

**Iowa Northland Region**

**FY 2021-2025**

**Passenger  
Transportation  
Plan**

Adopted April 9, 2020 & April 16, 2020

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

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

**WHEREAS**, the Policy Board, in cooperation with the state, is conducting a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process pursuant to 23 CFR 450 (c); and

**WHEREAS**, the FY 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is a product of this on-going planning process; and

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

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

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Area Transportation Policy Board hereby approves the final FY 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan.

Passed and adopted this 9<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Quentin Hart, Chair

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Executive Director

RESOLUTION OF THE IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION  
AUTHORITY  
POLICY BOARD

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

WHEREAS, the Policy Board, in cooperation with the state, is conducting a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process pursuant to 23 CFR 450 (b); and

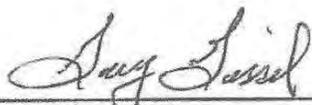
WHEREAS, the FY 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is a product of this on-going planning process; and

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority Policy Board hereby approves the final FY 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan.

Passed and adopted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Gissel, Chair

ATTEST:



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Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Executive Director

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# Section 1 – Introduction and Process Discussion

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## Purpose

The Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) process for Iowa's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) is designed to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems. The goals are to:

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

This PTP was developed for the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The MPO includes the cities of Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Evansdale, Hudson, Elk Run Heights, Gilbertville, and Raymond, as well as parts of unincorporated Black Hawk County. The RTA includes Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties, excluding the MPO-area. The MPO and RTA combined constitute the Iowa Northland Region.

The PTP for the Iowa Northland Region is designed to provide a formalized setting for transportation coordination among passenger transportation providers. The purpose is to bring providers and major human service agencies in the region together to better understand available transportation services and increase the effectiveness and coordination among providers.

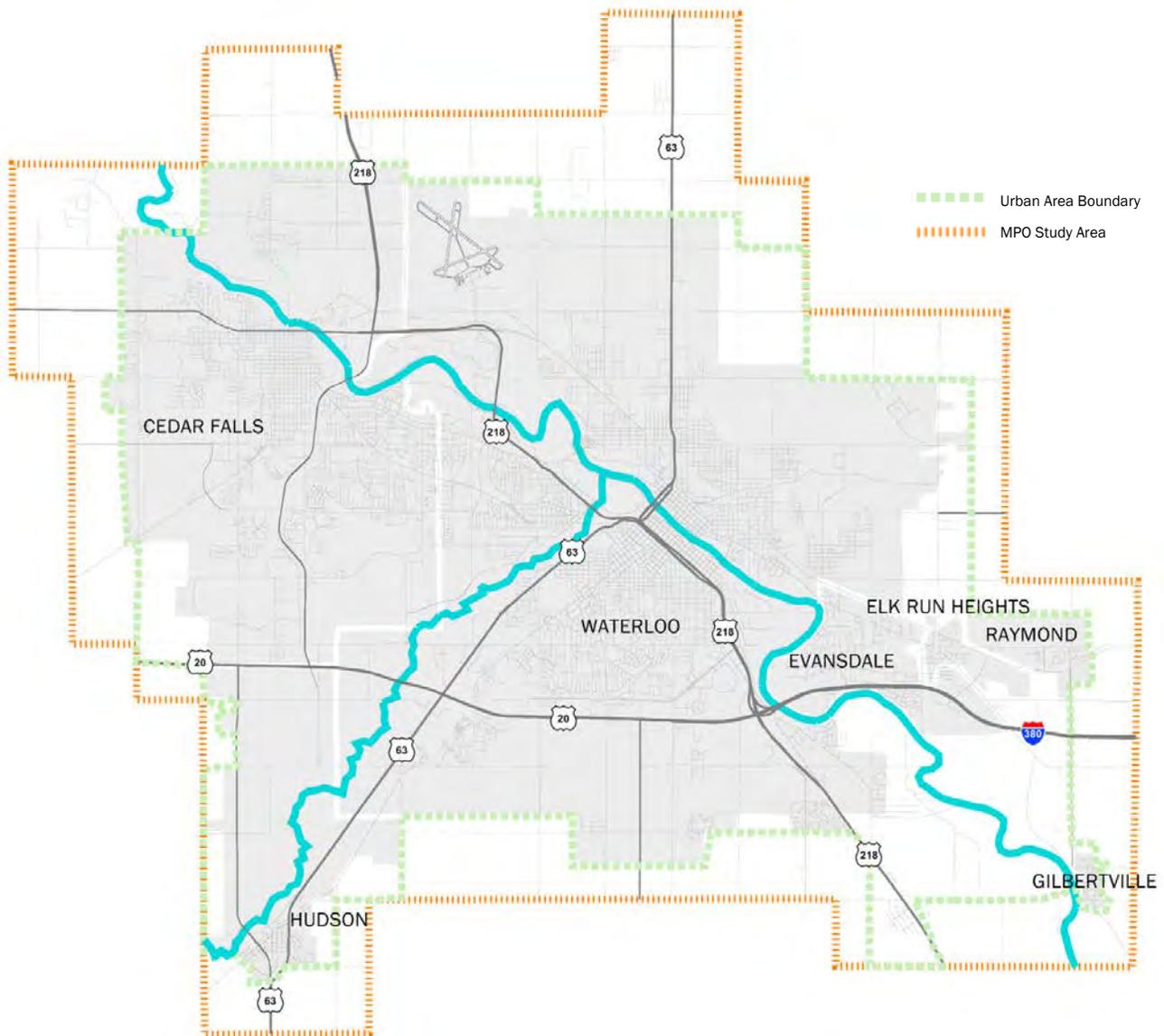
The PTP is divided into five sections. The first section provides an introduction and discusses the process that was undertaken to complete the PTP. The second section provides an area profile of the Iowa Northland Region and an inventory of existing passenger transportation operations. The third section discusses coordination issues within the region, including a status of previously recommended priorities and strategies. The fourth section describes proposed passenger transportation investment strategies for the next five years, focusing on meaningful priorities and strategies that could meet identified needs and could eventually lead to projects. The last section includes a brief overview of funding opportunities and expectations.

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) has developed guidance for PTPs in order to incorporate federal regulations for coordinated planning with local decisions regarding passenger transportation. The PTP provides a basis for efficient and effective passenger transportation resource allocations for operations, maintenance, and service development. The creation of this document is the result of joint efforts from local passenger transportation providers, policy makers, units of government, human service organizations, and the general public. This document is intended to provide a better understanding of current and past passenger transportation services, as well as serve as a mechanism to guide future transit decisions and investments.

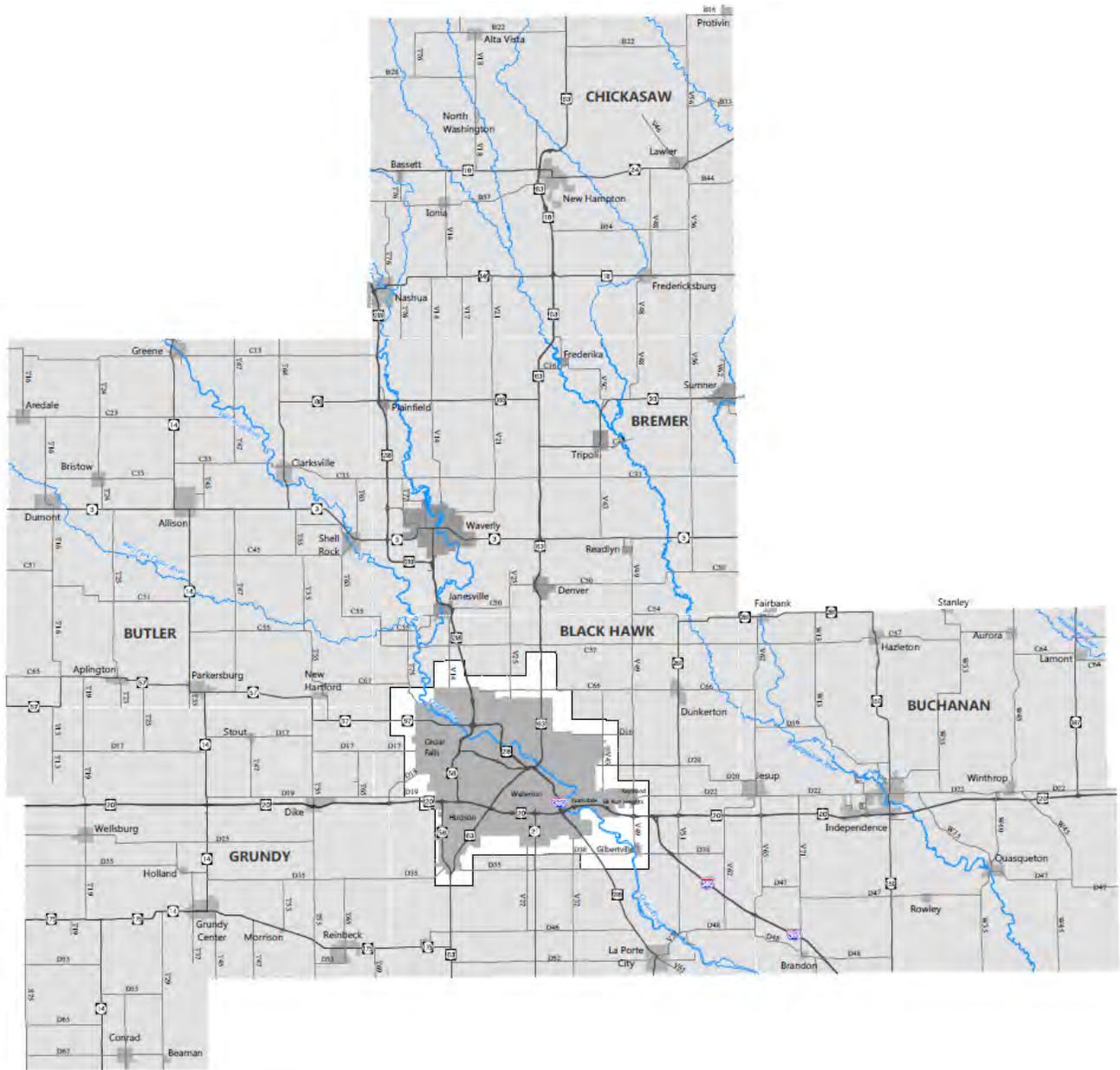
## Planning Structure

The Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) serves as an umbrella organization for the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and the Regional Transit Commission (RTC). The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MET Transit) is a voting member of the Black Hawk County MPO Policy Board. The role of metropolitan and regional planning agencies is to oversee transportation planning and programming to ensure that existing and future expenditures on transportation projects are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process. This document is a joint endeavor of the Black Hawk County MPO and the RTA. MET Transit and RTC are members of the Black Hawk County MPO and RTA respectively, and each participates in the planning and programming process along with the cities and counties in each region. Map 1.1 shows the boundary for the Black Hawk County MPO, and Map 1.2 shows the Iowa Northland Region.

**Map 1.1: Black Hawk County MPO Planning Area**



**Map 1.2: Iowa Northland Region**



### **Process for Plan Development**

The Passenger Transportation Plan has been required by the Iowa DOT since 2007. Input regarding the development of the FY 2021-2025 PTP has been gathered in a variety of ways. Since 2006, a Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) has met at least twice a year to discuss passenger transportation and human service agency coordination. The TAC consists of human service organizations, representatives of local government, transit users, and transportation providers. These entities work cooperatively to recognize current transit shortfalls and identify the potential for new services and coordination possibilities in the region. The TAC serves as the main sounding board for passenger transportation planning issues in the region and has played an integral role in the development of the PTP.

In addition to the TAC, a Transit Providers group consisting of MET Transit, RTC, and Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI) has met monthly to discuss coordination issues. MET Transit’s Board and RTC’s Advisory Committee meet on a monthly and quarterly basis respectively.

INRCOG staff developed the draft and final FY 2021-2025 PTP document. Staff involved in the document development include: Kyle Durant, Transportation Planner; Codie Leseman, Transportation Planner; Dan Schlichtmann, Data Services Coordinator; and Hayley Weiglein, Administrative Assistant. Over the past year, staff worked with the TAC to develop and conduct a Passenger Transportation Survey. The survey, along with other public input efforts, were utilized by the TAC to help identify priorities and strategies for the next five years. Public input efforts are described in more detail in the next section of this document.

## Public Input

### Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC continues to meet at least twice a year to discuss passenger transportation and human service agency coordination. Between August 1, 2019 and April 30, 2020, four TAC meetings were held. Three of these meetings were focused on the development of this PTP. Meeting minutes can be found in the Appendix of this document. The primary focus of the November 2019 meeting was to review the draft Passenger Transportation Survey and finalize the survey questions and methodology. At the January 2020 meeting, the TAC discussed the survey results and identified the goal, objectives, and priorities and strategies for the PTP. Table 1.1 contains a list of TAC participants that attended meetings over the past year.

**Table 1.1: TAC Participants – August 1, 2019 to January 29, 2020**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Lorie Glover	Black Hawk County Emergency Management
Nafissa Cisse-Egbuonye	Black Hawk County Health Department
Lisa Sesterhenn	Black Hawk County Health Department
Jan Heidemann	Bremer County of the East Central Region (ECR)
Sheila Baird	Cedar Valley United Way
Kyle Clabby-Kane	Iowa Works
Debra Hodges Harmon	Iowa Works
Todd Rickert	Grundy County Social Services
Susan Backes	House of Hope
Mark Little	MET Transit
Lon Kammeyer	MET Transit Board
Janna Diehl	Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A)
Mike Dangan	Public
Kyle Durant	INRCOG
Codie Leseman	INRCOG
Ben Kvigne	INRCOG/RTC

### Passenger Transportation Survey

The most recent public input received for this document was obtained through a Passenger Transportation Survey. The online survey was distributed to passenger transportation providers and human service agencies in December, 2019. The survey consisted of 12 questions as well as several opportunities for written comments. Agencies were also provided the opportunity to complete the survey manually. Agencies were notified of the survey through mailings and email. A total of 50 responses were received. The survey, along with a summary of results, can be found in the Appendix.

### National Household Travel Survey Add-on

The Black Hawk County MPO participated in the 2017 National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) Add-on. The NHTS is a periodic national survey used to assist transportation planners and policy makers who need comprehensive data on travel and transportation patterns in the United States. Data is collected on daily trips taken by households and individuals in those households over a 24-hour period. States and MPOs can participate in the Add-on Program to obtain additional samples of the household travel survey within their respective geographic boundaries.

Add-on participants are also provided the opportunity to add six questions unique to their needs. The survey produced responses from a total of 1,221 households consisting of 2,450 individuals specifically from the Black Hawk County MPO. Results from the survey can be reviewed one variable at a time, or multiple variables can be cross tabulated to identify unique trends.

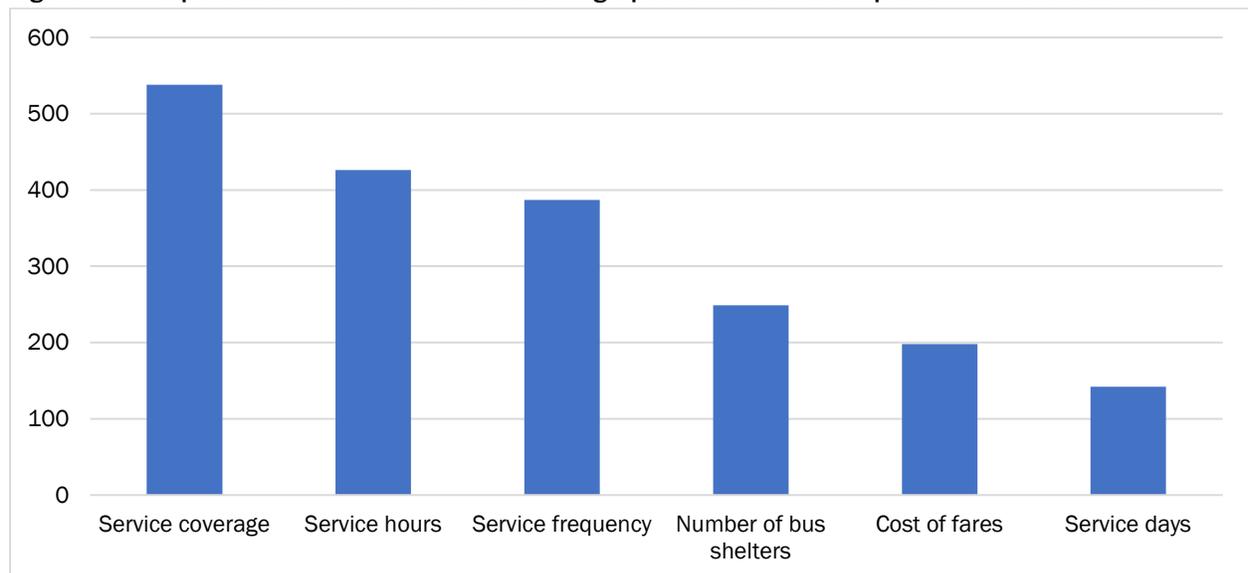


Several questions in the NHTS Add-on for the MPO area relate to transit. The following data has a 95 percent confidence interval and uses the seven-day weights developed for the MPO area:

- Between 2,963–5,761 persons in the MPO area have no household vehicles available.
- Between 2,240–4,238 persons have a medical condition that results in them giving up driving.
- Between 14.7–22.6 percent of households have used a bus for travel at least a few times a year. This may include charter buses and buses in other metropolitan areas.

Respondents were also asked which two of the following options would best improve MET Transit service in the metropolitan area. Figure 1.1 shows total number of unweighted responses to each improvement. A total of 1,940 responses were recorded among the six improvements, and an additional 572 respondents selected “none of the above”.

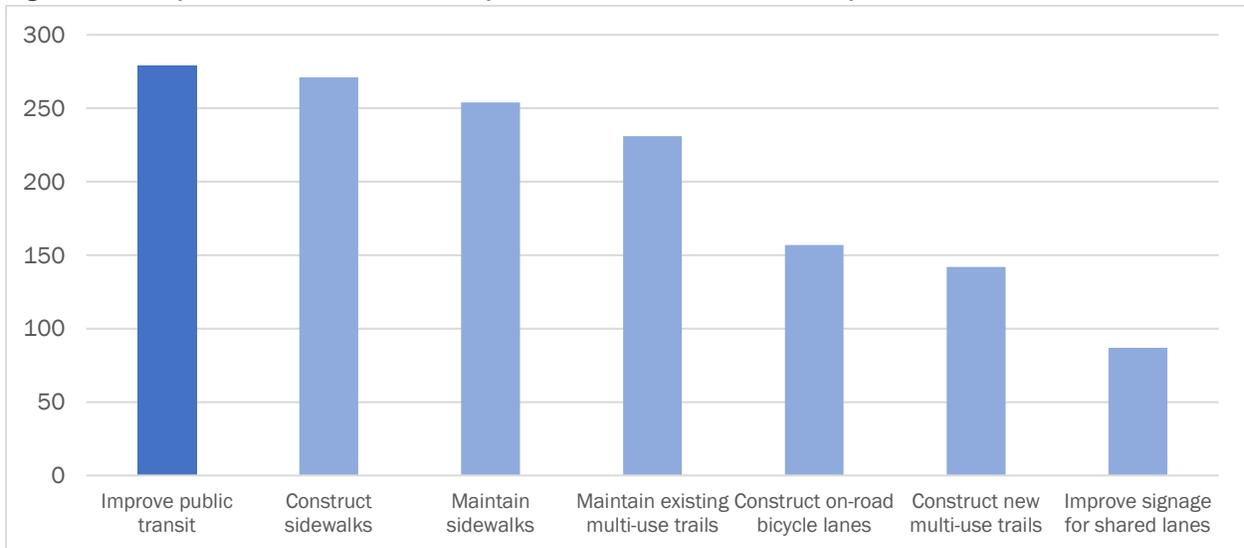
**Figure 1.1: Responses to Which Two of the Following Options Would Best Improve MET Transit Service**



Improving service coverage received the highest number of responses among the six options. However, expanding existing routes to cover more areas comes with several potential trade-offs including increased cost to city governments, decreased frequency, increased travel times, and a reduction in overall ridership.

NHTS respondents in the MPO area were also asked which transportation investment is most important to them. Available responses were all related to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements. Figure 1.2 shows the results of this question. The investment selected by the greatest number of respondents was “improve public transit” with 279 responses. A total of 1,421 responses were recorded among the seven investments, and an additional 307 respondents selected “none of the above”.

**Figure 1.2: Responses to Which One Transportation Investment is Most Important to You**



Like data from the U.S. Census, NHTS data can be referenced for a variety of different purposes. Further analysis of the data may identify additional trends in the metropolitan area not described in this section.

Methods of visualizing the NHTS Add-on data have also been developed. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), along with Oak Ridge National Laboratories and MacroSys, worked with MPOs and DOTs to develop an online NHTS tool so users can generate maps based on the survey data as well as the origin-destination travel data. This advanced tool allows MPO staff to display a variety of trends within the MPO area quickly and easily. Survey data are displayed using a customized geography developed by MPO staff specific to the MPO area. This custom geography divides the MPO area into 37 areas based largely on land uses and natural breaks in the landscape, e.g. rivers, highways. This data can help MPO planners identify travel trends and potential service improvements to maximize ridership.

### **Airline Highway Transportation Survey**

In 2018, MET Transit partnered with INRCOG, the RTC, and Grow Cedar Valley (formally the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber) to conduct a survey of businesses in the Airline Highway Industrial Area in Waterloo. This was a follow-up to a survey Grow Cedar Valley had conducted in 2017 which found that public transit was ranked the lowest of all community services in the six-county area surveyed.

A total of 14 businesses responded to this survey. Ten businesses said they “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” that their business would benefit from improved public transit service. Two businesses said they would “possibly” be willing to contribute funds to have dedicated fixed-route bus service to their businesses. Three businesses said they would “possibly” be interested in sponsoring a rideshare program for their employees.

Businesses were also asked to list the times their employees arrive to and depart from work. The majority of employees start their shift in the morning on the hour (i.e. 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, and 9:00 a.m.). Departure times are more evenly distributed between the hour and half-hour, and the majority of employees depart work between 2:30 and 6:30 p.m. Figure 1.3 shows the shift start and end times for employees at businesses surveyed in the Airline Highway Industrial Area. This data can help with scheduling a potential new MET Transit fixed route to the Airline Highway area.

**Figure 1.3: Shift Start and End Times for Airline Highway Industrial Area Employees**

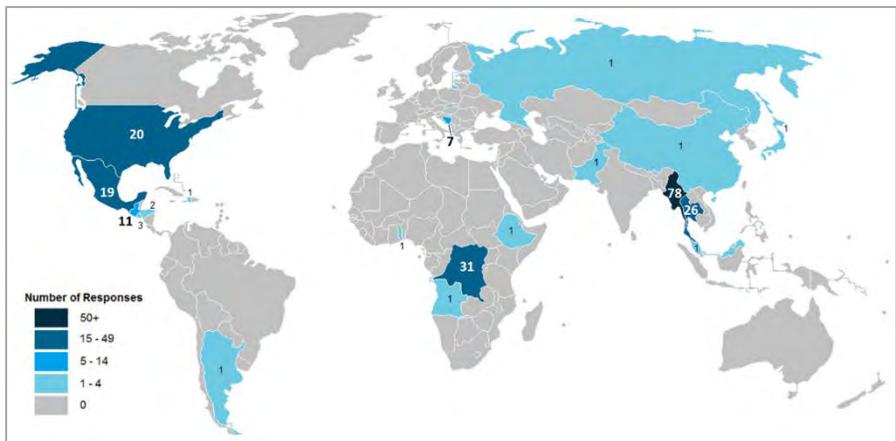


**Special Outreach Survey**

A total of 187 non-English speaking and 20 homeless residents took part in the Special Outreach Survey conducted by INRCOG in the metropolitan area in 2015. The survey was intended to identify transportation needs and challenges faced by these unique populations. Half of all respondents were from either Myanmar or Thailand. There was also significant representation from the Congo, Mexico, Guatemala, and Bosnia. Surveys were administered by staff members at Hawkeye Community College Metro Center, Operation Threshold, and Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center. Most non-English speaking respondents have some measurable understanding of English, through there were inherent challenges involved with surveying this population. Accordingly, data from this survey is not statistically-significant.

Approximately 35 percent of survey respondents indicated they have missed work, school, or important appointments because of transportation. 27 percent indicated they must get a ride with family or friends to get to medical appointments, and 26 percent must get a ride to get to work or school.

Only one non-English speaking respondent indicated they usually ride the bus to work or



Map of countries special outreach survey participants are from

school. The vast majority – 94 percent – of non-English speaking respondents indicated they have not ridden the bus in the past month, and 89 percent indicated they do not understand how to ride the bus. However, 51 percent of non-English speaking respondents said “Yes” or “Maybe” when asked if they would ride the bus if it was easier. These results demonstrate a significant potential demand for transit in the metropolitan area. Additional marketing and route restructuring may help make MET Transit service more understandable and intuitive for this population.

### **MET Transit Route Restructuring Input**

INRCOG staff are working with MET Transit on the redesign of the fixed-route bus network in Waterloo and Cedar Falls. In 2017, MET Transit board voted to purchase a three-year license of the transit planning software, Remix. INRCOG Transportation Planners are using the software to compare several route alternatives in an effort to identify efficiencies in service and develop schedules that are faster, more reliable, and easier to understand without increasing the overall cost of the services.

As part of the route restructuring process, INRCOG staff presented an overview of proposed changes at a Waterloo City Council Work Session and a Cedar Falls Committee of the Whole meeting. Staff also presented to the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Student Government. The proposed changes will also be presented to the general public in 2020.

### **Black Hawk County Metropolitan Area 2013 Survey**

The 2013 public input survey was conducted in the lead-up to the 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan update for the MPO. A total of 348 responses were received. When asked about the condition of public transit, about 30 percent of respondents said it is “good” or “excellent” and 26 percent responded “poor” or “very poor”. Nearly 90 percent of respondents said they had not used a MET Transit bus in the last year, yet over 50 percent said improving local bus service is “moderately important” or “very important”. Among eight different project types overall, “improving public transportation” had the second highest average score, behind only “improving roadway conditions”.

When asked what elements of the transit system should be improved, 40 percent of respondents said “hours/days of service”, 39 percent said “service coverage”, 33 percent said “frequency of service”, and 29 percent said “availability of information about service”. This was a multiple-choice question. These results align with the NHTS results described earlier in this section. If the total number of responses for service coverage and service days are combined with the NHTS results, then the top three responses would be the same in both surveys, in the same order.

### **Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority 2012 Survey**

The 2012 public input survey was conducted to gather input for the 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan for the RTA. A total of 194 responses were received. When asked about the quality of public transit outside of the Waterloo and Cedar Falls metropolitan area, 65 percent of respondents said it was “very poor” or “poor”, and about 18 percent responded “good” or excellent. During the previous year, 94 percent of respondents had never used an RTC bus, and 95 percent of respondents had never used a city-to-city bus. When asked their awareness level of RTC, 31 percent of respondents said they do not know what RTC is, and 63 percent responded they are aware of what RTC is, but have not utilized the service.

When asked how important expanding passenger transportation service in the region is, nearly 60 percent of respondents said “very important” or “moderately important” while only 11 percent responded “not important”. Among eight different project types overall, “improving public transportation” had the second highest average score, behind only “improving roadway conditions”. These results mirror those from the 2013 public input survey conducted for the MPO.

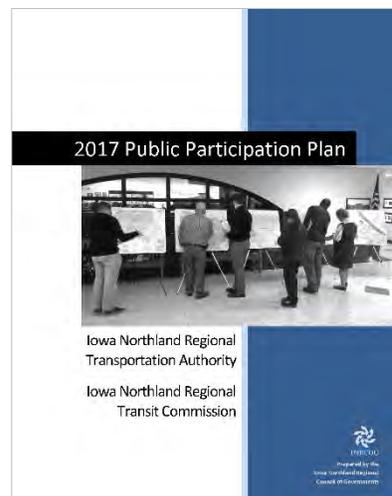
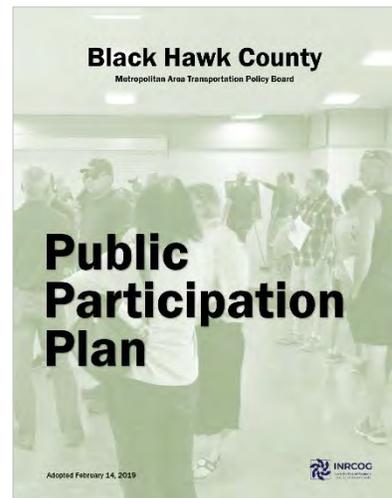
The survey provided opportunities for written comments. Some passenger transportation-related comments include the following:

- Need for more in-town (outside of metropolitan area) transit
- Need for easily accessible and affordable transportation from small cities to and from Waterloo, especially hospitals and medical facilities
- Need for additional marketing of RTC
- Improved transportation for medically-needy residents, people with disabilities, the elderly, and low-income families
- Need for expanded service hours, especially weekday evenings for second shift
- Need for increased metro transit service frequency
- Simplified electronic schedule of public transportation options posted on a centralized website

### Public Involvement – Draft and Final Document

The public involvement process utilized for the development of the draft and final FY 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan was guided by the Public Participation Plans (PPP) for the MPO and RTA. The PPP details the processes each organization will follow to involve the public in the transportation planning and programming process. Public involvement actions required include the following

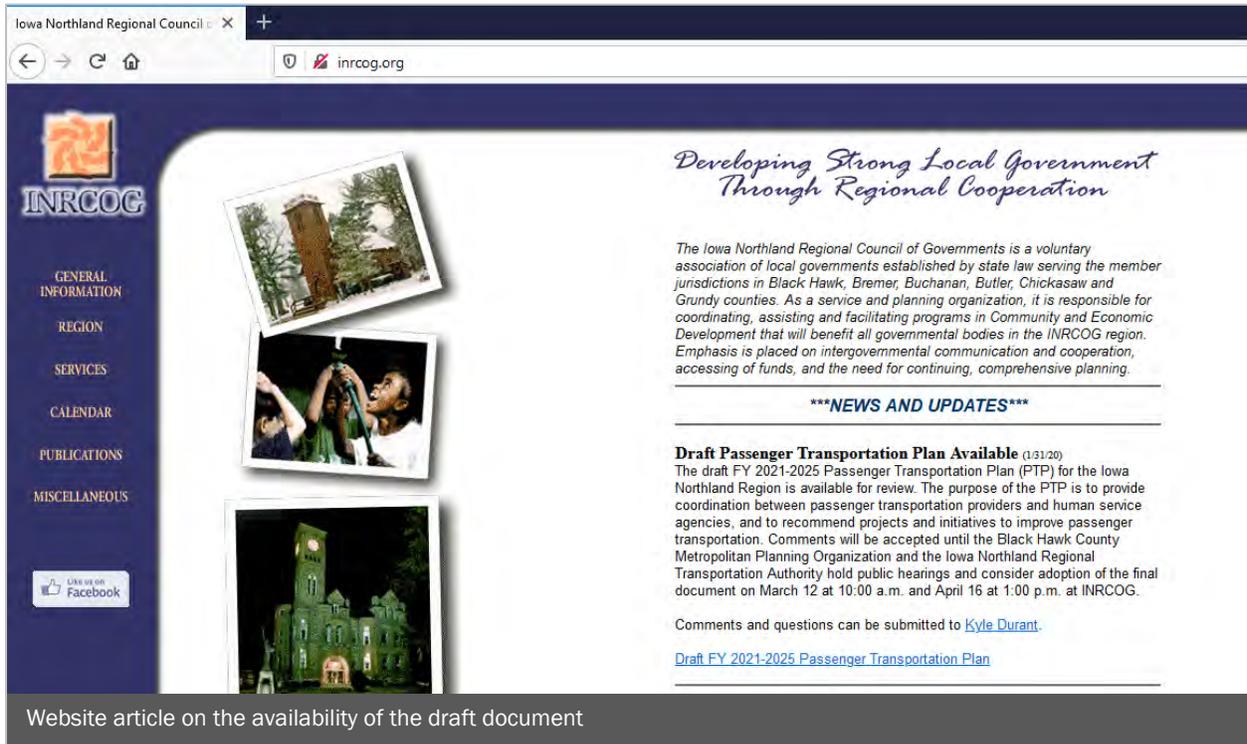
1. Draft PTP
  - a. The draft PTP will be prepared by INRCOG staff with input from the Transit Advisory Committee.
  - b. The draft document will be made available at the INRCOG Center, on the INRCOG website, and upon request.
2. Public Comment Period
  - a. The draft PTP will be presented to the Policy Board and Technical Committee at a regularly scheduled meeting.
  - b. The public will have at least a 15-calendar-day comment period following completion of the draft PTP and presentation to the Policy Board and Technical Committee to submit comments via letter, email, phone, or in person.
  - c. Notices and agendas of meetings will be made available through local media sources, at the INRCOG Center, and on the INRCOG website and Facebook page. Notices may also be sent to organizations serving traditionally underserved populations.
  - d. All meetings will be held in accessible facilities.
  - e. Any person with sight, reading, or language barriers can contact INRCOG (minimum 48 hours prior to the meeting) and arrangements will be made for accommodation.
3. Final PTP
  - a. The Policy Board will consider a summary of comments and responses and adopt the final PTP.
  - b. The Final PTP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT and FTA.
  - c. The final PTP will be made available on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.



4. Revisions

- a. Revisions to the PTP will be made as necessary.
- b. Amendments will require a public hearing at a regularly scheduled Policy Board meeting. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty (20) calendar days and no less than four (4) calendar days before the date of the hearing.

The INRCOG website [www.inrcog.org](http://www.inrcog.org) was used to share the draft PTP. Staff contact information was provided to any person who wished to comment on the draft document. Other information on the transportation planning process and additional transportation planning documents are available on the website. The final PTP will be posted online and will be available at the INRCOG office.



## Section 2 – Area Profile and Inventory

### Population

The Iowa Northland Region is comprised of Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties, covering 3,162 square miles, or approximately six percent of the state of Iowa. According to the U.S. Census 2018 Population Estimates, the region has a combined population of 217,361. The majority of that population is concentrated in Waterloo and Cedar Falls. The next largest concentrations of population are in the Cities of Waverly and Independence. Table 2.1 shows the regional population estimates by county and city.

**Table 2.1: INRCOG Region Population Estimates by City and County, 2018**

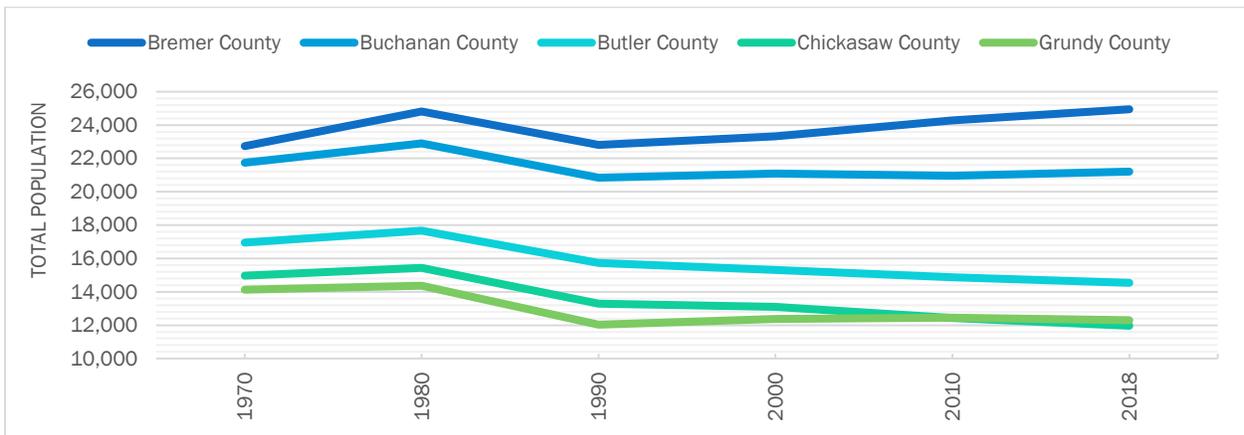
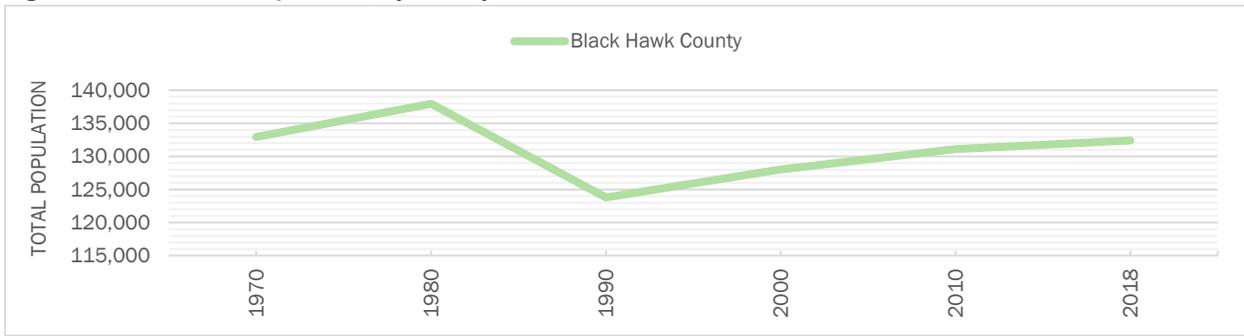
Black Hawk County		Bremer County		Buchanan County	
Cedar Falls	41,048	Denver	1,841	Aurora	164
Dunkerton	838	Frederika	202	Brandon	309
Elk Run Heights	1,156	Janesville	983	Fairbank	1,124
Evansdale	4,757	Plainfield	415	Hazleton	826
Gilbertville	729	Readlyn	840	Independence	6,073
Hudson	2,466	Sumner	1,961	Jesup	2,710
La Porte City	2,259	Tripoli	1,356	Lamont	456
Raymond	802	Waverly	10,153	Quasqueton	561
Waterloo	67,798	Unincorporated	7,196	Rowley	266
Unincorporated	10,555			Stanley	122
				Winthrop	854
				Unincorporated	7,734
County Total	132,408	County Total	24,947	County Total	21,199

Butler County		Chickasaw County		Grundy County	
Allison	988	Alta Vista	253	Beaman	187
Aplington	1,061	Bassett	65	Conrad	1,081
Aredale	69	Fredericksburg	913	Dike	1,280
Bristow	152	Ionia	275	Grundy Center	2,682
Clarksville	1,352	Lawler	419	Holland	271
Dumont	609	Nashua	1,593	Morrison	92
Greene	1,068	New Hampton	3,394	Reinbeck	1,637
New Hartford	492	North Washington	138	Stout	213
Parkersburg	1,943	Unincorporated	4,914	Wellsburg	692
Shell Rock	1,284			Unincorporated	4,169
Unincorporated	5,521				
County Total	14,539	County Total	11,964	County Total	12,304

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Population Estimates

Over the past 50 years, the population of the region has fluctuated in size. Figure 2.1 shows historical population estimates for each County from 1970 to 2018. The area's population experienced a sharp decrease following the economic recession of the 1980s which had a detrimental effect on agriculture and manufacturing in the region. Population growth for the region since has been relatively slow.

**Figure 2.1: Historical Population, by County**

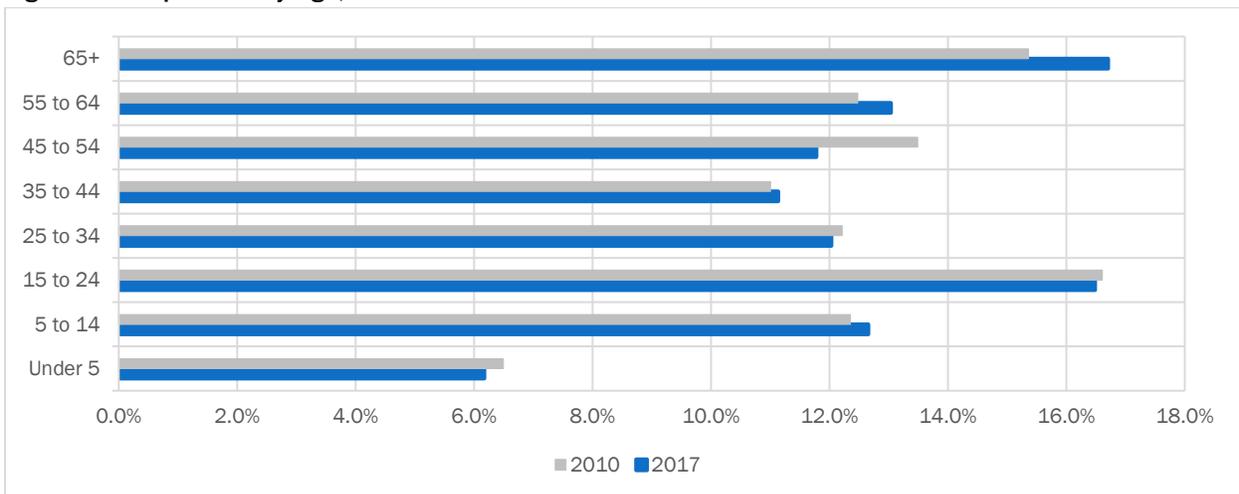


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2018 Population Estimates

## Age

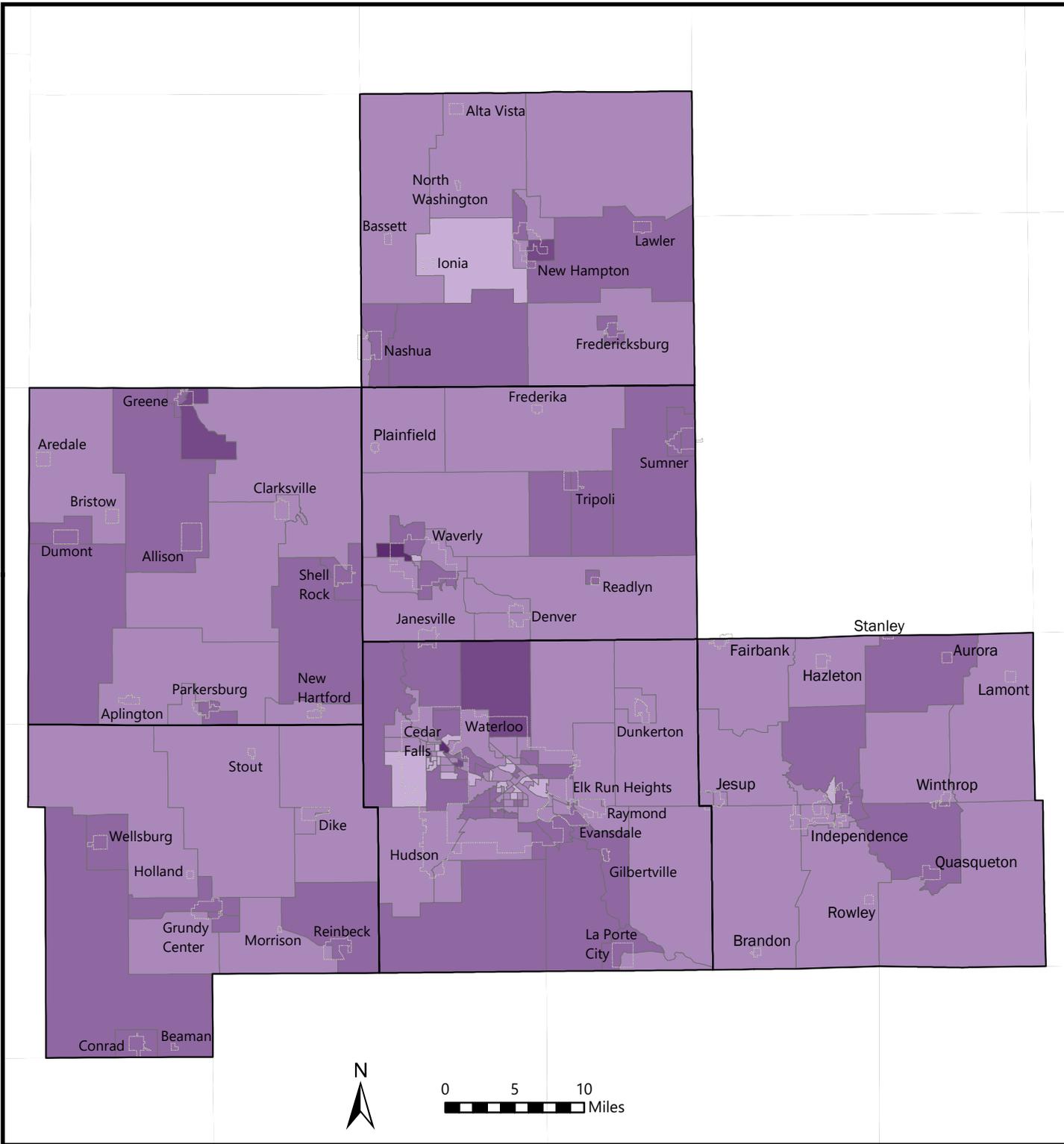
Figure 2.2 compares the population of the region in 2010 and 2017, and Map 2.1 shows the percent of the population over the age of 65. Millennials and senior citizens currently make up the largest percentages of the population. The age range that decreased the most was 45-54 (-1.71 percent). The region's percentage of residents 65 years old or older increased by 1.34 percent, the most of any age group over this time period. This trend will require attention in transportation planning as the number of driving seniors increases.

**Figure 2.2: Population by Age, 2010 vs. 2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

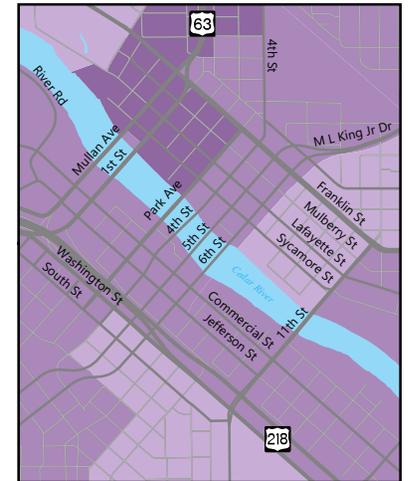
Percent of Population that is Over 65 by Census Block Group



Downtown Cedar Falls



Downtown Waterloo

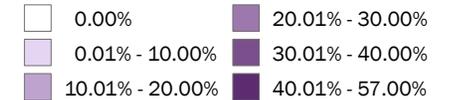


Legend



City Boundary

Percent Population Over 65



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Block Group



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## Diversity

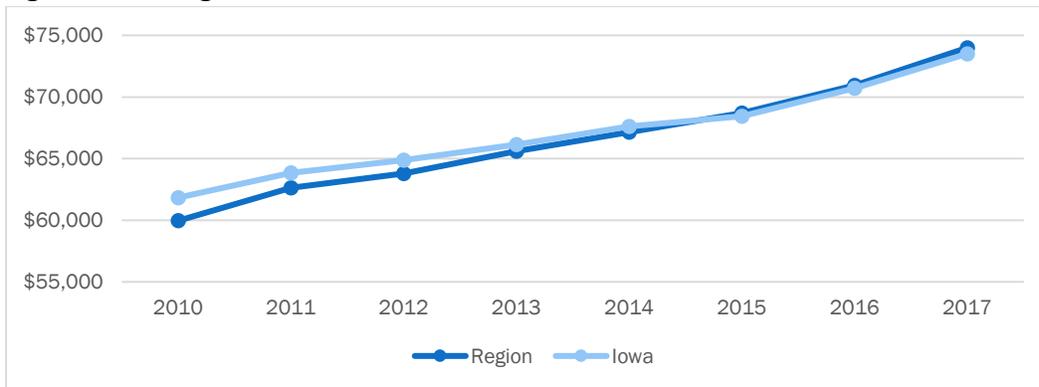
Ten percent of the region’s population is non-White, including 5.6 percent that is Black or African American – nearly two percent higher than the state average. Waterloo is the most diverse community, though significant minority populations can be found in other cities as well. The area also continues to experience new-comer populations. These populations may present special challenges and opportunities for public transportation planning, including the difficulty of communicating programs to people who may not speak English fluently. Map 2.2 shows the percent of the population that is non-white by census block group, and Map 2.3 shows the percent of the population that speaks English less than “very well”.

As part of this document, a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Analysis was conducted for MET Transit and RTC (reference Appendix III). The purpose of the analysis was to outline how the two transportation providers identify persons who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available. The analysis provides a more in-depth assessment of the LEP population and identifies methods of assistance.

## Household Income

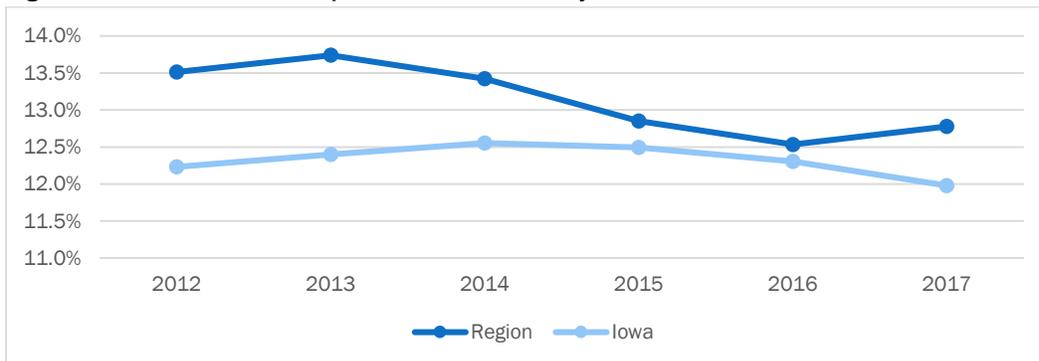
According to the FHWA Livability Initiative, transportation is the second largest expense for most households after housing. Households living in auto-dependent locations spend 25 percent of their income on transportation costs. Housing that is affordable and located closer to employment, shopping, restaurants, and other destinations can reduce household transportation costs to nine percent of household income. Figure 2.3 shows the average household income for the region, and Figure 2.4 and Map 2.4 show the percent of the population below poverty level.

**Figure 2.3: Average Household Income**



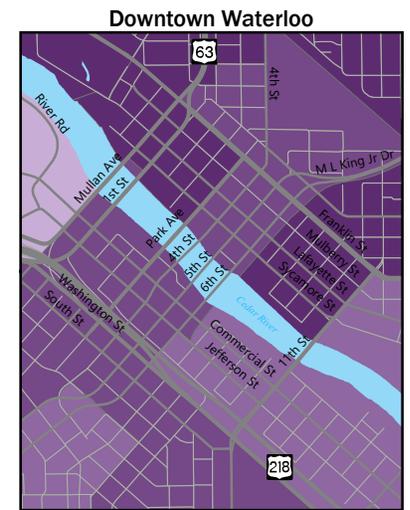
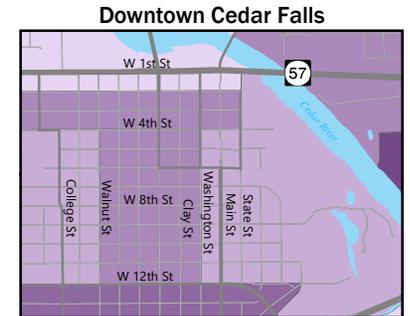
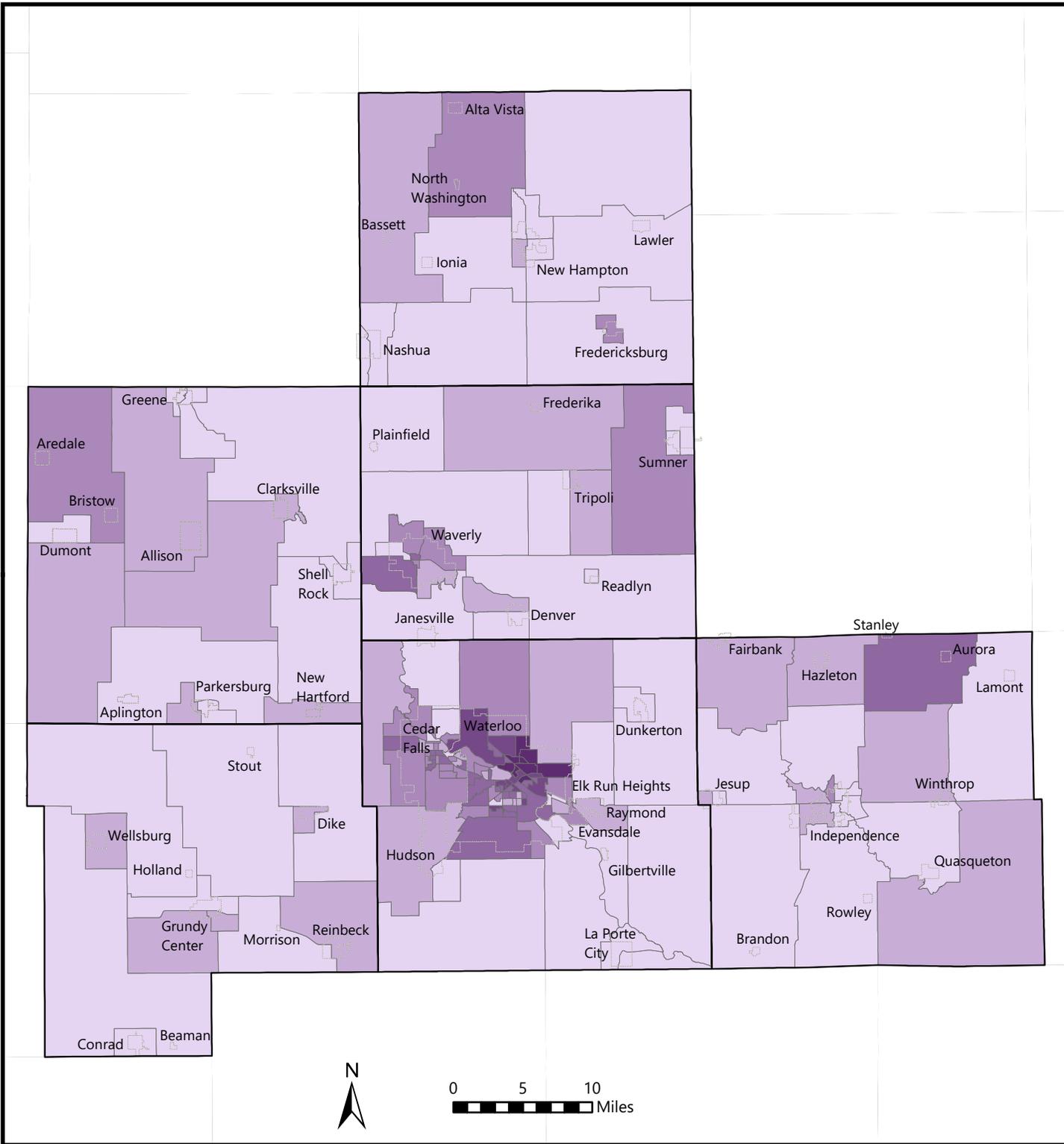
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

**Figure 2.4: Percent of the Population Below Poverty Level**

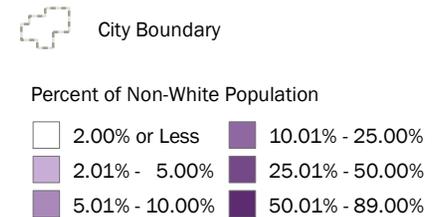


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Percent of Non-White Population by Census Block Group



Legend

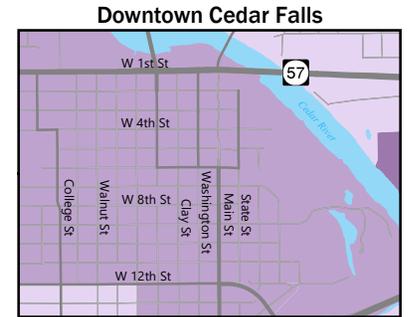
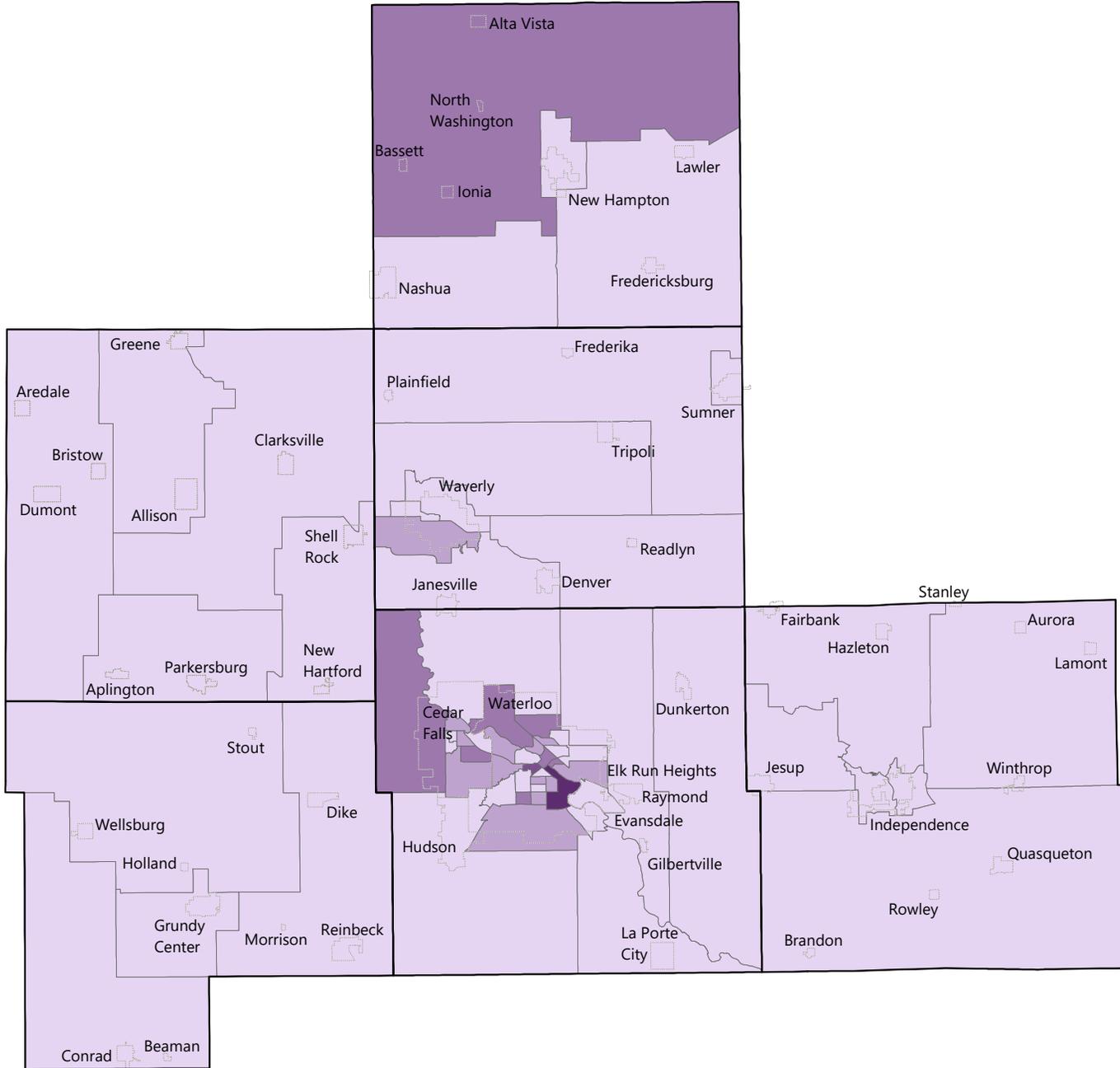


Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Block Group

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**Percent of Population that Speaks English Less than "Very Well" by Census Tract**



**Legend**



City Boundary

Percent that Speaks English Less than "Very Well"

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 0.00%         | 2.51% - 5.00%   |
| 0.01% - 1.00% | 5.01% - 10.00%  |
| 1.01% - 2.50% | 10.01% - 16.00% |

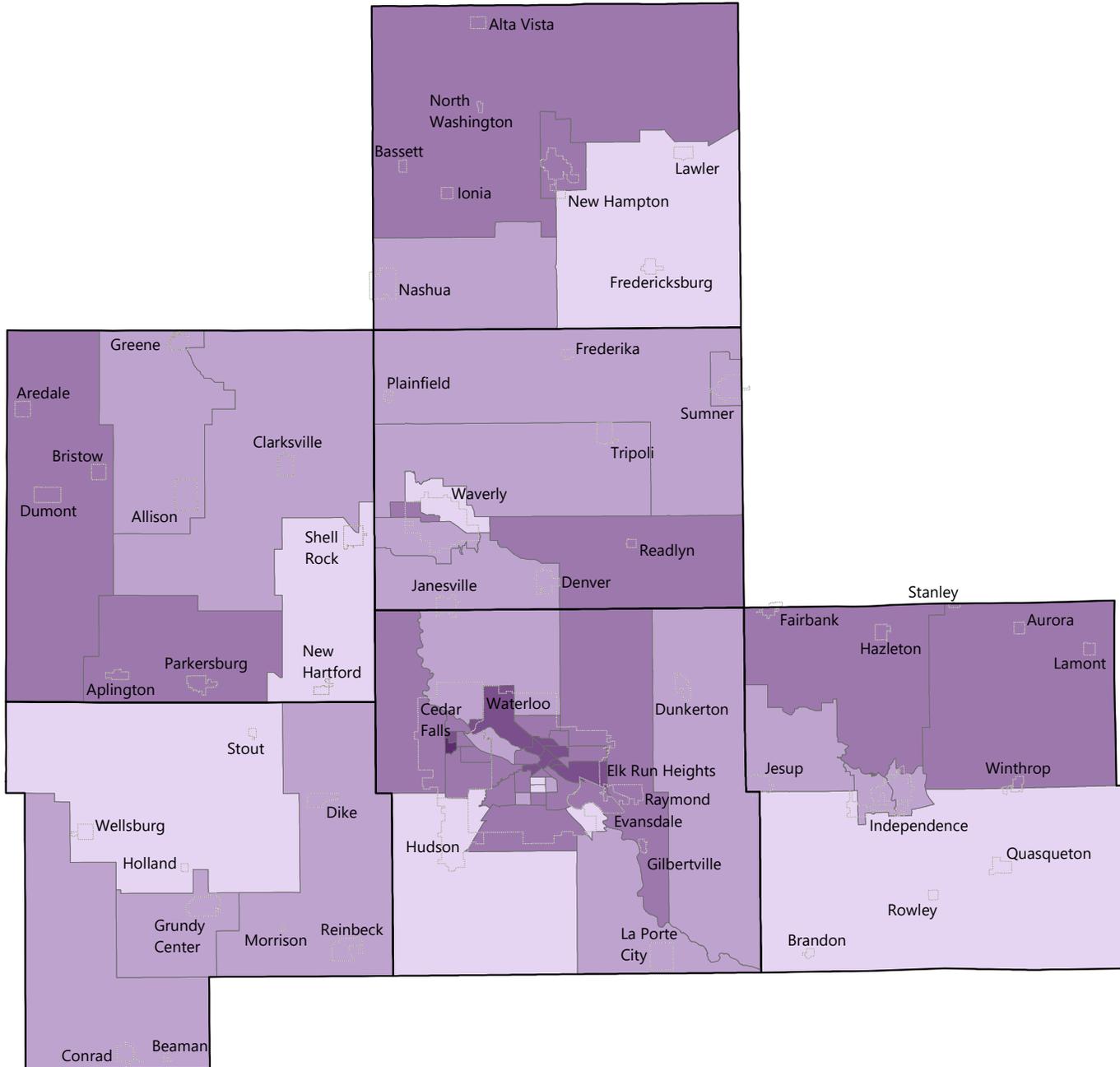


Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Tract



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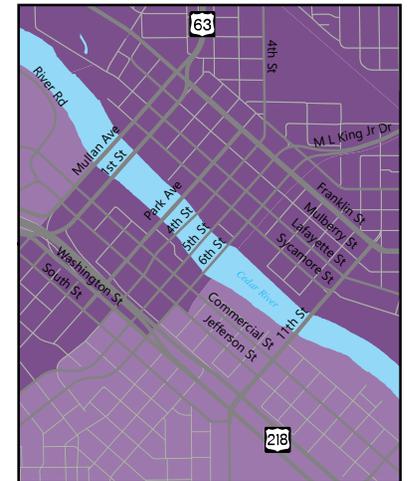
**Percent of Population Whose Income was Below the Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months**



**Downtown Cedar Falls**



**Downtown Waterloo**



**Legend**



City Boundary

Percent Whose Income was Below Poverty Level

- 5.00% or Less
- 5.01% - 10.00%
- 10.01% - 25.00%
- 25.01% - 50.00%
- Over 50.01%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Tract

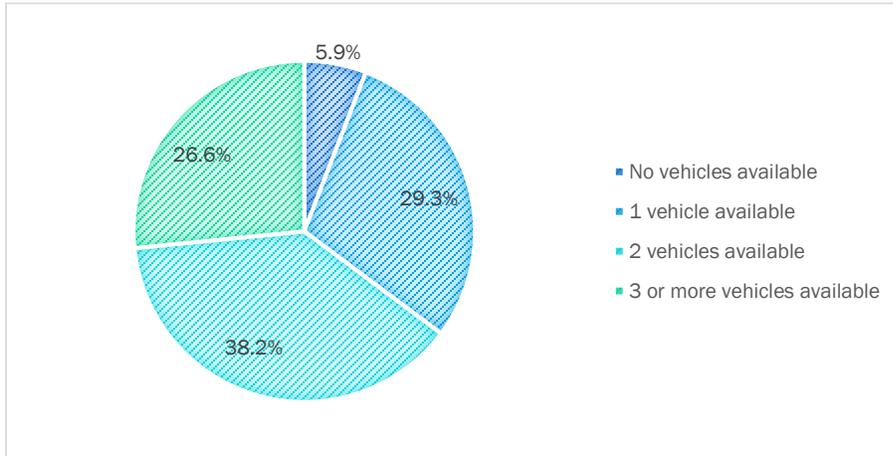


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## Vehicles per Household

Figure 2.5 shows the number of vehicles per household in the region. Approximately 35 percent of households have either one or no vehicles available. While the number of vehicles per household has increased over time, a substantial percentage of households have no vehicles available (5.9 percent). These households are more likely to depend on public transit, walking, or bicycling to get to and from their destinations.

**Figure 2.5: Vehicles per Occupied Household**

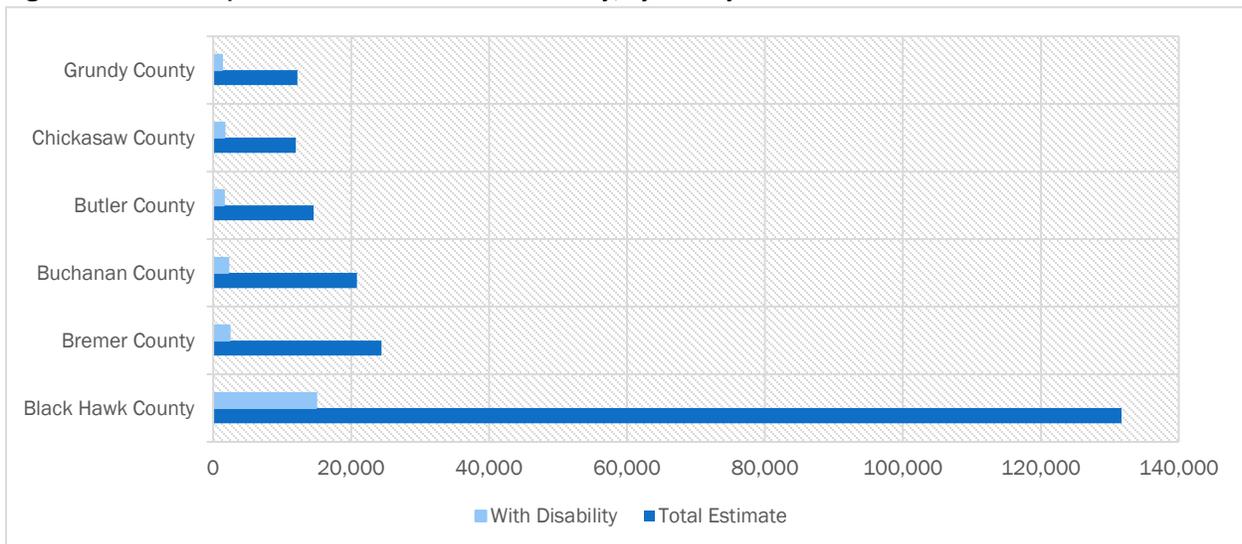


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

## Disabilities

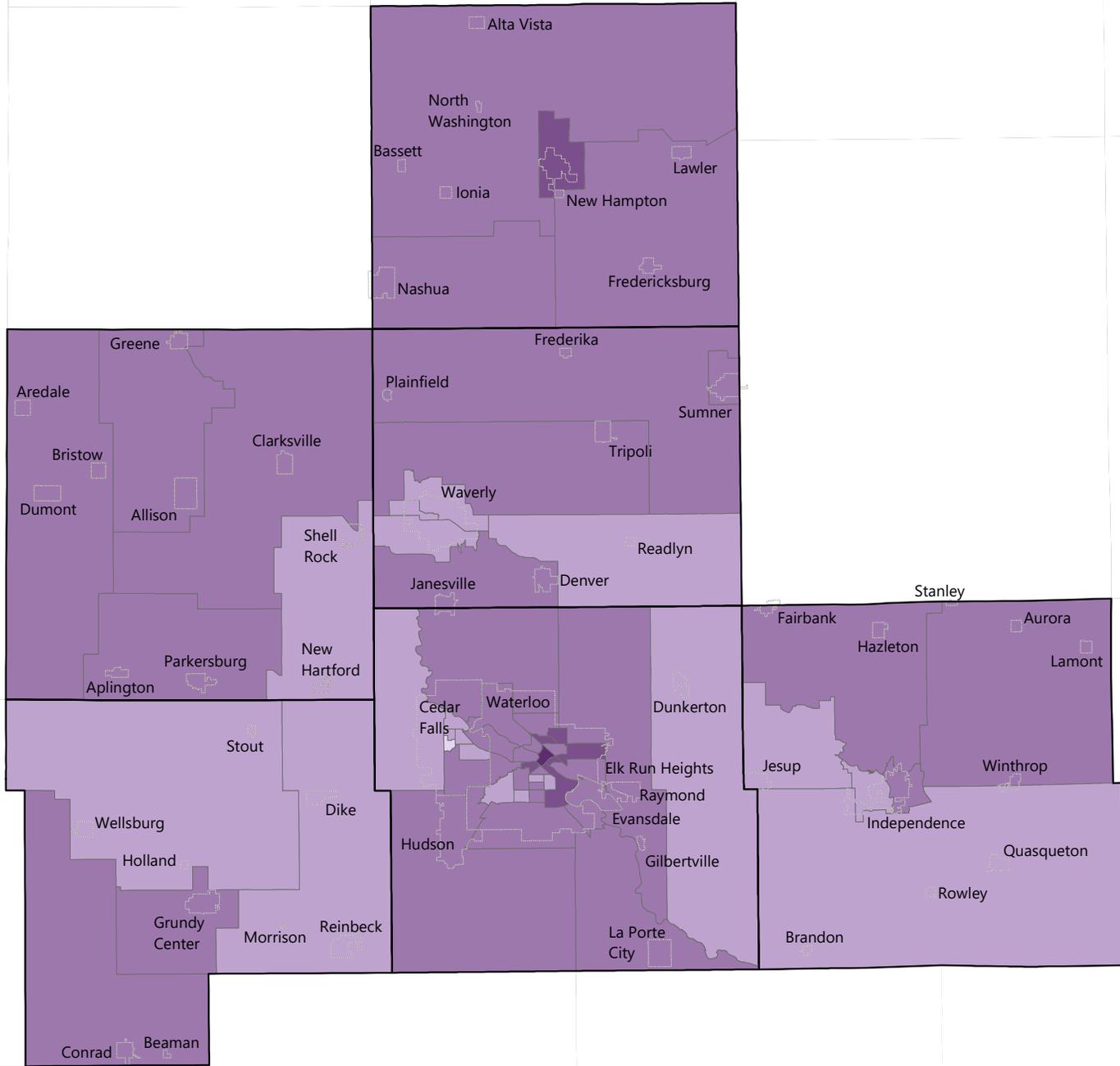
Persons with disabilities often face transportation challenges, and inadequate or unreliable transportation is a significant obstacle to gaining and retaining employment. According to the 2014 National Household Travel Survey, adults with disabilities are more than twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation. Further, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is twice that of the general unemployment rate. For people with disabilities, transportation choice allows for full participation in community life. According to the 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, there are approximately 24,000 people living in the region with a disability. Figure 2.6 shows the number of persons with a disability by county, and Map 2.5 shows the percent of the civilian noninstitutionalized population with a disability.

**Figure 2.6: Total Population Estimate with a Disability, by County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

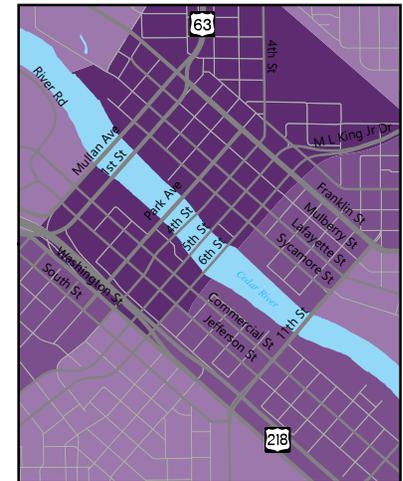
# Percent of Population with Disability 2017 Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population



Downtown Cedar Falls



Downtown Waterloo



Legend



City Boundary

Percent Noninstitutionalized Population with Disability

- 5.00% or Less
- 5.01% - 10.00%
- 10.01% - 15.00%
- 15.01% - 20.00%
- 20.01% - 33.00%



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Tract

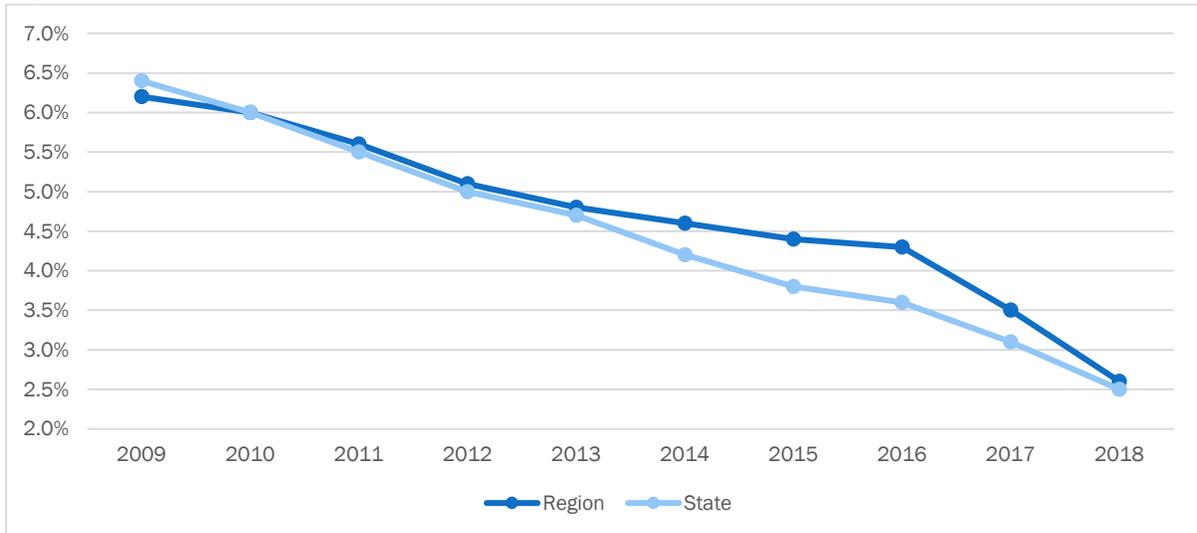


INRCOG Council of Governments  
Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. No liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

## Unemployment

Figure 2.7 illustrates the unemployment rate for the region over the past ten years, along with the statewide average. The unemployment rate in 2009 was at its highest point since the early 1990s. Since then, the unemployment rate has seen a gradual decline relatively consistent with the statewide average.

**Figure 2.7: Unemployment Rate**

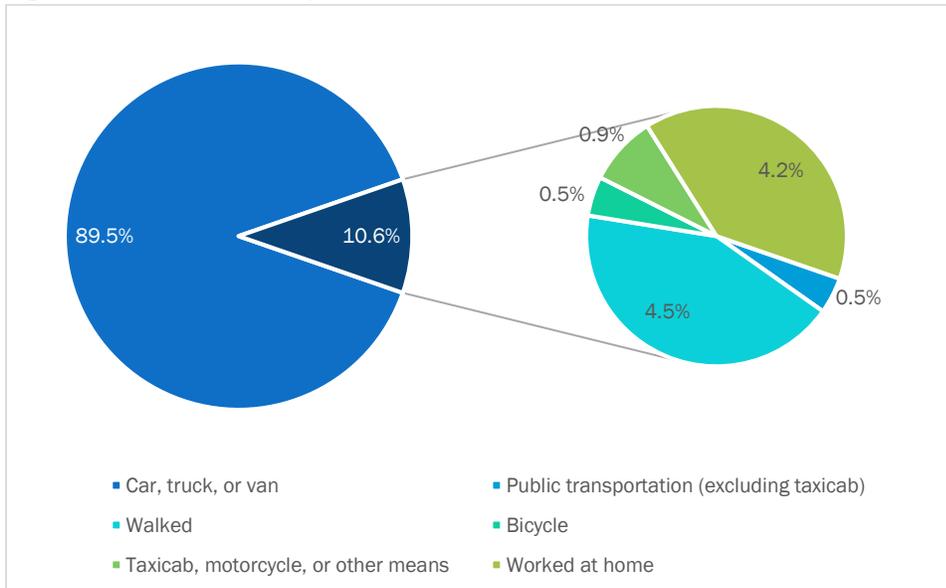


Source: Iowa Workforce Development, Local Area Unemployment Statistics 2009-2018

## Mode of Transportation to Work

The Iowa Northland Region remains an auto-oriented community. 90 percent of residents utilize an automobile for travel to work (Figure 2.8). Walking or bicycling are the next highest modes of transportation at five percent combined. Public transportation makes up a small percentage of all commuting trips.

**Figure 2.8: Means of Transportation to Work**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

## Activity Centers

Outside of the metropolitan area and the cities of Waverly and Independence, the region is primarily rural in nature with small cities spread throughout. However, transportation destinations are not limited to the urbanized areas of the region. Maps 2.6 and 2.7 identify activity centers within and outside of the metropolitan area that are considered to be trip generators. For this document, activity centers include grocery stores, residential care homes, social services, pharmacies, and medical facilities (hospitals, clinics, and dentists).

## Service Inventory

The INRCOG region is served by both public and private transportation providers which includes the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MET Transit), the Regional Transit Commission (RTC), Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI), private taxi operators, and intercity bus carriers. Transportation services are also provided by human service agencies throughout the region. The following section provides a summary of the region's transportation providers which is based on responses to the Passenger Transportation Survey. Table 2.6 provides a summary of human service agencies that provide transportation services to their clients.

### Metropolitan Transit Authority (MET Transit)

MET Transit is the delegated public transit provider for Waterloo and Cedar Falls (28E agreement) and operates 13 fixed routes within the communities. Ten routes operate continuously all year long, and three routes operate depending on the academic calendar. Table 2.2 outlines each route's operations and annual ridership for fiscal year 2018.

**Table 2.2: MET Transit Fixed Routes**

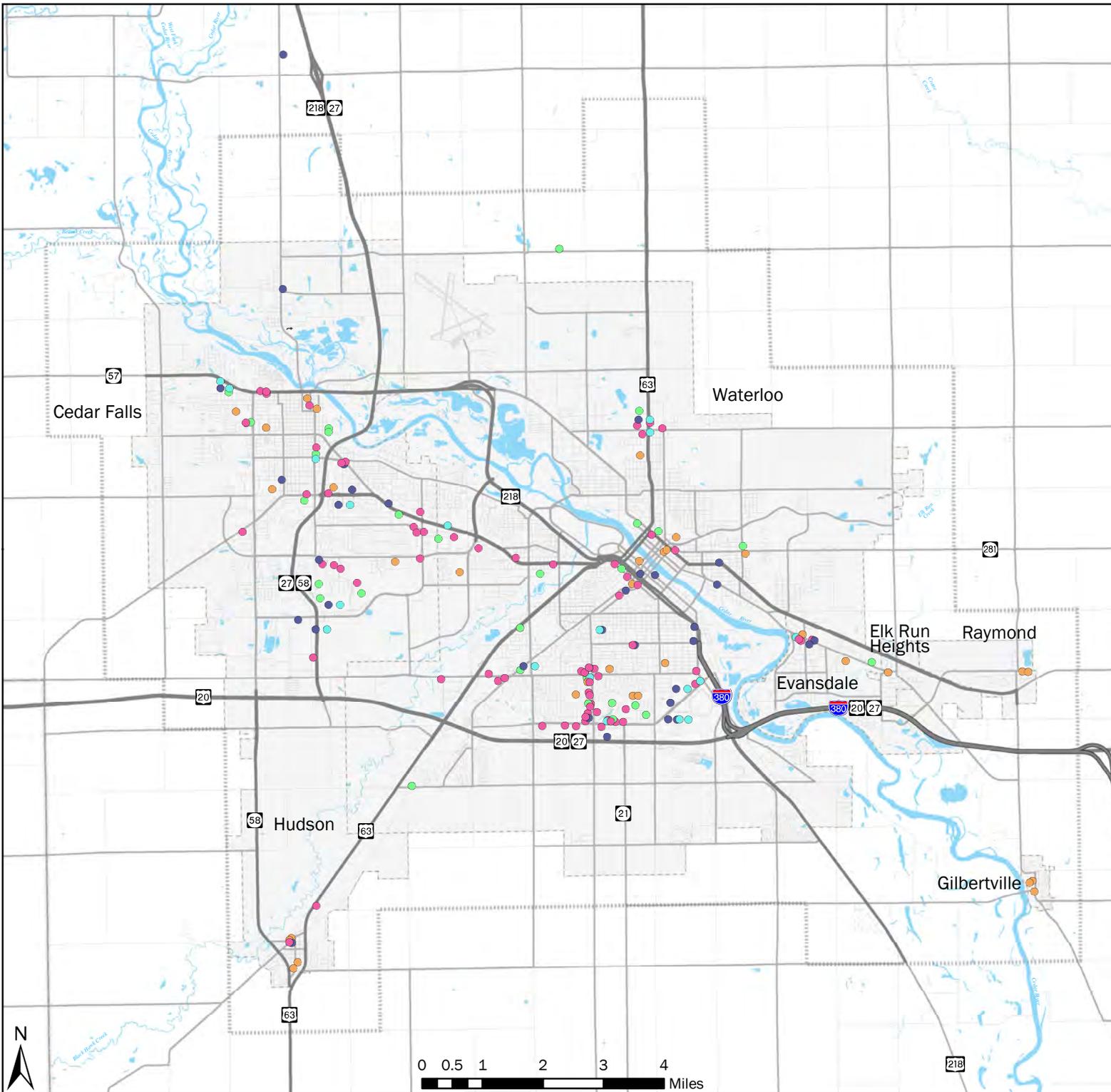
Route	Annual Operations	Daily Operations	Ridership (FY 2018)
Route 1/West	All year	All day	39,258
Route 2/West	All year	All day	37,828
Route 3/East	All year	All day	38,002
Route 4/East	All year	All day	38,723
Route 5/La Porte	All year	All day	29,070
Route 5L/W 11th	All year	All day	58,524
Route 6/CF University	All year	All day	29,789
Route 7/CF Rainbow	All year	All day	47,440
Route 8/West Loop	All year	No mid-day service	6,793
Route 9/CF Loop	All year	No mid-day service M-F	11,349
Route 10/HCC	Reduced summer service	No mid-day service	6,304
Route 11/UNI	Academic year only	All day	21,129
Route 12/Safe Ride	Academic year only	Fri and Sat nights only	2,731

Source: MET Transit, FY 2018 Ridership Statistics

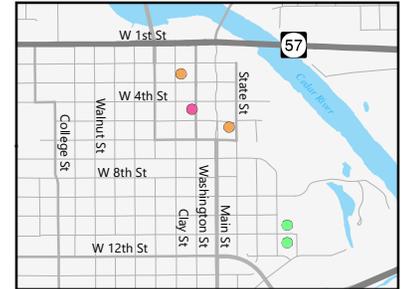
MET Transit's fixed route and paratransit hours of operation are 5:45 a.m. to 6:35 p.m. from Monday to Friday, and 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. Regular fixed route fares have remained the same for over a decade. Regular fares for adults are \$1.50 per ride, while fares for seniors, disabled, Medicare card holders, and students are \$0.75; and the cost of a 30-day pass is \$50 and \$45 respectively. Riders can also purchase 11 ride tickets at once for the price of 10 tickets.

Map 2.8 shows the location of MET Transit's current fixed routes. Route 10 serves the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), the Hawkeye Community College (HCC) main campus, and the Crossroads Mall area during the academic year, and continues service between HCC and the Crossroads Mall area during the summer. Route 11 operates entirely in and around the UNI campus. Route 12 serves the UNI campus and downtown Cedar Falls on Friday and Saturday nights only, and is free to the general public.

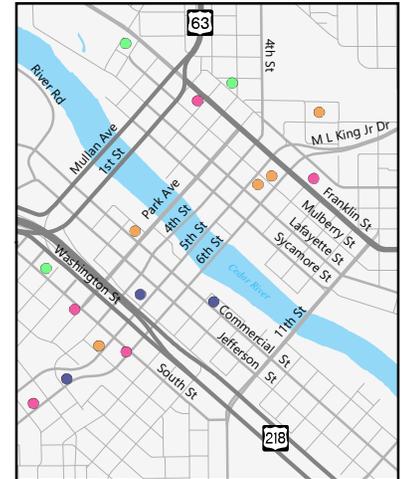
# Activity Centers in the Metropolitan Area



### Downtown Cedar Falls



### Downtown Waterloo



### Legend

- City Boundary
- MPO Study Area

### Activity Centers

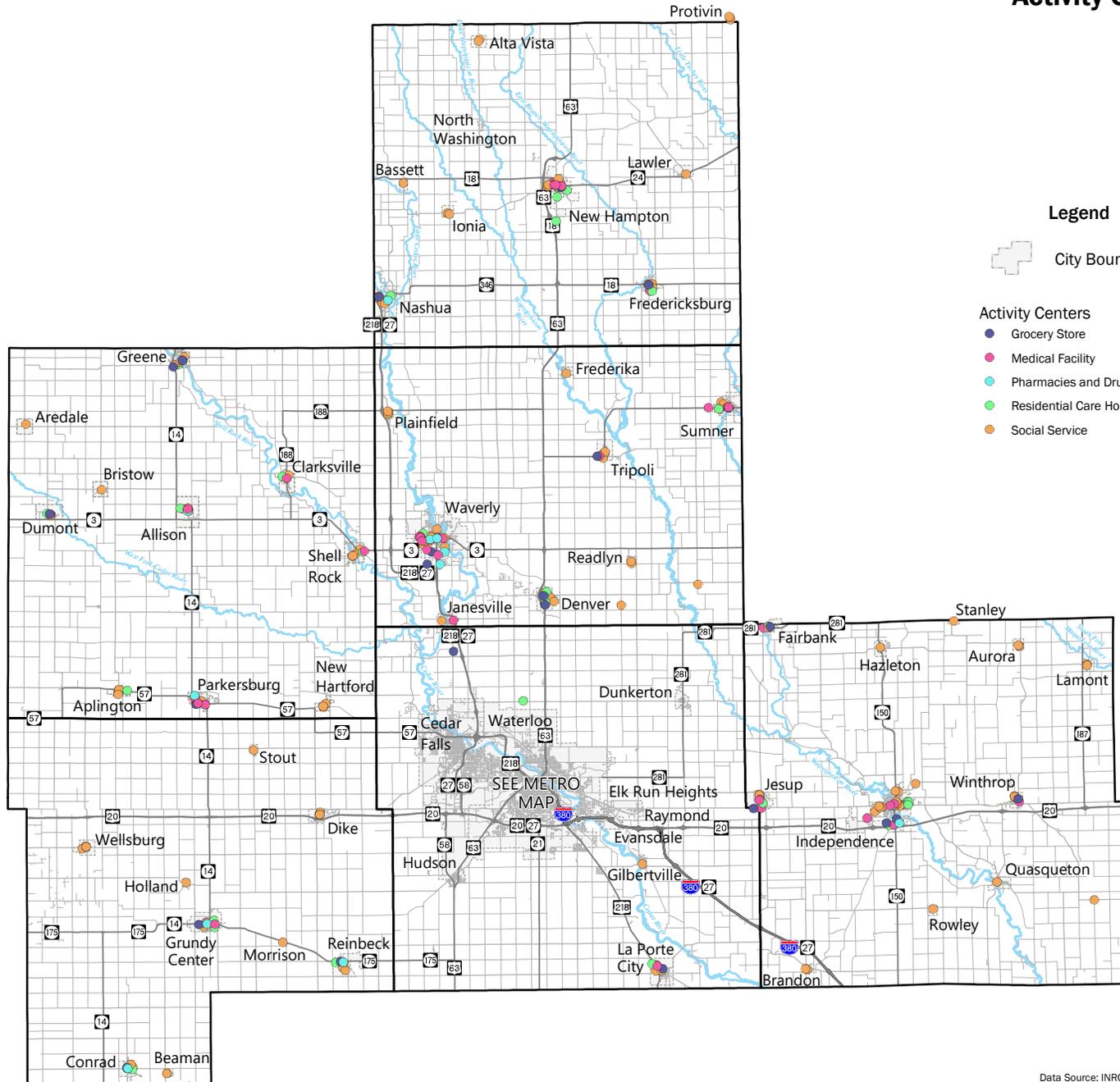
- Grocery Store
- Medical Facility
- Pharmacies and Drug Stores
- Residential Care Home
- Social Service

Data Source: INRCOG



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# Activity Centers in the Region

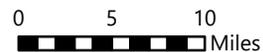


### Legend



### Activity Centers

- Grocery Store
- Medical Facility
- Pharmacies and Drug Stores
- Residential Care Home
- Social Service

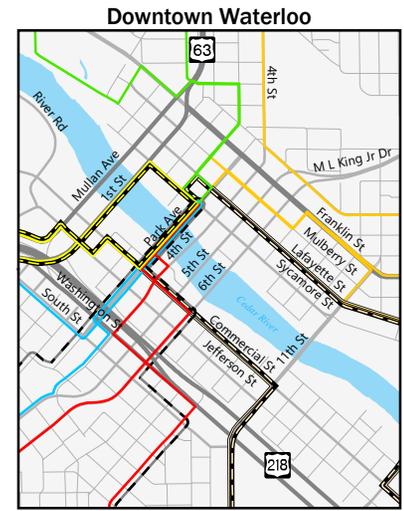
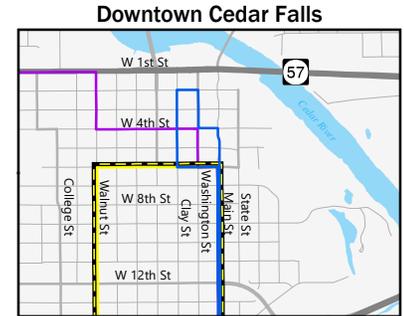
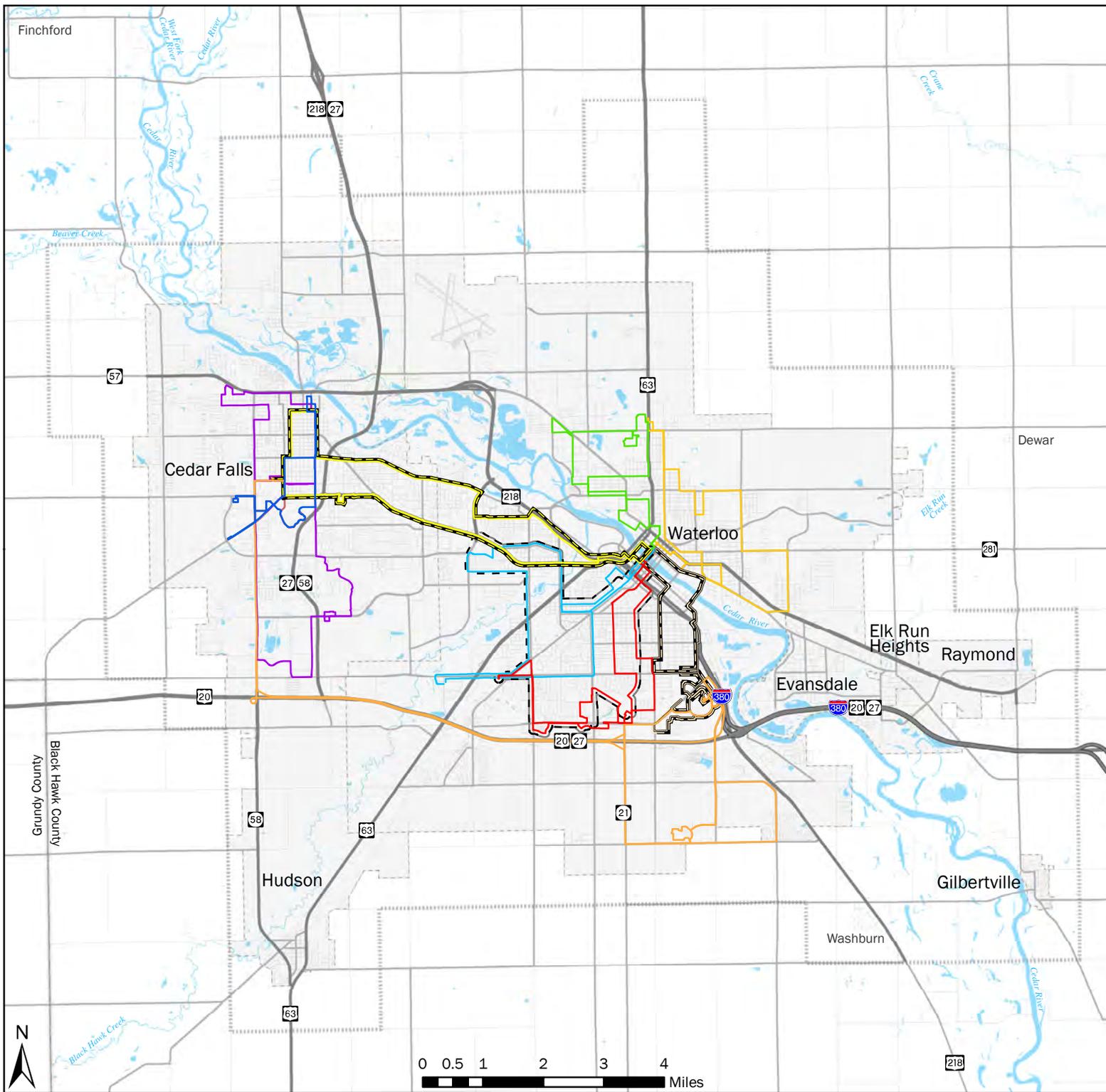


Data Source: INRCOG



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Legend

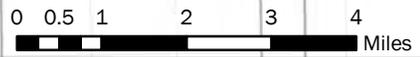
- City Boundary
- MPO Study Area

Bus Routes

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 West              | 7 CF/Rainbow Dr     |
| 2 West              | 8 West Loop         |
| 3 East              | 9 CF Loop           |
| 4 East              | 10 Hawkeye CC       |
| 5 West 11th         | 11 Panther Shuttle  |
| 5 LaPorte Rd        | 12 Weekend SafeRide |
| 6 CF/University Ave |                     |

Data Source: MET Transit and INRCOG

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Paratransit service, which is also provided by MET Transit, provides transportation for people who are unable to use fixed route buses. To qualify for paratransit service, passengers must meet one of the following conditions established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

- Inability to get on or off a bus
- Inability to get to or from a fixed route bus stop
- Inability to wait at a fixed route bus stop
- Inability to ride the fixed route buses or follow transit instructions because of a disability

ADA paratransit eligibility is based on a passenger's functional abilities rather than a medical diagnosis. MET Transit currently offers paratransit throughout Waterloo, Cedar Falls, and Evansdale, though it is only required to offer the service within 0.75 miles of fixed routes.

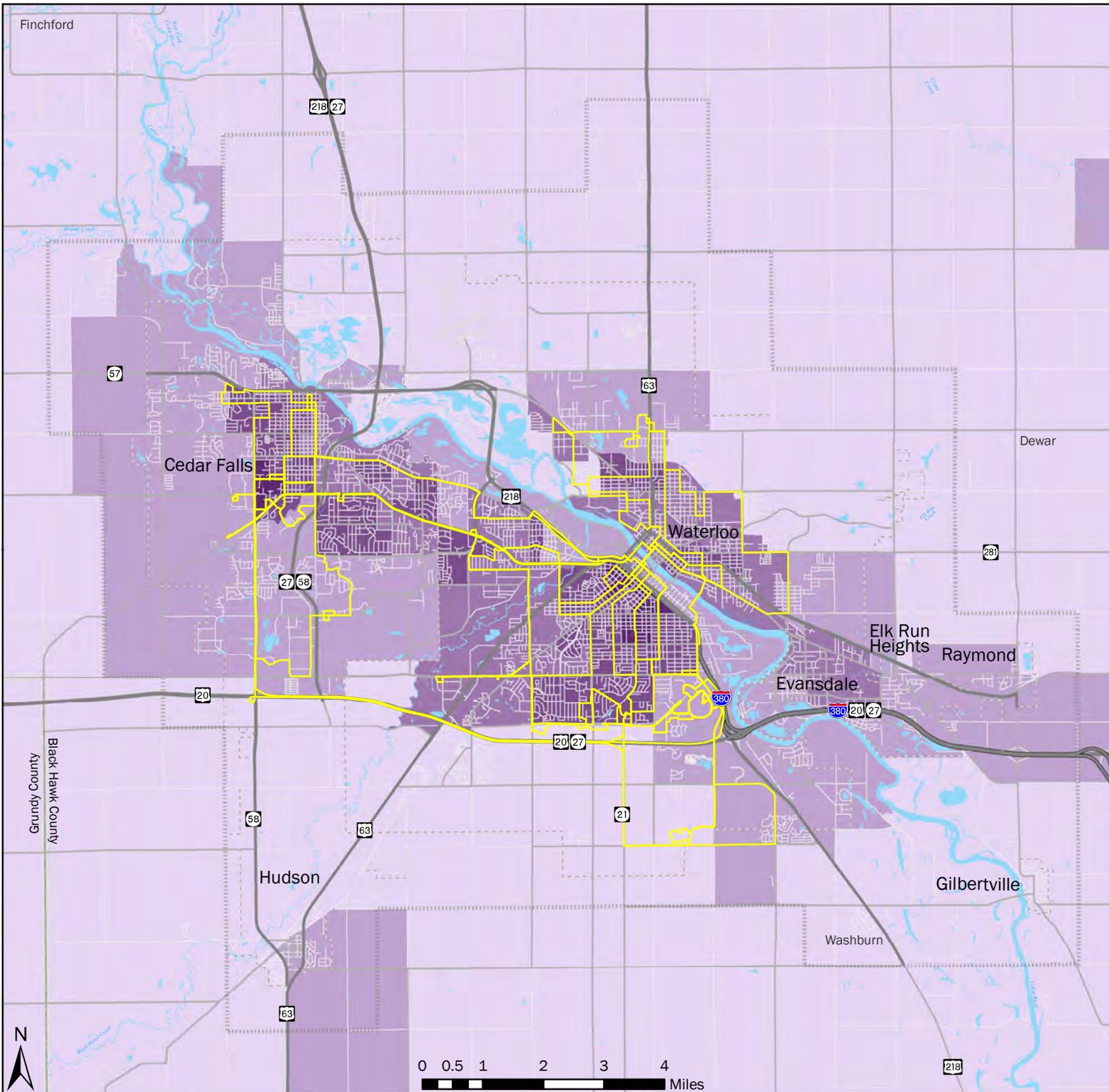
Maps 2.9 through 2.13 show the relationship between MET Transit's current fixed routes and several economic and demographic characteristics: population, employment, non-White population, non-English speaking population, and population in poverty. Table 2.3 shows various demographic data made available through Remix – a transit planning software – based on a 0.25-mile radius of each fixed route. Reviewing these characteristics may help to show gaps in coverage that should be considered for future expansion or route changes. However, having a transit route nearby does not necessarily mean it efficiently connects all potential passengers to their destinations.

**Table 2.3: Demographic Characteristics within ¼ Mile of MET Transit Fixed Routes**

Route	Pop.	Jobs	Poverty	Minority	Seniors	Youth	Non-English	Disability	No Vehicle
1/West	15,202	7,432	16.0%	23.7%	13.9%	15.5%	2.7%	11.7%	10.7%
2/West	17,052	9,174	12.5%	24.3%	15.6%	22.9%	3.0%	11.3%	10.3%
3/East	6,277	4,662	32.8%	46.0%	11.6%	25.4%	1.6%	17.2%	21.7%
4/East	8,773	4,998	31.2%	56.1%	11.9%	26.3%	1.4%	17.9%	16.1%
5/La Porte	8,686	7,420	19.4%	28.6%	13.2%	24.3%	3.7%	13.7%	12.6%
5/W 11th	8,948	7,609	19.4%	28.8%	12.9%	24.4%	3.7%	13.7%	12.7%
6/University	19,359	13,736	19.4%	12.9%	13.0%	16.1%	1.7%	10.1%	8.4%
7/Rainbow	19,815	14,009	19.5%	13.2%	12.9%	16.0%	1.6%	10.2%	8.7%
8/West Loop	20,710	10,580	15.2%	22.8%	14.4%	23.3%	2.2%	11.7%	10.3%
9/CF Loop	15,334	10,263	26.1%	8.4%	9.1%	12.0%	2.2%	6.8%	6.4%
10/HCC	9,296	7,422	29.1%	11.1%	10.9%	9.4%	2.5%	7.3%	7.2%
11/UNI	5,555	3,142	51.7%	9.4%	3.4%	2.8%	0.9%	4.4%	3.4%
12/Safe Ride	7,605	4,387	36.7%	9.7%	6.5%	8.0%	2.0%	5.7%	5.7%

Source: Remix

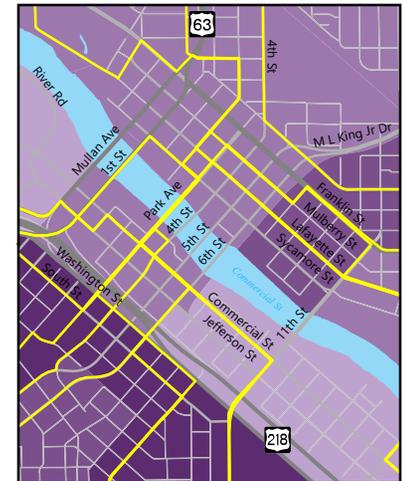
# MET Bus Routes and Population Per Square Mile



Downtown Cedar Falls



Downtown Waterloo



**Legend**

- City Boundary
- MPO Study Area
- Bus Route

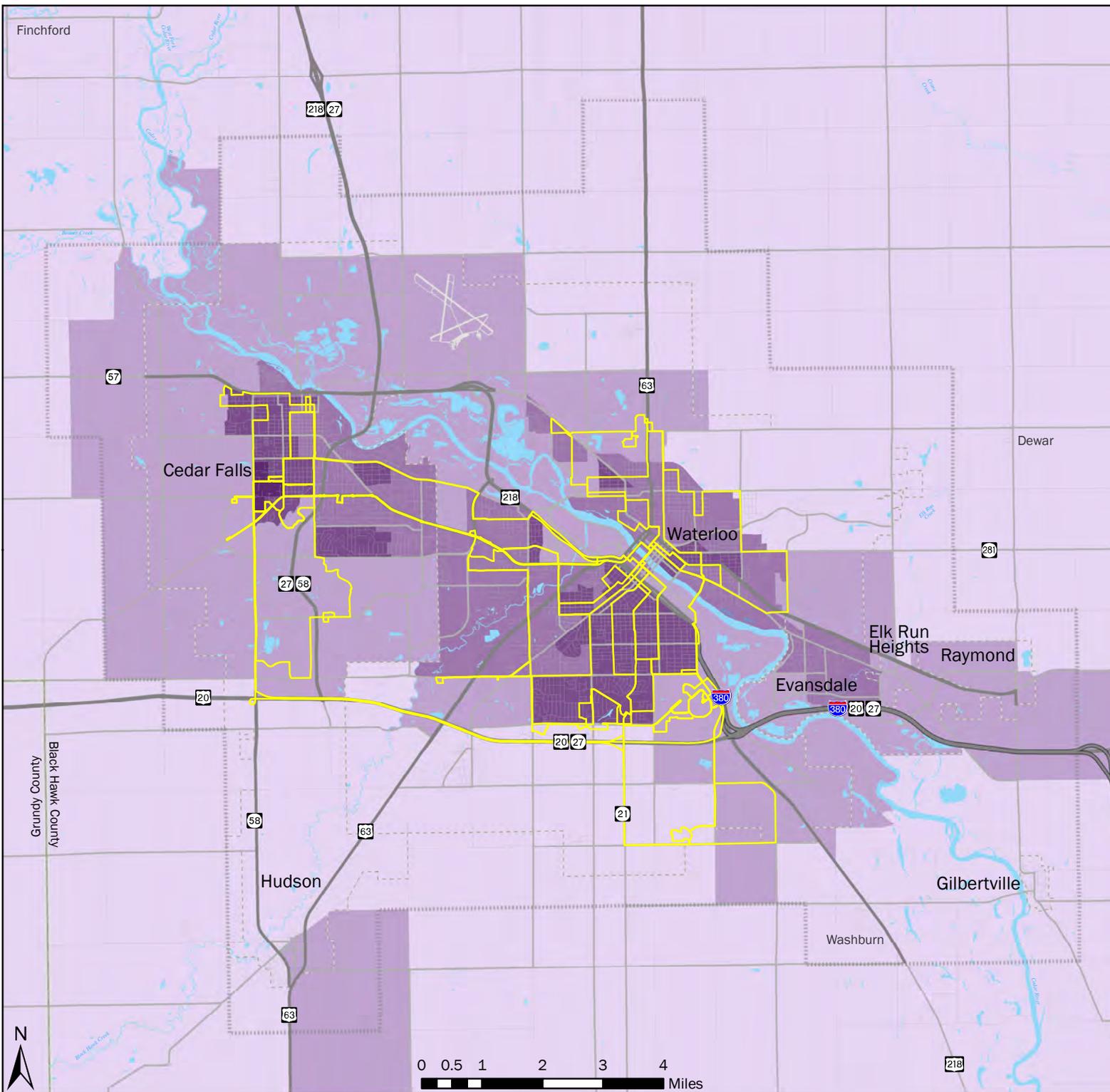
Population per Square Mile

	0 - 200		3,001 - 7,000
	201 - 1,000		7,001 - 14,504
	1,001 - 3,000		

Data Source: INRCOG and U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Block Group

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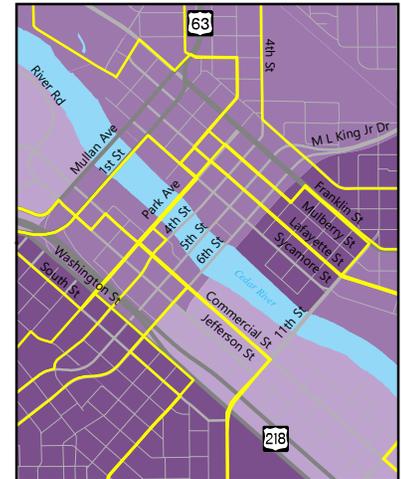
# MET Bus Routes and Employment Per Square Mile



Downtown Cedar Falls



Downtown Waterloo



### Legend

- City Boundary
- MPO Study Area
- Bus Route

Employment per Square Mile

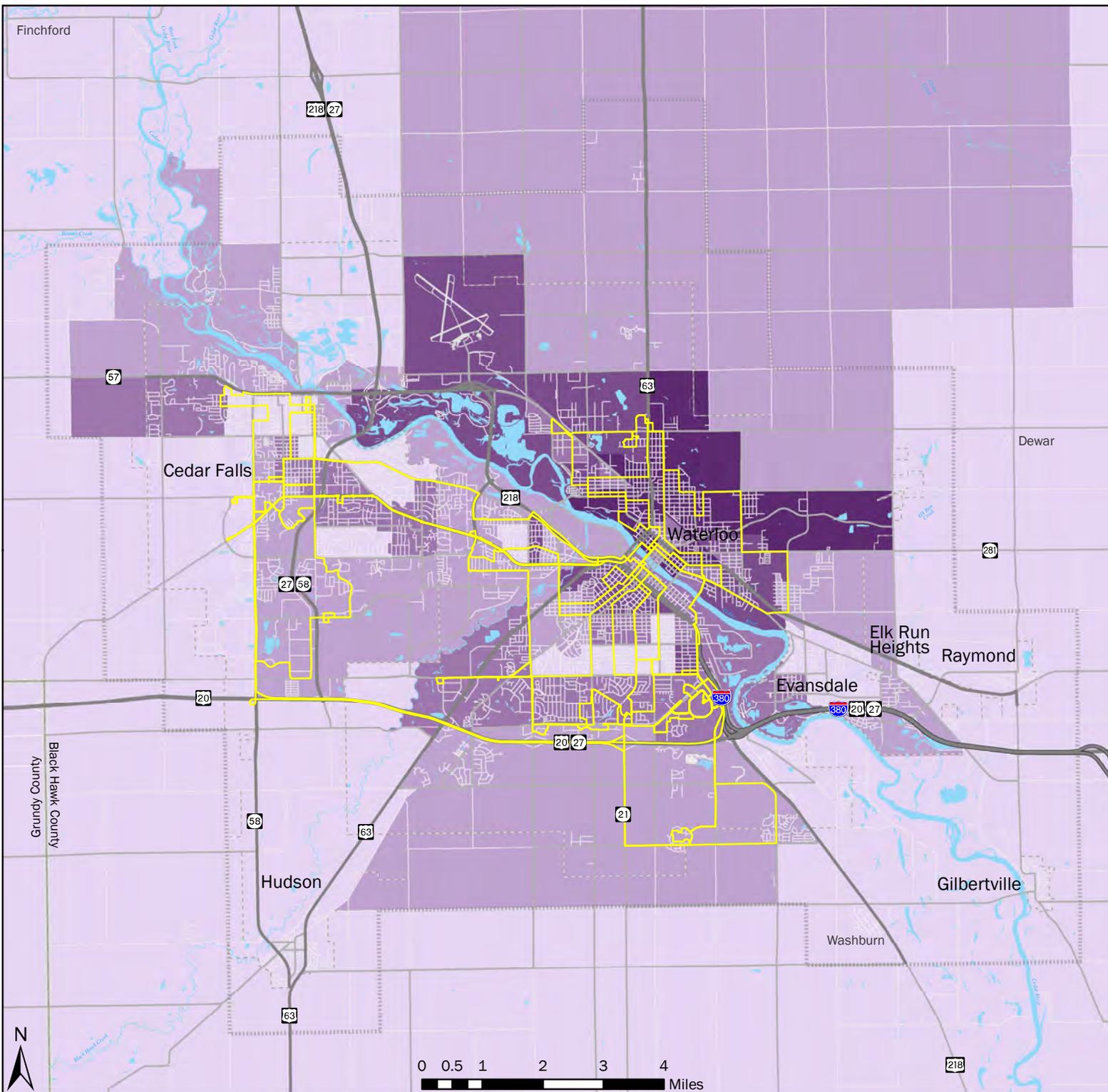
	0 - 150		3,001 - 7,000
	151 - 1,000		7,001 - 14,270
	1,001 - 3,000		

Data Source: INRCOG and U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Block Group

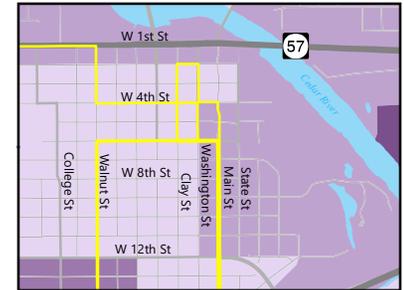
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Map 2.11

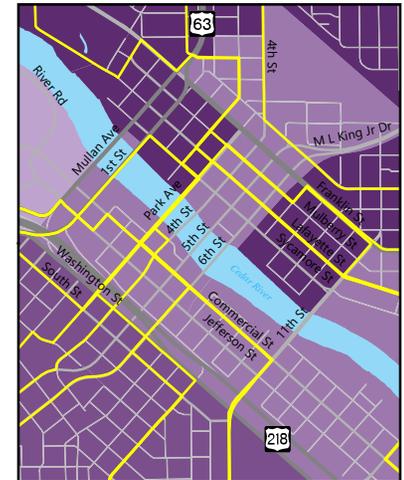
**MET Bus Routes and Percent of the Population that is Non-White**



**Downtown Cedar Falls**



**Downtown Waterloo**



**Legend**

-  City Boundary
-  MPO Study Area
-  Bus Route

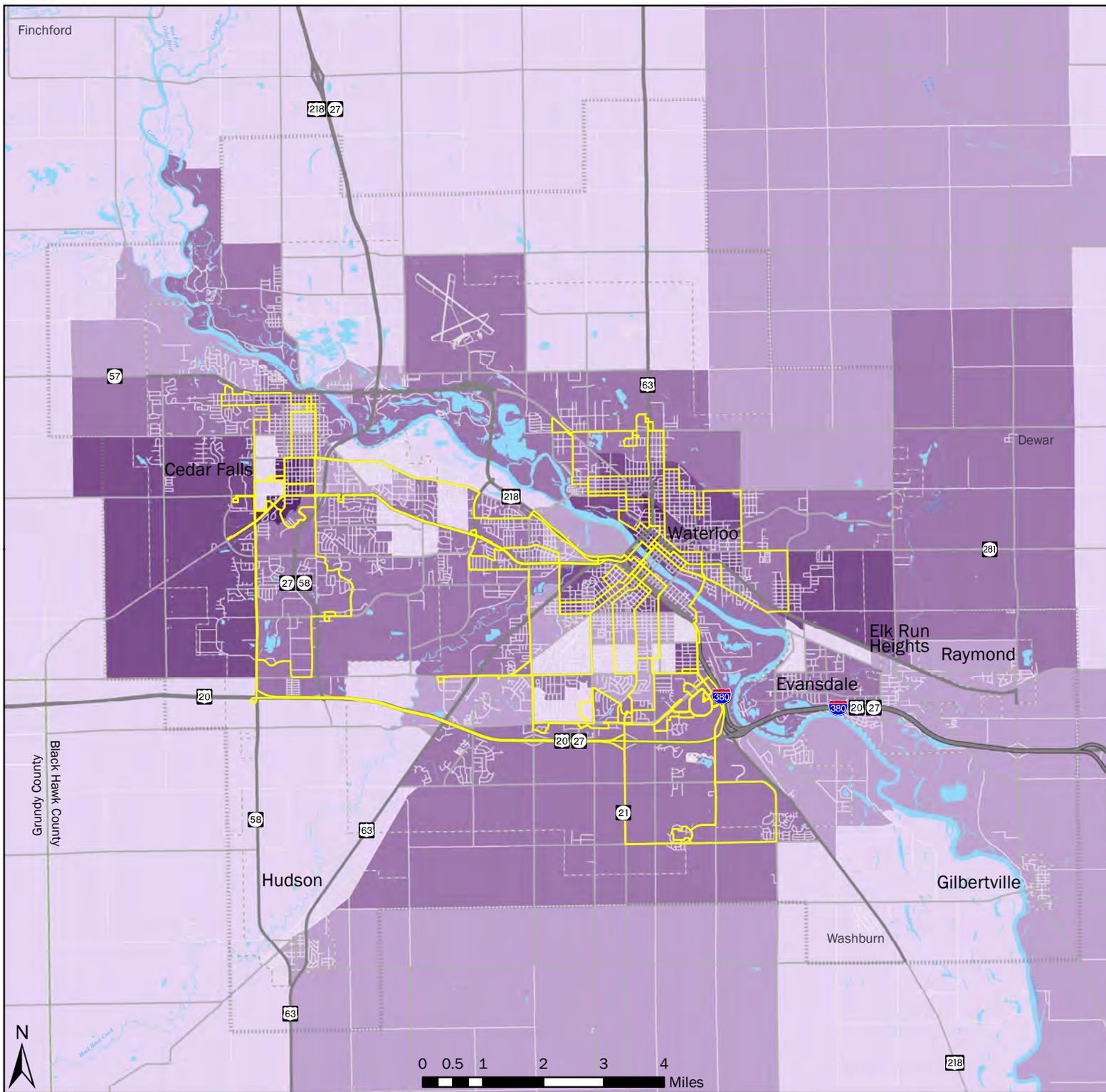
- Percent Non-White Population**
-  5.00% or Less
  -  5.01% - 10.00%
  -  10.01% - 25.00%
  -  25.01% - 50.00%
  -  Over 50.00%

Data Source: INRCOG and U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Block Group

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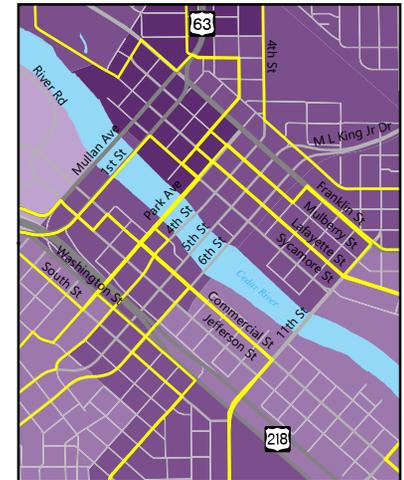
# MET Bus Routes and Percent of the Population that is Below Poverty Level



Downtown Cedar Falls



Downtown Waterloo



**Legend**

- City Boundary
- MPO Study Area
- Bus Route

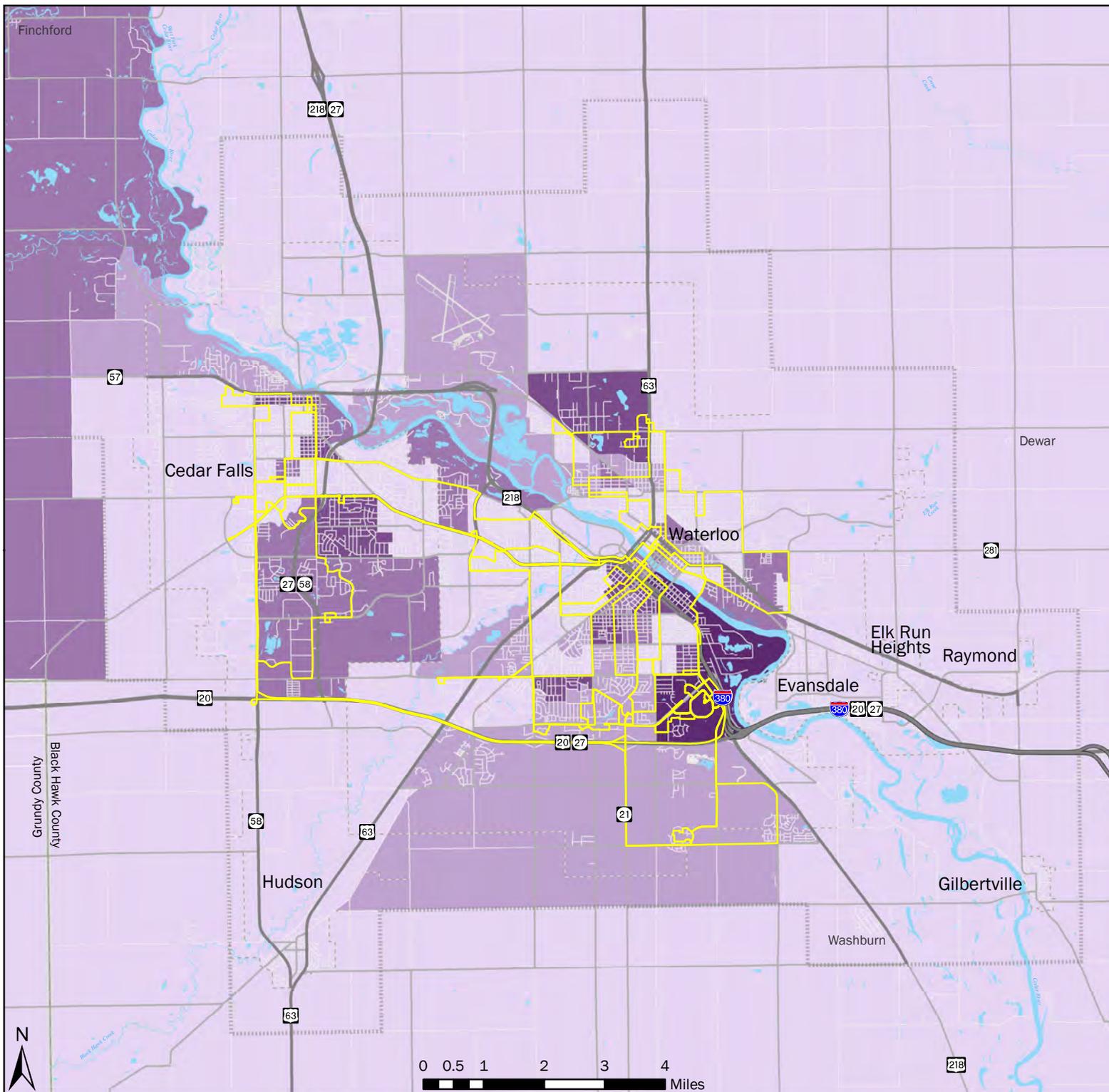
Percent Below Poverty Level

	5.00% or Less		25.01 - 50.00%
	5.01% - 10.00%		Over 50.01%
	10.01 - 25.00%		

Data Source: INRCOG and U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Block Group

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**MET Bus Routes and Percent of the Population with Limited English Proficiency**



**Downtown Cedar Falls**



**Downtown Waterloo**



**Legend**

- City Boundary
- MPO Study Area
- Bus Route

Speak English Less than "Very Well"

	1.00% or Less		5.01% - 10.00%
	1.01% - 2.50%		10.00% - 16.00%
	2.51% - 5.00%		

Data Source: INRCOG and U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimate, Census Block Group

**INRCOG** Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments  
 Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. No liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

MET Transit has a total of 37 vehicles in service, including 18 fixed route buses and 19 paratransit buses. Table 2.4 outlines the fleet of vehicles including several characteristics about each vehicle.

**Table 2.4: MET Transit Vehicle Inventory as of December 2019**

Bus ID	Service	Description	Seats-Standing	Lock downs	Date acquired	Purchase price	Condition	Mileage 6/26/19	Over ULB
119	Fixed Route	2019 Ford Glaval	18-0	2	9/26/2019	\$95,576	Excellent	532	
214	Fixed Route	2014 Gillig	26-17	2	3/19/2014	\$373,873	Good	257,310	
114	Fixed Route	2014 Gillig	26-17	2	3/18/2014	\$373,873	Good	226,836	
113	Fixed Route	2013 Gillig	26-17	2	2/21/2013	\$373,449	Good	316,024	
312	Fixed Route	2012 Gillig	26-16	2	3/12/2012	\$356,945	Good	347,676	
112	Fixed Route	2012 Gillig	26-16	2	3/12/2012	\$356,945	Good	364,664	
212	Fixed Route	2012 Gillig	26-16	2	2/14/2012	\$356,945	Good	291,347	
510	Fixed Route	2010 Gillig-35'	31-50	3	8/30/2010	\$355,632	Fair	308,592	
110	Fixed Route	2010 Gillig-30'	26-40	2	8/23/2010	\$345,787	Fair	361,936	
210	Fixed Route	2010 Gillig-30'	26-40	2	8/19/2010	\$345,787	Fair	352,730	
310	Fixed Route	2010 Gillig-30'	26-40	2	8/19/2010	\$345,787	Fair	355,708	
410	Fixed Route	2010 Gillig-35'	31-50	3	8/19/2010	\$355,632	Fair	415,709	
902	Fixed Route	2009 Gillig-30'	26-18	2	4/20/2009	\$288,599	Fair	379,447	
901	Fixed Route	2009 Gillig-30'	26-18	2	4/20/2009	\$288,599	Fair	373,465	
903	Fixed Route	2009 Gillig-35'	30-56	2	4/20/2009	\$328,655	Fair	397,904	
702	Fixed Route	2007 Opt Opus-30'	23-31	2	5/27/2008	\$276,770	Poor	158,440	Y
503	Fixed Route	2005 D Chrysler-30'	25-10	2	3/28/2006	\$237,562	Poor	210,073	Y
302	Fixed Route	2003 Bluebird-30'	24-18	4	8/21/2003	\$156,820	Poor	324,126	Y
118	Paratransit	18 Glaval University	16-0	4	6/13/2018	\$81,318	Excellent	26,840	
218	Paratransit	18 Glaval University	16-0	4	11/18/2018	\$81,318	Excellent	16,279	
117	Paratransit	17 Glaval Legacy	18-0	5	4/7/2017	\$140,363	Good	52,910	
216	Paratransit	16 Chev TurtleTop	16-0	4	12/7/2016	\$95,806	Good	70,182	
116	Paratransit	16 Chev TurtleTop	16-0	4	12/7/2016	\$95,806	Good	74,638	
615	Paratransit	16 Chev TurtleTop	16-0	4	10/27/2015	\$94,854	Fair	79,757	Y
515	Paratransit	16 Chev TurtleTop	16-0	4	10/27/2015	\$94,329	Fair	97,416	Y
415	Paratransit	16 Chev TurtleTop	16-0	4	10/27/2015	\$94,329	Fair	95,661	Y
315	Paratransit	15 Glaval Legacy	18-0	5	7/28/2015	\$135,186	Good	85,934	
215	Paratransit	15 Glaval Legacy	18-0	5	5/1/2015	\$136,786	Good	97,418	
115	Paratransit	15 Glaval Legacy	18-0	5	5/1/2015	\$136,786	Good	106,279	
512	Paratransit	12 Glaval Con.-32'	10-0	5	12/17/2012	\$155,674	Good	149,402	
412	Paratransit	12 Glaval Titan-183"	16-0	4	10/8/2012	\$81,203	Poor	136,245	Y
111	Paratransit	11 Eld Aero-176"	18-0	4	2/23/2011	\$58,089	Poor	212,775	Y
908	Paratransit	09 Eld Aero-176"	19-0	4	7/13/2009	\$62,159	Poor	165,206	Y
905	Paratransit	09 Eld Aero-176"	19-0	3	6/26/2009	\$61,547	Poor	231,868	Y
906	Paratransit	09 Eld Aero-176"	19-0	4	6/24/2009	\$62,154	Poor	216,309	Y
904	Paratransit	09 Eld Aero-176"	19-0	3	6/23/2009	\$61,304	Poor	196,596	Y
301	Paratransit	03 Bluebird-30'	24-18	4	8/21/2003	\$154,393	Poor	264,700	Y

ULB = Useful Life Benchmark

### Regional Transit Commission (RTC)

RTC provides open-to-the-public, accessible transit services to the general public, seniors, disabled, and low-income persons as a primary means of transportation in the rural areas of the region. RTC is also responsible for coordinating transportation in the region. In addition to providing direct service, RTC subcontracts with Chickasaw County Council on Aging to provide open-to-the-public transit service to regional residents on behalf of RTC. RTC subcontracts with Exceptional Persons, Inc. as well, but that service will no longer be provided starting July of 2020.

RTC operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. As a common rule, the service provided is from curb-to-curb; door-to-door service may be provided, if requested. RTC offers demand response service for the Iowa Northland Region.

RTC operates 19 light duty gasoline buses. RTC switched from diesel to gasoline vehicles over a decade ago due to several issues with diesel vehicles including limited availability, difficulty servicing them, and not always

being able to refuel in certain areas of the region. RTC also owns and operates 2 mini vans and 1 conversion van. Table 2.5 outlines the fleet of vehicles for RTC.

**Table 2.5: RTC Vehicle Inventory as of December 2019**

Bus ID	Description	Seats	Lock downs	Date acquired	Purchase price	Condition	Mileage 11/20/19	Over ULB
0901	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	7/25/2009	\$56,772	Fair	166,978	Y
0902	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	7/25/2009	\$56,772	Fair	176,466	Y
0903	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	7/7/2009	\$56,772	Poor	145,905	Y
0904	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/6/2009	\$56,502	Fair	179,026	Y
0905	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/31/2009	\$56,502	Fair	176,791	Y
0906	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/17/2009	\$56,502	Fair	178,962	Y
0907	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/19/2009	\$56,502	Fair	185,053	Y
0909	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/7/2009	\$56,502	Good	134,165	Y
0910	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/10/2009	\$56,502	Fair	171,554	Y
0911	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/25/2009	\$56,502	Good	137,039	Y
0912	2009 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/24/2009	\$56,502	Fair	175,363	Y
1001	2011 Ford Eldorado	18	4	10/13/2010	\$56,757	Fair	161,999	Y
1201	2012 Ford Eldorado	18	4	8/1/2012	\$56,757	Good	119,398	Y
1401	2015 Ford Eldorado	18	4	2/24/2015	\$74,385	Very Good	114,828	
1402	2015 Ford Eldorado	18	4	2/24/2015	\$74,385	Very Good	115,586	
1601	2017 Ford Glaval	18	4	4/18/2017	\$83,713	Excellent	68,494	
1701	2017 Dodge Minivan	6	2	9/21/2017	\$42,800	Excellent	29,842	
1702	2017 Dodge Minivan	6	2	9/21/2017	\$42,800	Excellent	28,772	
1801	2018 Ford Aerotech	18	4	3/7/2018	\$76,251	Excellent	32,998	
1802	2018 Ford Aerotech	18	4	3/7/2018	\$76,251	Excellent	28,580	
1901	2019 Ford Aerotech	18	4	12/31/2018	\$75,787	Excellent	16,233	
V061	2006 Ford E-350 CV	9	2	11/8/2019	\$15,700	Excellent	73,907	

ULB = Useful Life Benchmark

### **Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI)**

EPI was formed in 1957 and operates as a 501(c)(3) private, non-profit, charitable organization serving individuals with disabilities and families with child care needs. In addition to full- and part-time staff, EPI enlists the services of volunteers. EPI offers primary transportation services for persons with disabilities through contracts with counties, the Central Rivers Area Education Agency, MET Transit, and RTC.

RTC currently contracts with EPI for the lease of vehicles used in transportation services. However, starting in July of 2020, EPI will no longer offer passenger transportation services due to funding changes. Residence based vehicles will provide transportation to locations previously completed by bus for persons with disabilities served by EPI's residential services.

### **Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center (BHGMMC)**

BHGMHC is a private, non-profit, community mental health center accredited by the Iowa Department of Human Services that provides comprehensive and accessible mental health services for children, adolescents, adults, older adults, couples, and families. The center is located at 3251 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Waterloo.

### **Center of Attention**

The Center of Attention is a community resource center that is dedicated to building circles of support and friendship to help eliminate loneliness and isolation in the community. The Center of Attention offers after school programs, mentoring, and adult and family groups.

### **Community Based Services (CBS)**

CBS offers Supported Community Living services that promote the development of abilities and successful community living for individuals and families with special needs. Services may be provided 24-hours per day in supported community living sites, or in a person's home for a customized amount of time. Services include advocacy, skill building, community skills, basic living skills, personal care, and recreation. CBS is located at 403 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE, Waverly.

**East Central Region (ECR)**

The ECR is a partnership between nine counties to provide better mental health and disability services to individuals in eastern Iowa. Instead of having services in only one county to choose from, ECR provides Iowans with a regional base of services to address their needs. Counties get to pool their resources and offer a core set of services to help improve the health of Iowans. ECR is located at 203 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE, Waverly.

**Eastside Ministerial Alliance**

This non-profit agency serves low income individuals in Black Hawk County. Services provided include rental and utility assistance, food and clothing pantry, meals on wheels, and parenting workshops. Eastside Ministerial Alliance is located at 205 Adams Street, Waterloo.

**House of Hope**

House of Hope provides homeless mothers and women who age out of foster care with individualized support and transitional housing to achieve secure families, independence, and permanent homes. Their vision is to end the cycle of homelessness in the Cedar Valley with respect, empowerment, stewardship, and accountability. House of Hope is located at 845 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Waterloo.

**IowaWORKS Center**

IowaWORKS Centers are located throughout the state to provide services for individuals and businesses such as career exploration, labor market information, and job fairs. The IowaWORKS Center that serves the Iowa Northland Region is located at 3420 University Avenue, Waterloo.

**Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center**

The Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center is dedicated to keeping and enhancing the quality of life for neighborhood families through stewardship of resources and shared responsibility. The center has been a multicultural, multigenerational service provider for individuals and families in Black Hawk County for 50 years. Services provided include senior services, meals on wheels, and a youth summer feeding program. The Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center also provides services for the disabled, the sick, shut-ins, the homeless, and low-income households in crisis. The center is located at 1112 Mobile Street, Waterloo.

**North Star Community Services**

This non-profit rehabilitative agency provides adult day services and supported community living services so individuals with disabilities are better able to live enriched, meaningful, productive, and independent lives in their communities. Within the Iowa Northland Region, North Star has facilities in New Hampton, Waterloo, and Waverly.

**Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A)**

NEI3A is a private, not-for-profit corporation serving individuals throughout 18 counties in Northeast Iowa, including all six counties in the Iowa Northland Region. The organization coordinates services for individuals to help them maintain the independence they desire. Services provided include option counseling, case management, meal programs, caregiver support, respite services, evidence-based health programs, advocacy, and recreation and education programs. NEI3A is located at 3840 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Waterloo.

**Operation Threshold**

Operation Threshold provides education and services to help people meet their basic needs and become self-sufficient. The agency serves Black Hawk, Buchanan, and Grundy Counties. Programs include Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), affordable housing assistance, energy assistance, and family development. Operation Threshold is located at 1535 Lafayette Street, Waterloo.

### **Pathways Behavioral Services**

This non-profit corporation is licensed by the Iowa Department of Public Health and accredited by the Department of Human Services. Pathways offers substance abuse and mental health prevention and treatment services to people in the Iowa Northland Region. In the Iowa Northland Region, Pathways has facilities in Waterloo, Waverly, Independence, Allison, and Fredericksburg.

### **Peoples Community Health Clinic**

Peoples Community Health Clinic is a non-profit health care clinic that provides access to affordable, compassionate, high quality health care for all, while helping to improve the health of the community as a whole. Care is provided no matter what a person's financial situation is, and both uninsured and insured patients are welcome. Peoples Community Health Clinic is located at 905 Franklin Street, Waterloo.

### **Tri-County Child & Family Development**

Tri-County is a local non-profit corporation that provides head start services throughout the Cedar Valley. Their mission is to serve the children and families in Black Hawk, Buchanan, and Grundy Counties. Tri-County is located at 205 Adams Street, Suite 2, Waterloo.

### **Retirement Communities, Assisted Living Facilities, & Nursing Homes**

There are numerous retirement communities, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes throughout the region. Facilities that provide transportation to their clients include Prairie Hills of Independence, Tripoli Nursing and Rehab, Rehabilitation Center of Allison, Linden Place in Waverly, Valley View Community in Greene, Parker Place Retirement Community in Parkersburg, Winding Creek Meadows in Jesup, Hillcrest Home in Sumner, Shell Rock Senior Living, Parkview Manor in Reinbeck, and Arlington Place Assisted Living in Grundy Center.

### **Public School Districts**

The Iowa Northland Region has 33 public school districts with at least a portion of the district located within the six-county region. The 2017-2018 certified enrollment for these public schools was 41,634. Transporting students to and from school and events is an integral operation for each school district. Table 2.7 provides transportation statistics for these districts. As part of the PTP development process, INRCOG staff contacted each school district to obtain vehicle fleet information. Table 2.8 provides a vehicle inventory for surveys received.

### **Taxi Services**

There are a handful of taxi services operating out of the Waterloo and Cedar Falls metropolitan area. Most of the companies serve the metropolitan area only, though a couple will travel outside this area. The majority of the region is largely without privately operated taxi service due to limited operating incomes, and substantial lengths of trips requested.

**Table 2.6: Human Service Agencies that Provide Transportation Services**

Agency	Provide Rides to Clients	Contract to Provide Rides	Purchase Transit Passes	Clients Use MET Transit	Clients Use MET Para.	Clients Use RTC	Clients Arrange Ride	Counties & Cities Served	Hours and Days of Service	Buses ADA	Vans & Minivans ADA	Cars ADA	Buses Not ADA	Vans & Minivans Not ADA	Cars Not ADA
Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Grundy; Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Grundy Center, Waverly, Independence, New Hampton, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City	M-F, 8:00-17:00		1	1			
Center of Attention	X						X	Black Hawk; Waterloo	M-Tu, 14:30-19:30; Su 15:00-19:00					1	1
Community Based Services	X		X			X		Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler; Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Waverly, Iowa City	M-F, 8:00-17:00					2	6
East Central Region		X	X	X	X	X	X	Bremer; Waverly	M-F, 7:00-17:00						
Eastside Ministerial Alliance		X		X			X	Black Hawk	M-F, 9:00-16:00						
House of Hope			X	X	X		X	Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Iowa City	M-F, 5:30-18:30; Sat-Sun, 7:00-18:00						
IowaWORKS Center			X	X	X	X		Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Grundy; Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Waverly, Independence, New Hampton, Grundy Center	M-Tu, 7:00-18:00						
Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center	X		X	X	X	X	X	Black Hawk; Waterloo, Cedar Falls	M-F, 8:00-16:30					1	
North Star Community Services	X	X	X	X		X	X	Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Chickasaw; Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Waverly, New Hampton, Iowa City, Mason City, Decorah	New Hampton: M-F, 5:00-18:00 Waverly: M-F, 7:00-15:00		1			3	2
Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Grundy; Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Waverly, Independence, New Hampton, Grundy Center	M-F, 8:00-18:00						
Operation Threshold			X					Black Hawk; Waterloo, Cedar Falls	---						
Pathways Behavioral Services	X		X	X	X	X	X	Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Grundy; Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Waverly, Independence, New Hampton, Grundy Center	Independence: M, Tu, Th, 8:30-18:00; W, 8:30-16:00					1	1
Peoples Community Health Clinic		X			X			Black Hawk, Butler; Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Waverly, Iowa City	M-F, 8:30-17:00						
Tri-County Child & Family Development		X						Black Hawk; Waterloo, Cedar Falls	M-F, 9:30-14:00						

Source: 2020 Passenger Transportation Survey

**Table 2.7: 2017-2018 Annual Transportation Data for Public Schools**

District Name	Certified Enrollment	District Sq. Miles	Route Miles	Non-Route Miles	Adj. Net Operating Cost	Avg. # Students Transported	Adj. Avg. Cost Per Pupil Transported	Adj. Avg. Cost Per Route Mile
AGWSR	626	266	121,295	26,407	\$372,363	233	\$1,598	\$3.07
Aplington-Parkersburg	825	165	105,383	38,332	\$294,283	517	\$569	\$2.79
BCLUW	531	187	108,030	41,364	\$331,240	458	\$723	\$3.07
Cedar Falls	5,126	61	301,933	92,241	\$1,480,213	2,295	\$645	\$4.90
Charles City	1,498	224	115,402	45,421	\$363,879	759	\$479	\$3.15
Clarksville	315	63	22,417	8,005	\$63,328	84	\$754	\$2.82
Denver	750	57	89,156	27,122	\$128,675	316	\$407	\$1.44
Dike-New Hartford	882	151	87,219	26,251	\$277,889	444	\$626	\$3.19
Dunkerton	419	82	41,118	8,481	\$141,649	212	\$668	\$3.44
East Buchanan	568	137	69,341	16,267	\$239,131	327	\$732	\$3.45
Eldora-New Providence	625	137	64,907	53,048	\$213,086	268	\$795	\$3.28
Gladbrook-Reinbeck	585	189	56,486	21,346	\$246,555	195	\$1,262	\$4.36
Grundy Center	654	114	35,634	15,576	\$195,301	182	\$1,074	\$5.48
Hampton-Dumont	1,200	239	91,205	43,609	\$336,916	341	\$987	\$3.69
Howard-Winneshiek	1,159	434	230,159	49,370	\$773,160	499	\$1,550	\$3.36
Hudson	677	63	43,485	18,928	\$197,278	313	\$630	\$4.54
Independence	1,425	195	94,209	69,651	\$411,509	703	\$586	\$4.37
Janesville Consolidated	403	44	45,163	13,023	\$161,906	197	\$822	\$3.58
Jesup	908	137	71,052	13,671	\$277,206	422	\$657	\$3.90
Nashua-Plainfield	613	180	90,512	27,174	\$248,018	267	\$928	\$2.74
New Hampton	958	248	137,279	28,875	\$396,211	640	\$619	\$2.89
North Butler	586	211	106,691	54,144	\$371,786	371	\$1,002	\$3.48
North Linn	609	151	96,231	17,571	\$300,273	290	\$1,035	\$3.12
Oelwein	1,252	143	63,047	23,682	\$294,096	536	\$549	\$4.66
Starmont	619	201	94,947	19,369	\$228,271	474	\$482	\$2.40
Sumner-Fredericksburg	809	217	163,523	23,964	\$380,250	448	\$848	\$2.33
Tripoli	422	105	29,032	14,161	\$106,994	140	\$764	\$3.69
Turkey Valley	361	169	85,072	13,153	\$203,420	291	\$699	\$2.39
Union	1,054	255	162,004	64,950	\$472,970	399	\$1,185	\$2.92
Vinton-Shellsburg	1,544	235	145,710	84,447	\$451,524	565	\$799	\$3.10
Wapsie Valley	680	130	71,935	15,614	\$241,064	200	\$1,205	\$3.35
Waterloo	10,872	150	978,903	69,975	\$4,420,156	4,960	\$891	\$4.52
Waverly-Shell Rock	2,078	162	133,830	94,813	\$473,679	1,878	\$252	\$3.54

Source: Iowa Department of Education, 2017-2018 Annual Transportation Data for Iowa Public Schools

**Table 2.8: Vehicle Inventory for Public Schools**

District Name	School Vehicles	School Vehicles Lift Equip for ADA-Accessibility
Aplington-Parkersburg	13	1
BCLUW	13	1
Denver	7	0
Gladbrook-Reinbeck	4	0
Grundy Center	8	0
Hudson	9	0
Independence	20	3
North Butler	14	3
Oelwein	10	0
Starmont	13	0
Tripoli	6	0
Union	20	2
Vinton-Shellsburg	15	2
Wapsie Valley	7	0
Waterloo	91	7
Waverly-Shell Rock	22	2

**Intercity Transit**

In addition to MET Transit and RTC service, Burlington Trailways operates two private intercity bus routes with stops at Central Transfer in Waterloo. The Schedule 1485 bus departs Waterloo daily at 12:40 p.m. to Cedar Rapids, Ames, and Des Moines, and the Schedule 1486 bus departs daily at 1:50 p.m. to Dubuque, Rockford, and Chicago. Both schedules follow the same route in opposite directions. Burlington Trailways provides intercity bus service throughout much of Iowa with routes extending as far as Indianapolis, St. Louis, and Denver.



**Ridesharing**

Overall, transit ridership is down nationwide, but the use of ridesharing services has dramatically increased over the past few years. The services Uber and Lyft are both available in the Waterloo and Cedar Falls metropolitan area. Use of these services is likely to continue growing over time as awareness of their availability increases and as a greater share of adults embrace smartphone technology.

## Transit Infrastructure

There has been an increase in the development of transit-related infrastructure in the metropolitan area in recent years. In 2018, the City of Waterloo began replacing its old bus benches with ADA-compliant bus stop landings. The old benches were often situated in grassy areas inaccessible to people in wheelchairs, and many benches had begun falling into disrepair. The new landings are situated along the existing bus routes. Additional landings may be necessary if current fixed-routes are changed.



New landing on South Street, Waterloo



New bus shelters on University Avenue, Cedar Falls

New bus shelters have also been installed in Cedar Falls as part of the University Avenue reconstruction project. Similar shelters are planned for the Waterloo side of University Avenue which is expected to be completed in 2021. Bus stops with these new shelters include the first designated bus pull-outs in the metropolitan area.

In the fall of 2019, the City of Waterloo removed all its bus benches in response to a letter from the U.S. Department of Justice, and installed around two dozen ADA-compliant landings at select locations. The City installed temporary benches at select locations to provide seating through the winter. The City plans to request proposals from businesses to construct and maintain bus shelters. This effort also ties into a contract between the Iowa Department of Public Health and INRCOG, called SNAP-Ed, which will focus on education and planning for improving walkability around low-income senior housing and congregate meal sites.

The University of Northern Iowa Multimodal Transportation Center (MTC) was completed in the early 2010s providing the metro area with a second indoor transfer facility. The UNI Department of Public Safety oversees operation of the MTC. Since the MTC was a unique project that received an earmark to help fund construction, it is not anticipated that UNI would receive future funding through the FTA.

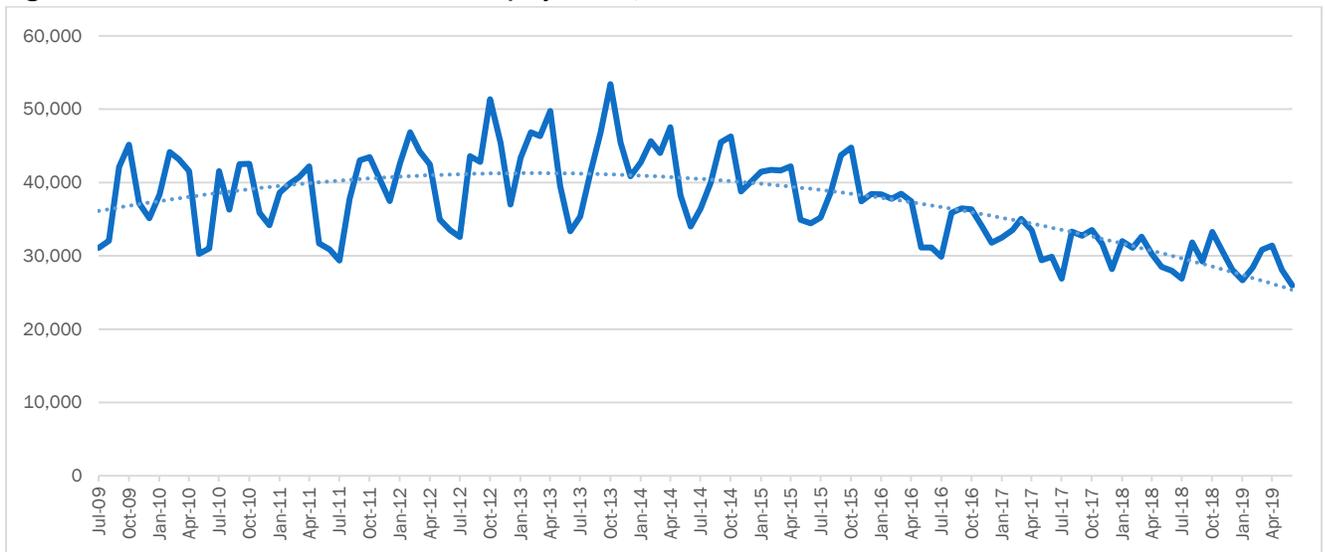
MET Transit's Central Transfer facility in downtown Waterloo is still in good shape, and MET Transit does not envision the need for a new transfer facility in the immediate future. Rather, enhancements to the facility (dynamic message signs and tickers for real-time bus arrivals, trees and vegetation, pedestrian lighting, public art, bicycle racks, etc.) should be considered to improve the waiting environment for transit users. MET Transit's office and bus facility is currently at capacity. RTC operates out of the INRCOG building located in downtown Waterloo, and the facility is anticipated to adequately serve RTC for the foreseeable future.

## MET Transit Ridership

Total ridership steadily increased from 2007 to 2013. Ridership peaked in 2013 and has since declined each subsequent year. Between fiscal years 2014 and 2018, annual fixed route ridership has decreased by 28.5 percent from 515,435 to 368,744 rides. This trend is not unique to MET Transit, as decreases in ridership have been seen in the majority of transit systems nationwide. Several factors might contribute to this decrease including the lower price of gas, construction detours, availability of ridesharing services, and changes in Iowa's managed care organizations (MCOs) structure.

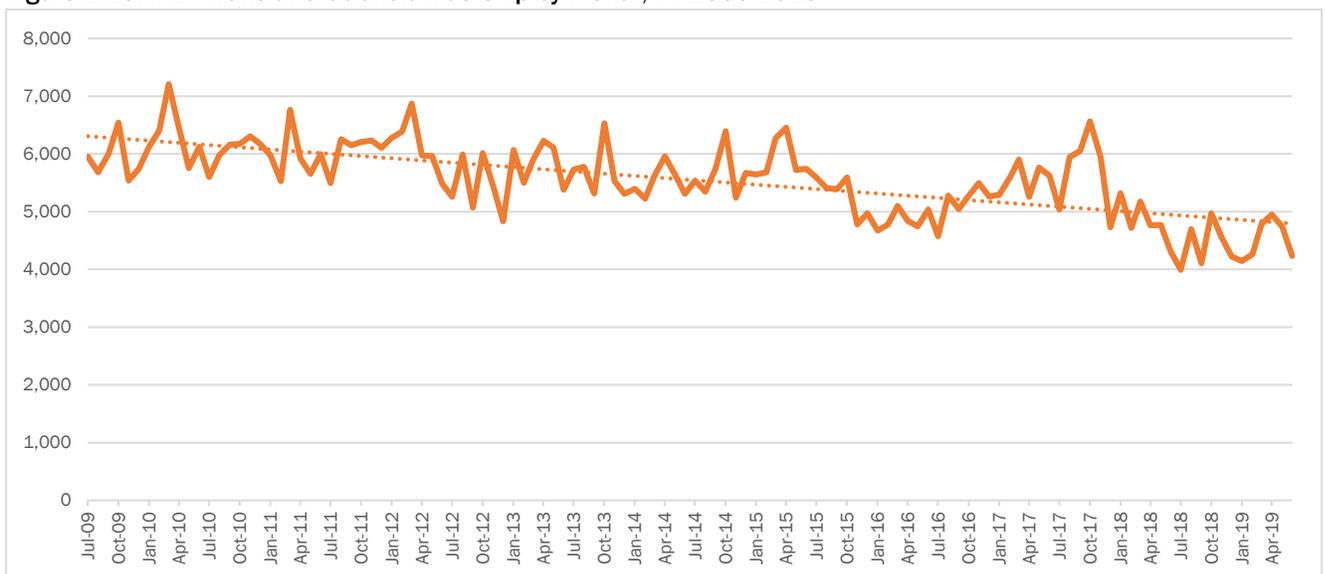
Figure 2.9 shows the total number of fixed route passenger-trips by month, and Figure 2.10 shows the total number of paratransit trips by month. As shown, fixed route ridership peaked in October 2013. On a month-to-month basis, ridership trends follow the academic calendar. Notable ridership increases are observed each year around March-April and September-October, and decreases are observed in June-July and in December.

**Figure 2.9: MET Transit Fixed Route Ridership by Month, FY 2009-2019**



Source: MET Transit

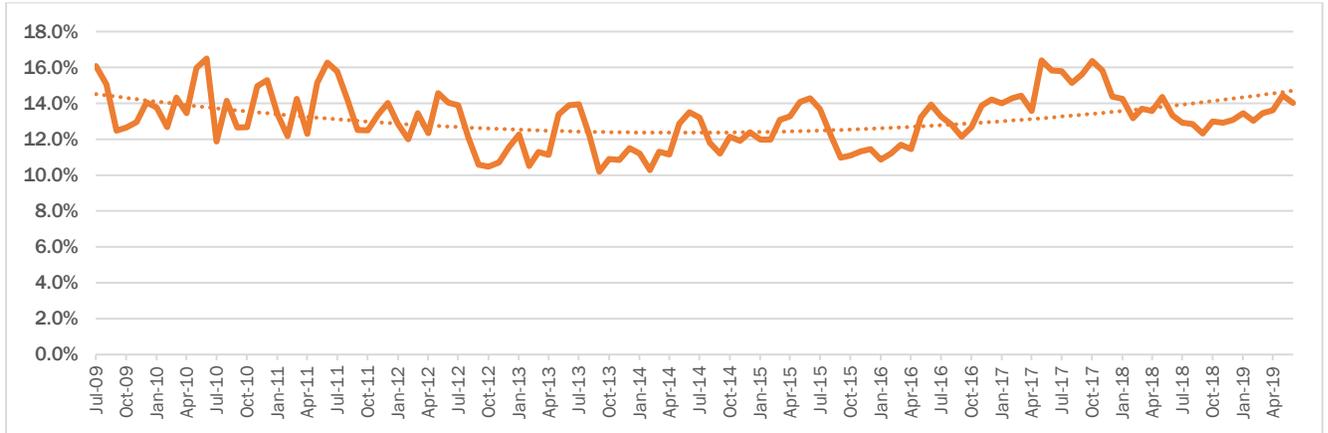
**Figure 2.10: MET Transit Paratransit Ridership by Month, FY 2009-2019**



Source: MET Transit

Overall changes in paratransit ridership have been less dramatic, though trends suggest paratransit ridership is decreasing as well. MET Transit aims to transition riders from paratransit to fixed route service where possible, as paratransit service is significantly more expensive to operate per ride. Figure 2.11 shows the number of paratransit rides as a percentage of total rides. Despite a slight decrease in paratransit ridership, fixed route ridership has decreased more so resulting in an increase in the share of paratransit rides as a percentage of total rides.

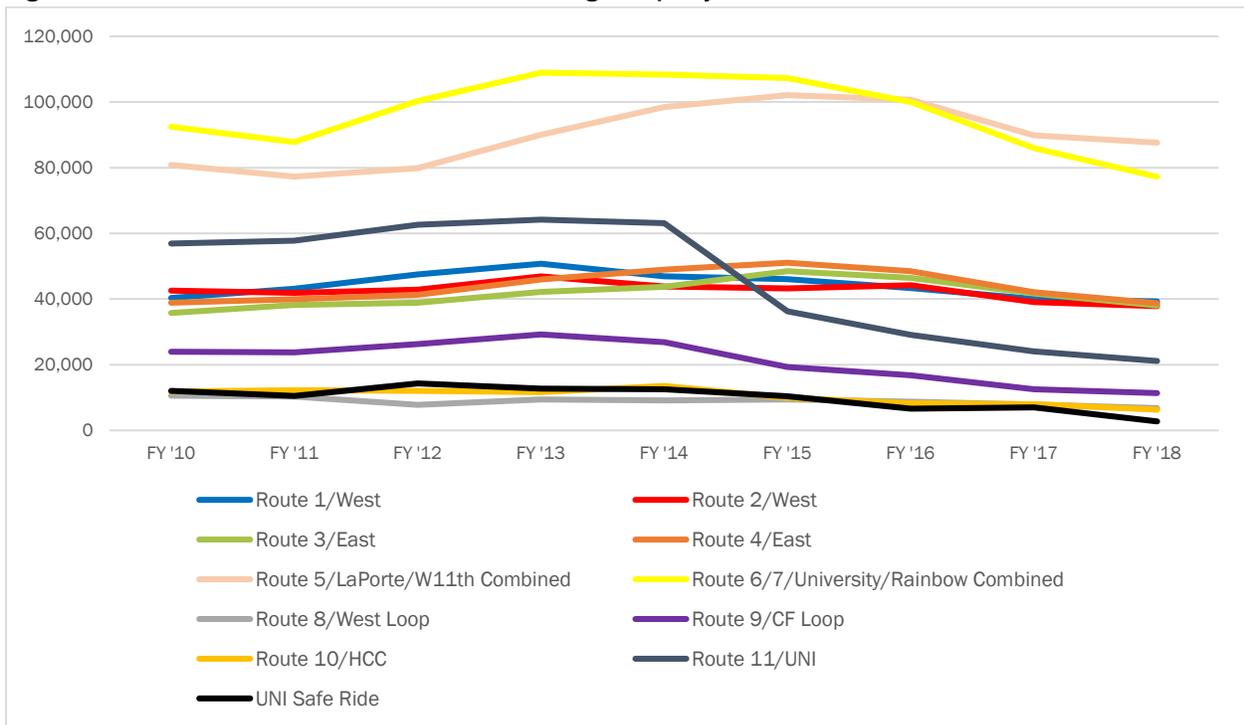
**Figure 2.11: MET Transit Paratransit Rides as a Share of Total Rides, FY 2009-2019**



Source: MET Transit

Ridership trends can also be observed by individual fixed route. Figure 2.12 shows the annual ridership on each bus route since fiscal year 2010. Two sets of routes are combined in the figure, Routes 5L and 5W11 and Routes 6 and 7, because they cover much of the same areas.

**Figure 2.12: MET Transit Annual Number of Passenger Trips by Route**



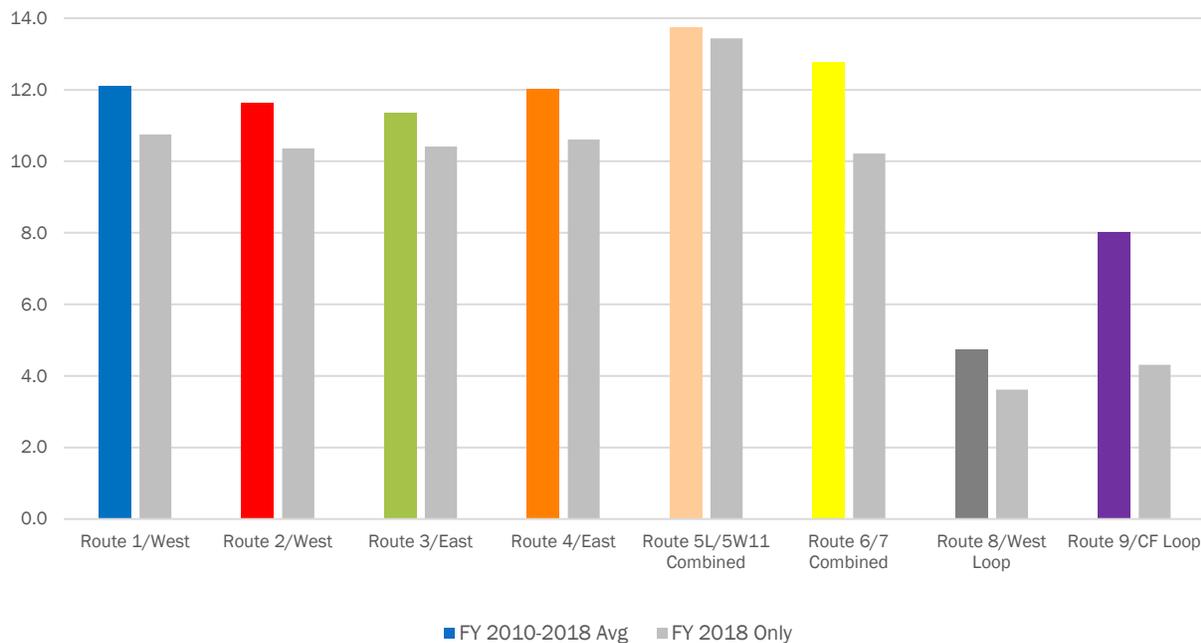
Source: MET Transit

Most fixed routes have seen an overall decrease in ridership since fiscal year 2010. Most notably, ridership on Route 11 dropped significantly in fiscal year 2015. Headways along this route were increased from 30 minutes to 35 minutes at that time so that buses could stay on schedule. Additional student housing near the University of Northern Iowa campus may have also contributed to the reduction in rides.

Annual passenger-trips only tell part of the story, however. Some routes have a greater number of revenue hours than others. Revenue hours are the number of hours of service available to passengers along a particular route. Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4 each have 70 revenue hours per week. Routes 5L and 5W11 combined have 125 revenue hours per week. Routes 6 and 7 combined have 145 revenue hours per week. Route 8 has 36 revenue hours per week, and Route 9 has 50.5 revenue hours per week.

Figure 2.13 shows the average number of passengers per revenue hour by route. Routes 10, 11, and 12 are excluded from this graph. Two different timeframes are used to show the average number of passengers per revenue hour: the nine-year average from fiscal years 2010 to 2018, and the fiscal year 2018 averages only. This graph helps show ridership demand for each route irrespective of the number of revenue hours currently dedicated to each route. It also compares ridership trends in fiscal year 2018 in relation to the historical trends over the past nine years. Routes 5L and 5W11 combined saw the smallest decrease in rides compared to the nine-year average, while Route 9 saw the largest decrease. Service along Route 9 was recently reduced from 11 hours to 8 hours per day with mid-day service eliminated, which likely contributes to the noticeable decline. Funding for mid-day service had been available through the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program. Local funds have not made up for the loss of JARC funds after 2014.

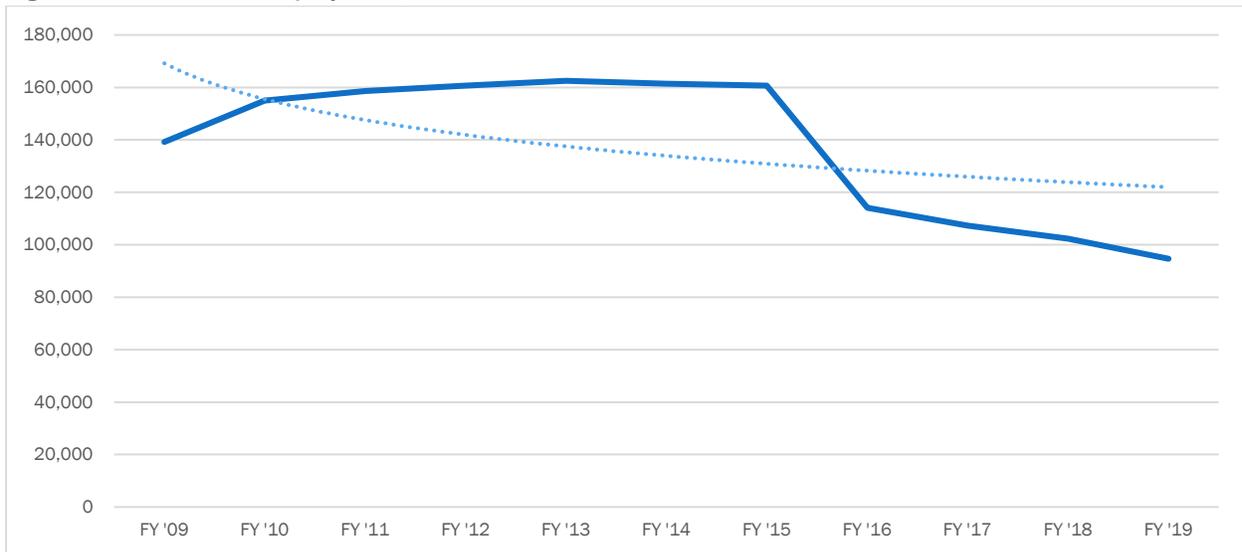
**Figure 2.13: MET Transit Average Number of Passengers per Revenue Hour by Route**



## RTC Ridership

Figure 2.14 shows the total number of rides by year from FY 2009 to FY 2019. Ridership gradually increased from 2009 to 2013. Similar to MET Transit, ridership peaked in 2013 and has since declined each subsequent year. Between fiscal years 2014 and 2019, ridership has decreased by 41.3 percent from 161,338 rides to 94,650 rides.

**Figure 2.14: RTC Ridership by Year, FY 2009-2019**



## Ridership Forecasts

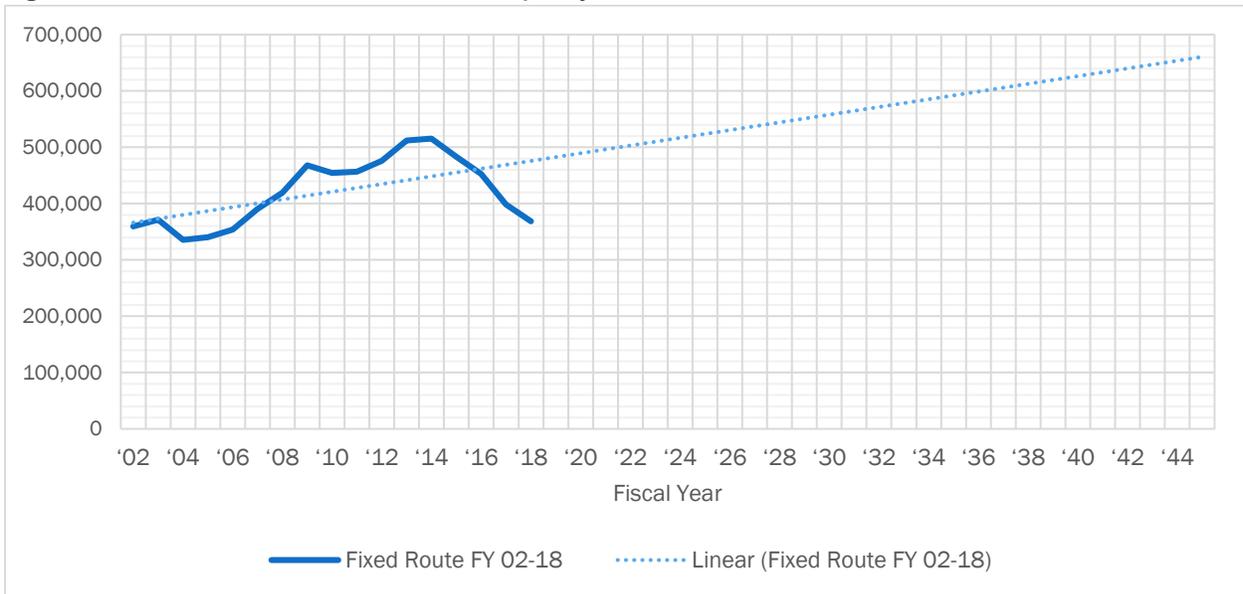
Forecasting future transit ridership can be challenging. Variations in economic conditions, demographic trends, alternate modes of transportation (e.g. ridesharing), and the structure of the fixed route system itself will all have some impact on future ridership. For example, a substantial increase in gasoline prices could result in a sudden increase in ridership, whereas existing trends of declining ridership may continue if gas prices stay below three dollars per gallon.

To forecast ridership on MET Transit's fixed routes, a linear trendline is used based on each year's ridership from fiscal year 2002 to 2018. This forecast is based on almost two decades of historical data which show, in general, an overall increase in ridership. For example, while the recent decline in ridership is notable, total annual ridership is still not as low as it was in fiscal years 2004 and 2005. Interestingly, this projection estimates that annual ridership will increase to around 660,000 in fiscal year 2045, which is the same as the annual ridership observed in 1991. In other words, this projection shows that 27 years from now ridership will return to levels observed 27 years ago.

Ridership in recent years may have also been impacted by recent developments including road construction and changes in Medicaid. However, MET Transit staff believe these impacts will be temporary. Road construction on U.S. Highway 63 and University Avenue often resulted in lengthy detours and delays, particularly near downtown Waterloo. This led to buses falling behind schedule and several bus detours that may have been confusing for riders. Changes in Iowa's Medicaid program had resulted in passengers using paratransit service in some cases, as there may not have been a method in place for providing bus passes to Medicaid recipients. This issue has been resolved as managed care moved out of the transitional period.

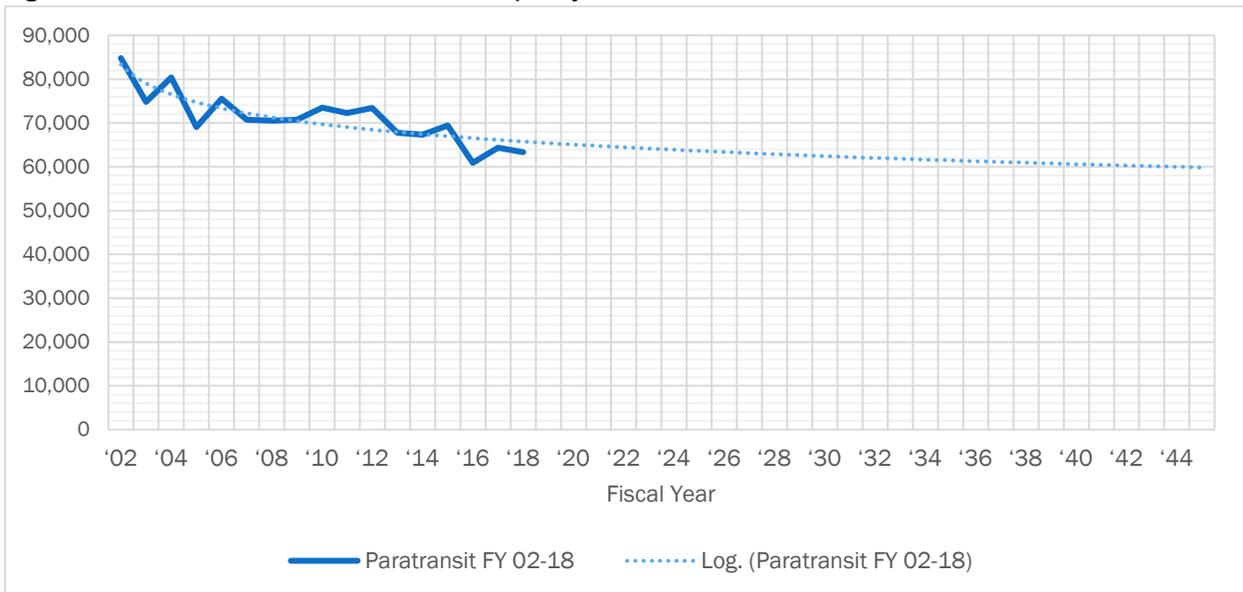
Figure 2.15 shows the projection for MET Transit fixed route ridership. The solid line shows observed annual ridership totals, and the dotted line shows the linear trendline and projection out to fiscal year 2045.

**Figure 2.15: MET Transit Fixed Route Ridership Projection**



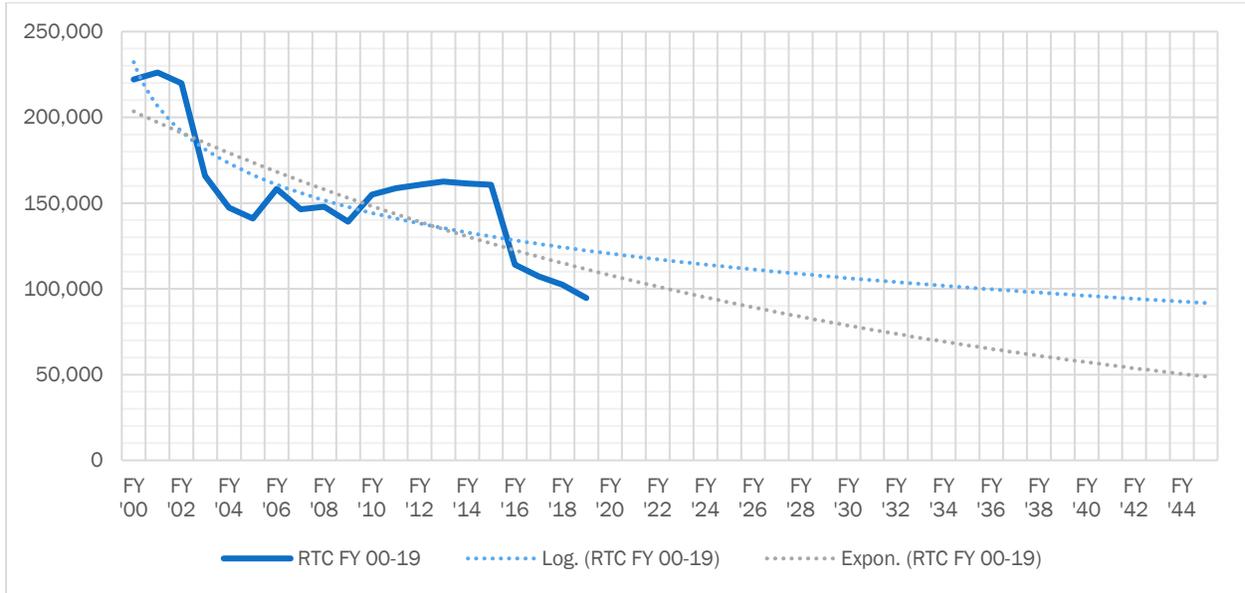
To forecast ridership on MET Transit’s paratransit buses, a logarithmic trendline is used instead of a linear trendline. This is because ridership is expected to level out as the baby boomer generation ages and begins using paratransit service more. According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Five-year Estimates in 2017, an estimated 23.1 percent of the population in Black Hawk County was between the ages of 50 and 70 years old. This is up from 22.2 percent according to the same survey in 2010. For this reason, paratransit ridership could actually increase rather than flatline over the next two decades. Figure 2.16 shows the projection for paratransit ridership.

**Figure 2.16: MET Transit Paratransit Ridership Projection**



To forecast ridership for RTC, a logarithmic trendline and exponential trendline are used to provide a range of projections. Like MET Transit's paratransit system, ridership could level out as the baby boomer generation ages and relies more on passenger transportation services. According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Five-year Estimates in 2017, an estimated 26.2 percent of the region's population – outside of Black Hawk County – was between the ages of 50 and 70 years old. This is up from 24.5 percent according to the same survey in 2010. Conversely, ridership could decline if contracts are lost.

**Figure 2.17: RTC Ridership Projection**



## Section 3 – Planning Concerns & Coordination Issues

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### Service Expansion

While MET Transit would like to provide service later in the evenings and to areas not currently served, it is difficult to expand service when current funding sources are being exhausted. If additional funds become available, MET Transit has a number of priorities for expanding service:

- Changing the hours of operation to start at 5:15 a.m. instead of 5:45 a.m.
- Add commuter service to the Airline Highway Industrial Area in Waterloo
- Add service to underserved areas including North Cedar in Cedar Falls and Cedar Terrace in Waterloo
- Expand operating hours further into the evenings
- Increase frequency along high-demand routes
- Add service on Sundays

While expansion of service is inherently limited to funding, MET Transit plans to optimize its fixed route service using the software, Remix. Remix allows users to develop and analyze alternative routes to determine how to maximize use of available funds. Analyses can also compare the existing fixed route system with hypothetical new fixed route systems to identify the effectiveness of changes on a systemwide scale. MET Transit is working with MPO staff to restructure the fixed-route system. Public input meetings are expected in the spring of 2020, and implementation is planned for winter 2020.

Waverly and Independence are RTC's largest service areas in the region, and expanded service in these communities is always considered a need. A consistent issue when additional buses are added to an area of existing service is that existing ridership is spread out among the buses rather than attracting new riders.

While the entire region could likely benefit from increased service, areas RTC staff have identified in particular for potential expansion include western Butler County and Chickasaw County. Issues with both existing service and potential service expansion include timing, as many facilities do not allow clients to be dropped off early or stay late, and duplication of service as private organizations or individuals may already be providing some services. Other opportunities RTC continues to explore are providing rides to Iowa City and Cedar Rapids for medical appointments, and providing rides to work for larger employers in the region.

RTC has worked to respond to public input and needs for expanded service. RTC recently began a new route based within Grundy County as a direct result of meeting with hospital staff. RTC has also been in contact with larger businesses in rural areas of the region to potentially provide vanpool service for employees living in the metropolitan area. With a couple of large businesses due to come online in the coming years, this appears to be a great potential for increased passenger transportation service.

### Ridesharing and Car Sharing

Overall, transit ridership is down nationwide, but the use of ridesharing services has dramatically increased over the past few years. The services Uber and Lyft are both available in the metropolitan area. Use of these services is likely to continue growing over time as awareness of their availability increases and as a greater share of adults embrace smartphone technology.

To some extent, ridesharing services compete with transit services. However, they can also compliment transit service in certain situations. For example, a part-time worker may ride a MET Transit bus to their job in the afternoon and use a ridesharing service to return home.

In addition to ridesharing, car sharing services are currently available in many larger metropolitan areas and may eventually be deployed in Black Hawk County as well. Car sharing is a short-term rental service, usually charged by the hour. There are multiple car sharing services, some of which rely on a designated fleet of cars, while others rely on individuals' private vehicles. These services may also compete with MET Transit. However, they may also allow a greater share of the population to adopt a car-free lifestyle, thereby increasing the total number of unique riders on MET Transit buses.

## Detours and Delays

A frequent challenge for MET Transit's fixed route service is navigating detours and delays, particularly in the summer during construction season. Several bus routes have been rerouted as a result of recent road reconstruction projects in the metropolitan area, and frequent changes to these routes may seem confusing or unpredictable for riders.

Detours also have the effect of delaying bus routes. A bus that must go further out of the way or wait longer in traffic queues is less likely to stay on schedule. With MET Transit's current format where several buses meet at Central Transfer at the same time to allow for transfers, delays can be compounded and affect other routes in the system.

Another common cause of delays in the metropolitan area is rail crossings. Oftentimes trains are stopped at rail crossings for long periods to allow for safety-related work and railcar changes to occur in one of the two major railyards in Waterloo. These blocked crossings prevent traffic from crossing, forcing MET Transit buses to take detours where feasible and causing delays. Long-term improvements to address this problem include construction of additional grade-separate crossings and optimization of freight rail service. The recent completion of the railroad overpass on U.S. Highway 63 should help reduce the number of delays and reroutes.

## Ridership vs. Coverage

Today's transit planners emphasize the trade-offs between ridership and coverage. Ridership refers to having fewer, more direct routes with high-frequency service, as opposed to having a lot of indirect routes with low-frequency service. Transit systems that emphasize ridership in this way tend to have more riders than coverage-oriented systems, because service is often spread too thin in coverage-oriented systems to be practical for people who have other transportation options available, e.g. carpooling, ridesharing. So, while adding coverage at the expense of ridership may seem desirable, reducing coverage locally (i.e. reducing the number of people living within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of a fixed route) may actually have the net effect of improving coverage metro-wide by providing direct routes to more areas, even though slightly fewer people would live within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of a fixed route. Figure 3.1 illustrates the difference between ridership and coverage-oriented systems.

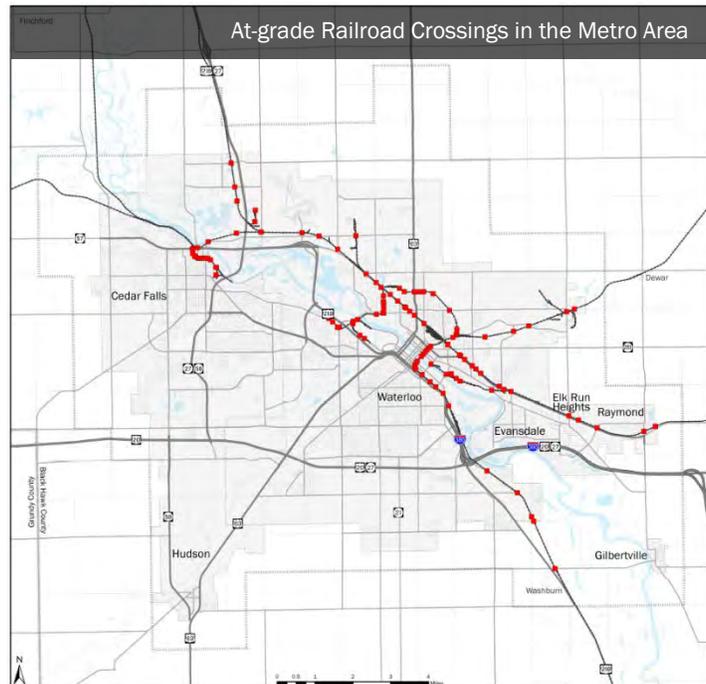
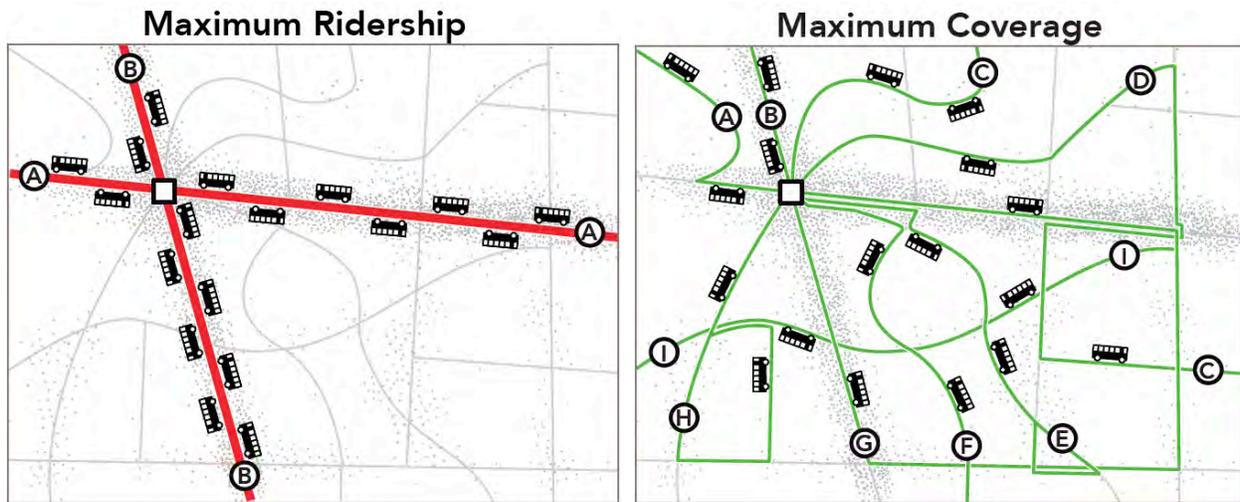


Figure 3.1: Ridership vs. Coverage-Oriented Fixed Route Systems



### Driver Recruitment and Retention

Finding and retaining qualified drivers continues to be a challenge for MET Transit and RTC. Many eligible drivers may seek employment with private agencies or school districts instead, because they can offer higher salaries and more regular schedules than public transit providers. Another barrier for MET Transit in recruiting drivers is that drivers are required to start as part-time paratransit drivers and work their way up if they want a full-time position as a fixed route driver. MET Transit works with its drivers to get them the hours they desire, and many are eventually able to move up to full-time positions, but this initial hurdle can be difficult for many to overcome.

One of the major management challenges for RTC is hiring and maintaining drivers. RTC has faced problems with recruitment and new drivers passing all necessary tests and licensing, leading to difficulties staying fully-staffed. A hurdle for driver recruitment is that the service area is spread out geographically, requiring drivers to commute a substantial distance to get to the bus, or buses needing to be parked at the driver's residence. RTC added utility driver positions with the aim of using these drivers to fill in for other drivers and/or provide expanded service. However, these positions have often been vacant, putting a strain on the system's ability to meet current demand. The lack of drivers is also a limiting factor for expanding service in the region.

### Bus Replacement

The condition of MET Transit's fleet is in relatively good shape, with 35 percent of the fleet over the federal Useful Life Benchmark. RTC's fleet is in relatively poor condition, with 60 percent of its vehicles over the federal Useful Life Benchmark. Many of MET Transit and RTC's buses purchased as part of the stimulus package enacted in 2009 are now well-aged and will require replacement in the coming years. Another stimulus would provide short-term relief for transit agencies. However, only a long-term funding solution will provide transit agencies long-term assurance that they will have enough vehicles to continue operating at their current level.

In FY 2014, the MPO funded a paratransit bus replacement for the first-time using Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds, now the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program. In FY 2017, the RTA funded the first and only bus replacement for the RTC using STBG funds. Some funds from the Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP) are also allocated for bus replacements. However, these funding sources will not likely be enough to offset the reduction in funding that occurred when new federal transportation bills were enacted.

In 2018, RTC purchased two new minivans to replace existing buses beyond their federal Useful Life Benchmark. The minivans were purchased using local funds rather than federal or state dollars. The vehicles have been a great addition to RTC's fleet, primarily providing economical services for trips with three or fewer passengers. The minivans are equipped with two wheelchair securement locations and a manual ramp, making them ADA accessible. For future bus replacements, RTC may consider purchasing additional minivans as a cost-effective option.



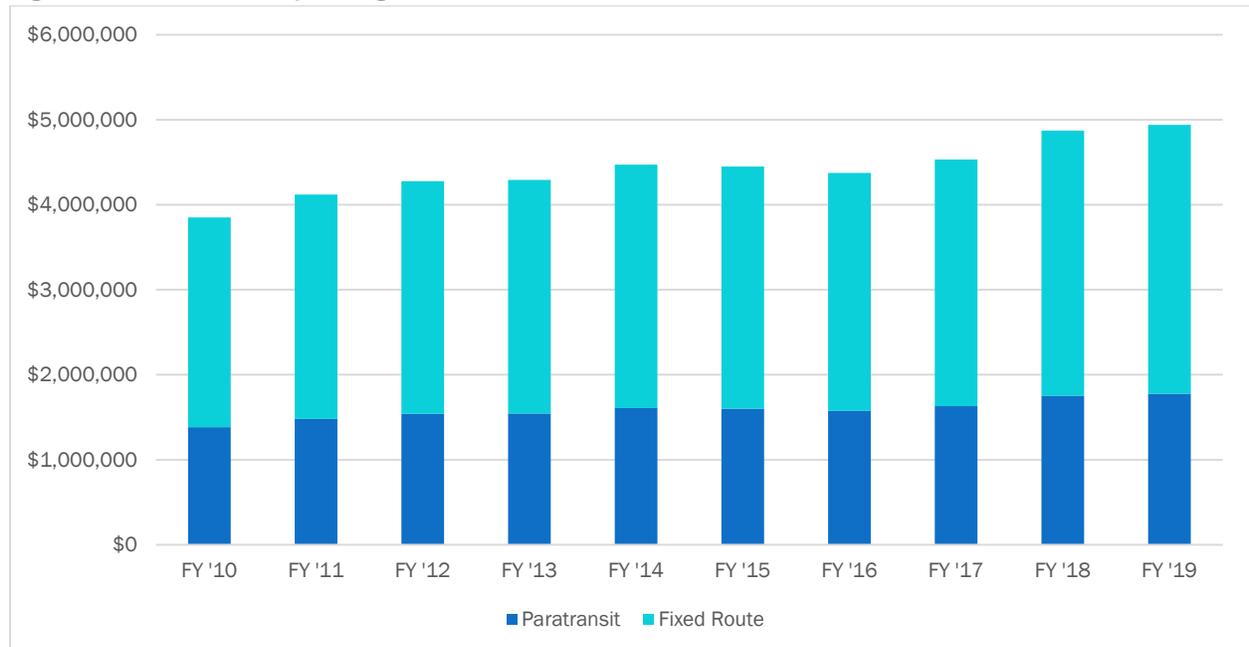
RTC ADA-accessible Van

### Increasing Costs

Operating costs have been rising at a steady rate due largely to the rising cost of maintenance and fuel. For MET Transit, operating costs in FY 2010 totaled \$3.85 million; over the past ten years, operating costs have increased by an average of \$121,000 per year, reaching \$4.94 million in FY 2019. For RTC, operating costs in FY 2010 totaled \$1.68 million; in FY 2013, operating costs increased to an all-time high of \$1.86 million. The substantial drop in operating costs in FY 2016 is likely reflective of gas prices which reached a ten-year low.

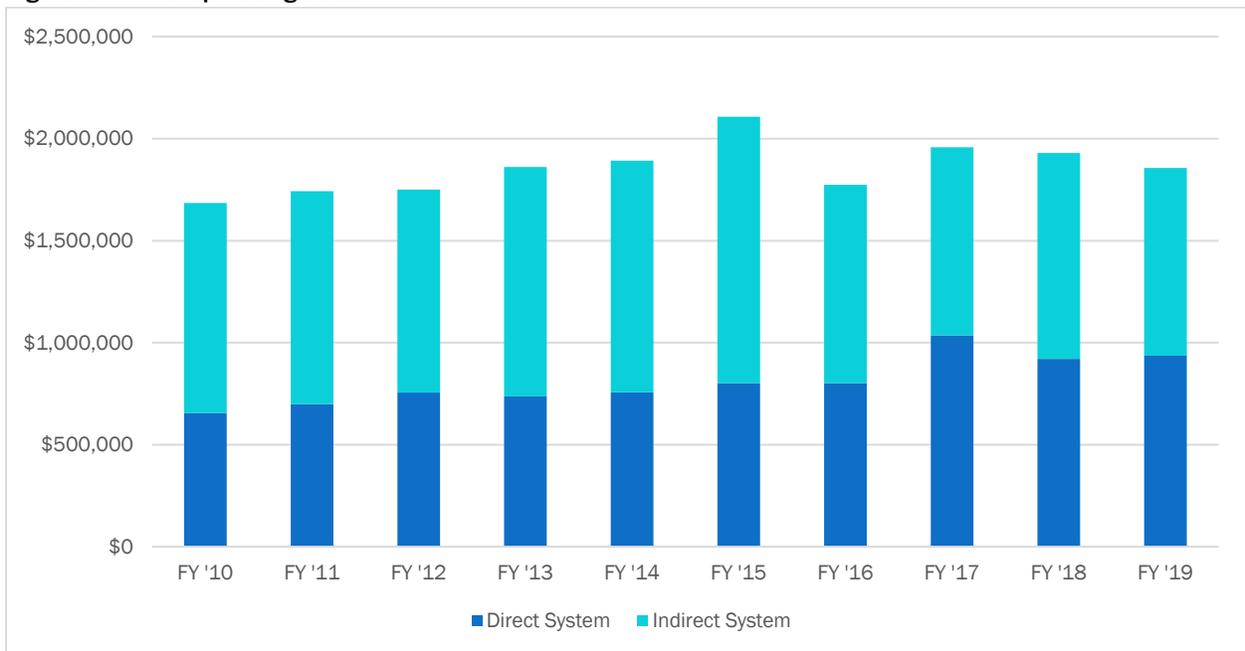
RTC staff have considered various options to help cover increasing operating costs. In the near future, RTC will be increasing its rates. RTC will likely replace buses beyond their federal Useful Life Benchmark with smaller, more efficient minivans.

Figure 3.1: MET Transit Operating Costs



Source: MET Transit

**Figure 3.2: RTC Operating Costs**



Source: RTC

## Regulations

While state and federal funding are critical to the operation of public transit, the regulations that accompany the funding can make coordination and improving service challenging at times. Rules involving items such as drug and alcohol testing, statistical reporting, and insurance requirements are some of the examples of regulations that have deterred potential coordination partners.

Another issue that has historically impacted public transit in the region is charter regulations. Charter regulations limit service options for persons and organizations wishing to utilize a charter for any type of purpose, such as a field trip or a wedding party. Oftentimes customers are unable to obtain these services at all. Achieving a balance between the intent of regulations and their real-world implications is an ongoing challenge for state and federal governments and public transit providers.

## Medicaid Brokerage

Recent changes in Iowa's Medicaid insurance programs continue to affect transit service within the region. Medicaid brokerage is now run by managed care organizations (MCOs). MET Transit and RTC continue to work on addressing the challenges involved with the implementation of this new system. Both transit agencies hired additional staff to assist with the modernization process. The modernization process initially had a negative impact on rides, but both transit agencies have experienced an increase over the past two years. A particular planning concern for MET Transit and RTC is physically disabled persons being transported by other transit providers in vehicles without wheelchair lifts. MET Transit works with clients to use the fixed route system, but winter months can be difficult for mobility-challenged persons. MET Transit has a full-time staff member to assist with the process.

## Technology

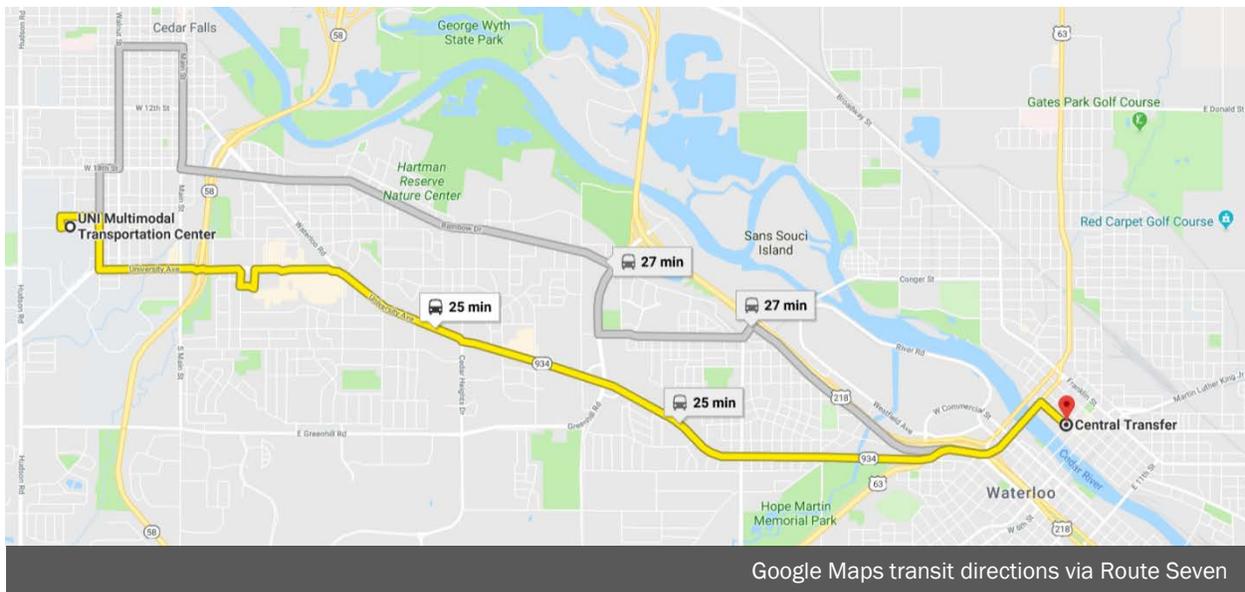
MET Transit now has GPS on all buses which allows riders to track a bus online. The real-time map is available at <https://transit.unitegps.com/mt>. GPS technology can also allow real-time information to be displayed on television screens or tickers to provide information directly to passengers at central locations. MET Transit has expressed interest in these improvements, and partnerships with other entities, such as hospitals and educational institutions, will be necessary to implement them to additional transfer locations.

In 2015, MET Transit routes were made available on Google Maps. Users can search for bus directions as they would for driving directions. Additional settings allow users to set the time they wish to depart or arrive, and the best routes are generated based on MET Transit's fixed route timetables.

Other technological improvements implemented over the years include electronic fareboxes and video surveillance on all buses. Paratransit service is now scheduled through EchoLane, and vehicles have transitioned from the old paper-pencil manifests to electronic tablets around 2016. The TextMET service has been discontinued, now that the real-time map is available.



RTC's fleet of vehicles have all been updated to include video surveillance systems. Buses feature a four-camera system focused on the driver, lift and entrance door, interior of the bus from the back, and the road. The cameras have increased safety and security for the drivers and passengers. RTC has also used video recordings for incident investigation and risk management as well as driver and management training. RTC is considering purchasing scheduling software to improve efficiency in scheduling and dispatch, driver communication, and overall logistics.



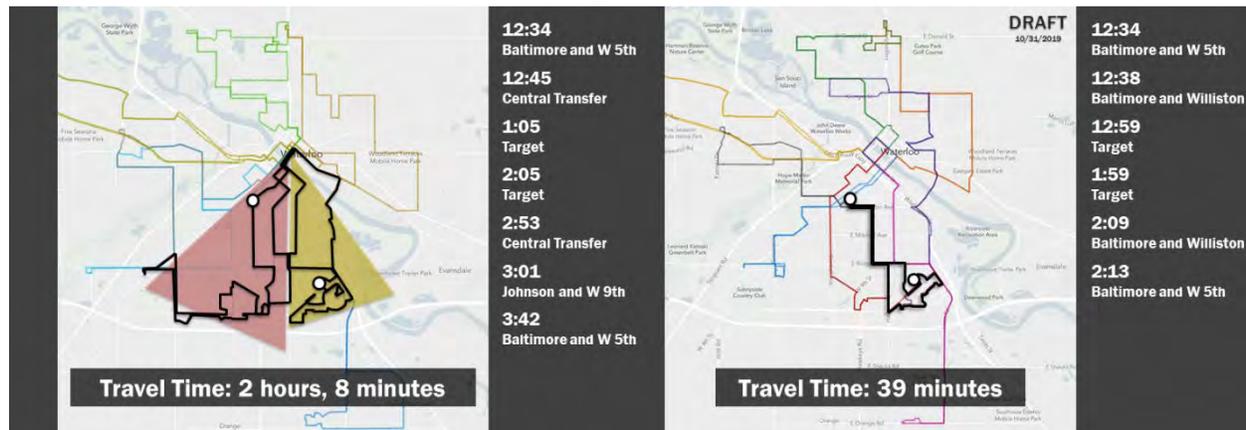
MET Transit purchased a three-year license of the transit planning software, Remix. Remix allows users to develop and analyze alternative fixed routes to determine how to maximize use of available funds. Staff at MET Transit and INRCOG have access to this software and have met on a regular basis to discuss the software’s capabilities and opportunities for service improvement. Planners can analyze the effects of potential changes to fixed routes and how these changes would affect a route’s coverage, service times, and connectivity to other routes.

MET Transit and INRCOG will continue using Remix software to determine the feasibility of more long-term changes to the fixed route system. Changes in development patterns over the past few decades have altered where people live and work and where transit service is most effective. Several small changes to individual bus routes have been made over the years, but the overall fixed route network has not been comprehensively updated for over two decades.

Remix software allows MET Transit to review data with INRCOG staff to identify entirely new fixed route network scenarios, which in turn can be compared against each other to identify routes that maximize ridership, coverage, frequency, and cost effectiveness. These analyses will also help identify new transfer locations, such as hospitals and shopping centers, where multiple routes from different directions can intersect. In addition, new routes can be explored that do not terminate at Central Transfer as most routes currently do. These new routes could include Central Transfer as a stop along a longer route, or operate separately from Central Transfer entirely.

Several alternative routes have been explored, and there is a desire to develop new routes that operate in both directions for sizable lengths. Such routes would provide many riders the same commute both to and from their destinations, reducing travel times for some and providing more dedicated service along high demand corridors. Planning considerations can be expanded in the future to include transit-oriented-development, where dedicated transit routes attract new higher density, mixed-use developments. This kind of development is most commonly seen in large metropolitan areas with light rail and commuter rail transit service.

**Comparison of travel time on existing fixed routes vs. new fixed routes scenario**

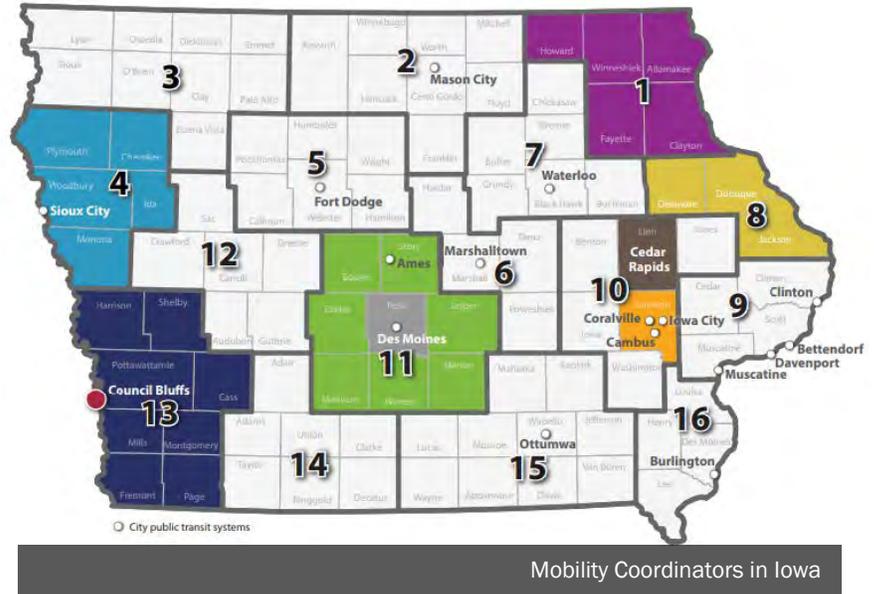


Ultimately, service improvements are limited to available funding. Known coverage gaps exist in the Airline Highway area of Waterloo, and Cedar Terrace and North Cedar neighborhoods in Cedar Falls, and evening service is not available which inherently limits the effectiveness of transit for some commuters. There may be some potential for increased ridership with the advent of ridesharing (e.g. Lyft, Uber), where a rider can make a bus trip in one direction and rideshare in the other direction.

## Coordination of Services and Marketing

Given constrained transit budgets, cost and time efficiency are always important considerations. Coordination efforts are undertaken by MET Transit, RTC, and various agencies in the INRCOG region. Joint contracts between these organizations have helped to improve the efficiency of the regional transit systems.

Mobility management has been a planning emphasis over the past ten years both nationally and in Iowa. Mobility managers, or mobility coordinators, assist individuals in navigating from their origin to their destination, regardless of the number of modes of transportation required. Referrals are made to public and private transportation providers alike. Mobility coordinators can provide travel training, showing persons how to ride the bus if they have never had that experience. Mobility coordinators also meet with human service agencies, businesses, and other organizations to inform them of the public transit services available.



Currently, there is not a mobility coordinator located in the region. MET Transit and RTC have discussed jointly hiring a mobility coordinator and marketing person, and this remains as an identified need. The Iowa DOT has a Statewide Mobility Coordinator who educates public transit agencies, planning organizations, and other statewide organizations about the benefits of mobility management. Both MET Transit and RTC plan to continue to work closely with the Statewide Mobility Coordinator to coordinate transit services in the region.

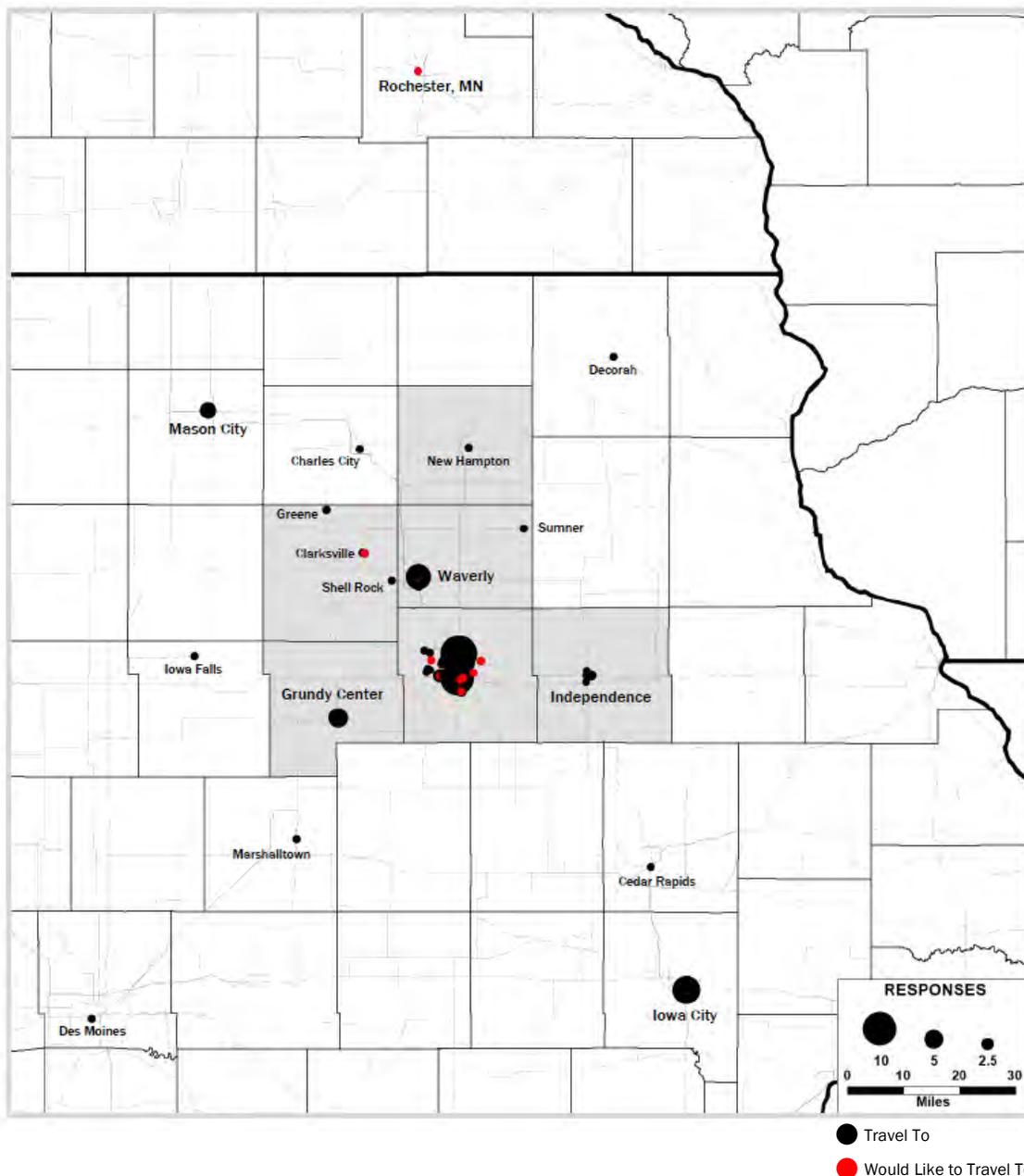
## Passenger Transportation Survey

The most recent public input received for this Passenger Transportation Plan was obtained through a Passenger Transportation Survey. The online survey was distributed to passenger transportation providers and human service agencies in December, 2019. The survey consisted of 12 questions as well as several opportunities for written comments. Agencies were also provided the opportunity to complete the survey manually. Agencies were notified of the survey through mailings and email. A total of 50 responses were received. Common needs and coordination issues identified include the following:

- Transportation services are provided most often Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Clients want to use transportation services, but currently cannot, during the weekends, mostly from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Waverly and Grundy Center are the top two destination cities outside of the Black Hawk County metropolitan area.
- The top seven most frequently traveled to destinations are all hospitals/mental health facilities; #3 is the University Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.
- The top two destinations clients would like to travel to, but currently cannot, are the University Hospitals in Iowa City, and Pathways Behavioral Services in Waterloo.
- The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota was identified as both a current destination and a desired destination.

- 81 percent of respondents agree that the demand for transportation services is growing at their agency.
- 78 percent of respondents agree that the cost of providing transportation services is becoming increasingly challenging.
- 61 percent of respondents agree that their clients' income prevents them from using local transportation services as much as they would like.
- 49 percent of respondents agree that the cost of maintaining their vehicles is becoming increasingly challenging.
- 25 percent of respondents agreed that language barriers are a challenge for many of their clients.
- Limited transportation service availability weekday nights and on the weekends has a negative impact on clients.

### Destinations Clients Travel To and Would Like to Travel To



## Previously Recommended Priorities & Strategies

The following table identifies priorities and strategies that were identified in the FY 2015-2019 Passenger Transportation Plan and provides a status for each.

Project or Initiative	Description in FY 2015-2019 PTP	Status in FY 2020
Preventative Maintenance – Section 5310 Funding	Funding will be used by MET Transit to provide handicap-accessible ramps, vehicle inspections, and to maintain accessibility features for vehicles	Maintaining accessibility features for vehicles remains a need for MET Transit, and the project is carried forward to the FY 2021-2025 PTP.
MET Transit Ambassador Program	This program would involve training seniors, limited-English speaking persons, and other populations on how to ride MET Transit's system, so in turn they can train others. Project would be in conjunction with NEI3A.	This program has not been implemented but remains a need. The project is carried forward to the FY 2021-2025 PTP.
RTC Expanded Service in Waverly and Independence	There is a need for expanded service in these cities, particularly for the elderly and persons with disabilities.	Expanded service to these communities is always considered a need. In 2012, RTC expanded service to 6:30 p.m. on Mondays to provide transportation to community meals. This service was discontinued in 2014 as other providers and area churches were providing rides to the community meals.
Mobility Manager / Marketing	This position would involve mobility and marketing related tasks for both MET Transit and RTC.	MET Transit and RTC have discussed jointly hiring a mobility coordinator and marketing person, but to date a position has not been created nor funded. This project remains a need and is carried forward to the FY 2021-2025 PTP.
Driver Recruitment and Retention	Recruiting and retaining qualified drivers.	This continues to be a challenge for MET Transit and RTC.
Vehicle Replacement	Replacing vehicles when they reach the end of their useful life.	As of 2019, 35 percent and 60 percent of MET Transit and RTC's fleets were over their ULB respectively. This is still a need and is carried forward to the FY 2021-2025 PTP.
MET Transit Expanded Service	Growth in the north industrial park area and around U.S. Highway 63 may increase demand in those areas.	To date, service has not been expanded. MET Transit has identified priorities for expanding service which include adding commuter service to the Airline Highway Industrial Area in Waterloo. This has been identified as a project in the FY 2021-2025 PTP.
Vanpools to the Metro Area	This would be a vanpool program targeted at people who work in the metropolitan area but live outside of it.	To date, this project has not been initiated. RTC has been in contact with larger businesses in the rural areas of the region to potentially provide vanpool service for employees living in the metropolitan area. A modified version of this project has been included in the FY 2021-2025 PTP.
Expanded Service in west Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties	These are all potential expansion areas for RTC as they are currently underserved.	In 2019, RTC began a new route based within Grundy County as a direct result of meeting with hospital staff. Expansion in western Butler County and Chickasaw County remains a need. RTC continues to explore options for expanded and coordinated services in these areas.
Expanded MET Transit Service Hours	Additional evening hours for fixed route and paratransit service.	To date, MET Transit has not extended service hours. This initiative remains a need and has been identified by MET Transit as a priority.

# Section 4 – Priorities and Strategies

## Goals and Objectives

The MPO identified four goals specifically for the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) which are to:

- Increase the safety of the transportation system.
- Strategically preserve the existing infrastructure.
- Support an efficient transportation system.
- **Provide a high degree of multimodal accessibility.**

The MPO also adopted several objectives to help achieve these goals and performance measurements to track the progress toward meeting the objectives. Objectives and performance measurements specific to providing a high degree of multimodal accessibility (transit services) are as follows:

Objective	Performance Measurement	MPO Baseline Condition Data (2018)
A greater number of trips are made using public transit	Total number of fixed route rides using MET Transit	398,270
Decrease the percent of MET Transit’s vehicles that are beyond Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)	Percent of revenue vehicles within an asset class that have met or exceeded ULB	Buses: 26% Mini-buses: 54%
	Percent of non-revenue vehicles that have met or exceeded ULB	Non-revenue: 66%
Transit facilities remain in good condition	Percent of MET Transit’s facilities with a condition rating below 3.0	Facilities: 0%
Increase the number of bus shelters in the metropolitan area	Number of bus shelters	6

For the FY 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan, the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) identified the following goal:

- Ensure that the public has access to safe, reliable, convenient, and efficient transit systems, placing special emphasis on providing transit service for those that are most dependent upon transit.

The TAC has also identified objectives to help achieve this goal which include the following:

1. Promote and improve the image of the public transit system
2. Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing
3. Enhance the efficiency of the public transit system
4. Improve accessibility and availability of public transit
5. Improve fleet conditions and reliability
6. Improve service to all user groups
7. Coordinate transportation planning and services with other community organizations and workforce development

## Projects and Initiatives

The following table identifies projects and initiatives recommended by the TAC for the life of this plan. Section 5310-funded projects must specifically be included in the Passenger Transportation Plan. All other projects and initiatives identified are encouraged but are not required.

Project or Initiative	Objectives Addressed	Description	Responsible Parties	Status Updates
Preventative Maintenance – Section 5310 Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve accessibility and availability of public transit</li> </ul>	Funding will be used by MET Transit to provide handicap-accessible ramps, vehicle inspections, and to maintain accessibility features for vehicles	MET Transit	
Hold a free ride event – Try Transit Out!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and improve the image of the public transit system</li> <li>• Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> </ul>	This educational event will help promote and encourage usage of MET Transit. The event could be aligned with the implementation of the route restructuring project.	MET Transit	
Joint Mobility Coordinator and Marketing position for MET Transit and RTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> <li>• Promote and improve the image of the public transit system</li> <li>• Coordinate transportation planning and services with other community organizations and workforce development</li> </ul>	This position will assist individuals in navigating from their origin to their destination, regardless of the mode of transportation. Tasks can include travel training; meeting with human service agencies, businesses, and other organizations to inform them of available services; and educating the general public on available transportation services.	MET Transit, RTC	
Transit audits for the metropolitan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> <li>• Promote and improve the image of the public transit system</li> </ul>	Transit audits take people through the entire transit experience (reading a transit map, ticket purchasing, boarding, riding the bus, using the pedestrian network, etc.). This initiative will help obtain insight from a range of citizens and elected officials.	INRCOG, TAC, MET Transit	
Ambassador Program (train the trainer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> </ul>	This initiative will involve training senior citizens, non-English speaking persons, and other populations on how to use MET Transit. In turn, those individuals will have the knowledge and expertise to train others.	MET Transit, INRCOG, TAC	
Develop a marketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> </ul>	Marketing RTC's services has long been identified as a need for the region. Advertising methods could include email, social media, workforce outreach, community services, and conventional media. External marketing experts should be considered.	RTC	

Project or Initiative	Objectives Addressed	Description	Responsible Parties	Status Updates
Develop a marketing plan/strategy of existing services for the TAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> </ul>	This project involves creating a pamphlet of existing services that can be used by TAC members to create awareness of services and promote usage of public transit.	INRCOG, TAC, MET Transit, RTC	
Create a "Day in the Life" video of challenges for persons using public transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> </ul>	Persons using public transit daily – especially those with a physical disability – are faced with challenges that often go unnoticed (i.e. snow piles on curb ramp and bus stop). This video will help to educate elected officials, city planners, and city engineers, and the general public of the daily challenges faced.	INRCOG, TAC, MET Transit, RTC	
Increase outreach with partnering groups, agencies, and companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate transportation planning and services with other community organizations and workforce development</li> <li>Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing</li> </ul>	Increase the frequency and quantity of outreach to groups, agencies, and companies. This may help identify opportunities for coordination of services and new services while promoting and marketing existing services and how to best utilize them.	RTC, TAC	
MET Transit route restructuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the efficiency of the public transit system</li> </ul>	Using transit planning software, INRCOG staff and MET Transit are redesigning the fixed-route bus network in Waterloo and Cedar Falls. The project will identify efficiencies in service and develop schedules that are faster, more reliable, and easier to understand	MET Transit, INRCOG, Cedar Falls, Waterloo	
Extend weekday service hours and weekend hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve accessibility and availability of public transit</li> <li>Improve service to all user groups</li> </ul>	MET Transit's fixed route and paratransit hours of operation are 5:45 a.m. to 6:35 p.m. M-F, and 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday. Extending service hours will help serve the needs of all user groups	MET Transit, Cedar Falls, Waterloo	
Vanpools to businesses and medical facilities in the region and outside of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve accessibility and availability of public transit</li> </ul>	This would be a vanpool program to businesses and/or medical facilities within and outside of the Iowa Northland Region. For example, a vanpool to/from the University Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.	RTC	

Project or Initiative	Objectives Addressed	Description	Responsible Parties	Status Updates
Implement a winter maintenance program for bus stops in the metropolitan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve accessibility and availability of public transit</li> </ul>	Using public transit in the winter is more challenging. Limited and/or inconsistent maintenance of sidewalks and bus stops severely limits accessibility to public transit.	MET Transit, City of Waterloo, City of Cedar Falls, private property owners	
Improve accommodations at bus stops in the metropolitan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve accessibility and availability of public transit</li> <li>• Improve service to all user groups</li> </ul>	Many bus stops in Waterloo and Cedar Falls need to be improved either through the addition of complete bus shelters, or bus pads with connections to the existing sidewalk network.	MET Transit, City of Waterloo, City of Cedar Falls	
Add commuter service to the Airline Highway Industrial Area in Waterloo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve accessibility and availability of public transit</li> </ul>	This project was identified as a need in the 2018 Airline Highway Transportation Survey. A new fixed route could serve employees during 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> shift start and end times.	MET Transit, private businesses	
Passenger Transportation Survey for businesses in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate transportation planning and services with other community organizations and workforce development</li> </ul>	A survey will be sent to businesses in the region to identify opportunities for coordinated services and/or new services.	RTC, INRCOG	
Replace vehicles when they reach their federal Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve fleet conditions and reliability</li> </ul>	As of 2019, 35 percent and 60 percent of MET Transit and RTC's fleets were over their ULB respectively. Older vehicles result in higher operating and maintenance costs, reduced reliability, and compromised safety. Both MET Transit and RTC will continue to replace their vehicles as federal, state, and local funding becomes available.	MET Transit, RTC	
Conduct a follow-up Special Outreach Survey for non-English speaking and homeless residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve service to all user groups</li> </ul>	In 2015, a survey was conducted in the metropolitan area to identify transportation needs and challenges faced by these populations. A follow-up survey will be conducted to identify new challenges and to identify opportunities for coordinated services.	INRCOG	

## Section 5 – Funding

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There are several federal, state, and local funding opportunities for transit programs and projects. The largest amount of funding is distributed by formula to states and large metropolitan areas. Other program funds are discretionary or earmarked for specific projects. The following section provides an overview of federal, state, and local funding sources available.

### **Federal Funding**

#### **Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (Section 5303 and 5305)**

FTA provides funding for this program to the state based on its urbanized area populations. The funds are dedicated to support transportation planning projects in urbanized areas with more than 50,000 persons. In Iowa, these funds are administered by the Iowa DOT's Systems Planning Bureau and distributed annually to each of the state's nine metropolitan planning organizations through a funding formula. This program can support any MPO costs related to intermodal transportation planning activities for the urbanized area.

#### **Statewide Transportation Planning Program (Section 5304 and 5305)**

These funds come to the state based on population and are used to support transportation planning projects in nonurbanized areas. Iowa uses these funds, combined with Section 5311 funds, 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. The Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority is the RPA for this region. The combined 5304 and 5311 funds are distributed annually to each of Iowa's 18 RPAs through a funding formula.

#### **Urbanized Area Formula Grants Program (Section 5307)**

FTA provides transit operating, planning, and capital assistance funds directly to local recipients in urbanized areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000. Assistance amounts are based on population and density figures and transit performance factors for larger areas.

#### **Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310)**

Funding is provided through this program to increase mobility for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options. Part of the funding is administered along with the nonurbanized funding, with the remaining funds allocated among urbanized transit systems in areas with a population of less than 200,000. Urbanized areas with more than 200,000 in population receive a direct allocation. Traditional Section 5310 projects include buses and vans; wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices; transit-related information technology systems; mobility management programs; and building accessible paths to bus stops.

#### **Nonurbanized Area Formula Assistance Program (Section 5311)**

This program provides capital and operating assistance for rural and small urban transit systems. 15 percent of these funds are allocated to intercity bus projects. A portion of the funding is also allocated to support rural transit planning. The remaining funds are combined with the rural portion (30 percent) of Section 5310 funds and allocated among regional and small urban transit systems based on their relative performance in the prior year.

#### **Rural Transit Assistance Program (Section 5311(b)(3))**

This funding is used for statewide training events and to support transit funding fellowships for regional and small urban transit staff or planners.

### **Bus and Bus Facilities Program (Section 5339)**

This formula program provides federal assistance for major capital needs, such as fleet replacement and construction of transit facilities. All transit systems in the state are eligible for this program.

### **Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program**

This program is designed to address specific issues identified by Congress and provides flexible funding for projects to preserve or improve the condition and performance of several transportation facilities. The Iowa DOT provides programming authority for allotments of STBG funds to MPOs and RPAs. The flexible nature of STBG funds allows them to be used for all types of transportation projects including roadway projects on federal-aid routes, bridge projects on any public road, transit capital improvements, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) eligible activities, and planning activities. Iowa has implemented a Swap program that allows MPOs and RPAs, at their discretion, to swap targeted federal STBG funding for state Primary Road Fund dollars. Transit capital improvement projects generally are not swap-eligible.

### **Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP)**

ICAAP funds projects that are intended to maximize emission reductions through traffic flow improvements, reduced vehicle-miles of travel, and reduced single-occupancy vehicle trips. Funds are programmed for road and transit projects through a statewide application process based on their anticipated air quality or congestion relief benefits.

## **State Funding**

### **State Transit Assistance (STA)**

All public transit systems are eligible for this funding. These funds can be used by the public transit system for operating, capital, or planning expenses related to the provision of open-to-the-public passenger transportation. 97 percent of funding is distributed among eligible transit systems using a performance-based distribution formula calculated on prior year statistics for rides, miles, operating cost, and local support. At least \$300,000 is reserve for special projects each year. These can include individual special projects for new services needed to support human services coordination, statewide transit training needs, and emergency projects.

### **Public Transit Infrastructure Grant (PTIG) Program**

This program is funded annually by the state legislature to provide funding assistance to support vertical infrastructure needs of Iowa's public transit systems. Projects can involve new construction, reconstruction, or remodeling, but must include a vertical component to qualify. Projects are evaluated based on anticipated benefits to transit, as well as the ability to have projects completed quickly.

## **Local Funding**

### **Municipal Transit Levy**

Iowa law authorizes municipalities to levy up to 95 cents per \$1,000 of assessed taxable property 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. Within the metropolitan area, the City of Waterloo and the City of Cedar Falls have transit levies in place.

### **General Fund Levy**

The cost of supporting transit services is an eligible use of general fund revenues for all Iowa governments and is the primary source of funding to support transit for counties that do not have the option of a transit levy, as well as for cities which choose not to use the transit levy. RTC receives a small amount of support through such levies.

### Passenger Revenue

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 “fare box receipts”), as well as prepaid fares from sale of passes or tickets, or fares billed to the passenger after the fact.

### Contract Revenue

Human service agencies, local communities, as well as private businesses, are often willing to pay part or all of the cost for certain types of rides provided as part of the open to the public transit operation.

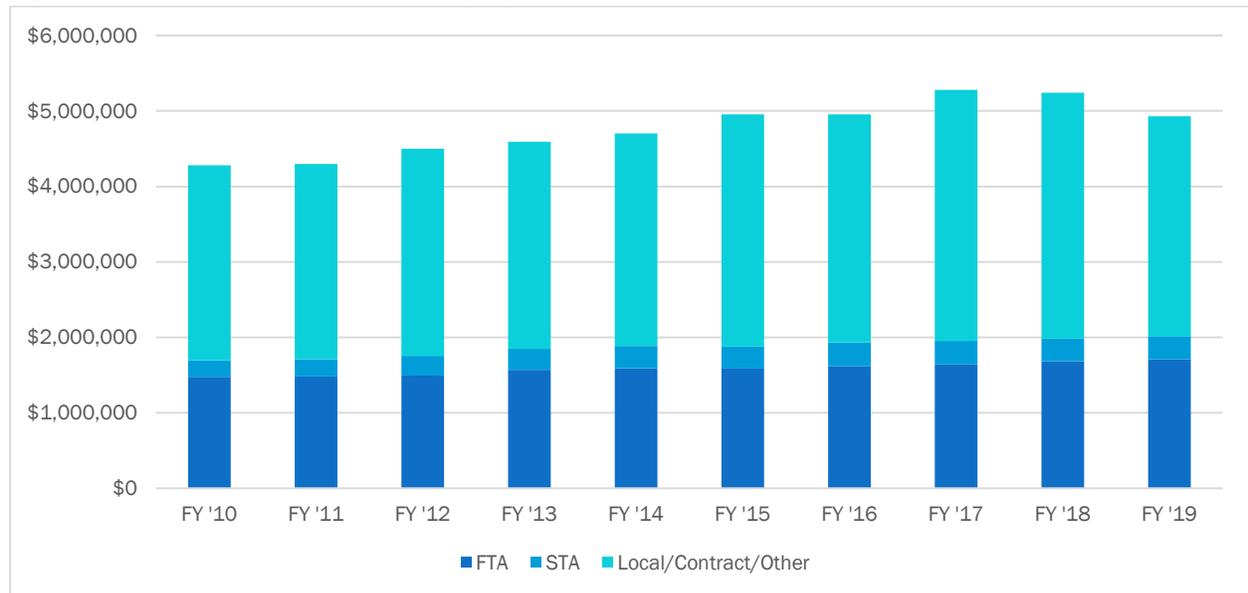
### Other Funding

Apart from traditional funding programs, there are other types of funding sources that could be available for different passenger transportation projects. These sources are typically reserved for addressing the transportation needs of the population served by the program and can only be used for transportation related to that program. For example, the Cedar Valley United Way has funded programs that provide transportation to the elderly. Another example is Head Start which provides developmental and educational services for economically disadvantaged children and their families, and provides funds to local public and nonprofit agencies – including supporting transportation services. Additional funding sources could include university student fees, revenues from on-board advertising, grants from the Black Hawk County Gaming Association and the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, and contributions from nonprofit agencies.

### Historic Funding

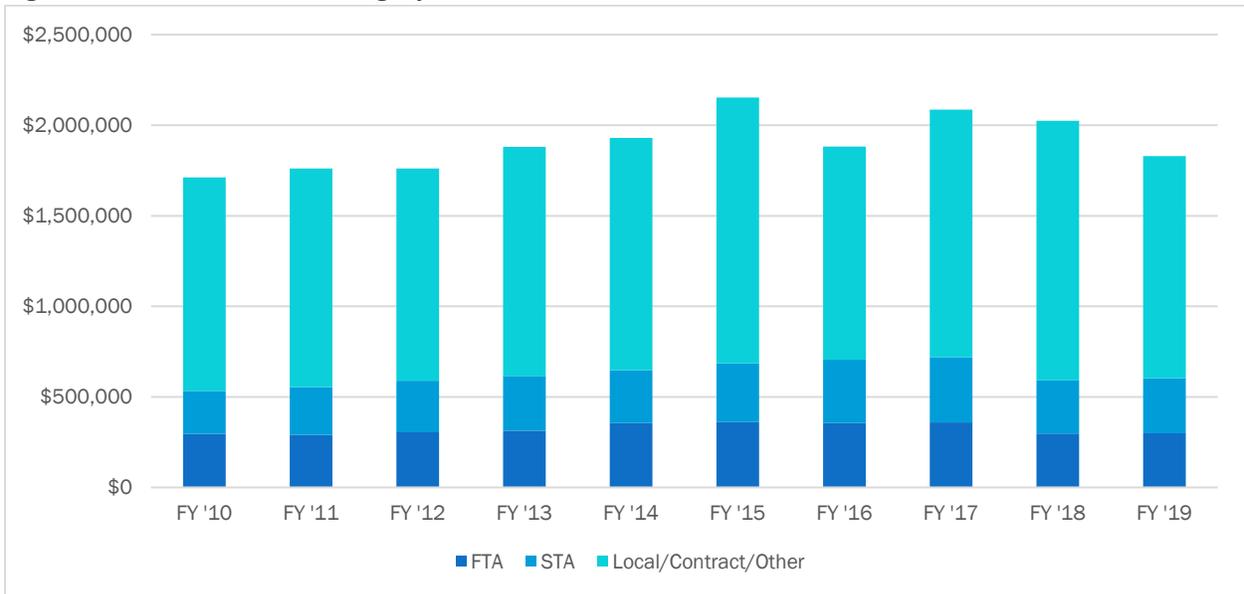
Figures 5.1 and 5.2 identify historical funding sources for MET Transit and RTC. The majority of funding used to cover the operating costs for RTC has come from local sources and contracts. The percentage of FTA and STA funding has stayed relatively constant over the years.

**Figure 5.1: MET Transit Historical Funding, by Source**



Source: MET Transit

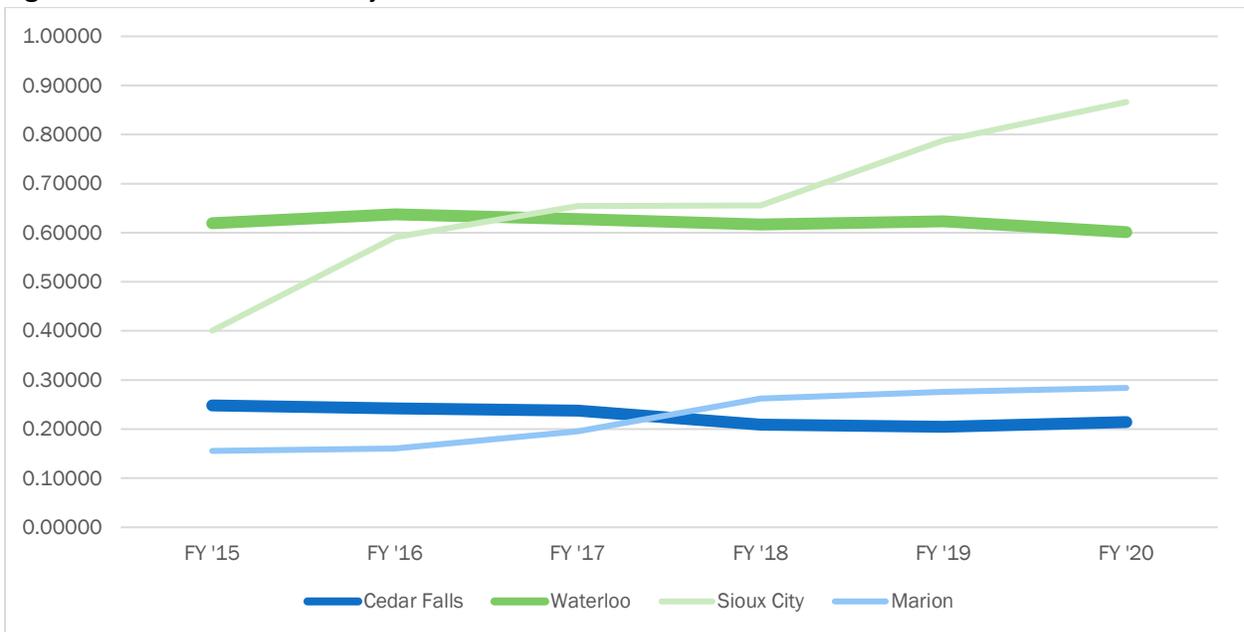
**Figure 5.2: RTC Historical Funding, by Source**



Source: RTC

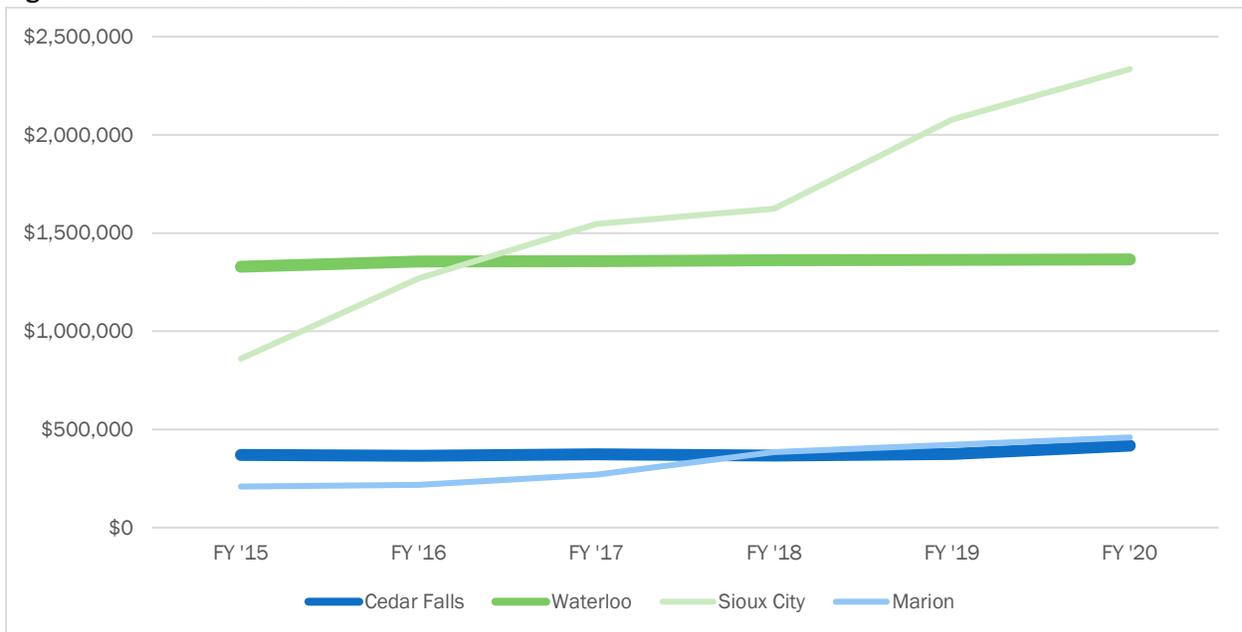
Figures 5.3 and 5.4 compare historical transit levy rates and taxes levied for Waterloo and Cedar Falls to similar communities in Iowa. Levy rates for Waterloo and Cedar Falls have generally declined over the past five years, and the amount of taxes levied has remained flat.

**Figure 5.3: Historical Transit Levy Rates**



Source: Iowa Department of Management, Adopted City Budgets

**Figure 5.4: Historical Taxes Levied for Transit**



Source: Iowa Department of Management, Adopted City Budgets

### Projected Funding

There are three primary sources of funding for public transit: State Transit Assistance, Federal Transit Administration, and local government. Typically, federal funding is designated for operations, capital, and planning, and state funding is designated for operations.

As described previously, cities have the ability to leverage up to 95 cents per \$1,000 of assessed taxable property to support the cost of a public transit system. Waterloo and Cedar Falls are the only cities in the region that currently utilize the municipal transit levy for MET Transit service. For RTC, the majority of funding used to cover operating costs comes from local sources and contracts. Waverly and Independence are the only communities within the region that contribute funding for RTC service outside of paying for riders.

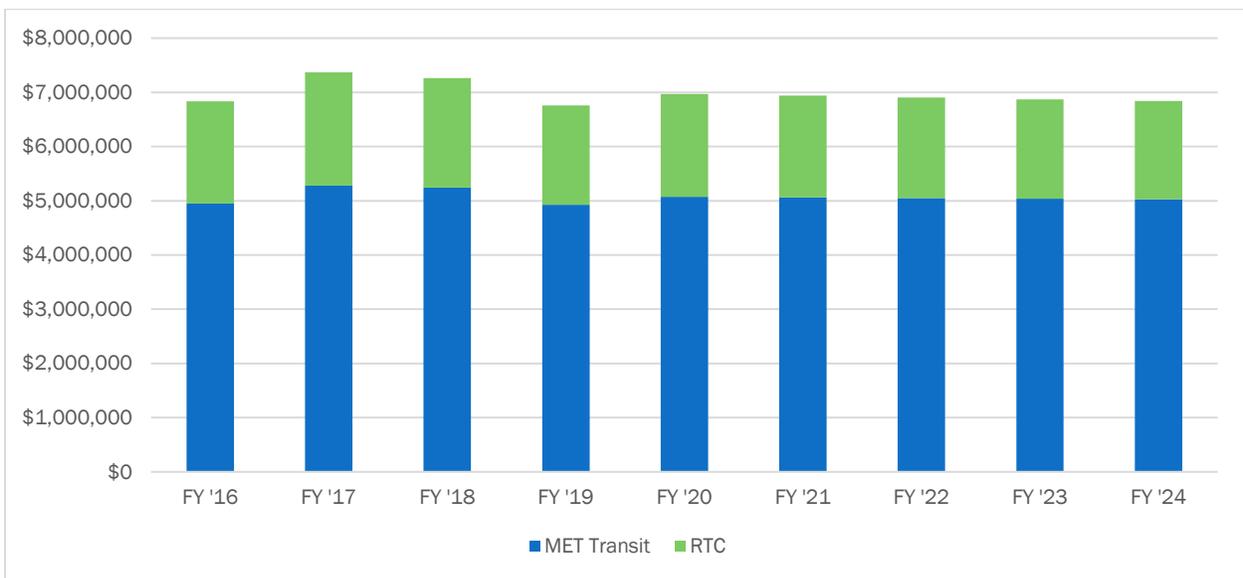
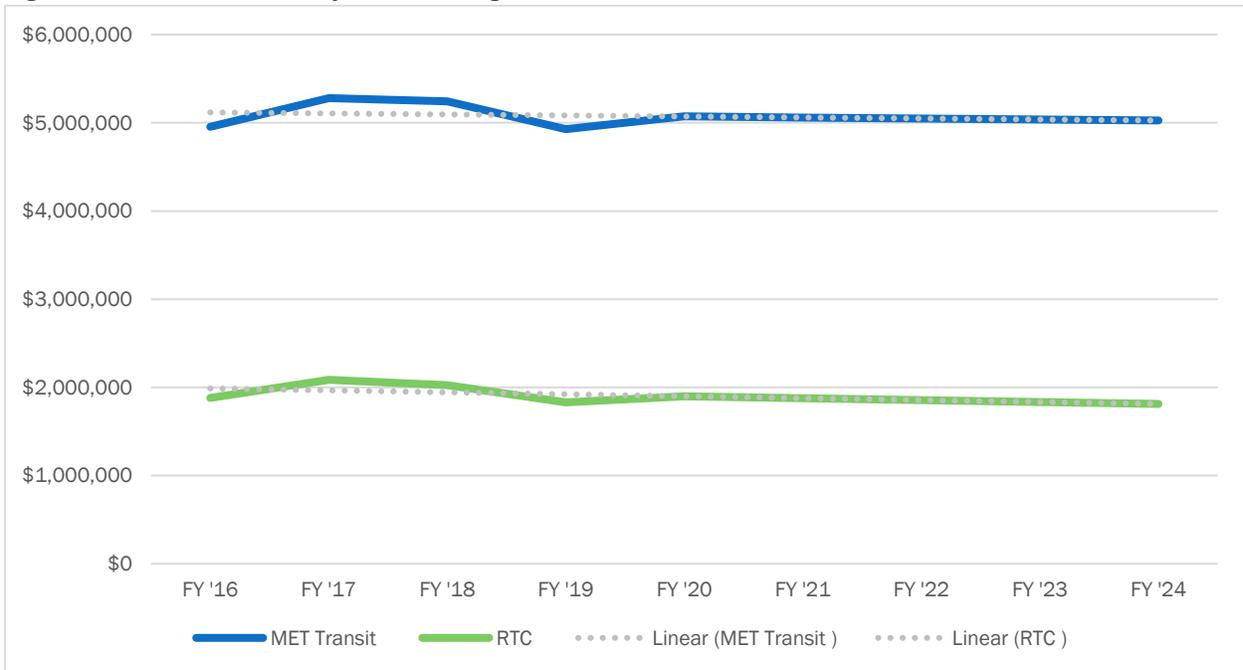
Table 5.1 illustrates the projected funding available for MET Transit and RTC, and Figure 5.5 shows the total funding received and projected by agency. Figures for FY 2020-2024 were computed using linear projections from FY 2016-2019.

**Table 5.1: Historical and Projected Funding for MET Transit and RTC, by Source**

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
<b>MET Transit</b>									
FTA	1,618,236	1,641,828	1,683,437	1,708,433	1,741,034	1,772,254	1,803,474	1,834,694	1,865,914
STA	312,825	311,886	300,489	299,132	292,964	287,716	282,469	277,221	271,974
Local/Contract/Other	3,022,660	3,326,487	3,257,785	2,920,858	3,038,421	3,001,010	2,963,599	2,926,188	2,888,777
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,953,721</b>	<b>5,280,201</b>	<b>5,241,711</b>	<b>4,928,423</b>	<b>5,072,418</b>	<b>5,060,980</b>	<b>5,049,541</b>	<b>5,038,103</b>	<b>5,026,664</b>
<b>RTC</b>									
FTA	356,260	359,526	297,128	298,661	269,095	245,576	222,056	198,537	175,017
STA	348,315	359,488	293,698	305,065	277,757	258,203	238,649	219,095	199,541
Local/Contract/Other	1,176,885	1,366,986	1,433,485	1,225,139	1,353,439	1,374,565	1,395,691	1,416,817	1,437,943
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,881,460</b>	<b>2,086,000</b>	<b>2,024,311</b>	<b>1,828,865</b>	<b>1,900,291</b>	<b>1,878,343</b>	<b>1,856,396</b>	<b>1,834,448</b>	<b>1,812,501</b>

Source: MET Transit and RTC

**Figure 5.5: Historical and Projected Funding for MET Transit and RTC, Totals**



## Passenger Transportation Survey Iowa Northland Region

This document presents the results of the Passenger Transportation Survey that was conducted as part of the development of the FY 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) for the Black Hawk County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The MPO includes the cities of Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Evansdale, Hudson, Elk Run Heights, Gilbertville, and Raymond, as well as parts of unincorporated Black Hawk County. The RTA includes Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties, excluding the MPO-area. The MPO and RTA combined constitute the Iowa Northland Region.

The purpose of this survey was to help identify existing transportation services, transportation needs, and opportunities for coordinated services for the Iowa Northland Region. Survey responses were also utilized to help identify passenger transportation investment priorities and strategies for the next five years.

The Passenger Transportation Survey was created and administered by INRCOG staff with input from the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). TAC participants included the following:

Lorie Glover	Black Hawk County Emergency Management
Nafissa Cisse-Egbuonye	Black Hawk County Health Department
Jan Heidemann	Bremer County of the East Central Region
Debra Hodges Harmon	Iowa Works
Todd Rickert	Grundy County Social Services
Susan Backes	House of Hope
Mark Little	MET Transit
Lon Kammeyer	MET Transit Board
Mike Dangan	Public
Ben Kvigne	INRCOG/RTC
Kyle Durant	INRCOG
Codie Leseman	INRCOG

The survey was conducted through the website [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). The website enabled the creation of the survey questions and choices, the creation of a link for users to click to access the survey, and collection of responses. Surveys were sent to assisted living facilities, retirement communities, hospitals, clinics, human service agencies, taxi services, and transit providers in the region. To solicit responses, agencies were sent a letter which included a link to the survey. To improve response rates, a paper survey and return envelope with prepaid postage were also included in the mailing. The survey was open from December 11, 2019 to January 8, 2020.

The survey consisted of 12 questions including one open-ended comment section. A total of 50 responses were received. This document details the results for each question, including tables, graphs, and a listing of written comments. On the following pages, “NR” stands for non-response. This means either the individual surveyed did not write a response, or their response was incomplete, irrelevant, or a misinterpretation of the question asked. All written comments were included in this report, with the exception of comments such as “N/A” or “I do not know”.

The Passenger Transportation Survey is not statistically-significant. For this reason, the following survey results should be considered anecdotal. Any questions regarding the survey methodology or results should be directed to INRCOG staff by calling 319-235-0311.

## General Information

### Agency County

- Black Hawk: 27
- Bremer: 7
- Buchanan: 4
- Butler: 5
- Chickasaw: 2
- Grundy: 3
- NR: 2

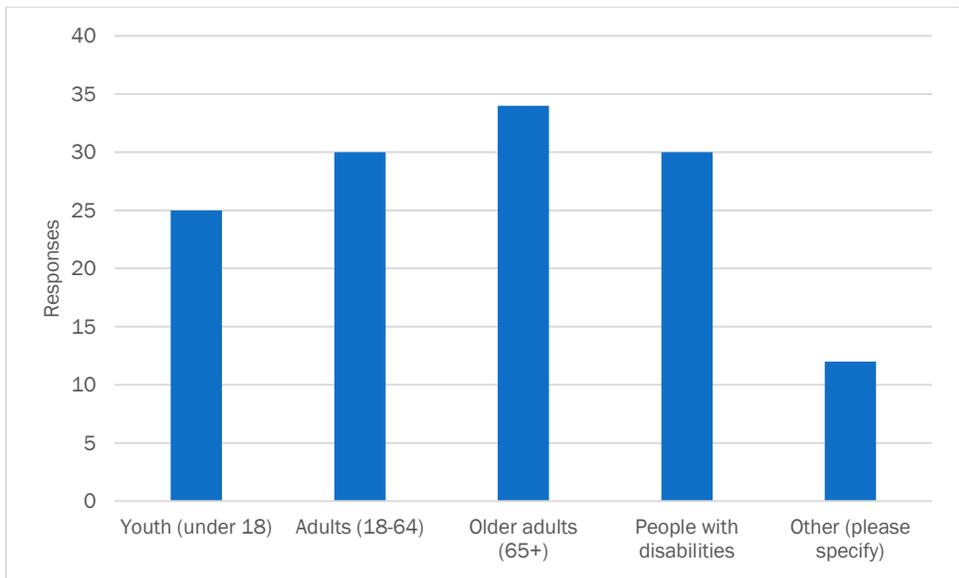
### Agency City

- Waterloo: 26
- Waverly: 5
- Independence: 3
- Allison: 2
- New Hampton: 2
- Reinbeck: 2
- Cedar Falls: 1
- Greene: 1
- Grundy Center: 1
- Jesup: 1
- Parkersburg: 1
- Shell Rock: 1
- Sumner: 1
- Tripoli: 1
- NR: 2

### Agency Type

- Assisted Living/Retirement Community: 13
- Social Service: 20
- Medical Facility: 11
- Child Care: 2
- Public Transit: 2
- NR: 2

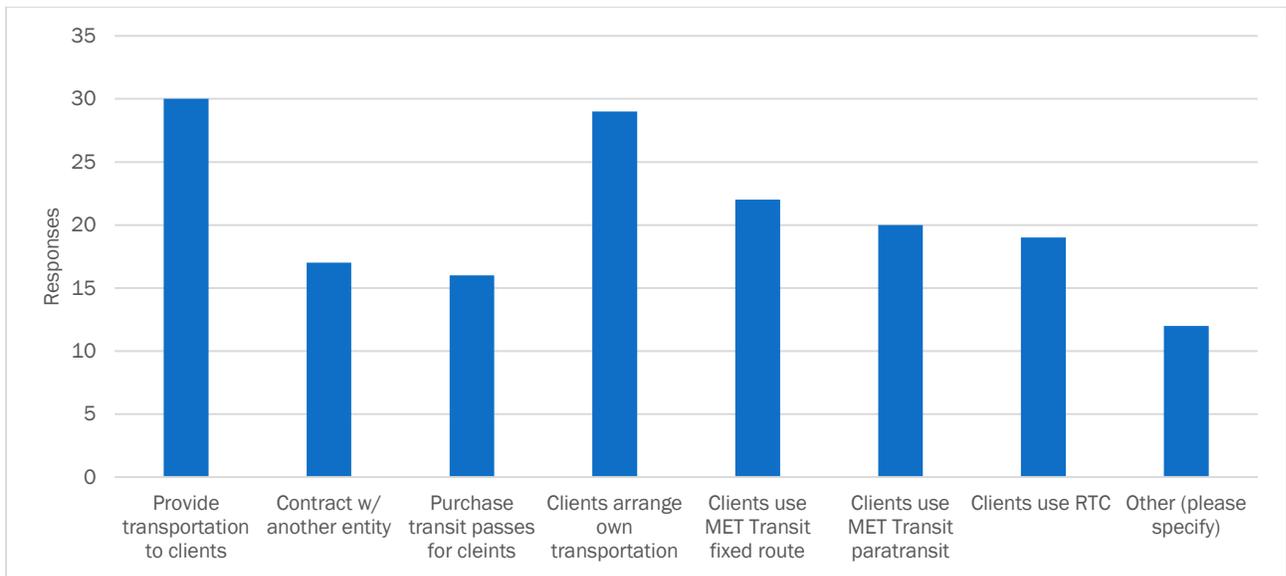
### 1. Who does your agency serve? (check all that apply)



Other:

- Focus is on single women but some have children and some may have disabilities
- All. General Public
- Dementia/Alzheimer's
- 55+
- Skilled nursing facility
- 60+
- Will work with kids starting 7/1/2020 (more than we do now)
- Homeless
- Adults 18 and up
- And the parents of youth (under 18)
- People with alcohol and substance abuse, some homeless
- Anyone with mental health concerns

**2. Which of the following apply to your agency? (check all that apply)**



Other:

- MET Transit
- Home staff bring clients here
- MCO Transportation
- Arrange through T19
- Only transportation to out of town medical appointment. Done by a volunteer.
- Ambulance services, Chassis, Ambulance, Secure Car, Nursing Homes with transport service, Curt's Cab, Dolly's
- Field trips to & from preschools
- We offer transportation for reoccurring programs like a parenting class offered in the evenings
- Some parents and staff find their own transportation, but a handful use the city bus service.
- We connect families to transportation resources as needed
- We provide transportation when we can
- We arrange transportation for patients for medical transport

### 3. Approximately how many of your clients (#) use transportation services per week?

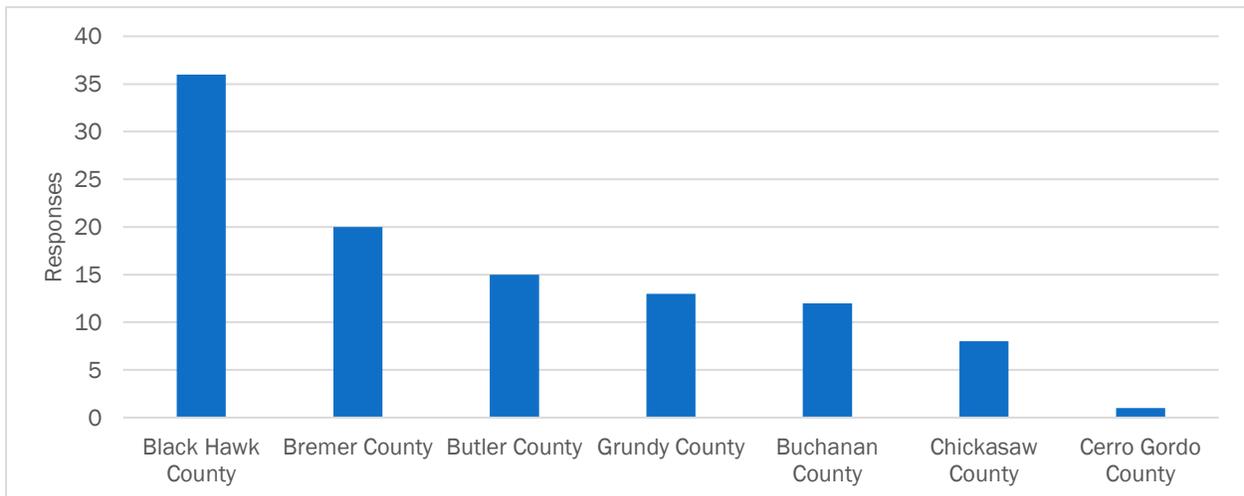
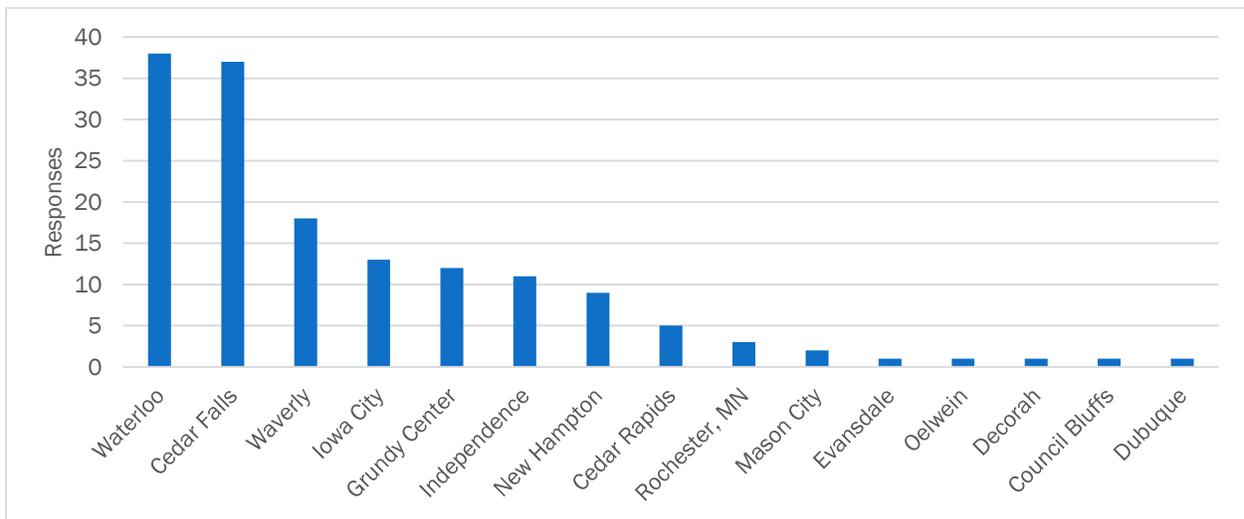
Summary

- Answered: 31
- Skipped: 8
- NR: 11
- Total clients: **1116**
- Avg. clients per response: 36

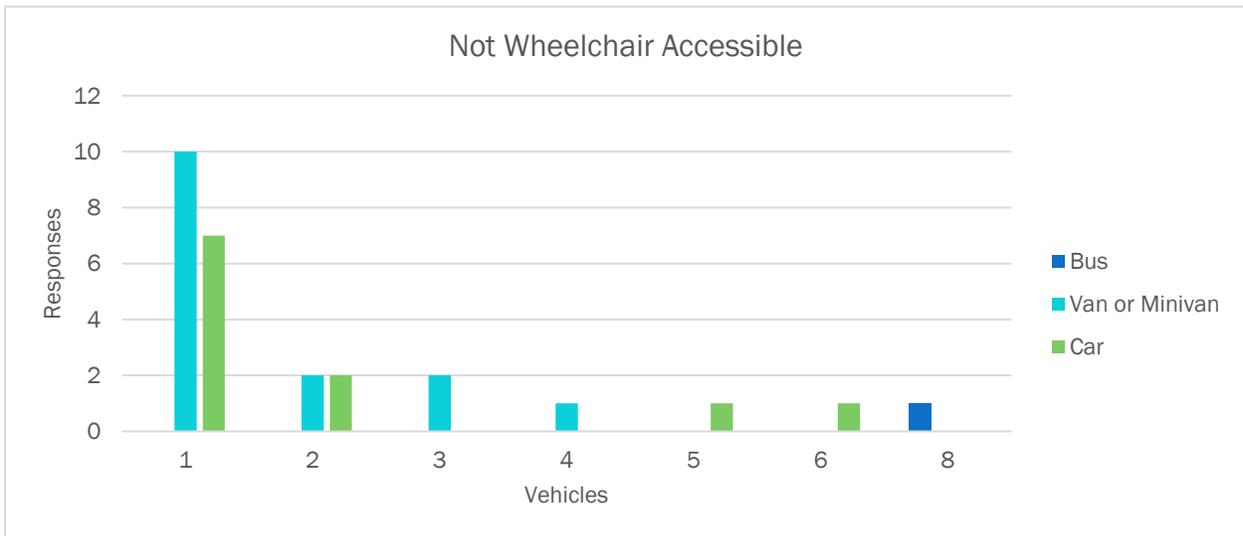
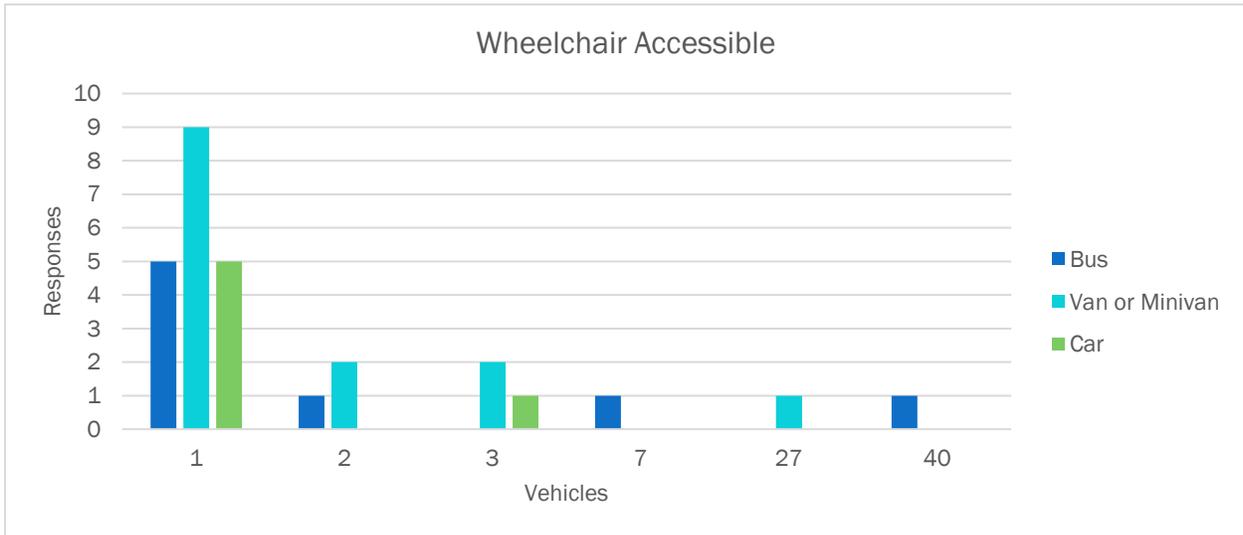
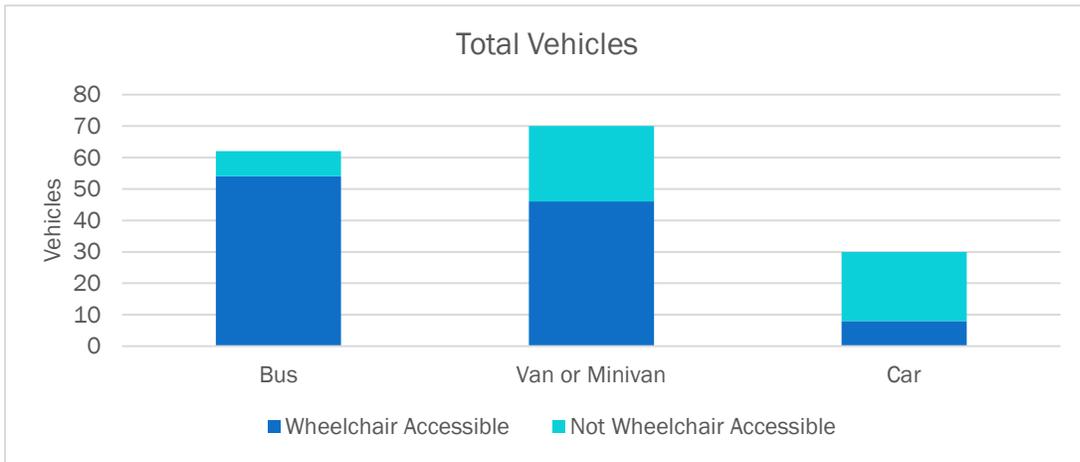
Total Number of Clients by Agency Type

- Assisted Living/Retirement Community: 95
- Social Service: 600
- Medical Facility: 316
- Child Care: 105

### 4. Which counties and cities do your clients have transportation service to (excluding personal automobile)? (check all that apply)



### 5. How many vehicles does your agency own and/or lease to provide transportation services?



## 6. What days/times do your clients use transportation services?

Summary

- Answered: 39
- Skipped: 11

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1:00 AM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2:00 AM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3:00 AM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4:00 AM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5:00 AM	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
6:00 AM	4	8	8	8	8	8	4
7:00 AM	7	18	18	17	16	16	8
8:00 AM	7	29	28	27	27	26	8
9:00 AM	7	35	33	34	33	33	8
10:00 AM	7	36	34	35	34	34	9
11:00 AM	7	36	34	35	34	34	9
12:00 PM	7	36	34	35	34	34	9
1:00 PM	7	36	34	34	34	33	9
2:00 PM	7	36	34	34	33	33	9
3:00 PM	8	36	34	33	32	32	9
4:00 PM	8	33	31	30	29	29	9
5:00 PM	8	30	30	27	28	27	8
6:00 PM	7	15	15	12	14	13	7
7:00 PM	5	7	7	6	7	7	4
8:00 PM	3	5	5	4	5	5	3
9:00 PM	3	4	4	4	4	4	3
10:00 PM	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
11:00 PM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12:00 AM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Low Use 
→
 High Use

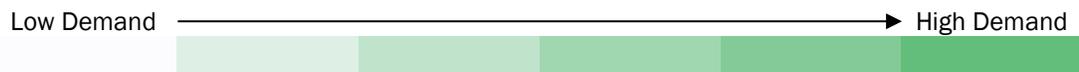


## 7. What days/times do your clients want to use transportation services, but currently cannot?

### Summary

- Answered: 18
- Skipped: 31
- NR: 1

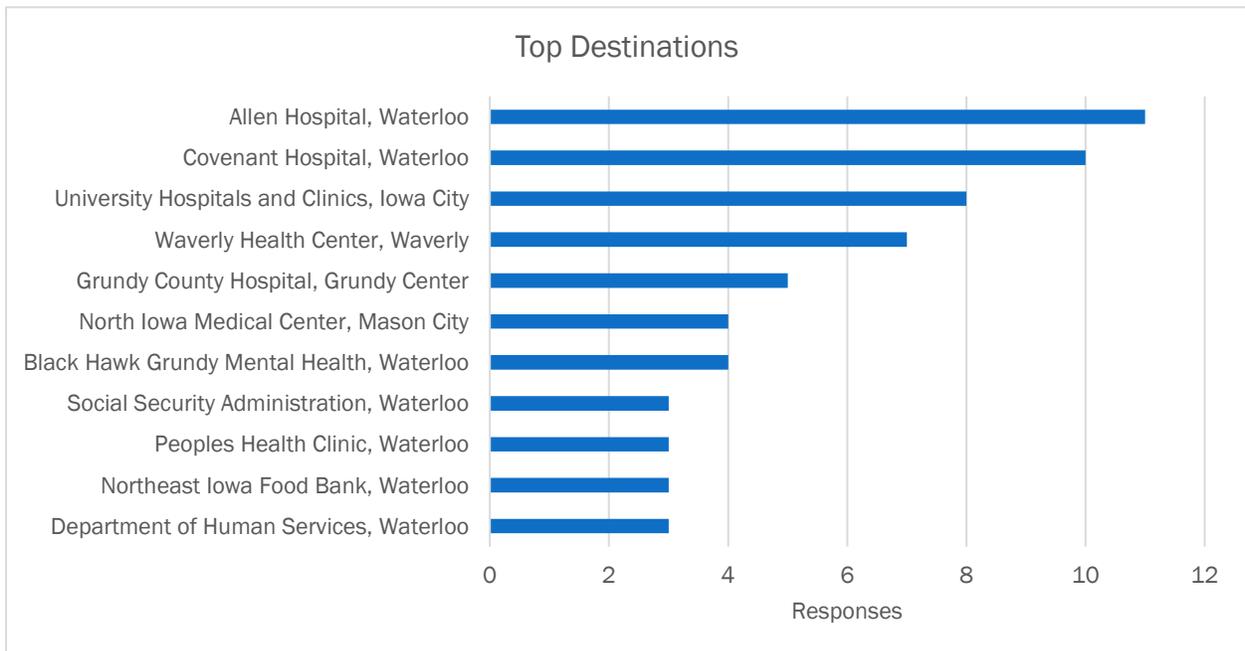
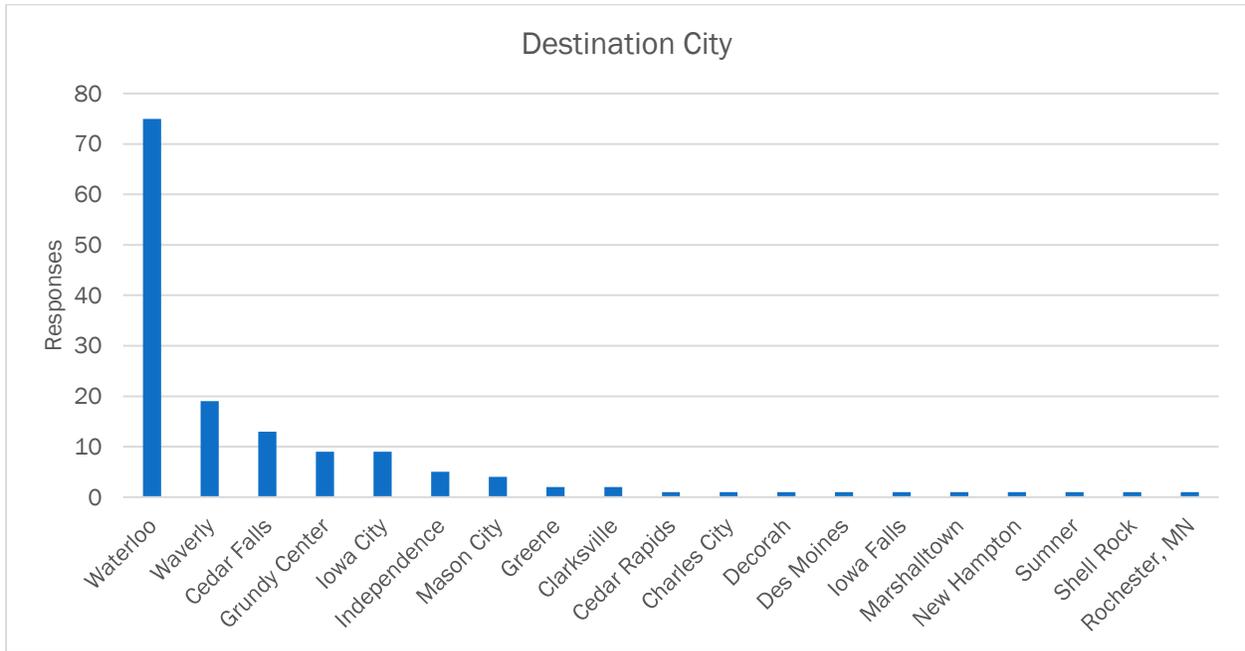
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1:00 AM	7	3	3	3	3	3	7
2:00 AM	7	3	3	3	3	3	7
3:00 AM	7	3	3	3	3	3	7
4:00 AM	7	3	3	3	3	3	7
5:00 AM	7	3	3	3	3	3	7
6:00 AM	7	1	1	1	1	1	6
7:00 AM	7	1	1	1	1	1	6
8:00 AM	11	2	2	2	2	1	10
9:00 AM	11	3	3	3	3	2	10
10:00 AM	11	3	3	3	3	2	10
11:00 AM	11	3	3	3	3	2	10
12:00 PM	11	3	3	3	3	2	10
1:00 PM	11	3	3	3	3	2	10
2:00 PM	11	3	3	3	3	2	10
3:00 PM	11	4	4	4	4	2	11
4:00 PM	11	4	4	4	4	3	11
5:00 PM	10	7	7	6	6	5	11
6:00 PM	8	8	8	7	7	7	9
7:00 PM	8	8	8	8	8	8	9
8:00 PM	8	7	7	7	7	7	9
9:00 PM	7	7	7	7	7	7	8
10:00 PM	8	7	7	7	7	7	9
11:00 PM	7	4	4	4	4	4	7
12:00 AM	7	4	4	4	4	4	7



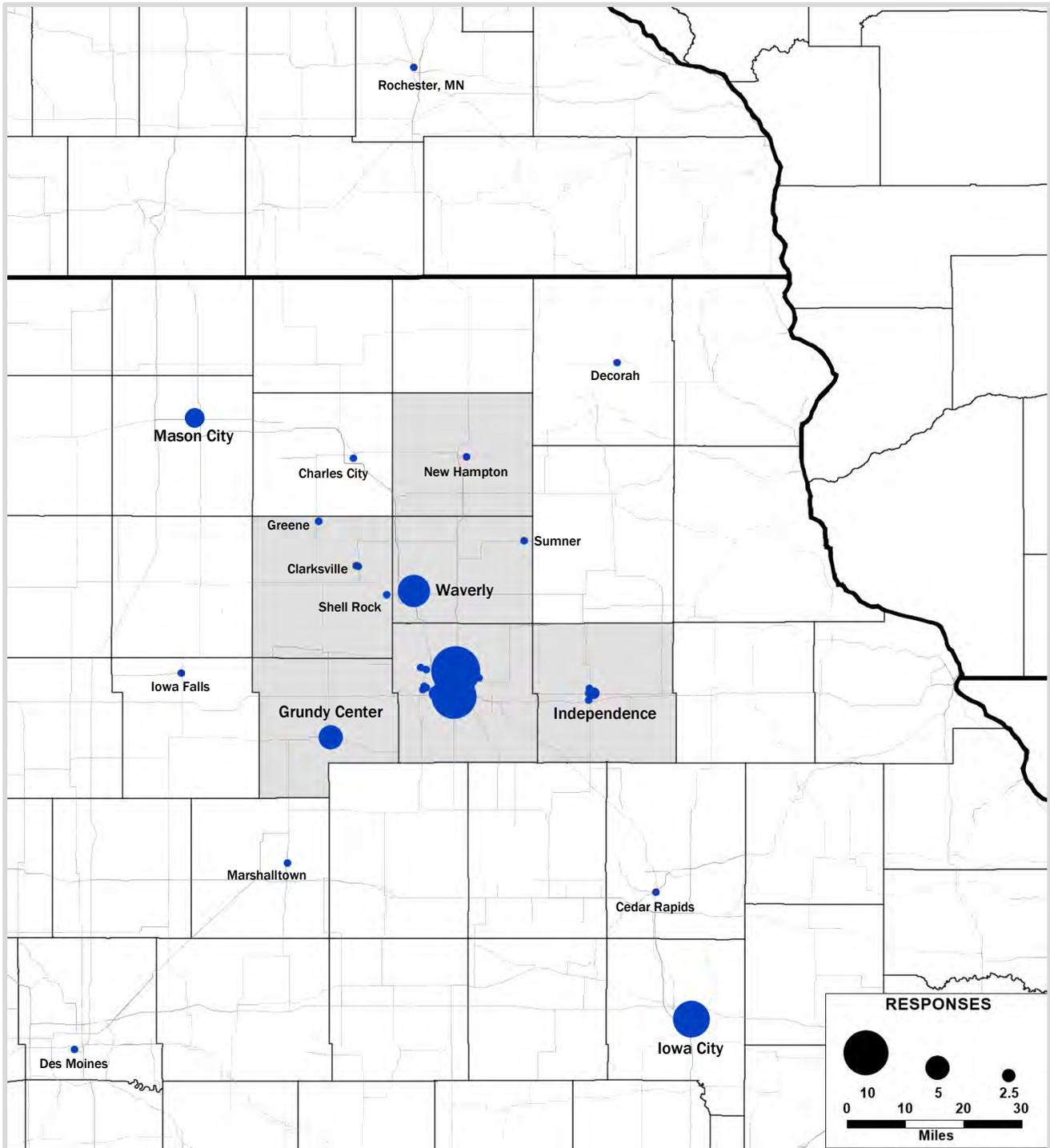
## 8. List up to five destinations your clients most frequently travel to (destination & city):

### Summary

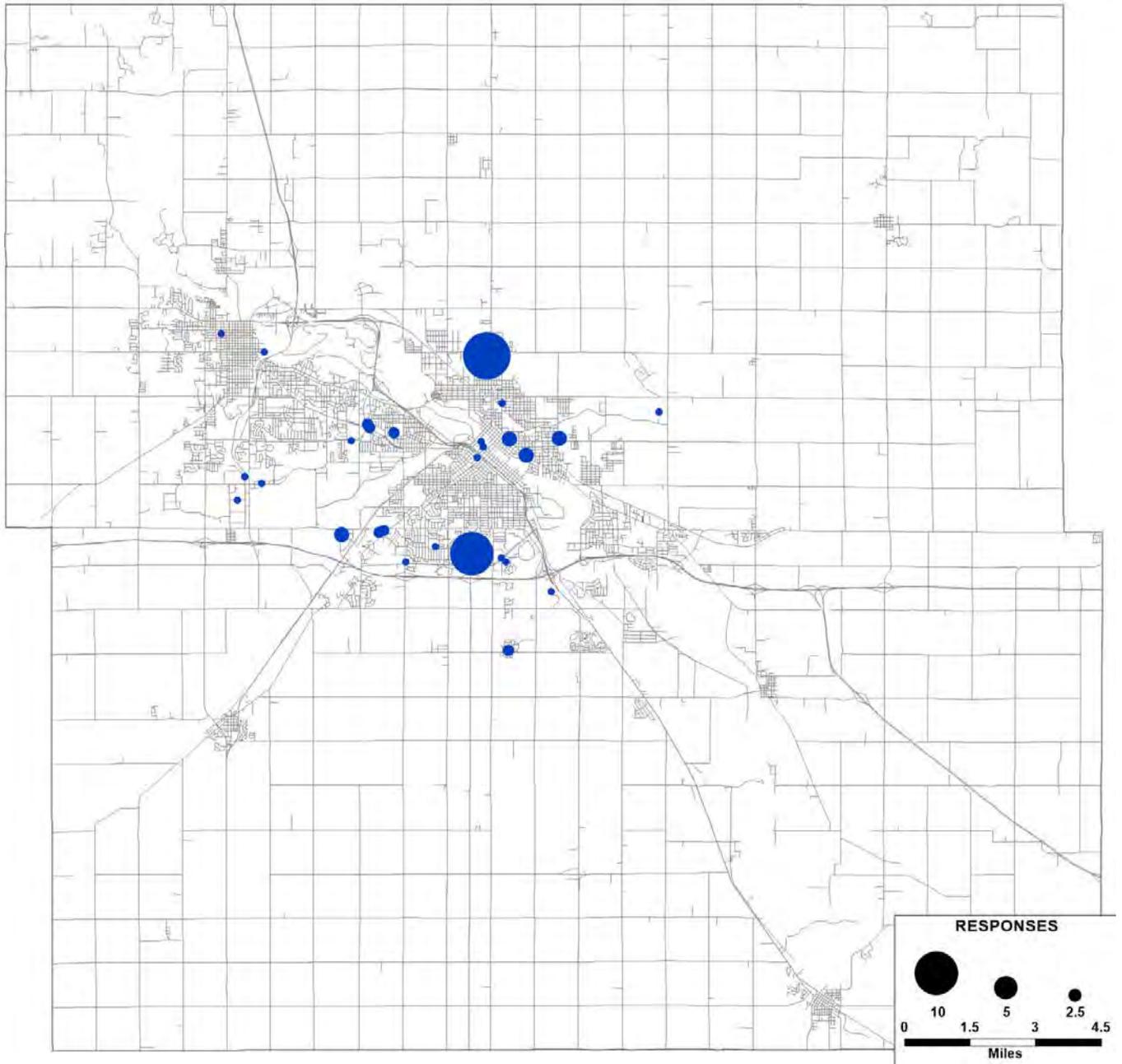
- Answered: 43
- Skipped: 7
- Number of responses: 165
- Number of destinations identified: **71**
- NR: 19



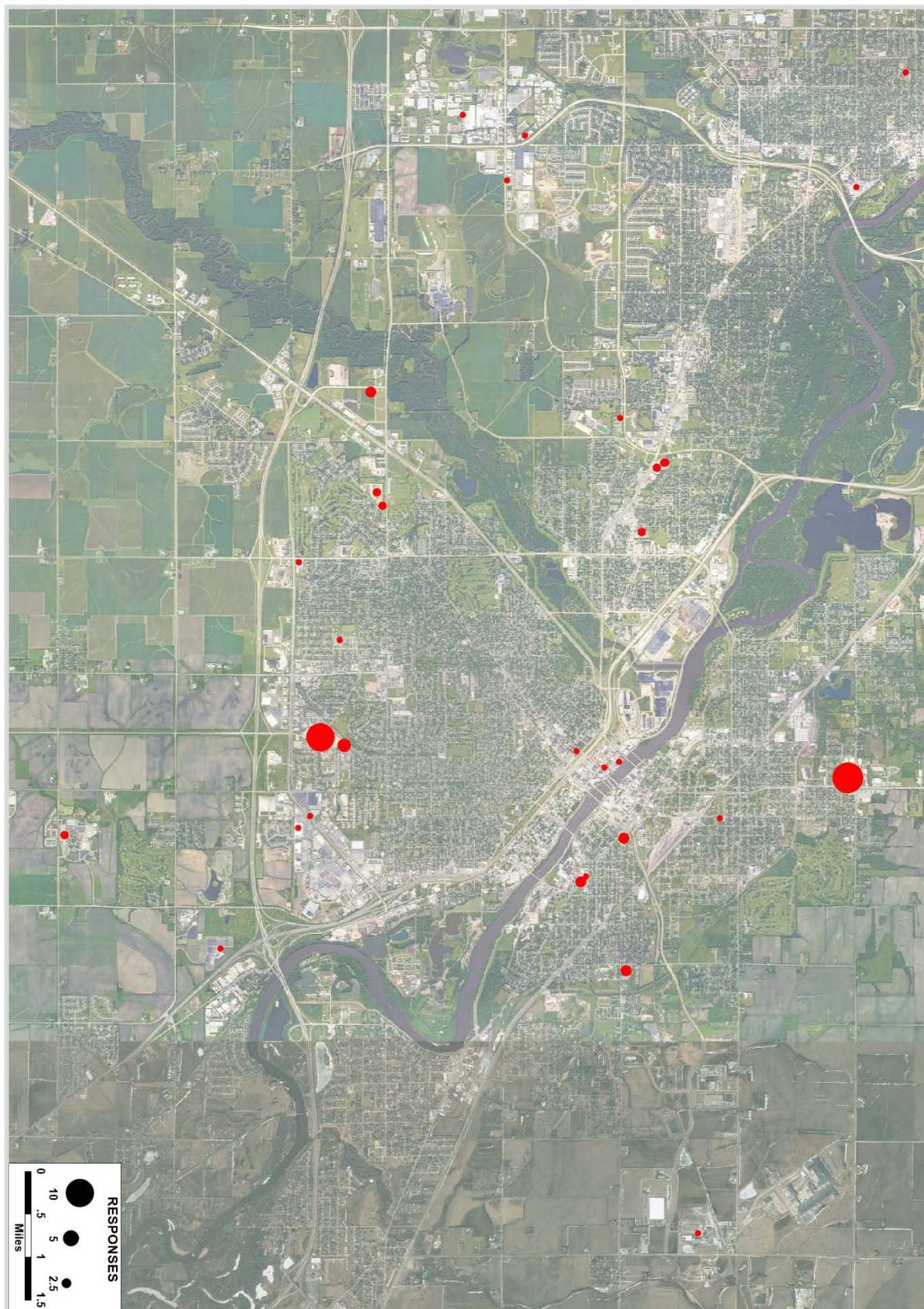
### All Destinations Identified



### Destinations in Black Hawk County



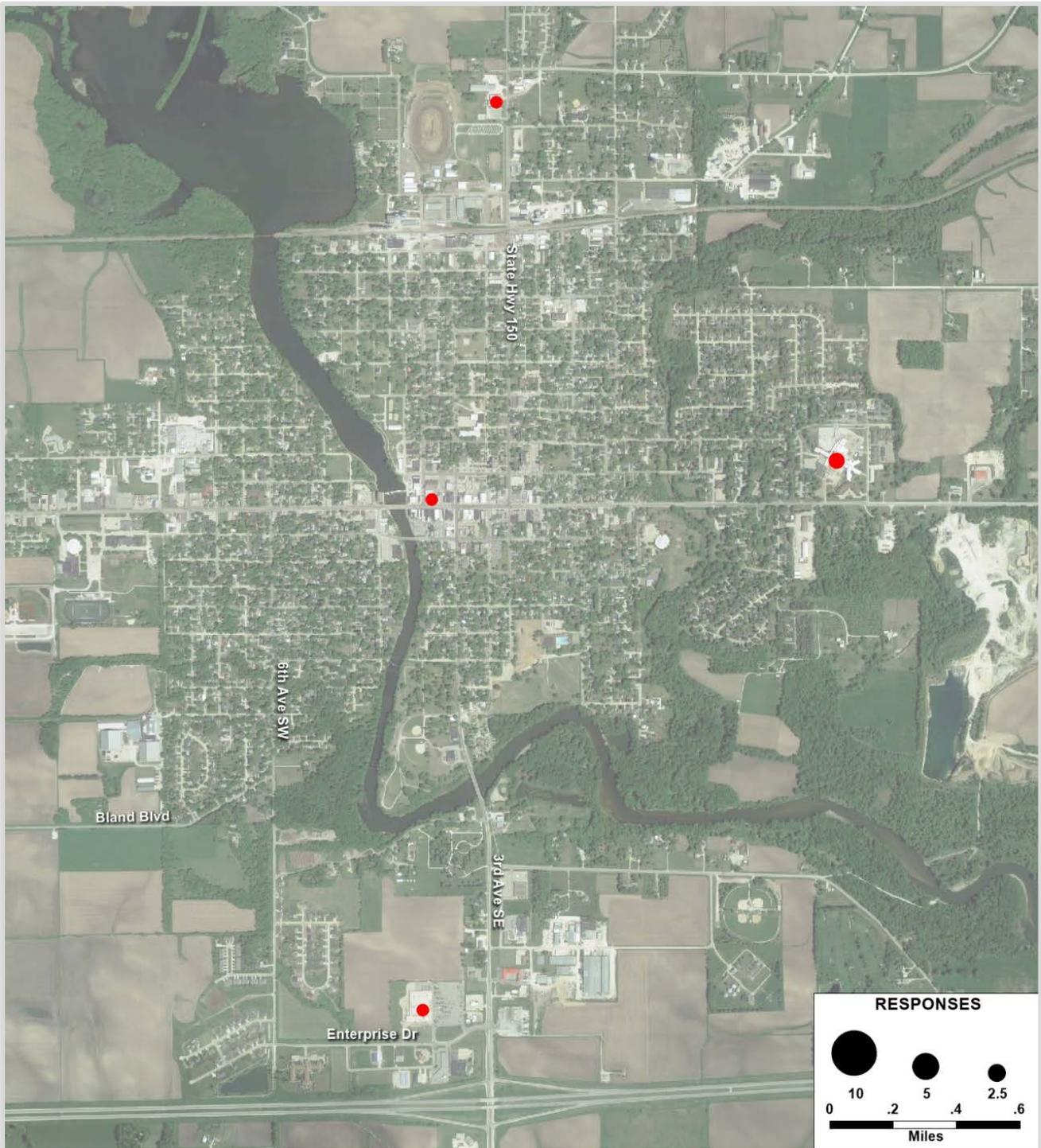
### Destinations in Waterloo/Cedar Falls



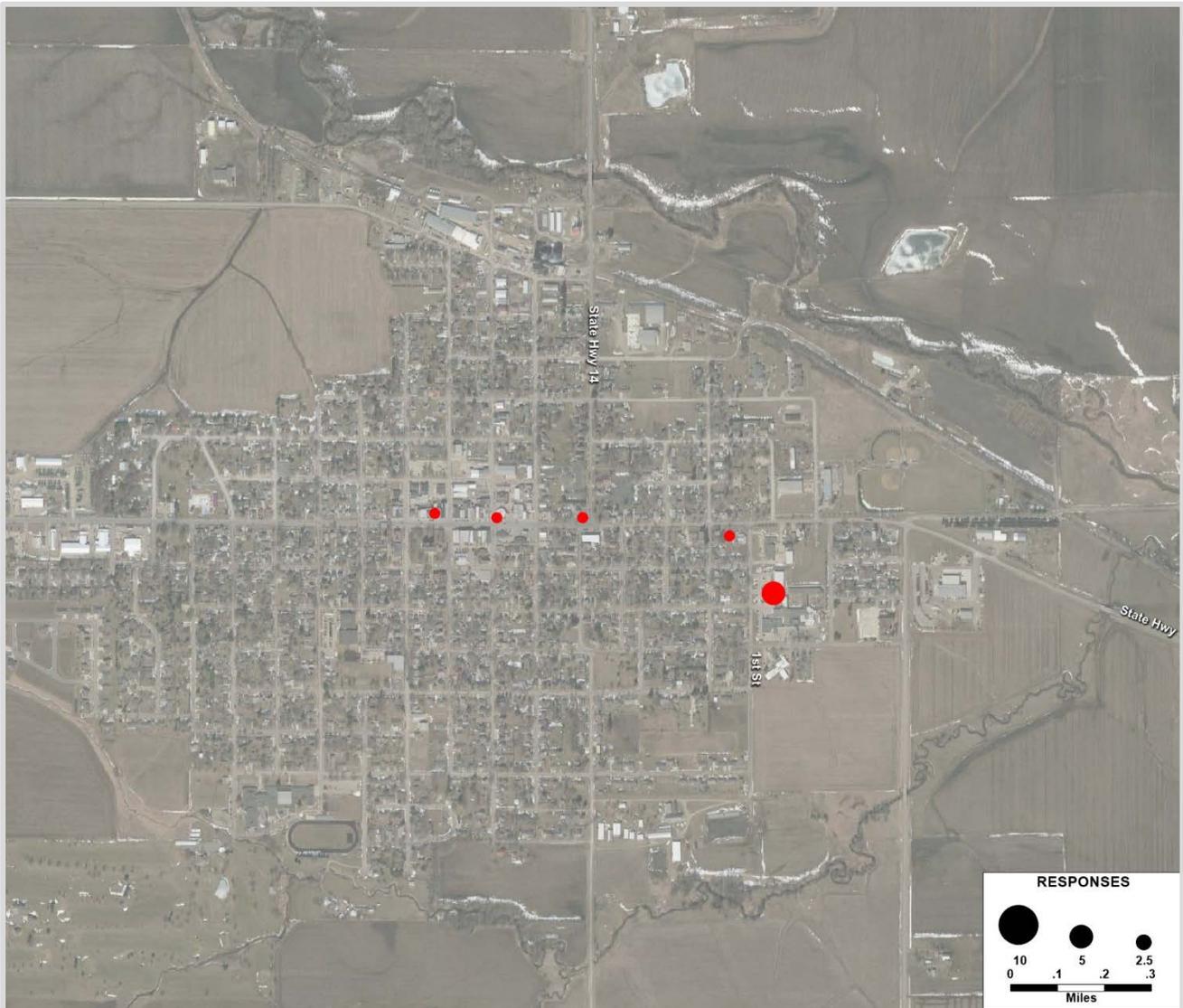
### Destinations in Waverly



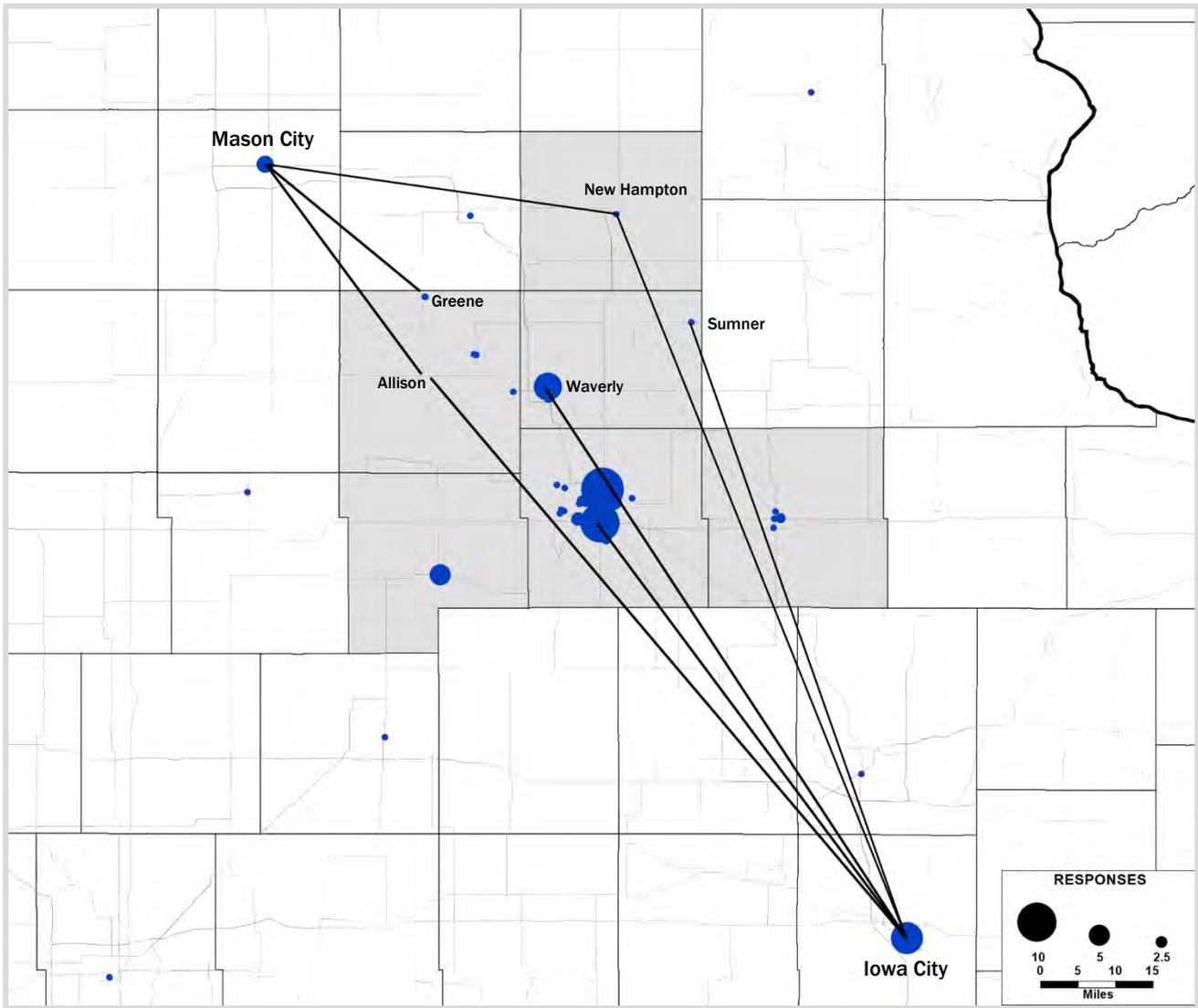
### Destinations in Independence



### Destinations in Grundy Center



### Travel Origins for Top Destinations Outside the Iowa Northland Region

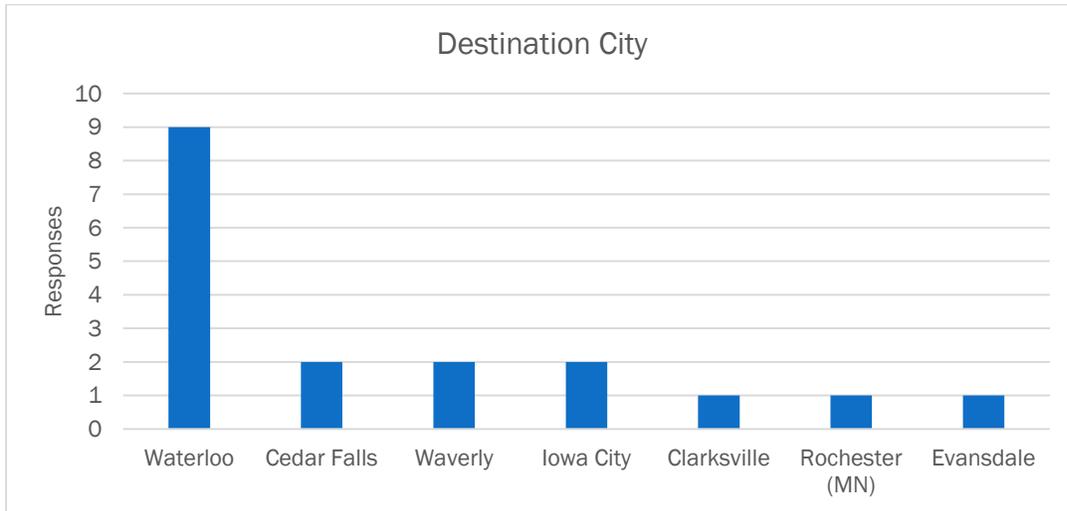


———— = 1 response

**9. List up to three additional destinations your clients would like to travel to, but currently cannot (destination & city):**

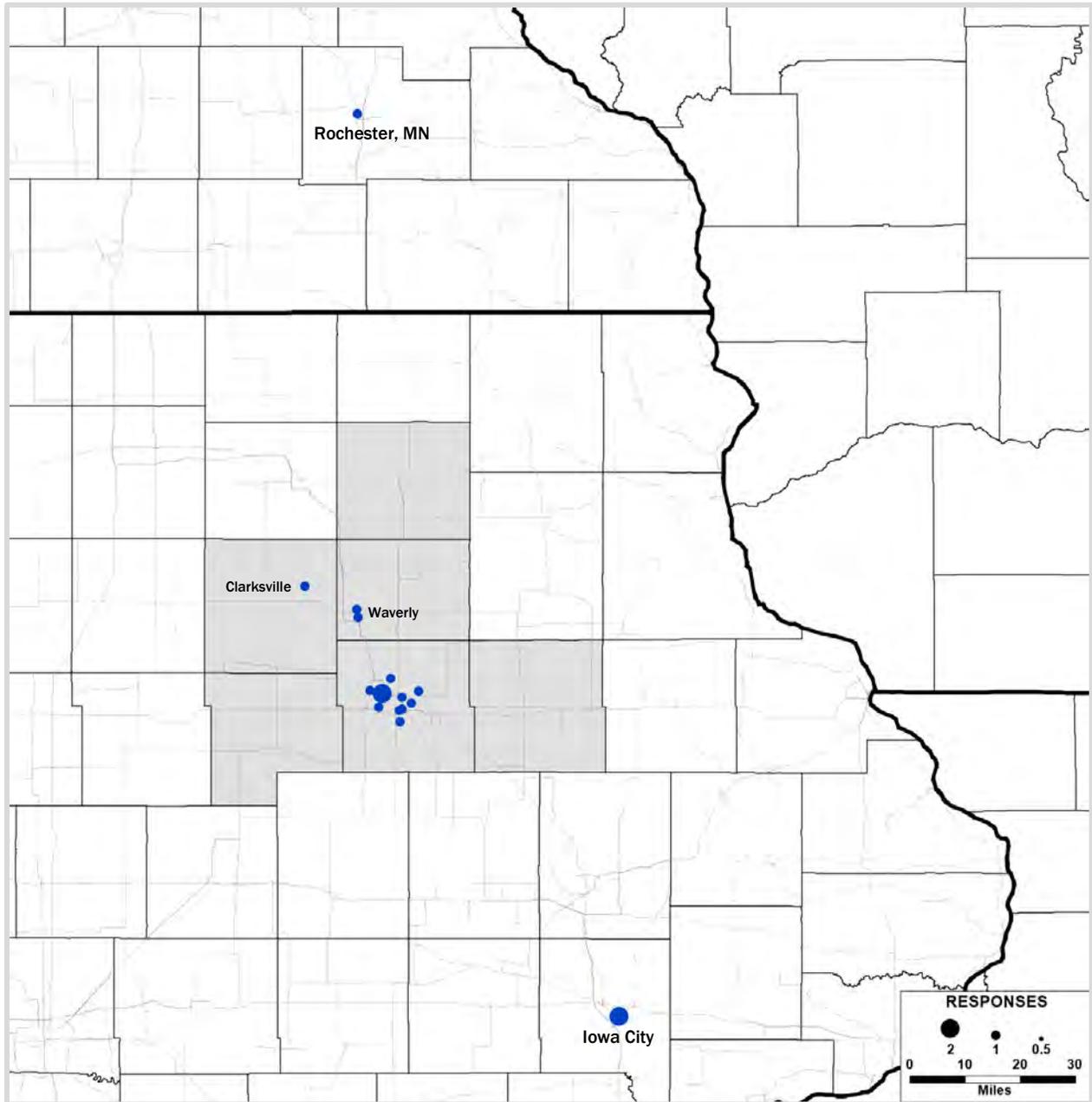
Summary

- Answered: 18
- Skipped: 32
- Number of responses: 24
- Number of destinations identified: **15**
- NR: 7



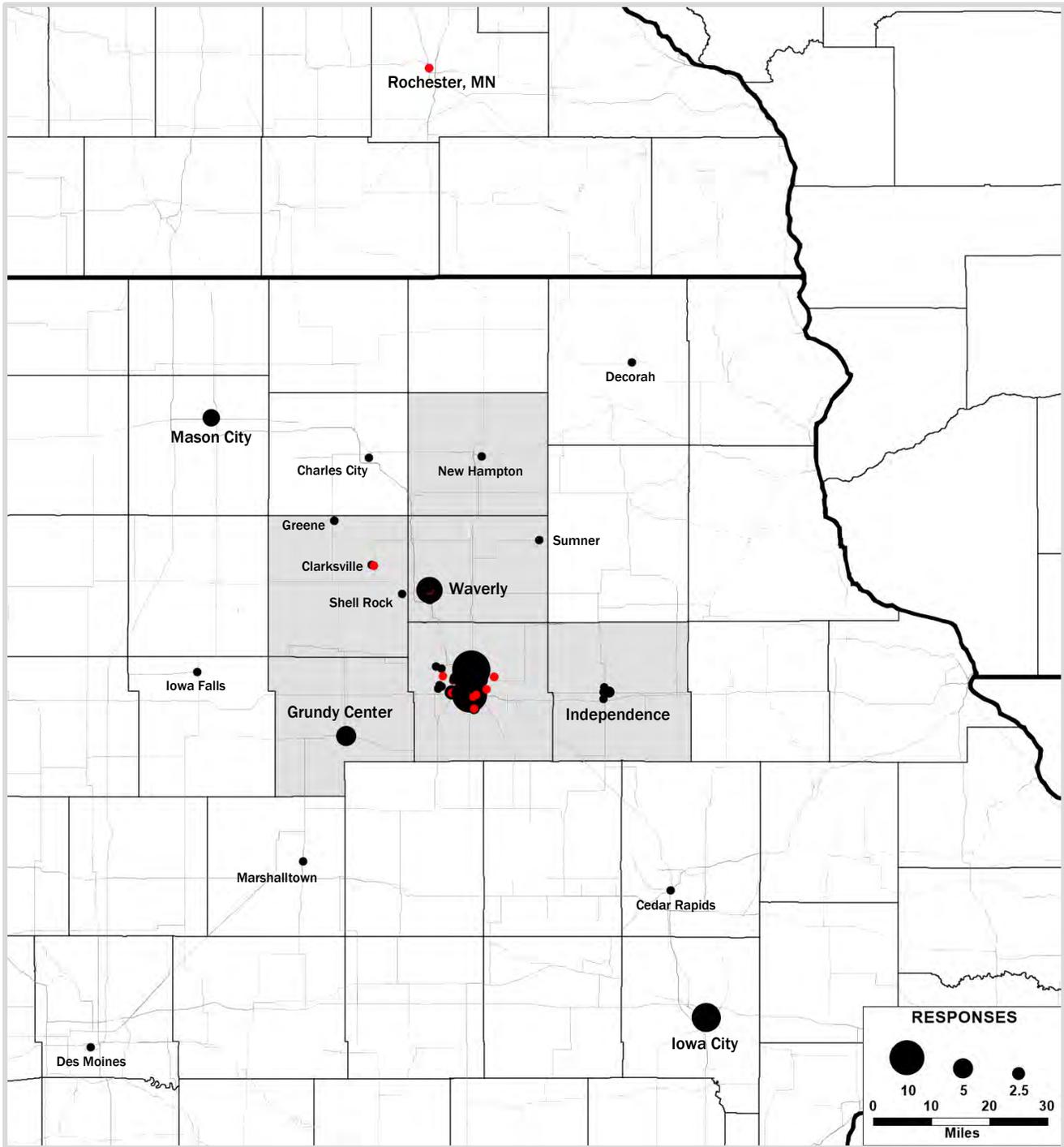
Destination	Responses
Pathways Behavioral Services, Waterloo	2
University Hospitals, Iowa City	2
Airline Hwy area, Waterloo	1
Clinic, Clarksville	1
Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo	1
Mall, Waterloo	1
Mayo Clinic, Rochester (MN)	1
Movie Theatre, Cedar Falls	1
Northeast Iowa Food Bank, Waterloo	1
Shopping, Evansdale	1
Social Security Administration, Waterloo	1
Tyson's, Waterloo	1
Walmart, Waterloo	1
Walmart, Waverly	1
Waverly Health Center, Waverly	1

### All Destinations Identified



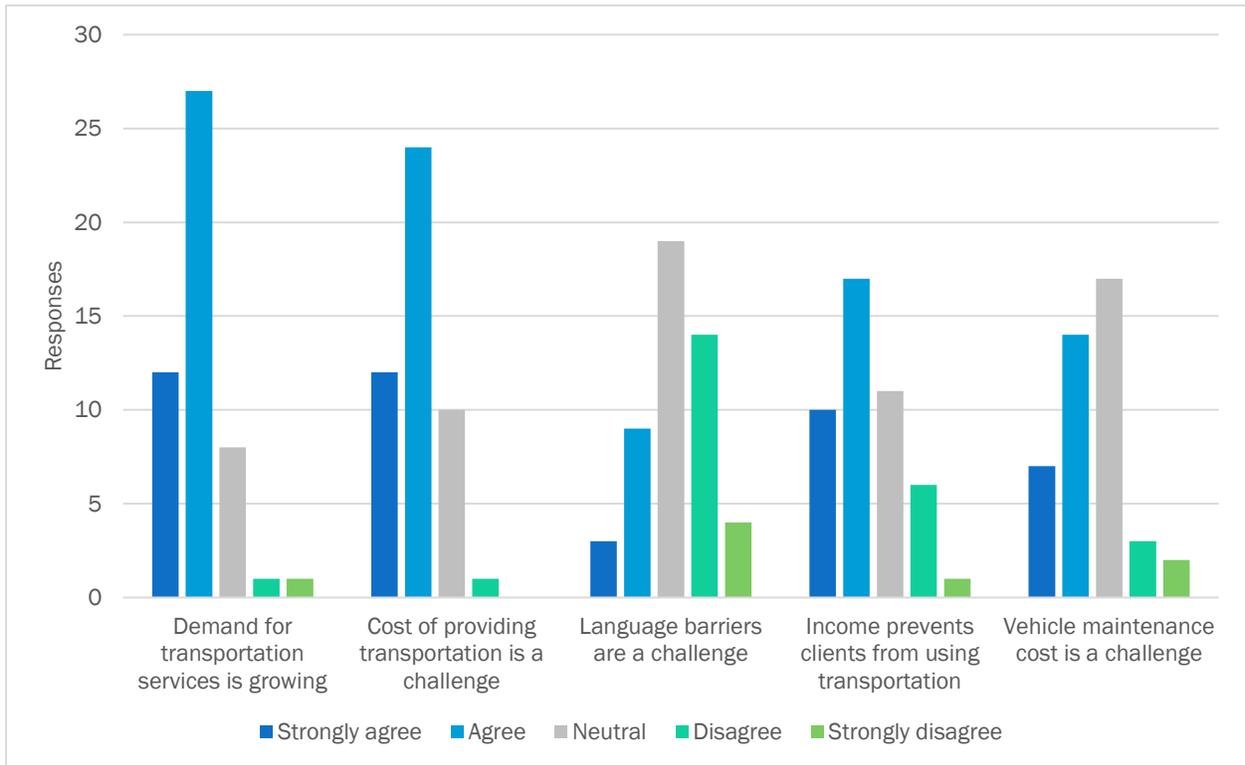


### Destinations Clients Travel To and Would Like to Travel To



- Travel To
- Would Like to Travel To

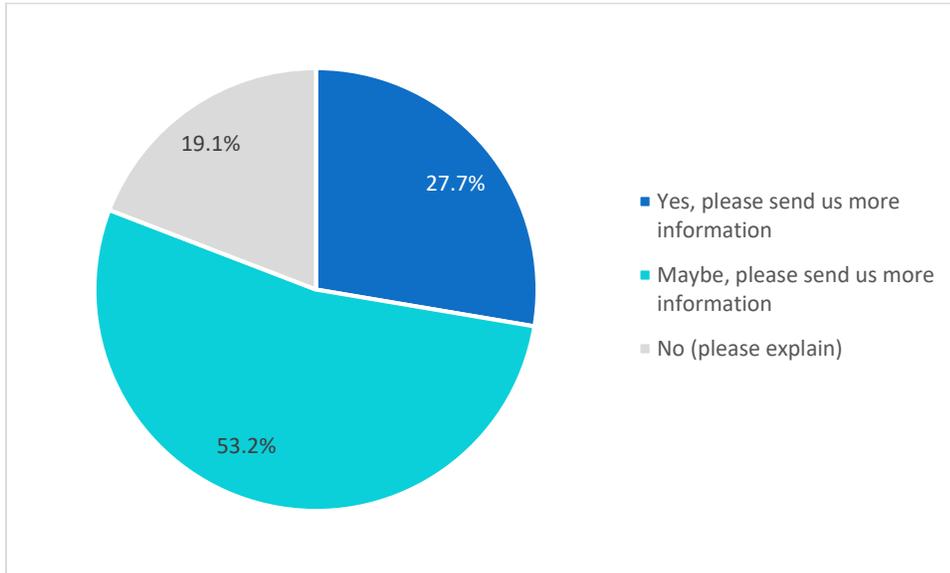
**10. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement below:**



## 11. Is your agency interested in coordinating services with the Regional Transit Commission (RTC)?

### Summary

- Answered: 47
- Skipped: 3



### Please explain responses:

- Not needed
- Not sure what you mean – we are always willing to work with the RTC. We are not responsible for making transportation arrangements for our clients.
- It is still cheaper to use our vehicle to transport than to contract.
- Most tenants can drive or find their own transportation.
- We are currently able to meet the needs of our residents with our own transportation system.
- We do not have adequate funding at this time for transit services.
- Already do.

## 12. Please describe any other challenges, concerns, or opportunities your agency is experiencing regarding transportation.

- Aside from not having extended hours for clients to get to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift jobs, safe bus stops, understanding the bus routes, faster routes – for a young mother to take her baby to daycare, then to work, then back before bus stops services limits the jobs she can have.
- We just have clients that worry about getting here. Currently we are not experiencing any issues with transportation and our clients – not that I am aware of. I know when managed care took over clients riding the bus, the numbers went down drastically. Their staff started driving clients here.
- We are a retirement community. Limited services are an optional choice such as one meal per day & lifeline both at extra costs. Rent, housekeeping, cable TV and utilities are included in monthly rent. Residents arrange for their own transportation and other services they might need such as home health care. They function independently.
- Clients want to use transportation services on the weekends. MCO transportation vendors, esp. Dolly's is a problem – late, don't pick people up, driver behavior, etc.
- We are closing our transportation services 6-30-19
- Our clients often do not have a license and/or vehicle or someone to bring them to appointments. No current public transportation in Buchanan County outside of what is provided by T19.
- Not able to transport elderly to bank, grocery store, pharmacy, church, hair appointments & doctor appointments in town.
- Evening, weekends, on demand. Clients want to use transportation services before 7 a.m. and after 5 p.m. on the weekdays, and all times on the weekends.
- Our agency does not provide transportation to our clients with the exception to families that participate in our house visiting program. This service is provided on an "as needed" situation. We do purchase bus passes for clients to use MET Transit to get to appointments and work. We have a program called "Pocket Change" that provides funding for bus passes. These funds are also used for other services to clients so we often deplete this resource quickly so we can't always provide the bus passes.
- To ensure that certain patients do actually use the transportation to attend pre-arranged medical appointments.
- Day Rehab hours are 8:30 – 2 p.m. The closer they can arrive & leave at these times the better. Right now, we have buses sitting in our lot at 7:45-7:50 and we let them in at 8:15-8:20. Long time to sit in cold waiting. Most of our customers live on limited incomes of less than \$800 a month so can't afford an in-town trip often of \$10 so out of town trips would need to be cheap as well or they will use SCL providers if in the plan or try to get natural supports to take them.
- We only had this one time with an individual where their transportation showed up 1 hour late. Their transportation was scheduled with Cozy Van.
- Mental Health Transfers – voluntary and committal. Transfers home – nursing home or otherwise.
- Finding drivers that are qualified to transport our residents.
- We currently use EPI for our fieldtrips which has followed our Federal Head Start Performance Standards which require a child restraint safety system (harness). I'm not sure who else will be able to do this so that we can have educational experiences outside our multiple facilities.
- We are looking into purchasing a fleet to provide transportation to support the people we support and our programs with cost control.
- The limited availability of the bus schedule prohibits our moms from accepting jobs with early morning or late hours. Many have had to reject job offers because of this reason. Further, bus stops are few and far between; making it especially difficult for our moms parenting young children during inclement weather.
- Our clients have vehicles that are not reliable, they don't have money to get repairs done

## APPENDIX I – PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

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- City buses have delays, which means staff are tardy for their work shift; this may eventually cause disciplinary action. Parents are usually in a rush if they are carpooling, using a personal service, or even using family/friends due to their driver needed to meet a schedule. This results in lack of information sharing when they drop of their child(ren).
- Our primary concern is transportation to and from work for individuals working second and third shift as bus routes aren't available after 6 PM.
- Our major challenge is getting fixed stops at our larger locations. I understand the difficulty in creating new stops in an already full schedule, however, this is something we could really use.
- Funding
- Multiple people going to appointments
- Free transportation to grocery store, food bank
- Nights and weekends can pose challenges for patients needing rides back to a group home or shelter setting. Often these patients do not have support systems to help provide transportation. Nights and weekends can be a challenge for transport.



December 11, 2019

Hello,

Your agency has been identified as a provider and/or user of passenger transportation, and we would appreciate a couple of minutes of your time to complete a **Passenger Transportation Survey**. This survey will help identify existing transportation services, transportation needs, and opportunities for coordinated transportation services for Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties. Information provided will be used in the Passenger Transportation Plan for the Iowa Northland Region.

A copy of the survey has been enclosed, or you may complete the survey using the link below. The survey will remain open until January 8, 2020.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PassengerTransportationSurvey>

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at (319) 235-0311 or [kdurant@inrcog.org](mailto:kdurant@inrcog.org). Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kyle Durant".

Kyle Durant  
Transportation Planner

**INRCOG | PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS**

*Developing Strong Local Government through Regional Cooperation*

229 E Park Avenue | Waterloo Iowa 50703 | P (319) 235-0311 | F (319) 235-2891 | [www.inrcog.org](http://www.inrcog.org)

**General Information**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Survey Questions**

**1. Who does your agency serve? (check all that apply)**

- Youth (under 18)
- Adults (18-64)
- Older adults (65+)
- People with disabilities
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Which of the following apply to your agency? (check all that apply)**

- We provide transportation to our clients
- We contract with another entity who provides transportation services
- We purchase transit passes for clients
- Our clients arrange their own transportation
- Our clients use MET Transit fixed route buses
- Our clients use MET Transit paratransit
- Our clients use Regional Transit Commission (RTC) buses
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Approximately how many of your clients (#) use transportation services per week? \_\_\_\_\_**

**4. Which counties and cities do your clients have transportation service to (excluding personal automobile)? (check all that apply)**

- Black Hawk County
- Bremer County
- Buchanan County
- Butler County
- Chickasaw County
- Grundy County
- Waterloo
- Cedar Falls
- Waverly
- Independence
- New Hampton
- Grundy Center
- Cedar Rapids
- Iowa City
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. How many vehicles does your agency own and/or lease to provide transportation services?**

	Wheelchair Accessible	Not Wheelchair Accessible
Bus		
Van or Minivan		
Car		

**6. What days/times do your clients use transportation services?**

	Start	End
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

**7. What days/times do your clients want to use transportation services, but currently cannot?**

	Start	End
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

**8. List up to five destinations your clients most frequently travel to:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City

**9. List up to three additional destinations your clients would like to travel to, but currently cannot:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination City

**10. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement below:**

a.) Demand for transportation services is growing at our agency.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

b.) The cost of providing transportation services is becoming increasingly challenging.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

c.) Language barriers are a challenge for many of our clients.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

d.) Our clients' income prevents them from using local transportation services as much as they would like.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

e.) The cost of maintaining our vehicles is becoming increasingly challenging.

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**11. Is your agency interested in coordinating services with the Regional Transit Commission (RTC)?  
RTC provides demand response transit service (non-fixed route) within Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan,  
Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties.**

- Yes, please send us more information
- Maybe, please send us more information
- No (please explain)

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**12. Please describe any other challenges, concerns, or opportunities your agency is experiencing regarding transportation.**

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**IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL  
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019**

**MINUTES**

Leseman called the meeting of the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Attendees:	Lorie Glover	Black Hawk County Emergency Management
	Jan Heidemann	Bremer County of the East Central Region (ECR)
	Sheila Baird	Cedar Valley United Way
	Mark Little	MET Transit
	Lon Kammeyer	MET Transit Board
	Janna Diehl	Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A)
	Codie Leseman	INRCOG

The first item was to review and consider approval of the minutes for the March 12, 2019 Transit Advisory Committee meeting. It was moved by Little, seconded by Diehl to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item was to discuss the development schedule for the FY 2020-2024 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). Leseman said the draft Plan is due February 1, 2020, and the final is due May 1, 2020. If anybody in the committee has any suggestions for topics to include in the Plan, they should contact Kyle Durant or Codie Leseman. The current PTP can be downloaded on the INRCOG website.

Next on the agenda was an update on Remix and the transit route planning project for MET. Little said there may be a presentation to the MET Transit Board in October. From there, MET and INRCOG staff can meet with the city councils of Waterloo and Cedar Falls in November, with the goal of submitting a budget request in December. Additional service may include adding a route in Cedar Falls and possible peak hour service along Airline Highway. The restructuring should result in less idle time and fewer transfers. Discussion continued about paratransit.

The next item was an update on the new ADA-compliant bus stop landings in Waterloo. Leseman said the City of Waterloo recently removed most of its bus benches in response to a letter from the Department of Justice, and installed around two dozen ADA-compliant landings at select locations. There is currently no immediate plan to replace the bus benches. INRCOG will facilitate a discussion with City departments to establish a process for reinstalling benches. This effort ties in to a contract between the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and INRCOG called SNAP-Ed which will focus on education and planning for improving walkability around low-income senior housing and congregate meal sites. INRCOG staff recently reached out to a few of the senior housing agencies, and have been told the lack of bus benches is problematic for their residents. INRCOG staff will meet with NEI3A staff next week to discuss this further.

Next on the agenda was to discuss agency and user needs and funding needs. The Cedar Valley United Way's Rally for the Valley went well, and there was substantial community support. Bremer County of the ECR is looking for a new CEO. Discussion continued about the reserving booths at the National Cattle Congress Fair.

The next item was to discuss the potential restructure of the Transit Advisory Committee. Leseman said the Black Hawk County MPO is working on updating its bylaws, and part of that includes identifying voting members for each committee. There had been discussion about creating a new committee to focus on pedestrian and bicycle issues, and one idea was to merge the Transit Advisory Committee with this new committee. The proposed new committee would meet every other month, and at least two meetings would need to focus specifically on transit issues to meet federal requirements. Little said he would be concerned about attendance if meetings last longer than an hour. Leseman said the meetings would be one hour in length from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. just before the Technical Committee

## APPENDIX II – TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

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meetings. This could also encourage attendance. There is still the concern of maintaining relevant discussion topics for the social service organizations outside of Black Hawk County. Anybody that would like to add an item to a meeting agenda should contact either Kyle Durant or Codie Leseman. We should have more direction after the MPO meeting later this week, and will report back to this committee with more information.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Codie Leseman  
Acting Secretary

**IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL  
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2019**

**MINUTES**

Durant called the meeting of the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Attendees:	Lorie Glover	Black Hawk County Emergency Management
	Nafissa Cisse-Egbuonye	Black Hawk County Health Department
	Jan Heidemann	Bremer County of the East Central Region (ECR)
	Debra Hodges Harmon	Iowa Works
	Todd Rickert	Grundy County Social Services
	Susan Backes	House of Hope
	Mark Little	MET Transit
	Lon Kammeyer	MET Transit Board
	Mike Dangan	Public
	Ben Kvigne	INRCOG/RTC
	Kyle Durant	INRCOG
	Codie Leseman	INRCOG

The first item was to review and consider approval of the minutes for the September 10, 2019 Transit Advisory Committee meeting. It was moved by Little, seconded by Glover to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item was to discuss the development schedule for the FY 2020-2024 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). Durant said the draft Plan is due February 1, 2020, and the final is due May 1, 2020. The Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) consists of transportation providers, human service organizations, and interested individuals that work cooperatively to identify transportation issues and to identify future coordination possibilities. The TAC serves as the main sounding board for passenger transportation planning issues in the region and plays an integral role in the development of the PTP. The next TAC meeting will focus on discussing the results of the Transit Providers Survey and identifying projects and initiatives for the PTP.

Next on the agenda was to review and discuss the draft Transit Providers Survey. Durant said INRCOG staff reviewed past survey results and example transit providers surveys from around the state. Past surveys have collected a wealth of transportation provider information that was limited in use for identifying transportation gaps and coordination opportunities. This draft survey is intended to collect more useful information. The survey will be available online as well as paper format. The group opted to review the draft questions one by one:

- 1. Who does your agency serve? (check all that apply)**
  - Youth (under 18)
  - Older adults (65+)
  - People with disabilities
  - Other, please specify

Backes said as worded, she would likely fill out “Other” and list “Women 18-65”. Leseman asked if the question should be open ended. Hodges Harmon said her agency serves everyone and would likely select all. Cisse-Egbuonye said this question needs to engage all survey takers. It was recommended to add a category “Adults 18-64”.

**2. Which of the following apply to your agency? (check all that apply)**

- We provide transportation to our clients
- We contract with another entity who provides transportation services
- We purchase transit passes for clients
- Our clients arrange their own transportation
- Our clients use MET Transit fixed route buses
- Our clients use MET Transit paratransit
- Our clients use RTC buses
- Other, please specify

Backes recommended spelling out Regional Transit Commission, and providing a brief explanation of what RTC is.

**3. Approximately how many of your clients use transportation services per week?**

Heidemann suggested that the question specify a number (#).

**4. Which counties and cities do your clients have transportation service to?**

- Black Hawk County
- Bremer County
- Buchanan County
- Butler County
- Chickasaw County
- Grundy County
- Waterloo
- Cedar Falls
- Waverly
- Independence
- New Hampton
- Grundy Center
- Other, please specify

Durant recommended adding “check all that apply”. Discussion ensued regarding the wording of the question. Backes suggested adding in parentheses “all transportation except personal automobile”. Kvigne recommended adding “Cedar Rapids” and “Iowa City” as options.

**5. How many vehicles does your agency own to provide transportation services?**

	Wheelchair Accessible	Not Wheelchair Accessible
Bus		
Van or Minivan		
Car		

Glover recommended adding “and/or lease” to the question.

**6. What days/times do your clients use transportation services?**

	Start	End
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

**7. What days/times do your clients want to use transportation services, but currently cannot?**

	Start	End
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Leseman said questions six and seven are new to the survey. Responses can be analyzed in GIS to potentially identify patterns. No changes were recommended.

- 8. List up to five destinations your clients most frequently travel to.**
- 9. List up to three additional destinations your clients would like to travel to, but currently cannot.**

No changes were recommended for questions eight and nine.

- 10. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement below (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree)**
  - a.) Demand for transportation services is growing at our agency.**
  - b.) The cost of providing transportation services is becoming increasingly burdensome.**
  - c.) Language barriers are a challenge for many of our clients.**
  - d.) Our clients' low income prevents them from travelling as much as they would like.**
  - e.) Maintaining our vehicles is becoming increasingly challenging.**

For question 10b, Glover recommended changing the word “burdensome” to “challenging”. For question 10d, Cisse-Egbuonye recommended removing the word “low”. Heidemann said as worded, travel could be misinterpreted as long-distance vacation travel. It was recommended to reword question 10d to “Our clients income prevents them from using local transportation services as much as they would like.” For question 10e, Heidemann recommended changing the wording to “The cost of maintaining...”

- 11. Is your agency interested in coordinating services with RTC?**
  - Yes, please send us more information**
  - Maybe, please send us more information**
  - No**

Backes recommended adding an explanation of what RTC is. Heidemann recommended changing the wording to “No, please explain.”

It was recommended by the group to add “Your Name” as well as a best way to contact the person completing the survey.

The next item was to discuss the potential and need for a Large Employer Public Transit survey. Durant said that in 2018, Grow Cedar Valley conducted a survey of businesses in the Airline Highway Industrial Area. Leseman said this was a follow-up to a survey that Grow Cedar Valley had conducted in 2017 which found that public transit was ranked the lowest of all community services in the six-county area surveyed. INRCOG staff have discussed the idea of conducting a similar survey of larger businesses in the region as part of the FY 2020-2024 PTP. With the draft document being due in February 2020, staff are recommending delaying this survey until summer 2020, at the earliest. This will allow for additional time to develop the ideal survey methodology.

Next was an update on new ADA-compliant bus stop landings in Waterloo. Leseman said the City of Waterloo recently removed its bus benches in response to a letter from the Department of Justice, and installed around two dozen ADA-compliant landings at select locations. The City installed temporary benches at select locations to provide seating through the winter. The City plans to request proposals from businesses to construct and maintain bus shelters, with the opportunity for advertising on said benches. This effort also ties into a contract between the Iowa Department of Public Health and INRCOG called SNAP-Ed which will focus on education and planning for improving walkability around low-income senior housing and congregate meal sites.

The next item was a presentation on MET Transit Fixed Route restructuring. Leseman provided a presentation which was recently provided to the MET Transit Board, the Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board and Technical

## APPENDIX II – TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

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Committee, and the Waterloo City Council. Little said there would be some trade-off with the route restructuring, as some areas of Waterloo and Cedar Falls would no longer be covered, and persons with mobility devices may need to utilize MET Paratransit services which would be a higher cost to the user.

Next was to discuss agency and user needs, coordination issues, and funding needs. No updates were provided.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Codie Leseman  
Acting Secretary

**IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL  
TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020**

**MINUTES**

Durant called the meeting of the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) to order at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Attendees:	Lisa Sesterhenn	Black Hawk County Health Department
	Sheila Baird	Cedar Valley United Way
	Kyle Clabby-Kane	Iowa Works
	Debra Hodges Harmon	Iowa Works
	Todd Rickert	Grundy County Social Services
	Susan Backes	House of Hope
	Mark Little	MET Transit
	Lon Kammeyer	MET Transit Board
	Ben Kvigne	INRCOG/RTC
	Kyle Durant	INRCOG
	Codie Leseman	INRCOG

The first item was to review and consider approval of the minutes for the November 26, 2019 Transit Advisory Committee meeting. It was moved by Hodges Harmon, seconded by Baird to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item was to review and discuss results of the Passenger Transportation Survey. Durant presented information from the Passenger Transportation Survey Report. The purpose of the survey was to help identify existing transportation services, transportation needs, and opportunities for coordinated services in the Iowa Northland Region. Surveys were sent to assisted living facilities, retirement communities, hospitals, clinics, human service agencies, taxi services, and transit providers in the region. It was decided not to send the survey to daycares and religious organizations, which had been done so in the past. A total of 50 responses were received. Durant briefly went over each survey question and the responses. Common needs and coordination issues identified include the following:

- Transportation services are provided most often Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Clients want to use transportation services, but currently cannot during the weekends, mostly from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Waverly and Grundy Center are the top destination cities outside of the metropolitan area
- The top seven most frequently traveled to destinations are all hospitals/mental health facilities; #3 are University Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City
- The top two destinations clients would like to travel to, but currently cannot are University Hospitals in Iowa City, and Pathways Behavioral Services in Waterloo
- The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota was identified as a current destination and a desired destination
- 81 percent of respondents agree that the demand for transportation services is growing at their agency
- 78 percent of respondents agree that the cost of providing transportation services is becoming increasingly challenging
- 61 percent of respondents agree that their clients' income prevents them from using local transportation services as much as they would like
- 49 percent of respondents agree that the cost of maintaining their vehicles is becoming increasingly challenging
- 38 percent of respondents disagreed that language barriers are a challenge for many of their clients
- Limited transportation service availability weekday nights and on weekends has a negative impact on clients

## APPENDIX II – TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

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Next on the agenda was to review the draft 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). Durant briefly went over each section of the draft document. Section IV – Priorities and Strategies will be completed using discussion from today's meeting. The draft document is due to the Iowa DOT by February 1, and the final document is due May 1.

The next item was to identify goals and objectives for the 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan. Durant said the goal for the 2015-2019 PTP was to *“Ensure that the public has access to safe, reliable, convenient, and efficient transit systems, placing special emphasis on providing transit service for those that are most dependent on transit.”* The group agreed to carry this goal forward to the 2021-2025 PTP.

Durant presented a list of potential objectives. The group agreed to the following objectives:

- Promote and improve the image of the public transit system
- Build awareness of the existing public transportation system through education and marketing
- Enhance the efficiency of the public transit system
- Improve accessibility and availability of public transit
- Improve fleet conditions and reliability
- Improve transportation to medical appointments
- Coordinate transportation planning and services with other community organizations and workforce development

Next was to identify transportation investment strategies and projects for the 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan, focusing on meaningful priorities and strategies that could meet identified needs and eventually lead to projects. Durant presented a list of potential objectives. Discussion continued about the 2015 Special Outreach Survey to non-English speaking and homeless residents. The group agreed to the following projects and initiatives:

- MET Transit: Preventative Maintenance – Section 5310 Funding
- MET Transit: Route Restructuring
- MET Transit: Ambassador Program (train the trainer)
- MET Transit and RTC: Joint Mobility Coordinator and Marketing Person
- MET Transit: Extend weekday service hours and weekend hours
- MET Transit: Transit audits for the metropolitan area
- MET Transit: Hold a free ride event (try us out!)
- RTC: Passenger Transportation Survey for businesses in the region
- RTC: Develop a marketing strategy
- RTC: Increase outreach with partnering groups, agencies, and companies
- RTC: Vanpools to businesses and medical facilities in the region and outside of the region
- Winter maintenance of bus stops in the metropolitan area
- Create a “Day in the Life” video of challenges for persons using public transit
- Improve accommodations at bus stops in the metropolitan area
- Develop a marketing plan/strategy of existing services for the TAC
- Conduct a follow-up Special Outreach Survey for non-English speaking and homeless residents

Durant said he would email the goal, objectives, and projects and initiatives to the group. Suggested changes or additions should be submitted by February 12, 2020. Comments on the draft 2021-2025 Passenger Transportation Plan should be submitted by February 28, 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Codie Leseman  
Acting Secretary

## APPENDIX III – LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ANALYSIS

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The purpose of this Limited English Proficiency (LEP) analysis is to outline how MET Transit and RTC identify persons who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available. As defined in Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. This analysis provides a more detailed analysis of the LEP population in the region and ways to assist that population. MET Transit has also adopted an LEP Plan within their Title VI Program that was approved in 2019.

This LEP analysis utilizes the framework of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s four-factor LEP analysis which considers the following elements:

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

### LEP Analysis

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

The 2017 and 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-year Estimates were utilized to determine what percentage of the region’s population could be considered LEP. For the purposes of this analysis, “Limited English-Speaking Households” data were utilized. The following table shows limited English-speaking households, and the population speaking English less than “very well”, by County.

As shown in the table, as well as on Map 2.3, the percentage of the population in the region that has limited English-speaking proficiency is low. The Waterloo/Cedar Falls metropolitan area has the most linguistic diversity. New Hampton and Waverly also show larger percentages of LEP persons than the region as a whole.

#### **Limited English-speaking Households, by County**

	Black Hawk	Bremer	Buchanan	Butler	Chickasaw	Grundy
All households	52,811	9,445	8,212	6,278	5,298	5,155
Limited English-speaking households	975	34	18	0	36	3
Percent limited English-speaking households	1.8%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

APPENDIX III – LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ANALYSIS

Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English, by County

	Black Hawk	Bremer	Buchanan	Butler	Chickasaw	Grundy
Total Population	124,243	23,246	19,600	14,050	11,531	11,613
Spanish/Spanish Creole	3,641	245	209	35	251	95
Speak English less than “very well”	1,137	101	99	4	80	14
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	281	4	31	7	3	11
Speak English less than “very well”	56	0	6	0	0	7
French Creole	8	9	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italian	76	2	0	0	0	4
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	4
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	4	4	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
German	414	183	780	117	14	80
Speak English less than “very well”	76	0	28	10	1	2
Yiddish	0	0	0	8	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other West Germanic languages	94	0	7	1	116	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	28	0
Scandinavian languages	94	9	6	0	7	10
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greek	45	0	19	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	8	0	0	0
Russian	11	10	27	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	10	12	0	0	0
Polish	72	2	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	26	0	0	0	0	0
Serbo-Croatian	2,130	7	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	1,031	0	0	0	0	0
Other Slavic languages	42	0	11	0	27	2
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	3	0	0	0
Armenian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Persian	28	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	15	0	0	0	0	0
Gujarati	116	0	6	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	28	0	6	0	0	0
Hindi	0	0	19	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	19	0	0	0
Urdu	257	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	57	0	0	0	0	0
Other Indic languages	135	12	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	21	12	0	0	0	0
Other Indo-European languages	23	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese	204	14	22	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	125	14	15	0	0	0
Japanese	53	32	2	9	0	3
Speak English less than “very well”	14	24	0	0	0	0
Korean	43	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	34	0	0	0	0	0
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	0	0	5	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	5	0	0	0
Hmong	6	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thai	22	12	0	0	0	6
Speak English less than “very well”	7	0	0	0	0	0
Laotian	65	47	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	55	26	0	0	0	0

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	Black Hawk	Bremer	Buchanan	Butler	Chickasaw	Grundy
Vietnamese	265	18	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	161	12	0	0	0	0
Other Asian languages	367	0	1	44	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	113	0	1	0	0	0
Tagalog	88	32	0	6	31	0
Speak English less than “very well”	59	7	0	6	0	0
Other Pacific Island languages	12	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Navajo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Native North American languages	11	0	0	0	7	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hungarian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arabic	470	12	0	0	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	257	0	0	0	0	0
Hebrew	0	0	0	5	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	0	0	0	0	0	0
African languages	73	58	9	3	0	0
Speak English less than “very well”	27	38	0	0	0	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

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

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

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

While the overwhelming majority of the population (97.8%) speaks English only or speaks English “very well”, there are areas within the Waterloo and Cedar Falls metropolitan area with higher percentages of LEP individuals. These areas are currently served by the MET Transit fixed route system.

In general, there are limited social, service, professional, and leadership organizations within the region that focus on outreach to LEP persons. Services provided by MET Transit that are most likely to encounter LEP individuals are the fixed route system which serves the general public and the paratransit (dial-a-ride) system which serves senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Service provided by RTC that is most likely to encounter LEP individuals is its demand-response service which is open to the general public but primarily serves senior citizens and persons with disabilities. In addition, LEP persons may call the INRCOG office to request transit services. INRCOG has a contract with Language Link which provides telephone interpreting service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

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

MET Transit and RTC have considered their available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance, including how much a professional interpreter and translation service would cost on an as-needed

basis, which documents would be the most valuable to be translated if the need should arise, and completing an inventory of available organizations that MET Transit or RTC could partner with for outreach and translation efforts. The amount of staff and vehicle operating training that might be needed have also been considered. Based on the needs and costs identified by the four-factor analysis, MET Transit and RTC have developed the following guidelines for identifying and assisting LEP persons:

1. Identifying LEP Persons
  - a. Examine records to see if requests for language assistance have been received in the past, either at meetings or over the phone, to determine whether language assistance might be needed at future events.
  - b. When MET Transit or RTC sponsor an event, have a staff person greet participants as they arrive. By informally engaging participants in conversation, it is possible to gauge each attendee's ability to speak and understand English.
  - c. Have Census Bureau Language Identification Flashcards available at MET Transit and RTC events near the registration table. Individuals self-identifying as persons not proficient in English may not be able to be accommodated with translation assistance at the event, but it will assist the sponsoring agency in identifying language assistance needs for future events.
  - d. Have Language Identification Flashcards on transit vehicles to assist vehicle operators in identifying specific language assistance needs of passengers. If such individuals are encountered, vehicle operators will be instructed to try to obtain contact information to give to the transit system manager for follow-up. Dispatchers and schedulers may also be instructed to obtain contact information from LEP individuals they encounter, either in person or over the phone.
  - e. Vehicle operators and other front-line staff, such as dispatchers, may be surveyed annually on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year. For MET Transit, this survey is conducted in October each year.
2. Language Assistance Measures
  - a. Have Language Identification Flashcards available.
  - b. Provide translation services to individuals who request them, if reasonable accommodations can be made.
  - c. When the MET Transit website is redesigned, a feature will be added to allow an LEP person to contact staff via email indicating their native language and the type of assistance needed.
  - d. Include a statement on all documents, agendas, and meeting notices that assistance is available for LEP persons. When an interpreter is needed, in person or on the telephone, staff will attempt to determine what language is required and then contact Language Link which provides telephone interpreting service. Available resources to identify what language is being used include Language Identification Cards and Google Translator. Documents will be translated into other languages upon request.
  - e. The MET Title VI Policy and Limited English Proficiency Plan will be posted in both English and Spanish on the agency website, doors of the main office and central transfer buildings, and on all transit vehicles.
3. Staff Training
  - a. Information on MET Transit and RTC's Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities.
  - b. Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
  - c. Use of the Language Identification Flashcards.
  - d. Documentation of language assistance requests.
  - e. How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.
4. Outreach Techniques

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- a. When staff prepare a document or schedule a meeting for which the target audience is expected to include LEP individuals, then documents, meeting notices, flyers, and agendas may be printed in an alternative language based on the known LEP population.
  - b. Bus schedules, maps, and other transit publications may be made available in an alternative language if and when a specific and concentrated LEP population is identified.
  - c. MET Transit's policy regarding public participation activities
    - i. Meetings are scheduled at various times/days during service hours, with meeting locations easily accessible and on a bus route.
    - ii. Meeting notice is in English and Spanish, and includes a statement that translation service is available upon request.
    - iii. Meeting notice is posted in transit station and transfer locations, on buses, at City Halls, and on the MET Transit website.
    - iv. In an effort to further target low income, minority, and LEP populations, meeting notices are televised on City cable channel.
    - v. Community, educational, social, and/or faith-based partners that are actively involved with low income/minority/LEP populations are notified and their assistance with outreach is requested.
    - vi. Public input opportunities include both written and oral commentary.
5. Monitoring and Updating LEP Efforts
- a. The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually.
  - b. How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
  - c. Determine the current LEP population in the service area.
  - d. Determine whether the need for translation services has changed.
  - e. Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.
  - f. Determine whether the transit system's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
  - g. Determine whether MET Transit and RTC have fully complied with their LEP goals.
  - h. Determine whether complaints have been received concerning the agency's failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals.
6. Dissemination of LEP Plan
- a. A link to the MET Transit Title VI Plan will be included on the website, [www.mettransit.org](http://www.mettransit.org). A link to the INRCOG Title VI Plan will be included on the website, [www.inrcog.org](http://www.inrcog.org).
  - b. Any person may request a copy of the plans via telephone, fax, mail, or in person, and shall be provided a copy at no cost.
  - c. LEP individuals may request a translated copy of the plans which MET Transit and INRCOG will provide, if feasible.

Questions or comments regarding the LEP Plans or Title VI Plans for MET Transit and INRCOG may be submitted to the following individuals:

Mark Little  
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Metropolitan Transit Authority  
1515 Black Hawk St.  
Waterloo, IA 50702  
Phone: (319) 234-5714, ext. 101  
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