

PUBLIC TRANSIT NEWSLETTER

September 2024

FTA RELAUNCHES ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS PORTAL

At FTA's Earth Day event on April 22, 2024, FTA Acting Administrator Veronica Vanterpool announced the relaunch of FTA's Environmental and Sustainability Management System (ESMS) program. The training and technical assistance program will help up to five transit agencies develop and implement an ESMS at their facilities. An ESMS is a set of management processes and procedures that allows an organization to analyze, control and reduce the environmental impact of its activities, products and services, and operate with a greater efficiency and control. The program includes an on-site baseline environmental review, three virtual workshops, a virtual gap audit and an on-site final audit.

Transit agencies interested in applying for the program should submit a signed letter of application by May 22, 2024, as outlined in the application instructions. More information about the program, reports of past rounds, and a suite of ESMS resources can be found on FTA's ESMS website.

CALENDAR - STATE FISCAL YEAR (JULY 1 - JUNE 30)

OCTOBER

- 1 Intercity Bus Applications due
- 1 ICAAP Application due to Systems Planning Bureau
- 1 STA Special Project applications due
- 25 Regional/Small Urban System Quarterly Report due
- 30 1st Quarter Fuel Tax Report due
- 30 Regional/Small Urban System DBE (April – Sept.) Semi-Annual Reports due
- 30 Large Urban System Quarterly Charter Report due to FTA
- 30 Large Urban Quarterly TrAMS Report (if in TMA) due to FTA
- 30 Large Urban Annual TrAMS Reports (if in 50,000 – 200,00 UZA) due to FTA

NOVEMBER

- 15 1st Quarter Statistical Report due
- 30 Large Urban NTD Reports due to NTD

DECEMBER

- 1 Large Urban System DBE (April – Sept.) Semi-Annual Report due to FTA

*****THIS FULL CALENDAR CAN BE FOUND IN THE TRANIST MANAGER'S HANDBOOK**

<https://iowadot.gov/transit/handbook/TMHandbookBinder.pdf>



NEEDED!!! UPDATED PUBLIC TRANSIT BUS PHOTOS



We would like to update our files to include pictures of more modern public transit vehicles to use for Power Point Presentations, etc. As you can see by the picture above our files are very outdated. These photos can include just the bus, bus with people, just use your imagination. Please submit your photos to amy.colwell@iowadot.us Thank you!!!

KRISTIN'S KEYWORDS

Hello, September! Fall is my favorite season, so I am happy to see this month on the calendar. I love autumn for its cooler temperatures, changing colors, football (Go Cyclones! And 49ers! And all Midwest NFL teams!), and anticipation of my favorite holidays of the year.

This year, September was a welcome sight on our work calendars because it meant we got through our latest State Management Review (SMR)! The FTA and its contracted review teams conduct SMRs of state DOTs every three years. The Public Transit Team began answering questions for the FTA-contracted reviewers back in January and February, had an in-person training with the reviewers in March, and participated in the on-site SMR August 27-29. As expected, we had a few deficiencies to correct – four to be exact – but most of them will be easy and quick to fix. I would like to thank those transit agencies chosen for visits by the reviewers as part of this process for your availability, preparation, and cooperation: Dylan Schulte/Mason City Transit, Mark Newberg/PeopleRides, Dennis Hart/Clinton MTA, and Brock Grenis/CorridorRides. We approach the SMRs as a learning experience. Take the input, improve, and move forward. Let's move forward!

I also like Fall on our work schedule. It is exciting to review the STA Special Project applications to see what new, innovative projects and partnerships you and your fellow public transit agencies are proposing. Reviewing the Intercity Bus applications can also be gratifying as we know our recommendations for funding can

mean many trips connecting to points around the country for passengers who may not have the means or ability to travel any other way. Keep in mind that transit agencies are eligible to apply for Intercity Bus funding to provide services connecting to the national transportation network. If interested, both applications are available through BlackCat and are due October 1.

Fall, too, means the start of year-end financial and statistical reviews. Sometimes these reviews can look like that yard full of leaves to be raked. No one wants to do the raking, but the yard looks so good when it's done. As we start our FY24 yearend reviews this Fall, I encourage all of you - DOT staff and transit managers alike - to remember how good it will feel when they're done! I anticipate the FY24 yearend reviews to be finished earlier than FY23; Laura and Matt now both have a year-plus transit experience and I'll be in a supporting role to help. the sooner they are done, the sooner next year's STA and FTA formula dollar projections can be calculated next Spring. The information we gather through these reviews help us do our annual reporting to the National Transit Database.

In July, we learned Iowa was not selected for either competitive FTA 5339 bus and bus facilities or low-no emission grant. These are highly competitive, over-subscribed programs and we have been very fortunate to have been funded for multiple years in a row. We have been told our regular bus and bus facilities grant was highly rated, just not chosen for the award. For the low-no emission grant, we participated in a de-brief with the FTA contact for the

program to determine ways we could improve our position in future applications. We received comments on the demonstration of benefits and local financial commitment sections as areas for improvement. Emma will work with the participating transit agencies next year on those, and all areas so we are more competitive for funding selection.

The Iowa DOT Public Transit Team will present at the IPTA Mid-Year Meeting on October 7 in Ankeny. If there are any topics you'd like us to cover specifically during that presentation, please let me know. In the meantime, enjoy the season of Fall. Thank you for all you do for public transit in Iowa.

- *Kristin*

2024 RURAL TRANSIT FACT BOOK PUBLISHED

SURCOM has published an updated edition of the Rural Transit Fact Book. This publication is intended to serve as a national resource for statistics and information on rural transit in the United States. The Fact Book includes rural demographic and travel behavior data as well as financial, operating, and fleet statistics and performance measures for agencies receiving Section 5311 funding. In addition to national level data, statistics are presented by state, FTA region, tribe, and mode, as well as other agency characteristics.

The Rural Transit Fact Book presents data from the National Transit Database (NTD) and rural demographic and travel data from the American Community Survey. The publication can be downloaded at the SURCOM website. For more information about the Fact Book, contact Jeremy Mattson at jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CAMBUS ON THEIR LOW-NO AWARD!

The University of Iowa's public transit system, CAMBUS, will receive \$16,376,762 in funding to replace aging diesel buses with battery electric buses and expand and modernize its maintenance facility. The funding will allow the university to expand bus service and help meet sustainability goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on campus.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY - DUE OCT. 1

- State Transit Assistance Special Projects
- Intercity Bus Grant Program
- ICAAP

YEAR END REVIEWS

Year End Reviews are starting soon. Thank you to everyone who got their reports submitted by August 15th! If you haven't, please make sure all of your transit statistics and annual vehicle reports are in ASAP with complete and accurate stats. Year-end reviews cannot be completed until these reports are finalized. We are starting to review these reports and you will be receiving your transit system questionnaires in October. Year End Reviews need to be finalized by Thanksgiving so please prioritize answering the questions when you receive them.

Remember: Finalized Year End Reviews are needed for both NTD reporting and FTA formula funding projections.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SPENCER THOMPSON PASSENGER PLANNER

Spencer Thompson came to the Iowa DOT about a year ago, having recently graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor's in Community & Regional Planning.



He has experience working for various local municipal agencies, from Parks and Recreation and GIS roles in Iowa City, to being a transit driver in Ames. In his role as Passenger Planner, he provides support in developing various long-range plans, such as annual Passenger Transportation and this year's upcoming Public Transportation Long Range Plan, while also working on statewide Park & Ride efforts. He also serves as the Sustainability Chair on the DOT's Resiliency and Sustainability Committee, making steady process to make the DOT as sustainable as possible. In his free time, he likes to travel, paint, take photos, watch movies, play board games, and go to farmer's markets and other local community events.

WHO TO CONTACT

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