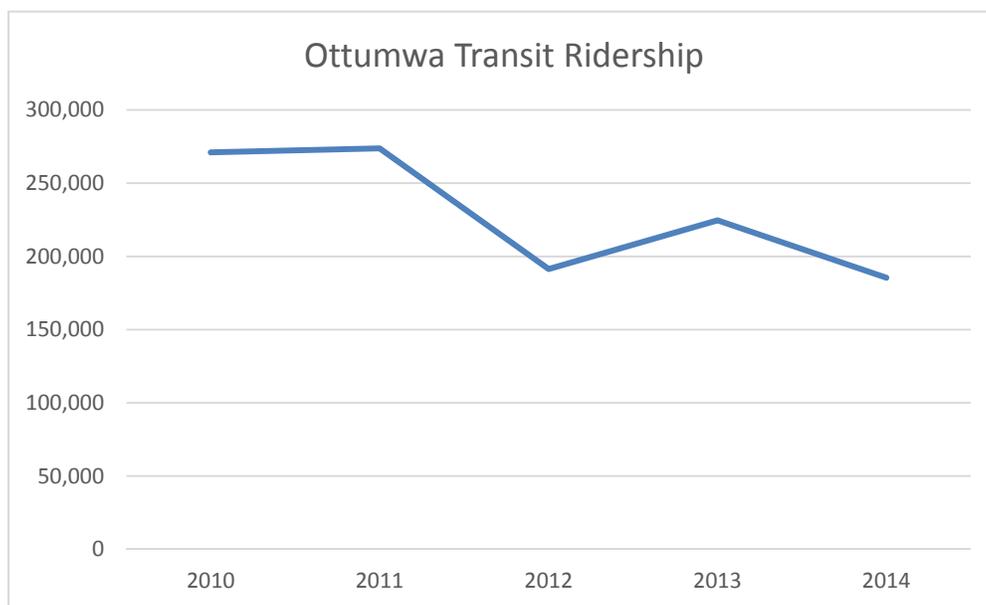
10-15 Regional Transportation Authority provides service in ten counties in southeast Iowa, including the five counties that make up RPA 15. The counties served by 10-15 RTA include: Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Van Buren, Wapello, and Wayne. Service is demand responsive, with the transit vehicle taking the rider from their point of origin to their destination and back if needed. 10-15's services are available to riders Monday through Saturday between the hours of 6am and 6pm. Service outside of this time may be provided if a driver and vehicle are available. 10-15 RTA also works several health and human service agencies within the region to operate transportation services for clients of those organizations. The hours and amount of service provided to the health and human service agencies vary depending upon the needs of the organization and its clients. Service is provided by two medium duty buses equipped with lifts, thirty-two light duty buses equipped with lifts, and two mini vans equipped with lifts. The medium duty buses can carry thirty passengers and the light duty buses can transport sixteen to twenty. 10-15's vehicles accumulate approximately 795,000 miles per year.

In addition to demand response service provided throughout the 10 county region, 10-15 RTA also provides fixed route service and paratransit in the City of Oskaloosa called "Oskaloosa Rides." This service consists of a single fixed route that makes a one hour circuit through Oskaloosa and stops at shopping centers, health and human service agencies, and residential areas. Also available is paratransit service for people who have a disability that may prevent them from accessing the fixed route. An application must be completed and approved in advance before paratransit service can be used. Oskaloosa Rides operates on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between the hours of 9am and 5:30pm. A map of the route is shown on page 13.



The figure on the previous page shows 10-15's total ridership for the last five years. 10-15 has averaged over 145,000 rides in each of the past three years. In the prior years, ridership was well over 200,000. The large decrease in ridership between 2011 and 2012 was due to Lee County leaving 10-15 RTA to join SEIBUS.

Ottumwa Transit provides service in the city of Ottumwa and provides rides Monday through Friday between 6am and 6pm. This service includes five fixed routes and paratransit service. Each of the fixed routes cover a specific geographic area of Ottumwa with transfers between the routes possible at the downtown bus zone. A map of Ottumwa Transit's bus routes is shown on page 14. Paratransit service is available to riders who have a disability and may not be able to access the bus stops. Paratransit service will take riders from their point of origin to their destination and back. Before paratransit can be used, an application must be completed and approved. Transit services are provided by nine medium duty buses with lifts, one light duty bus with a lift, and four minivans with lifts. The medium duty buses can transport thirty-two passengers and the light duty can carry 16 passengers. Ottumwa Transit averages 265,000 miles per year in providing transportation services.



The figure above shows Ottumwa Transit's total ridership for the last five years. Ottumwa Transit provided over 185,000 rides in 2014, which is a decrease from 2013. This decrease was due to route changes that were unpopular, Ottumwa Transit has returned to the previous routes that had the higher ridership. The number of rides in

2010 and 2011 were higher than the more recent years as they were before the organization was cited by the Iowa DOT and FTA for several rules violations. Ottumwa Transit has since made the changes required by IDOT and FTA and is now in full compliance with the rules.

Ten health and human service agencies within the region provide transportation to their clients. These ten agencies, shown in the figure on page 6, are: Jefferson County Health Center, Alcohol and Drug Dependency Services, Country Life Health Care, the Ottumwa Crisis Center, Tenco, Ottumwa Job Corps, Ottumwa Residential Facility, Pennsylvania Place/Sylvan Woods, First Resources, and Love Inc. Eligibility for transportation through these agencies is limited to people who are receiving services from the agency. Several of the HHS agencies also have income or medical requirements in order that must be met for their transportation services. Transportation services available from these agencies may be limited, either by the hours of operation or the number and size of vehicles, and unable to provide rides to all of their clients who may need it. As a result, these agencies may also work with or direct their clients to public providers or private taxi companies for transportation to their facilities.

In addition to operating their own vehicles, or as an alternative to, some health and human service agencies contract or have agreements with transportation providers for service. Christian Opportunity Center, First Resources, SIEDA Headstart, and Tenco have contracts with 10-15 for transportation to workshops, Ottumwa Transit has a memorandum of understanding with Job Corps for student transportation on its fixed route, and American Homefinding Association and WIC contract with R & B Taxi. Health and Human Service agencies may also provide funding assistance to clients for transportation. This assistance can in the form of cash, bus pass, gas voucher, or bus tickets. The table on page 11 shows health and human service agencies that responded that they provide funding for transportation services and the method used.

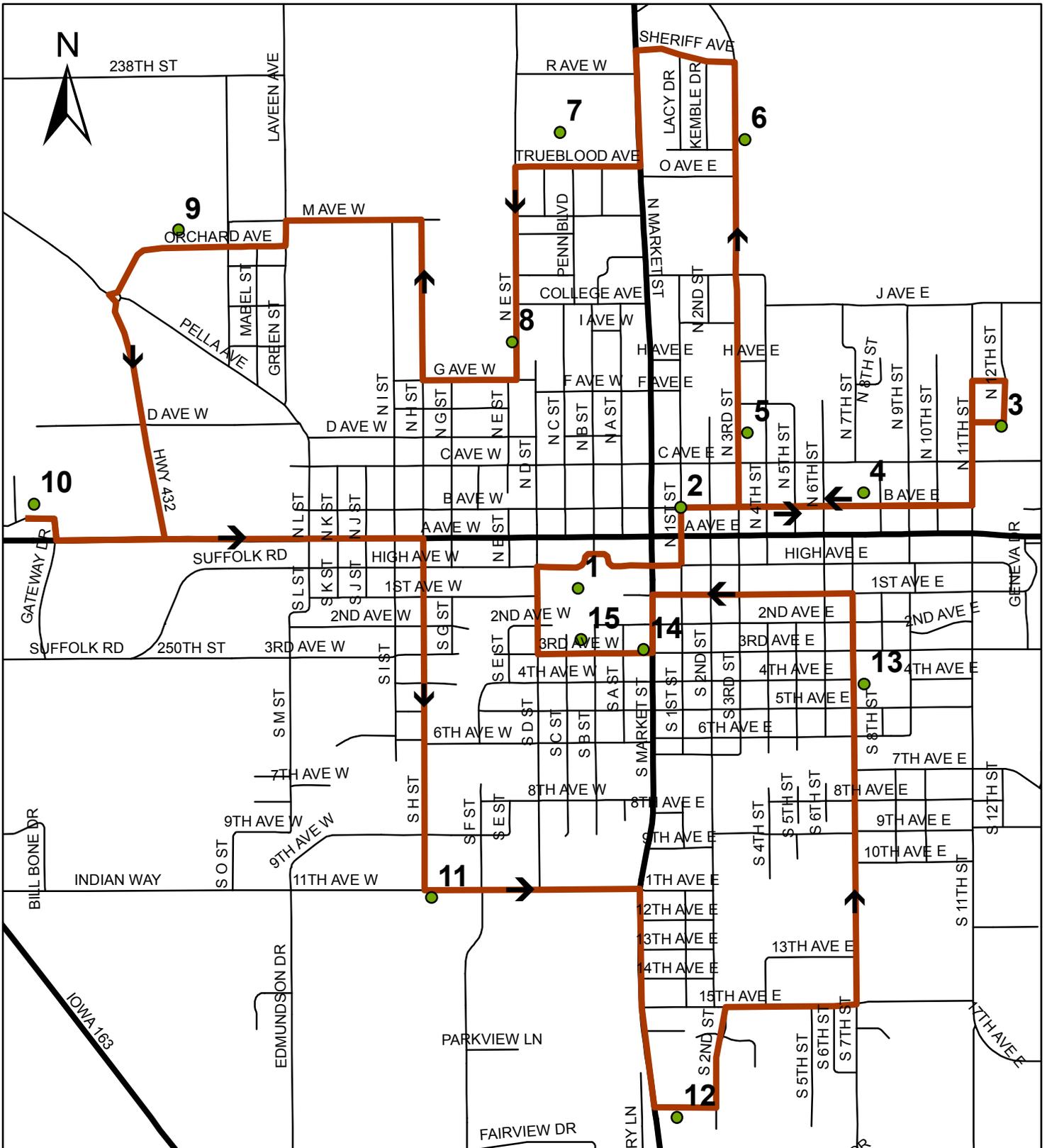
<b>Agencies that Provide Funding for Transportation</b>	
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Type of funding assistance</b>
First Resources	CT
Christian Opportunity Center	CT
American Homefinding Assoc	CT
WiC	CT
United Way of Mahaska Co	BP
SIEDA Comm Action	CT, BP
Vista Woods Care Center	BP
ADDS	BP
Crisis Center	BP
Ottumwa Job Corps	CT, BP
Van Buren Comm Services	BP
Wapello Co General Assist	GV, BT
Keokuk Co Comm Services	GV
Love INC	GV
Key: CT=Contract for service, BP=Bus Pass,	
GV=Gas voucher, BT=Bus Ticket	

In addition to the organizations identified in the table on page six, there are seventeen school districts in the region that provide transportation to their students. According to the Iowa Department of Education, these districts operate 310 buses and 103 smaller vehicles to transport students to and from school. The figure on page 12 shows the number of vehicles operated by each district that serves the five county region. All of the school districts were contacted and asked to identify the number of vehicles operated transporting students that were equipped with wheelchair lifts. This information is also shown in the figure for the districts that responded. School district vehicles are used only for the transportation of students and staff to school and school related activities. In addition to operating their own vehicles, the Ottumwa School district uses Ottumwa Transit for a tripper route to handle excess demand at the Liberty School, this service is a fixed route that runs every weekday afternoon and is open to the public. The Van Buren County School District uses 10-15 Transit to provide transportation for disabled students.

<b>School District Transportation</b>			
School District	Buses	Smaller Vehicles	Vehicles w/ lifts
Pella	39	5	2
Twin Cedars	10	7	n
Oskaloosa	32	10	n
North Mahaska	10	5	1
Ottumwa	31	0	3
Tri-County	9	5	n
English Valleys	11	7	2
Sigourney	10	3	0
Keota	7	4	n
Eddyville-Blakesburg	21	7	1
Pekin	21	0	0
Cardinal	14	12	2
Fairfield	30	5	2
Washington	18	18	2
Van Buren	21	4	0
Harmony	8	7	n
Central Lee	18	4	1

*Source: Iowa Department of Education*

# Oskaloosa Rides - Bus Route



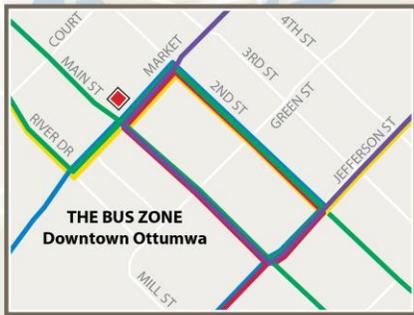
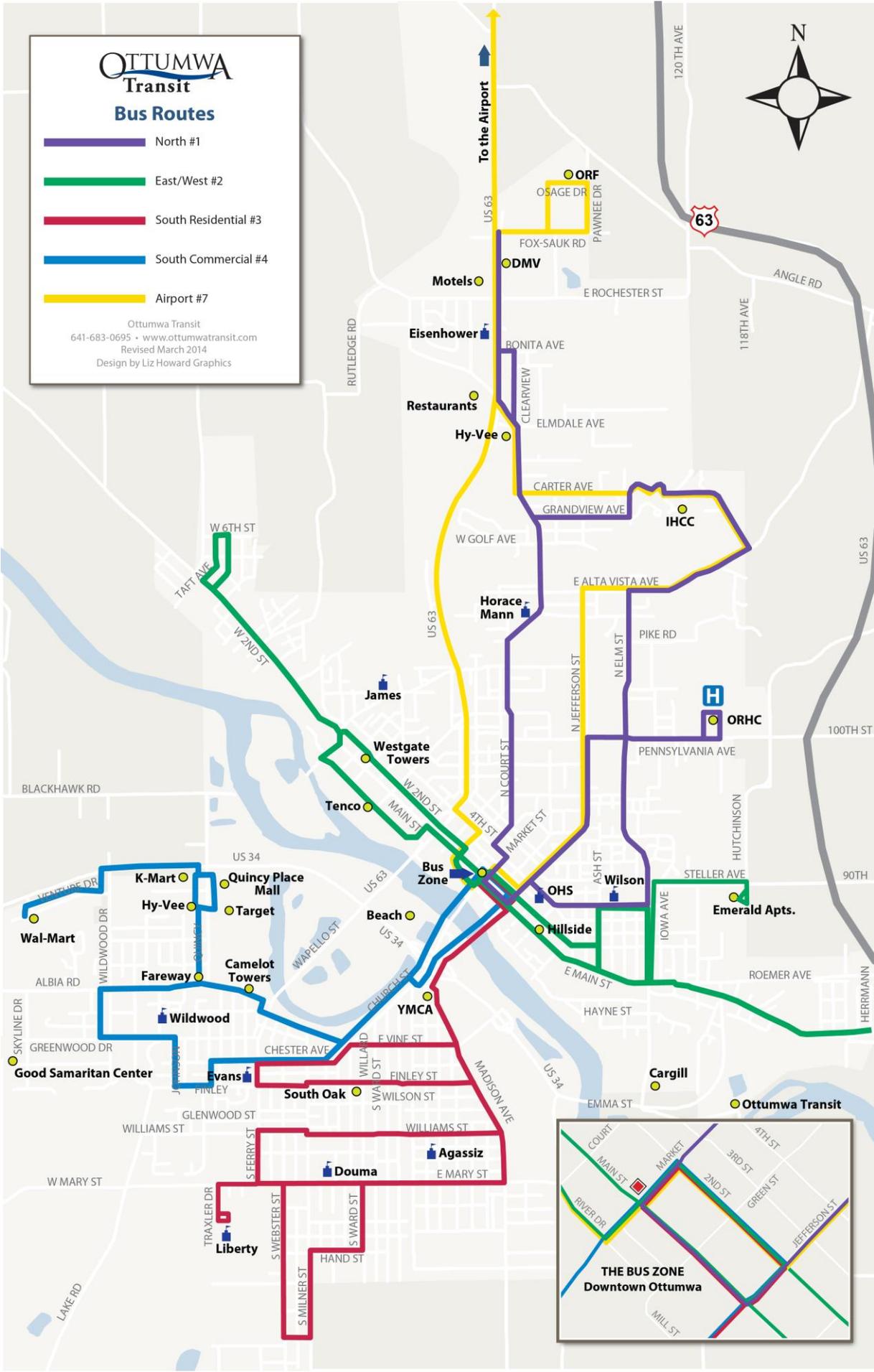
## Legend

- |                                    |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| ● 1 - Hy-Vee/Mall                  | ● 6 - Middle/High School /George Daily Auditorium | ● 11 - Edmundson Park                          |
| ● 2 - Christian Opportunity Center | ● 7 - William Penn University                     | ● 12 - Southern Hills/Highland Park Apartments |
| ● 3 - Hospital                     | ● 8 - Christian School                            | ● 13 - Webster                                 |
| ● 4 - Agency on Aging              | ● 9 - Elementary School                           | ● 14 - Library                                 |
| ● 5 - YMCA                         | ● 10 - Walmart                                    | ● 15 - Fareway                                 |

# OTTUMWA Transit Bus Routes

- North #1
- East/West #2
- South Residential #3
- South Commercial #4
- Airport #7

Ottumwa Transit  
641-683-0695 • www.ottumwatransit.com  
Revised March 2014  
Design by Liz Howard Graphics



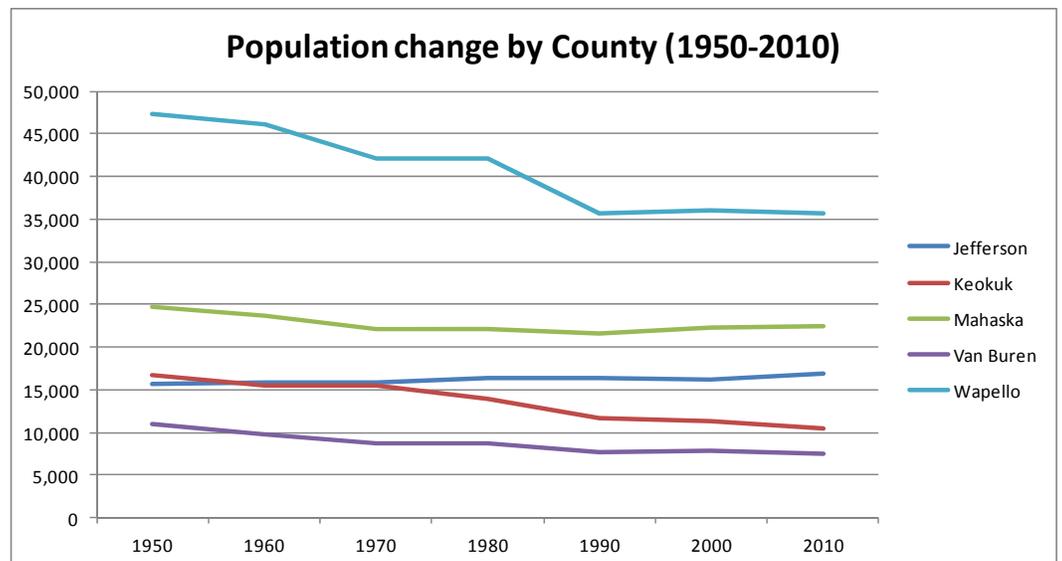
## Area Profile

2010 Census Populations	
<b>Jefferson County</b>	<b>16,843</b>
Batavia	499
Farfield	9,464
Libertyville	315
Lockridge	268
Vedic City	259
Packwood	204
Pleasant Plain	93
<b>Keokuk County</b>	<b>10,511</b>
Delta	328
Gibson	61
Harper	114
Hayesville	50
Hedrick	764
Keota	1,009
Keswick	246
Kinross	73
Martinsburg	112
Ollie	215
Richland	584
Sigourney	2,059
South English	212
Thornburg	67
Webster	88
What Cheer	646
<b>Mahaska County</b>	<b>22,381</b>
Barnes City	176
Beacon	494
Fremont	743
Keomah Village	84
Leighton	162
New Sharon	1,293
Oskaloosa	11,463
Rose Hill	168
University Park	487
<b>Van Buren County</b>	<b>7,570</b>
Birmingham	448
Bonaparte	433
Cantril	222
Farmington	664
Keosauqua	1,006
Milton	443
Stockport	296
<b>Wapello County</b>	<b>35,625</b>
Agency	638
Blakesburg	296
Chillicothe	97
Eddyville	1,024
Eldon	927
Kirkville	167
Ottumwa	25,023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 Census)

The population of Regional Planning Affiliation 15 was 92,930 in 2010, which is a decrease of 4,846 people from the region's population in 2000. This is the continuation of a long-term trend of population decreases that was interrupted by a slight population increase between 1990 and 2000. The trend is part of a larger shift in population from rural areas to suburban and urban areas. Within the RPA, Keokuk, Van Buren, and Wapello counties experienced population decreases while the other two counties saw population increases. Similar to the trend for the region, these three counties have a continuous decrease in population since 1950, while Jefferson and Mahaska counties populations are remaining steady.

The region's decreasing population, if it continues, will reduce the revenues available for maintaining and making improvements to public transit systems. A decline in the population may result in the decrease in the tax revenue collected. If this happens, local governments will have less funding to allocate to programs, including public transit. Local funds from cities and counties are often used to provide match for federal and state grants, a decrease in local funds will make it difficult for public transit systems to apply for grants.



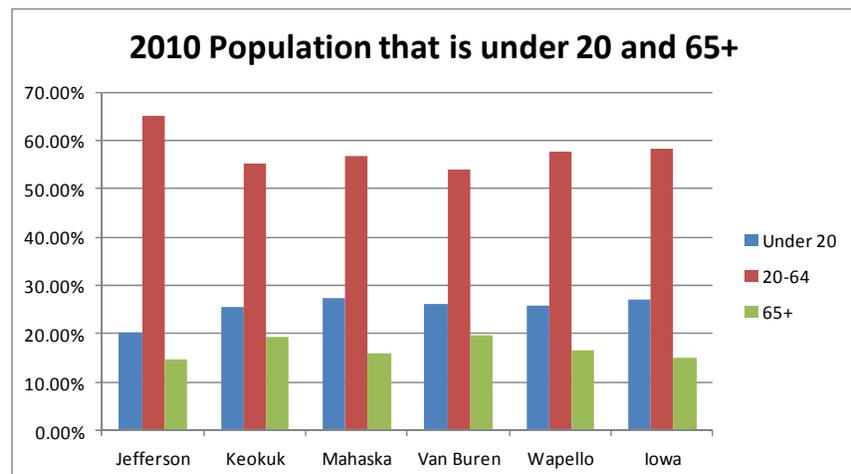
The distribution of population between rural areas and cities varies by county, from 47% of Van Buren County’s population living in cities to 79% percent of Wapello County’s population living in cities. In the three counties with urban areas, a majority of the city population lives in the urban areas. An urban area is defined by the Iowa DOT as having a population over 5,000. In RPA 15, there are three urban areas; Fairfield, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa. The map on page sixteen shows the distribution of population within the region.

The age distribution of the population in the region is similar to the distribution in the State of Iowa. The median age of the region’s population is almost 42 years, which is only four years higher than for the state. Approximately 58% of the population is between the ages of twenty and sixty-four, 25% is under the age of twenty, and 17% is sixty-five years and older. These percentages match the approximate distribution for the state

Median Age	
Jefferson County	43.5
Keokuk County	43.8
Mahaska County	38.9
Van Buren County	43.3
Wapello County	39.8
State of Iowa	38.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 Census)

Compared to ten years ago the median age of the population within the region is older, the average median age within the five counties has increased by two years. There are also fewer people under the age of 20, the percentage of the population decreased by three



percent. The percentage of the population between the ages of 20 and 64 increased by three percent while the percentage 65 and older remained the same. This shows that the population is aging and the number of young people is decreasing. This trend will increase the demand for passenger transportation services to provide trips both within and to locations outside the region for medical, entertainment, and shopping.

# Distribution of Population

**Mahaska County**  
**Population: 22,381**  
**Rural pop: 7,311**  
**Pop in cities: 67%**

## Urban Area Population

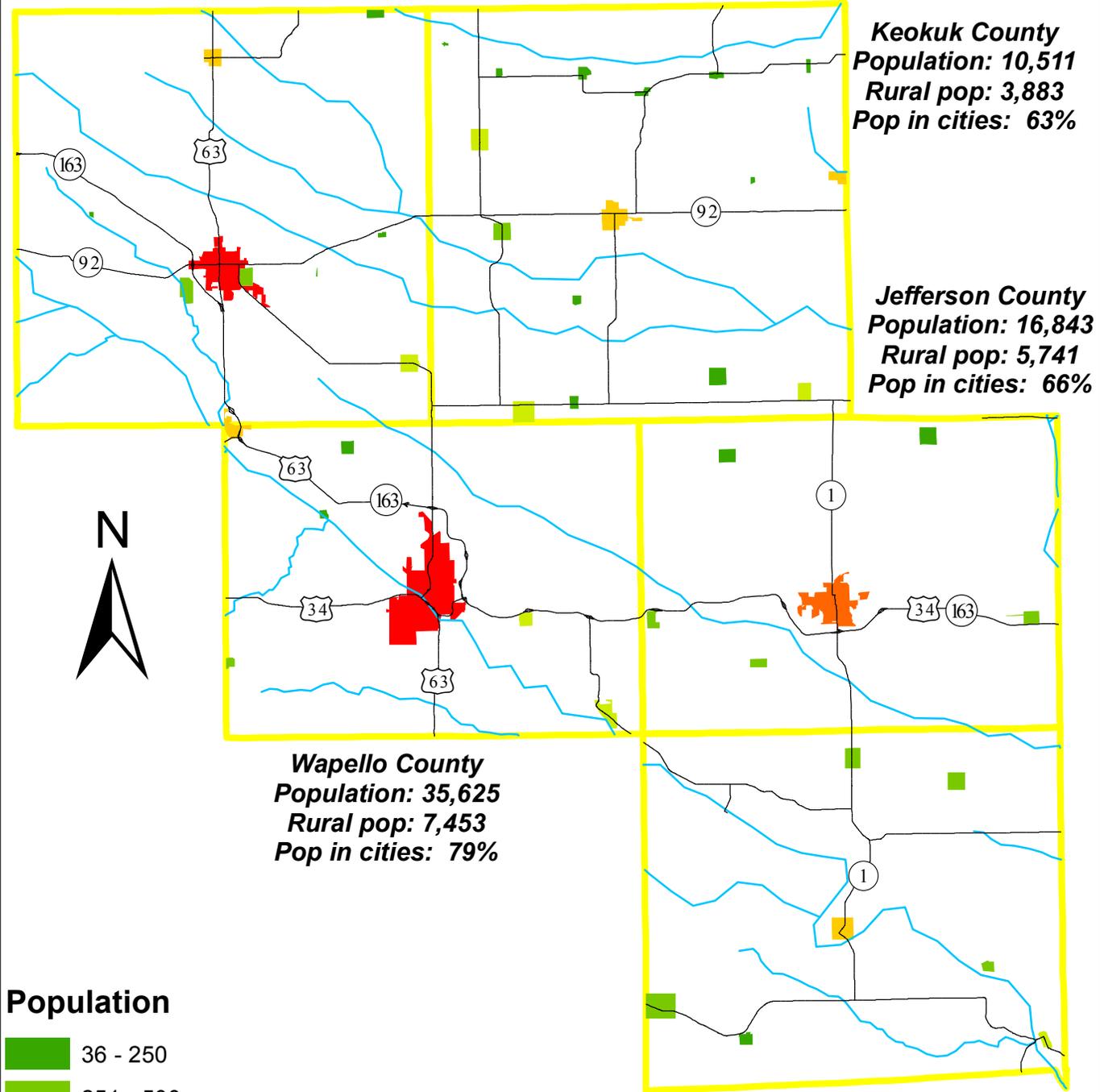
	Urban Area	Urban % of County pop
Jefferson	Fairfield	56%
Mahaska	Oskaloosa	56%
Wapello	Ottumwa	70%

**Keokuk County**  
**Population: 10,511**  
**Rural pop: 3,883**  
**Pop in cities: 63%**

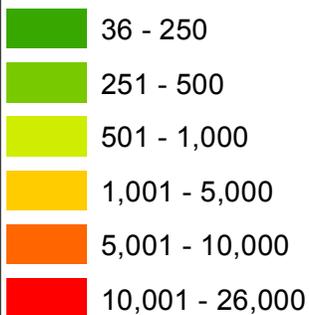
**Jefferson County**  
**Population: 16,843**  
**Rural pop: 5,741**  
**Pop in cities: 66%**

**Wapello County**  
**Population: 35,625**  
**Rural pop: 7,453**  
**Pop in cities: 79%**

**Van Buren County**  
**Population: 7,570**  
**Rural pop: 4,022**  
**Pop in cities: 47%**



## Population



The figure below shows the population and the percentage of people in each county and the City of Ottumwa that responded to the American Community Survey they “speak English less than very well”. Both Jefferson and Wapello counties have over 5% of their population that identifies as “speaking English less than very well”. In Jefferson County, the largest portion of people who responded that they “speak English less than very well” identified as speaking a European language at home. This percentage is the combination of several European languages and includes a combination of French, German, and other West Germanic languages. In Wapello County a majority of the people who responded that they “speak English less than very well” identified as speaking Spanish at home. By comparing the data for Wapello County to Ottumwa, we can also see that most of the people in the county who responded that they “speak English less than very well” live in Ottumwa.

<b>Limited English Proficiency by County</b>		
	Pop speaks english less than very well	Pct speaks english less than very well
Jefferson County	868	5.4
Keokuk County	29	0.3
Mahaska County	168	0.8
Van Buren County	169	2.4
Wapello County	1,761	5.3
Ottumwa	1,582	6.8

*Source: US Census Bureau ACS 2009-2013*

<b>Limited English Proficiency by School District (2013-14)</b>			
		Number of LEP Students	Percentage
Pella		26	1.1
Twin Cedars		0	0
North Mahaska		0	0
Oskaloosa		23	0.9
Ottumwa		472	10.2
Tri-County		0	0
English Valleys		0	0
Sigourney		0	0
Keota		0	0
Eddyville-Blakesburg		3	0.3
Pekin		1	0.1
Cardinal		1	0.1
Fairfield		40	2.3
Washington		82	4.6
Van Buren		0	0
Harmony		0	0
Central Lee		0	0

*Source: Iowa Dept of Education*

The figure on page 18 shows that there were 648 Limited English Proficient students in the seventeen school districts that serve the five counties of RPA 15. This figure also shows that the districts with the largest LEP population were the ones that served larger cities, the districts that served more rural areas had fewer if any Limited English Proficient students. The Ottumwa School District, which serves the city and Wapello County, has the most LEP students. This information, along with the Census information discussed on the previous page, indicates that the largest LEP population within the region is in or near Ottumwa.

In order to assist the region’s Limited English Proficient population in accessing transportation services the Ottumwa Transit has schedules that are printed in Spanish. In addition, both Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 RTA have bi-lingual dispatchers several drivers who can speak English and Spanish to communicate with transit system users who “speak English less than very well”, and speak Spanish as a native language. A bi-lingual interpreter can also attend at public meetings and hearings if requested and arranged in advance.

A higher percentage of the population within the region is disabled than statewide. According to the US Census Bureau, four of the five counties within RPA 15 have a higher percentage by a full percent or more. The counties with the highest percentage of disabled are Keokuk and Wapello, both have over 15% of the population that have a disability.

<b>Number of People with a Disability</b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Pct of Population</b>	<b>Num Disabled</b>
Jefferson	10	1,667
Keokuk	15.4	1,582
Mahaska	12.8	2,831
Van Buren	13.3	989
Wapello	15.8	5,530
Ottumwa	15.8	3,869
State of Iowa	11.4	343,424

*Source: US Census Bureau ACS 2009-2013*

The per capita income level of the region is below that of the state and the unemployment rate is higher. The per capita income of RPA 15 is \$22,543, which is \$3,567 below the State of Iowa. The unemployment rate for the region is 6.9%, which is 2% higher than Iowa. Individual counties within the region have an even greater difference between their per capita incomes and unemployment rates and those of the state. Within RPA 15, per capita income varies between \$20,510 in Van Buren County and \$25,224 in Jefferson County. Unemployment rates also vary, from a low of 6.1% in Mahaska County to a high of 7.7% in Van Buren County.

A majority of the region’s largest employers are located around the three largest cities; Fairfield, Oskaloosa, or Ottumwa. These three cities each have a population over 5,000, with Oskaloosa and Ottumwa having populations greater than 10,000. Each of

these cities is also where several large employers are clustered. The map on page 22 shows the cities by population, and then employers that have over 99 and over 350 employees. As shown on the map, the city with the largest number of large employers is Ottumwa, followed by Oskaloosa and Fairfield. There are also smaller clusters of employers in Eddyville and Keosauqua.

Health and human service agencies, hospitals and medical clinics, and stores follow a similar distribution pattern as a majority and the largest are located in the larger cities or in the county seats. Fairfield, Keosauqua, Oskaloosa, Ottumwa, and Sigourney all have hospitals located within them, meaning that for medical care beyond what can be obtained in a local clinic must be obtained in one of these cities or outside the region. Fairfield, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa all also have multiple big box and chain stores, meaning that people travel to one of these cities within the region to shop for items that cannot be obtained in smaller local stores. The map on page 23 identifies activities that can be found in the cities in the region.

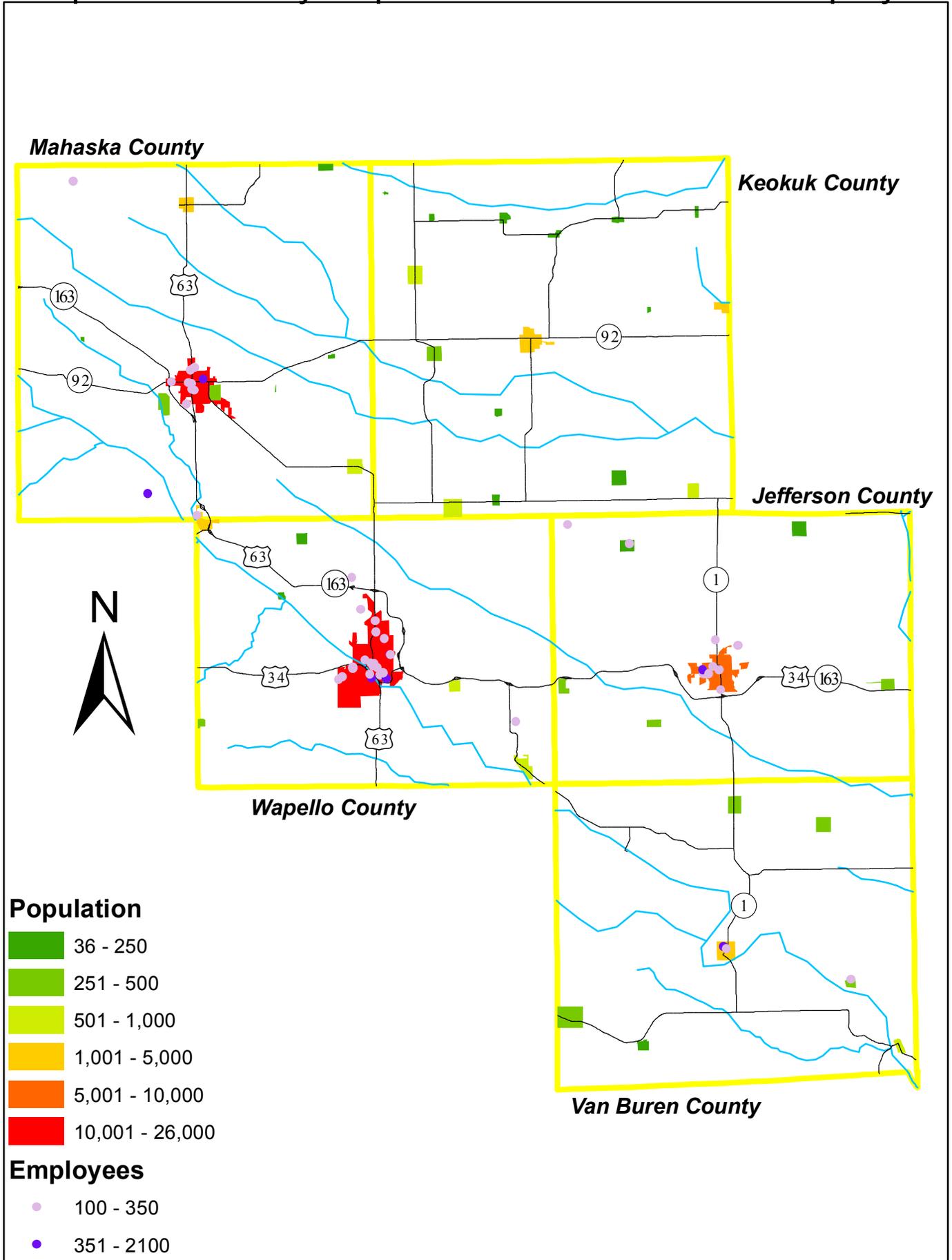
The clustering of large employers, HHS agencies, larger medical facilities, and larger stores Fairfield, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa mean that that these cities serve as activity centers within the region. This means that the destinations for trips within the region are often located in one of the three largest cities.

In summary:

- The region is experiencing a steadily decreasing population. Three of the five counties are seeing a continual decrease in their population while the other two counties populations are remaining steady.
- If the population decrease continues and income levels remain low it lead to a decreasing tax base, reducing local revenues and the ability to match federal and state grants, impacting funding for passenger transportation improvements.
- The median age within the region is increasing and the percentage of young people is decreasing.
- A growing aging population will require additional passenger transportation services to provide trips to those who don't drive or have someone who can drive them.
- The largest Limited English Proficient population is in Wapello County, and a majority of the people who identified themselves as "speaking English less than very well" indicate that they speak Spanish at home.
- Schedules should be printed in Spanish, and bi-lingual dispatchers and drivers should be employed by public transit agencies to communicate with LEP riders.
- The percentage of the population within the region that is disabled his higher than the state average.

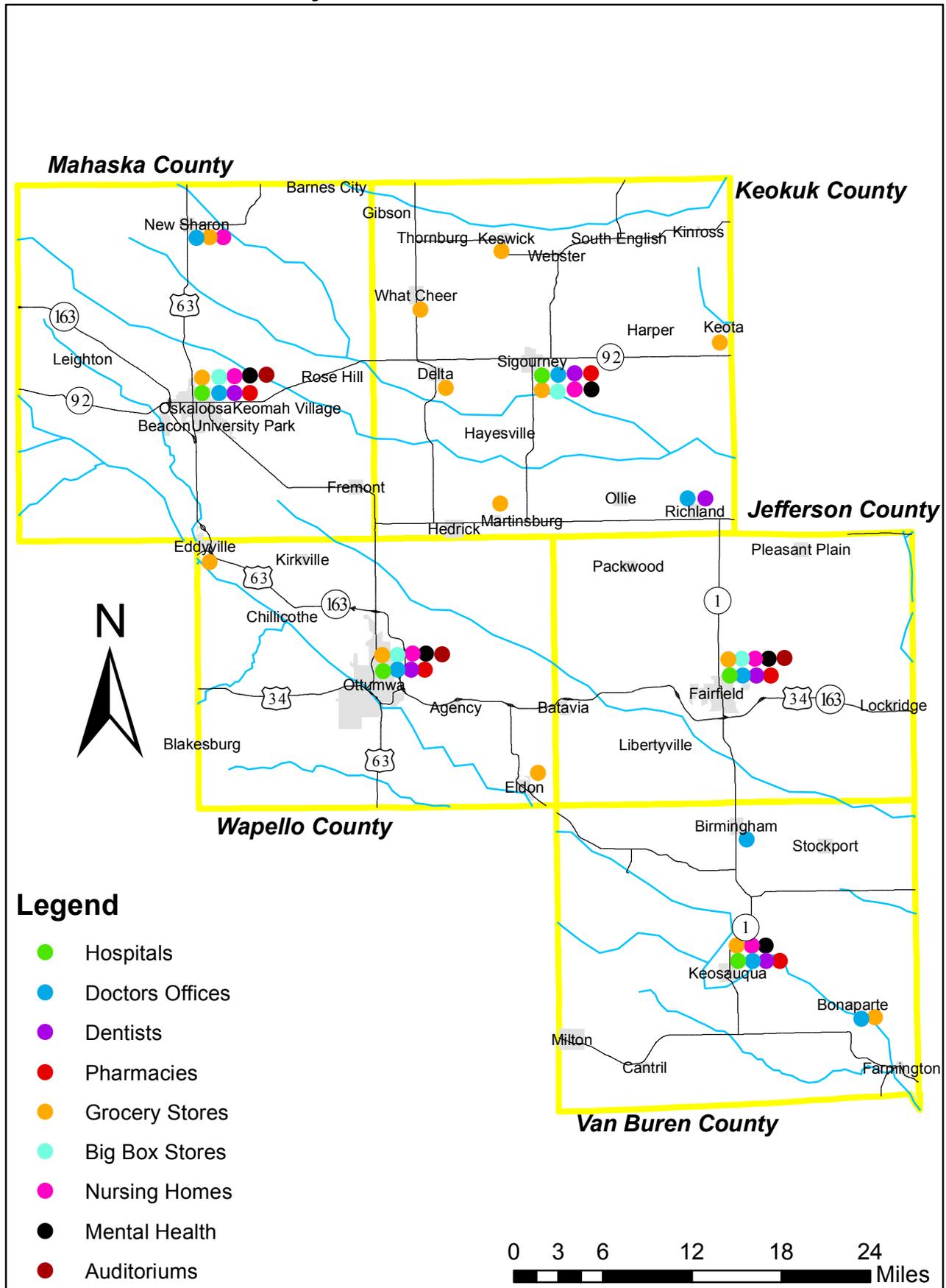
- Income levels in the region are lower than the state average, and unemployment is higher.
- Destinations are clustered in the three largest cities; Fairfield, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa, meaning a majority of the trips by passenger transportation providers are to one of these three cities.

# Comparison of City Populations to Number of Employees



Sources: Population - U.S. Census Bureau (2010 Census), Employees - Infogroup (2011 Employment Data)

# Activity Centers within RPA 15



## **Section Three: Coordination Issues**

An important part of the PTP is to assess passenger transportation services and to identify service, management, fleet, and facility needs. This includes evaluating whether current services are meeting the needs of the region, if previously recommended priorities and strategies have been implemented, and their effectiveness. The process also identifies recent developments that affect services and coordination between providers. This assessment is derived through a review of the region's demographics, statistics on service providers, and input obtained from private and public transit providers, health and human service agencies, and users of passenger transportation services.

Since the start of the Passenger Transportation Planning process in 2006 there have been a number of needs identified, some of these needs have been relevant to more than one organizations or that have been identified multiple years. Each year at the first Transit Advisory Group meeting, previously identified needs are reviewed and discussed to determine whether they are still valid. Needs that are found to still be relevant are discussed in more detail along with priorities and strategies for addressing them. The following service, management, fleet, and facility needs have been identified during previous years and many are still relevant. Input received regarding these needs is also discussed below.

1. Maintaining current passenger transportation services. If any transportation providers were to stop service or cut back, it would create a gap in the services available and make it more difficult for people to access employment, medical, or shopping.
2. Maintaining and replacing vehicles. This goes along with maintaining current passenger transportation services. If a transportation provider does not maintain or replace its vehicles, it will have to reduce services when those vehicles break down or wear out. Replacing vehicles is a large cost for transportation providers, even for public transit agencies that have access to federal and state grants. Both 10-15 Regional Transit Authority and Ottumwa Transit operate buses and vans that have exceeded the miles and number of years recommended by the Federal Transit Administration.
3. Keeping transportation service affordable. Funding is important to all passenger transportation providers, it allows these organizations to operate their current services, maintain and replace vehicles, and expand services. Fares from ridership is the primary funding for private transit agencies and is a large part of the funding for public transit agencies. While providers need to increase fares at

times to increase revenues and offset increasing costs, the fares need to remain affordable to the users of the service in order to maintain ridership.

4. Additional transportation from the rural areas and smaller cities to the larger cities. As discussed in section two, a majority of the employment, medical, and shopping opportunities are clustered in the larger cities. This makes Fairfield, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa destinations for many of the trips within the region. With a limited number of vehicles to provide transportation, and riders scattered over a wide area there has been a continual need for additional transportation from the rural areas to the cities.
  - a. Input regarding this need indicated that transportation for medical appointments was the most important.
  - b. Previously a need for transportation for court ordered mental health trips from Sigourney to Oskaloosa had been identified. This is no longer an issue as a provider will be locating in Sigourney.
  - c. Input was also received that there is a need for transportation run every day from Ottumwa to Eddyville and Oskaloosa for employment.
  
5. Transportation for medical appointments in Des Moines and Iowa City. While there are medical centers located in all five counties of the region within their county seats, there is a continuing need for patients to access medical services in Des Moines and Iowa City. For some it is because the medical services they need is only available in these cities, for others it is specified by the state or federal agency that provides financial support for their medical care. While transportation to Des Moines and Iowa City is currently available, there is not enough of it to meet the demand. It is also a long trip that occupies a vehicle for a whole day.
  - a. Health and human service agencies provided input that there is a need for transportation to Iowa City once a month for their clients.
  - b. There was discussion of transporting a larger number of riders on one trip to be more efficient. It was noted that some riders do not like having to wait for others to have their appointments.
  - c. Veterans Transportation for medical appointments in Des Moines and Iowa City is also needed from Keokuk County, Van Buren County, Wapello County, and Oskaloosa.
  
6. Additional service hours in the morning or evening. A majority of current passenger transportation services operate from 7 or 8am until 6pm. People however need to be at work or school before this time, or may work later. Also, people who work during the day will want to go shopping or to entertainment later after 6pm.

- a. Ottumwa Transit said that it had received input that residents would also like service available on the weekends.
7. Additional passenger transportation services in Oskaloosa. Health and Human service agencies in Oskaloosa have been identifying the needs for additional passenger transportation services in their city for several years. The “Oskaloosa Rides” fixed route service has been established to address this need. Ridership and feedback for “Oskaloosa Rides” will be reviewed to monitor the effectiveness of this service and determine if any changes should be made.
8. Better distribution of information to people about public transit services. It is important for people to be able to obtain information on available transportation services. If people are unable to, they will not know about the service or how to use it, and may be unable to access many basic necessities and services. This information is particularly important to people who live in small towns or rural areas where human services, medical care, and stores for basic goods may not be nearby.
  - a. 10-15 reported that it will soon be running television ads on KYOU Fox 15.
  - b. Health and Human service agencies asked that the public transit providers make presentations to their groups on services available.
9. Discussion about transportation and access to service when health and human service agencies are developing a new service.
10. Transportation to the Job Corps Center at the Ottumwa Airport. A new Job Corps Center was constructed near the Ottumwa Airport, which is located north of the city. Transportation between the Job Corps Center and other locations in the city was identified as a need prior to opening. This enabled the need to be addressed with Ottumwa Transit creating a route that runs to the airport and job corps center and then to the central part of Ottumwa and the bus zone. At the bus zone, riders from this route can transfer to all of the other routes operated by Ottumwa Transit and access locations in other parts of the city.
11. Transportation to and from large employers. Previously there was Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funding that was used to provide transportation between a person’s home and their workplace. This service worked well in Ottumwa and was heavily used by people riding to the city’s large employers. Under the current transportation funding bill there is not a separate JARC program to fund this type of service as there had been under previous bills. JARC service can be funded with the 5311 fund allocations that public transit agencies receive.

- a. There was discussion about whether it was possible for Ottumwa Transit to work with other agencies to fund a JARC service. The barrier to providing a service again is the high cost.

Of the needs identified above, the Transit Advisory Group felt that all of them were still valid except for seven and ten. The need for additional transit service in Oskaloosa has been addressed by creation of the “Oskaloosa Rides” fixed route, and the need for transportation to the job corps center was addressed by Ottumwa Transit creating a fixed route from the downtown bus zone to the airport and job corps center. In addition to the previously identified needs, three new issues were identified by the TAG:

1. In Ottumwa there is a need for transportation before 6:45am to get people to school or work and a need for improved transportation to the Indian Hills Community College campus.
2. In Sigourney there is a need for transportation from the medical center to transport non-scheduled patients of the emergency room home.
3. An issue affecting the ability of health and human service agencies to provide transportation services or to work with passenger transportation providers is that there are limits on how their funding can be used. Some have funding that cannot be used for transportation.

At the second TAG meeting last year, priorities and strategies were discussed to address the needs that had been identified and to improve and promote passenger transportation services. The Transit Advisory Group reviewed these priorities and strategies, including whether the previously identified priorities were still a priority and if the recommended strategies had been implemented. These previously identified priorities and strategies are discussed below along with their status.

1. Priority: Increasing ridership and getting people used to riding the bus. In order to increase revenue and expand services, public transit agencies need to increase their ridership. A barrier to this is there is the perception by some people that the bus is “only for old people. Other people are confused by not knowing how to access public transit services.
  - Strategy: Health and Human service agencies purchase vouchers, tokens, or passes from Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 RTA to give to their clients for transportation.
  - Status: Several health and human service agencies in Oskaloosa and Ottumwa currently purchase vouchers or passes to give to their clients. Both the HHS and public transit agencies believe this is still a priority and the implemented strategy is effective.

2. Priority: Providing transportation to medical appointments in Des Moines or Iowa City. As discussed previously, this is a very important need for the region that is identified every year. There are people in each of the five counties that transportation to Des Moines or Iowa City for medical appointments.
  - Strategy: Several health and human service agencies should work together to coordinate and fund 1-2 bus trips per month for their clients. This would be much more efficient in terms of vehicle usage than having a large number of individual trips, and it would also be more cost effective for the agency paying for the trip.
  - Status: This is an important priority for the region but the recommended strategy has not yet been implemented. The Transit Advisory Group discussed the ability for health and human service agencies to fund this at an hourly rate rather than per rider as this may decrease the cost to them. The 10-15 Transit director believed that this could be implemented.
  
3. Priority: Providing transportation for shopping trips.
  - Strategy: The public transit agencies and businesses should work together where the business pays for a block of time each week where passengers can be transported to their store and back.
  - Status: This strategy has been implemented in Fairfield and Ottumwa. The Hy-Vee in Fairfield and the north Hy-Vee in Ottumwa both pay 10-15 Transit to provide service where a rider could call in on a specific day during a block of time and request a ride from their residence to the store and back. 10-15 has said that this service in both cities has been well received and used, and there is talk of expanding it to bring in people from areas outside of the cities.
  
4. Priority: Providing additional transportation in the counties for medical and shopping trips.
  - Strategy: 10-15 should allocate one or two additional vehicles to a pair of counties once a week to provide additional capacity. The next day of the week these vehicles would be moved to another pair of counties. By focusing on a different two counties each day, 10-15 could provide additional capacity in each of its ten counties once a week.
  - Status: This strategy has not been implemented. The 10-15 director is open to the idea and believes it is possible, but it would take some planning and coordination with agencies in each county to be effective.
  
5. Priority: Transportation to the Job Corps Center and residential facility near the Ottumwa Airport.
  - Strategy: Ottumwa Transit should make adjustments to their routes to provide service to these two facilities.

- Status: Ottumwa Transit has implemented a route that provides service to the Job Corps Center and residential facility. This route has a very high ridership and is very successful.
6. Priority: Establishing a fixed route in Oskaloosa.
- Strategy: 10-15 Transit, health and human service providers, and the City of Oskaloosa should work together to identify and obtain funding to start a fixed route service and paratransit.
  - Status. 10-15 was successful in obtaining an STA Special Projects grant and health and HHS provides in Oskaloosa raised funds from area agencies and businesses to support a fixed route for two years. This gives the service time to become established and gain riders. The transit and HHS agencies are now working together to promote the service.

## **Section Four: Priorities and Strategies**

The following priorities and strategies have been identified for improving passenger transportation services in Regional Planning Affiliation 15. These priorities are based on a review of previous Passenger Transportation Plans, Transit Advisory Group meeting minutes, and input received from passenger transportation providers and health and human service agencies. The priorities identified have been reviewed by the Transit Advisory Group to ensure a consensus on the passenger transportation needs of the region and how to address the needs.

1. Priority: Increase the public awareness and use of passenger transportation services in the region.

Strategies:

- Transit agencies should keep their websites up to date with information on services available and how obtain a ride.
- Transit agencies should use local media to advertise services including where to obtain more information and who to contact.
- Transit agencies should meet with health and human service groups to discuss passenger transportation services, answer questions, and provide informational brochures. HHS groups can then help distribute information to their clients.
- Health and human service agencies that help clients with transportation should purchase vouchers, tokens, or passes from transit agencies to give to their clients. This will help familiarize people with the services available and using them.

2. Priority: Providing expanded or new service for transportation for employment, medical, or shopping.

Strategies:

- Employers and health and human service agencies should consider purchasing a block of time from passenger transportation providers for local in town transportation for their employees or clients.
- Several health and human service agencies that are located near to each other should discuss partnering to coordinate and fund regular bus trips from their area to Des Moines or Iowa City for medical appointments.
- Ottumwa transit should contact large employers in the city to see if they have an interest in supporting a JARC like service.
- 10-15 Transit should work with Hy-Vee in Fairfield and the north Hy-Vee in Ottumwa to expand the successful shopping shuttles to provide trips to people located outside of the cities in other smaller towns.
- 10-15 should reach out to other businesses to see if they would be interested in contributing funds to support a shopping shuttle.

## **Section Five: Funding**

Funding is necessary to support current transit services and to provide expanded or new services to meet the passenger transportation needs in Regional Planning Affiliation 15. Funding for transit services comes from a variety of federal, state, and local sources outlined below.

### **Federal Transit Funding**

Section 5311 funds (Formula Grants for other than Urbanized Areas): Provides funds to public transit agencies for transit activities in rural areas and urban areas with a population less than 50,000. These funds may be used for operations, capital improvements, planning, and Job Access and Reverse Commute service. Funding is distributed to Iowa's public transit agencies based on ridership and revenue miles. Both Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 Regional Transit Authority receive 5311 funds and use them to support their operations. Ottumwa Transit's anticipated allocation of 5311 funds for FY16 is \$388,701 and 10-15's anticipated allocation is \$431,497. 5311 funds are anticipated to continue to be available to the public transit agencies for the next five years to assist them in supporting their current operations.

Section 5339 funds (Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Grants): Provides funds to public transit agencies for capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and vans, and to construct bus related facilities. Approximately \$1,250,000 is received by the state each year for use by small urban (under 50,000 population) and regional transit systems. Funds must be used on replacement vehicles and is not available for expansion vehicles. Funding is awarded to public transit systems for vehicle replacement based on their vehicle's Public Transit Management System score, which takes into account the vehicle's age and miles. Both Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 Transit are eligible for 5339 funds based on the ranking of their vehicles. The amount of 5339 funds available to a public transit agency is expected to fluctuate each year based on the total amount available and the ranking of that agency's vehicles compared to other public transit agency vehicles in the state.

Surface Transportation Program funds (STP): Funds allocated through Iowa's Regional Planning Affiliations and Metropolitan Planning Organizations that can be used for road or transit capital projects by cities, counties, and public transit agencies. Up to 80% reimbursement is provided, leaving a 20% local match for projects. Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 RTA have access to STP funds through RPA 15. The RPA sets aside \$50,000 each year from its total allocation for 10-15, Ottumwa Transit projects will be funded out of the City of Ottumwa's allocation which was over \$450,000 for FFY16. To be considered for funding, the transit agency must submit an application for each

project. 10-15 Transit also has access to funds through RPA 17. STP funding for vehicle replacement or expansion by either public transit agency is expected to be available at a comparable level for the next five years.

Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP): Provides funds to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance programs and other support services to meet the needs of transit operators in non-urbanized areas (under 50,000 population). The Iowa Department of Transportation is the recipient of these funds and mainly uses them to provide local transit agencies with training fellowships. These fellowships pay up to 80% for public transit systems and their planners to attend Iowa DOT sponsored seminars, and transit related courses or conferences sponsored by other groups. It may also be used to reimburse transit systems for in-house training.

### **State Transit Funding**

State Transit Assistance (STA): Provides funds to public transit agencies for operations, capital improvements, and planning. Funding is distributed to Iowa's public transit agencies based on ridership and revenue miles. Both Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 Regional Transit Authority receive 5311 funds. Ottumwa Transit's anticipated allocation of STA funds for FY16 is \$203,398, and 10-15's anticipated allocation is \$321,963. STA funds are anticipated to continue to be available to the public transit agencies for the next five years to assist them in supporting their current operations

State Transit Assistance (STA) Special Projects: The Iowa Department of Transportation sets aside \$300,000 of STA funds for special projects to improve public transit in the state. Public transit agencies may apply for funds to start up a new service that is developed in cooperation with health and human service agencies. Funds may be awarded for up to two years, which is the time it would take for the service to start being reflected in the STA and 5311 formulas. 10-15 Transit is currently receiving STA Special Project funds for the "Oskaloosa Rides" service and is expected to continue to for one additional year.

Public Transit Infrastructure Grants (PTIG): Provides funds for vertical infrastructure improvements by public transit systems in the state. Projects can be new construction, reconstruction, or remodeling, but must have a vertical component. Projects are evaluated on their anticipated benefits to transit and their ability to be completed quickly. Participation in a project by the PTIG program is limited to 80%, and in combination with other federal funding cannot exceed that number. No individual transit system can receive more than 40% of the PTIG funds available in a year.

Capital Match Revolving Loan Fund (AMOCO Loan): Provides no interest loans to public transit systems which the transit agency can use towards the local match for a federally funded capital project. The transit agency then pays back the loaned amount over the negotiated time period. 10-15 is using this program to provide match for the replacement of several vehicles.

### **Non-transit Funding**

Older Americans Act: Provides funding for transportation services for anyone over the age of 60. Funds are provided to the Area Agencies on Aging, which may then contract with public transit agencies for service and reimburse them with money obtained through the Older Americans Act.

Headstart: Federal program that provides funds for transportation services to low income children and their families. Health and human service agencies may contract with a public transit agency for this service, and the transit agency is then reimbursed with Headstart funds.

Medicaid: Federal program that can be used to fund transportation services for individuals with disabilities. Transportation services eligible under Medicaid include providing transportation for an eligible person to a sheltered workshop or medical appointments. After completing a trip, the transportation provider submits a reimbursement request to Medicaid.

Access2Care non-emergency medical transportation: A transportation brokerage for individuals covered by Medicaid insurance to provide non-emergency transportation in Iowa. Transportation providers may contract with Access2Care to provide rides through this program and receive reimbursement for those rides.

### **Local Funding:**

Passenger Revenues: Funds obtained from passengers of a transportation service. Can be paid at the time the service is used, or for a voucher, token, or pass that is purchased in advance of using the transportation service. Passenger revenues provide funds to both public and private transit agencies.

Contract Revenue: Cities, counties, health and human service agencies, and private businesses may pay a transit provider for a specific number of rides or access to rides during a block of time. Both public and private transit agencies receive contract revenue.

**Advertising Revenue:** Transit agencies may sell space on or inside their vehicles to businesses for advertisements to generate some additional revenue. Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 Transit are both selling space on the exterior of their vehicles through an advertising agency.

**Municipal Transit Levy:** Cities in Iowa are able to levy up to \$0.95 per \$1,000 assessed value to raise funds that support public transit services. This includes a city directly supporting its urban transit system, or a smaller town using it to support services from their regional transit system. The City of Ottumwa currently uses a municipal transit levy to help fund Ottumwa Transit.

**General Fund Levy:** Cities and Counties in Iowa are able to use general fund revenues to support transit services. Each of the ten counties served by 10-15 Transit provides funds to the agency to help support its operations.

**Health and Human Service Agencies:** Health and Human Service Agencies provide many forms of assistance to people, one of which is funding for transportation. This assistance can come in different forms; providing rides either directly or by contracting with another organization, providing bus passes, or gas vouchers. In the region, six agencies contract for transportation services, seven provide bus passes to their clients, and three provide gas vouchers. Information on these specific agencies can be found on pages 10 and 11.

**Businesses:** Businesses may provide transportation assistance to their customers or employees. This may be in the form of company vehicle pools, contracting for a service, or subsidizing a service. Hy-Vee in Fairfield and the north Hy-Vee in Ottumwa currently provides funding for a shuttle to pick up people in both cities and transport them to and from the stores. The north Hy-Vee in Ottumwa is interested in providing additional funding to expand this service to provide transportation for people outside the city to the store. Several companies in Oskaloosa are providing funds to be the local match for the STA Special Projects funds for the Oskaloosa Rides fixed route.

**Local Foundations:** Some local foundations may provide funding to improve passenger transportation services. The Ottumwa Regional Legacy Foundation is a charitable organization that has offered grant opportunities for revitalizing Ottumwa and improving the city's infrastructure. In Keokuk County, the Community Services office coordinates the efforts of non-profit and charitable foundations in the county. Inquiries could be made to these organizations or others about the possibility of funding new transit services, including providing match for federal or state funds.

# Appendix A: Passenger Transportation Services Survey

## Passenger Transportation Services Survey

Agency name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing survey: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact info (phone /e-mail): \_\_\_\_\_

If your agency provides transportation services, circle all types of transportation that is provided:

Fixed route                      demand responsive                      subscription                      intercity  
Client transportation                      ridesharing                      other: \_\_\_\_\_

If your agency provides funding to people for transportation services, circle all types methods used to pay for transportation services:

cash                      bus pass/voucher                      contract w/: \_\_\_\_\_  
other: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is eligible for service? i.e. the general public, just clients, or is there an income or medical requirement? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are the days and hours that service is available? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are the approximate annual miles of service? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number, type, and ADA status of vehicles used to provide transportation service (ex. 3 minivans w/ lifts): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the agency's approximate annual operating expenses and revenues for providing transportation services? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return the survey to the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission, P.O. Box 1110, Ottumwa, IA 52501 by December 5th, 2014.**

# Appendix B: Transit Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

## Transit Advisory Group Meeting

### Minutes

Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015

10:00am

### Ottumwa Transit/ 10-15 Transit Conference Room

- 1.) Participating: Jay Allison – 10-15 Transit, Dave Silverio – Ottumwa Transit, Chris Kukla – RPA 15, Mark McMains – Christian Opportunity Center, Chris Fisher – Ottumwa Job Corps Center, Wendy Stuhr – Keokuk County Health Center, Tami Gilliland – Keokuk County Community Services, Ginger Knisley – Children First, Heather Gross – CPS Mahaska County, Laura Ammenhauser – SE IA Case Management, Donn Bruess – 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.
- 2.) Explanation of the purpose and process for the development of the Passenger Transportation Plan.
  - a. Goals are to: improve passenger transportation services, increase coordination, create awareness of unmet needs, develop new partnerships, assist groups and individuals in understanding services available, provide justification for future investments, and eliminate overlapping or duplicate services.
  - b. Document provides information on passenger transportation services in Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren, and Wapello counties, including; area demographics, existing services, coordination issues, priorities and strategies, and funding.
  - c. Coordination issues and priorities and strategies are identified by providers and users.
  - d. Plan is updated every five years, two advisory group meetings are held each year. On years between updates, meeting minutes are submitted to Iowa DOT.
- 3.) Discussion of needs that were identified through last year's transit advisory group meetings and whether those needs were still valid.
  - a. Additional transportation from smaller communities/rural areas to cities for employment, medical, and shopping. **Continuing need. There is a need transportation to and from employment in Eddyville and Oskaloosa every day. There is also a need for medical transportation to Iowa City once a month. Trips to IC and DM are available, but people do not like waiting. Group discussed whether an agency can hire a bus at an hourly rate for trip and then fill it. North Hy-Vee in Ottumwa is interested in funding a service that brings shoppers in from surrounding communities.**
    - i. Keokuk County/Sigourney needs transportation for court ordered mental health trips, the closest facility is in Oskaloosa. Other counties have similar needs. **No longer an issue. A provider will soon be in Sigourney.**
  - b. Additional service hours in the morning/evening. This is a greater need in Ottumwa than in other areas of the region. People would like to see later evening hours for Ottumwa Transit. **Continuing need. There is a need for additional hours in the morning and evening in Ottumwa and for weekend service.**
  - c. Development of a fixed route service in Oskaloosa. Oskaloosa Rides began operation during the summer of 2014. **This service has been started, operates M, W, F 9-5:30, community wants it expanded to 5 days a week.**
  - d. Better distribution of information to people about available public transportation services, particularly in the rural areas. **Continuing need. Information on services not widely available in rural areas. Request that presentations be given to human service groups. 10-15 will soon have an ad on the KYOU tv channel. Both Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 have info on websites.**
  - e. Discussion about transportation and access to service when Health and Human Service agencies are developing a new service. **Continuing need.**
  - f. Transportation to the Job Corps Center at the Ottumwa Airport. Ottumwa Transit has implemented a route to Workforce Development and the route is heavily used. **A fixed route has been started that provides transportation to the Job Corps Center and the residential facility, this route is well used and has the highest ridership.**
  - g. Veterans transportation to medical appointments in Des Moines and Iowa City. This is needed from Wapello County, Keokuk County, and Oskaloosa. **Continuing need.**
  - h. Transportation to and from large employers. Though there is no JARC funding, there is a need in Ottumwa for a JARC like service. **Continuing need. The cost of providing service is a barrier to implementation.**
- 4.) Discussion of passenger transportation needs not previously identified.
  - a. **In Ottumwa there is a need for more hours early in the morning before 6:45am to get people to school and work. Additional service was started, but then pulled, and is now being restarted. Ottumwa Transit**

- is going to work with Indian Hills Community College regarding the needs of students to get to early classes.*
- b. *In Keokuk County there is a need for transportation for non-scheduled patients from the ER needing a ride home. It was suggested that the hospital and other agencies that have a need for rides consider working together to purchase a block of time.*
  - c. *In Oskaloosa there is a need for night transportation to get people to and from jobs as more people are working out in the community.*
- 5.) Discussion of the status of priorities and strategies that were identified through last year's transit advisory group meetings; including whether these are still a priority and whether the strategies have been implemented and are working.
- a. Priority: Increasing ridership and getting people used to riding the bus. Strategy: health and human service agencies purchasing vouchers, tokens, or passes to give to their clients for transportation. Several agencies in Oskaloosa and Ottumwa currently do this. ***Still a priority, well used by health and human service agencies and their clients.***
  - b. Priority: Providing transportation to medical appointments in Des Moines or Iowa City. Strategy: several HHS agencies work together to fund 1-2 bus trips per month for their clients. ***Still a priority. It was discussed previously whether HHS agencies could hire a bus at an hourly rate for trip and then fill it. It was thought that this can be done.***
  - c. Priority: Providing transportation for shopping trips. Strategy: partnership between transit agency and business where the business pays for passenger to be picked up and transported to their store during a set time each week. Hy-Vee in Fairfield and north Hy-Vee in Ottumwa does this. ***Still a priority, both the services in Fairfield and in Ottumwa are well used. It was discussed previously that the manager of the north Hy-Vee in Ottumwa is interested in expanding service out to smaller communities. Hy-Vee in Fairfield should be contacted to see if interested in a similar expansion of service.***
  - d. Priority: Providing additional transportation in the counties for medical and shopping trips. Strategy: 10-15 provides additional vehicles in 1-2 counties once a week for capacity for additional trips and then rotates vehicles to different counties the next day. ***Still a priority, the 10-15 director believes it would be possible to implement such a system.***
  - e. Priority: Transportation to the Job Corps Center at the Ottumwa airport. Strategy: Ottumwa Transit operates a route that provides service to workforce development. ***Still a priority, it was noted earlier this route provides service to the job corps center and residential facility and is highly used.***
  - f. Priority: Providing fixed route transportation in Oskaloosa. Strategy: 10-15 Transit operates Oskaloosa Rides, a fixed route service in Oskaloosa. ***Still a priority, ridership is increasing and it was noted earlier that the community is interested in expending the service to Monday-Friday.***
- 6.) Discussion of passenger transportation priorities and strategies not previously identified.
- a. ***Priority: Providing information on public transportation services to rural areas. Strategy: improved/increased advertising, presentations by 10-15 to human service groups.***
  - b. ***Priority: Transportation from rural areas to larger cities for DHS appointments. Strategy:***
- 7.) Discussion of coordination issues.
- a. ***The funding many health and human service agencies receive has limits as to who it can be spent, and it cannot be used for providing transportation.***
- 8.) Next meeting. Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 10 am.

**Transit Advisory Group Meeting  
Minutes  
Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
10:00am  
Ottumwa Transit/ 10-15 Transit Conference Room**

- 9.) Participating: Jay Allison – 10-15 Transit, Dave Silverio – Ottumwa Transit, Chris Kukla – RPA 15, Mark McMains – Christian Opportunity Center, Tami Gilliland – Keokuk County Community Services, Susan Frey – Van Buren County Community Services, Debbie Howe – Love in the name of Christ.
- 10.) Review of the Passenger Transportation Plan: An overview of the Passenger Transportation Plan document was made to the TAG. This included discussing the organization and the content of the document.
- 11.) Discussion of any additions or changes to the Plan.
- i. The group was asked if there was any information in the document that needed to be corrected.
    - i. It was noted that several locations needed to be added to the activity centers map: mental health in Keosauqua and Sigourney, doctor's office in Richland, and grocery stores in Delta, What Cheer, Keota, and Keswick.
  - j. The group was asked if there was any information that should be added to the document.
    - i. It was noted that there is a need for improved transportation for veterans to medical appointments in Des Moines or Iowa City. Some people do not like the current service if they have to wait before or after their appointments for another rider. This issue is discussed on page 25 of the document.
  - k. The group was asked if there were any additional funding sources that should be identified, especially any local charitable foundations that would fund transportation projects or capital items.
    - i. The Ottumwa Regional Legacy Foundation was identified, and in Keokuk County the local non-profit and charitable foundations are coordinated through the Keokuk County Community Services office.
- 12.) TAG approval of the Passenger Transportation Plan.
- a. The group approved of the Passenger Transportation Plan, the needs identified, and the recommendations made.
- 13.) Other Discussion.
- a. There was discussion about having an awareness day in Keokuk County to provide information to residents and promote transit services.
  - b. It was also noted that 10-15 is changing its paint coloring to re-brand itself. Many people still refer to it as the SIEDA bus and do not believe that they can use the service.
- 14.) Next Meeting. A meeting will be held during the fall of 2015 to discuss the status of needs, recommendations, and projects.