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Development Plan

**Mason City
Transit**

FY 1988-92

1987

ABSTRACT

The Mason City Transit Development Plan outlines a transit development program for the City of Mason City. The plan provides a working guideline for transit development for a five year period, FY 1988 - 1992, based upon local needs, goals, objectives and funding.

The plan provides data on population, centers of activity, existing transit services and other factors affecting transportation. Unmet transportation needs are identified as are goals and objectives. This base data is then used to formulate development directions for transit services.

The selected direction for the city system is presented in detail for fiscal year 1988 and 1989. A general guideline is presented for the following three years.

Each section of the plan draws upon previous sections, building to a detailed directional plan for transit service provision based upon all of the data presented. The plan is a working document to be used to develop appropriate transit service in the city.

MASON CITY
TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

prepared by:

NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
121 Third Street N.W.
Mason City, IA 50401

DISCLAIMER

The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the material presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views, policies, or conclusions of the Iowa Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, or the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

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City of Mason City

Mayor: Dr. Stanley Romans

City Council: Roger Watson
Mary Greenan
Roger Pedelty
Scott Witter
Larry Loeckle
Ken Shadle

Finance Director/Transit Manager: Charles Hammen

North Iowa Area Council of Governments
Staff

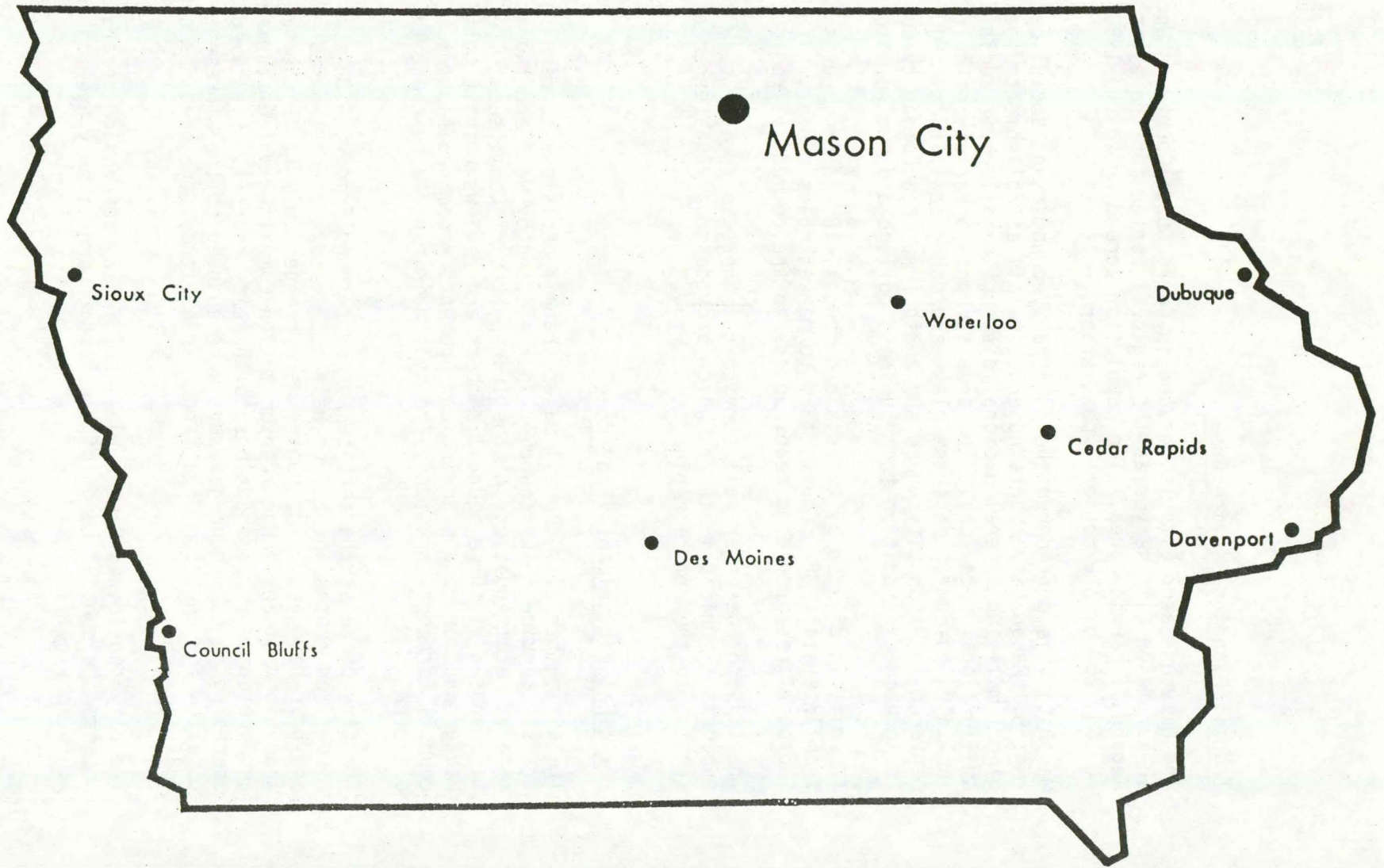
Executive Director:.....Dave Sperry
Assistant Director:.....Betsy Thompson
Grants Administrator:.....Margaret Reiber
T.A. Administrator:.....Nick Kramer
Housing Specialist:.....Vic Berding
NIACOG Assistant:.....Deb Lampson
Technical Assistant:.....Ray Forsythe
Administrative Assistant:.....Janet Ryg

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INTRODUCTION

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Mason City

Sioux City

Waterloo

Dubuque

Cedar Rapids

Des Moines

Davenport

Council Bluffs

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Transit Planning/Service Area

The City of Mason City is located in Cerro Gordo County in North Central Iowa. Mason City serves as the regional center for the eight county Region II service area. The population according to the 1980 census is 30,144, 20% of the regional population.

Mason City is considered the cultural, economic and social center of the region. Mason City sports numerous retail establishments including a regional mall and several national discount retailers in addition to numerous smaller local retailers. The area supports a variety of cultural activities including museums, concerts, plays and other activities. Education is also centered in Mason City where the North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) is located, in addition to a business college and two cosmetology schools.

The city is divided by two state highways, 18 and 65, and is eight miles from Interstate 35. County farm to market roads connect with these major thoroughfares providing ready access to the community from outlying areas.

There is no passenger rail service but there is freight service. The city supports a municipal airport which provides daily passenger and freight service to the entire region.

Principal Participants/Providers

The six member city council makes transit decisions concerning the city's transit service. The council, four elected by ward and two at-large, receive recommendations of the Transportation Committee. The committee is composed of three council members and reviews transit policies, performs background work and planning and presents recommendations to the full council for consideration. The system is managed by the city finance director.

The city operates the service Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Five fixed routes operate on half-hour headways and two routes operate on one-hour headways. The routes were changed July 1, 1986 based upon recommendations of an Ad Hoc Transportation Committee which studied the routes and presented recommendations to the city council. Six fixed routes operating on half-hour headways were changed to the aforementioned schedule to allow for coverage of a larger area without the need for operating an additional bus.

The city subsidizes Easter Seals L.I.F.T.S. to provide demand-response service to meet the special needs of the handicapped if they are unable to use regular route service.

Transit planning is performed by the North Iowa Area Council of Governments (NIACOG). The planner meets with the operator to determine directions for the system and plan a course of action based upon past experience, desires of users and of the city council and in the interest of system improvement. These plans are then presented to the city council for review and approval. Final planning approval rests with the NIACOG Board of Directors.

In the planning process, private providers are involved. This is accomplished through a regional private provider meeting. The meeting, to which all local private providers and those on a state list are invited, provides information on existing systems and potential expansion. It affords the providers the opportunity to examine existing operations and ask questions and provide input and determine their interest in participating as a contractor. Following the meeting, providers are invited to submit proposals for system operation. Any proposals are analyzed based upon level of service, fully allocated costs, performance record of provider and other factors which impact upon effective delivery of service. Any proposals are presented for review by the transportation committee which can then make recommendation to the council. The council may investigate further or accept the committee's recommendation.

Transit Development Planning/Decision Making Process

The Mason City Transit Development Plan is prepared for the city by the North Iowa Area Council of Governments (NIACOG). The planner meets with the transit manager and reviews past performance and problems, studies which have been performed, and needs and desires of riders, the manager and the city council. Based upon these ingredients, the desired future direction is determined and activities selected to achieve desired goals. These are then formulated into the TDP which is presented to the full council for review and approval. The plans are also reviewed and approved by the NIACOG Board of Directors.

Overview of the TDP

The Transit Development Plan is divided into four sections as follows:

Section I - Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide background information.

Section II - Transit Conditions

Section II provides data on population characteristics, transit services available, local economic conditions and other characteristics that impact upon the demand for transit services.

Section III - Transit Needs and Policy Direction

This section of the plan details past accomplishments in addition to policies of the city council. Needs of the city are delineated, and priorities established to determine action steps to pursue.

Section IV - Developmental Strategy and Five Year Program

This section details the goals and objectives of the system in terms of specific action steps in relation to available funding.

TRANSIT CONDITIONS

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Service Area Characteristics

The City of Mason City is located in Cerro Gordo County in north central Iowa and serves as the regional center for an eight-county area.

The population of Mason City is 30,144 (1980 Census). Persons aged 60 and over account for over 20% of this total, and this segment of the population is growing statewide and nationally. This group places the greatest demand upon the city's system and as the size of this group increases so does their demand for service.

A person's income also affects their use of public transit services. The lower a person's income the more likely they are to use public transit. Limited finances affect a person's ability to support operation of a private vehicle as it can severely deplete financial resources. In Mason City, 5.8% of the families and 9% of all individuals have incomes below the poverty level. Of the total population, 13% are at incomes 125% of the poverty level. These persons could derive great benefit from affordable public transit service to allow them to access employment, goods and services.

Mason City has considerable service offerings which create a number of high traffic areas attractive to transit system users. Two hospitals, several medical clinics and numerous physicians are located in the city, as are a number of nursing homes. Social service agencies are in abundance which serve persons in need, the same who benefit from public transit. Government offices, from which people seek services are also located in town.

The city also sports a number of educational institutions which attract students who use public transit services as an economical means of access. These include a community college, business college and two cosmetology schools in addition to two high schools, and the public middle and elementary schools.

Other high traffic areas where public transit is of particular importance is to apartment complexes including retirement units and mobile home parks. Major employers also create high traffic areas, whether it be for workers or for persons using services or acquiring goods.

Mason City is the regional center for retail establishments and has five malls/shopping centers, in addition to a number of major large discount establishments and numerous smaller retail establishments. These create intensive demand for transit service from persons desiring available goods.

Mason City Transit readily serves all high traffic areas. In most cases the transit service operates directly to the area or within easy walking distance (3 blocks). The system was designed to serve these areas while also providing ready access from residential areas.

The following pages show these high traffic areas in relation to the transit system.

MASON CITY

POPULATION DATA

1980 CENSUS

TOTAL POPULATION..... 30,144
Under Age 5..... 6.8%
18 years and older..... 74.9%
60 years and older..... 20.1%
Median age..... 31.7 years

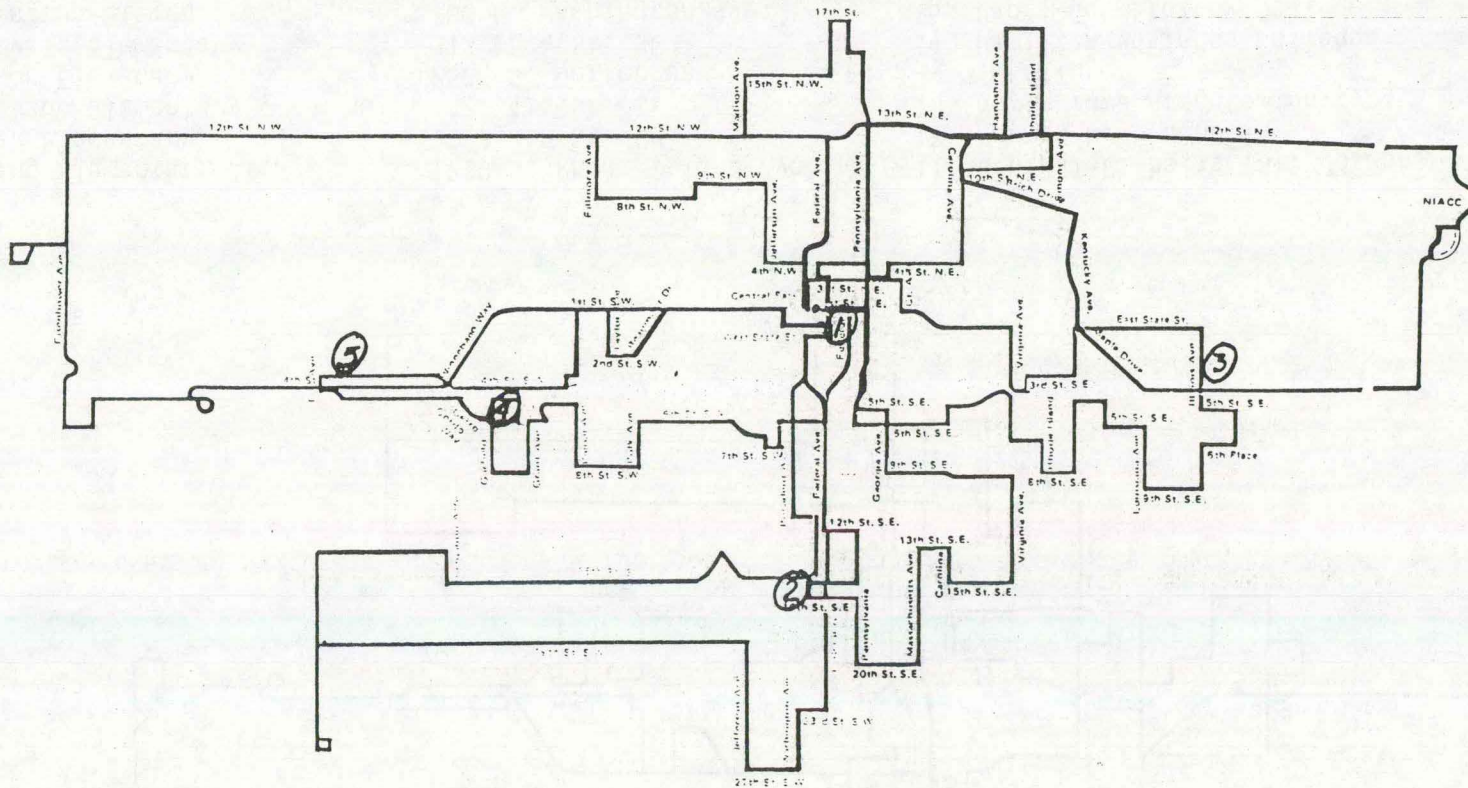
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS..... 11,884
2.46 persons per household

TOTAL FAMILIES..... 8,034

Income:

Per capita.....\$ 7,312
Median income.....\$15,505/household
\$20,264/families
Persons below poverty level..... 2,757
Persons 125% of poverty level..... 4,029
Families below poverty level..... 466 (5.8%)

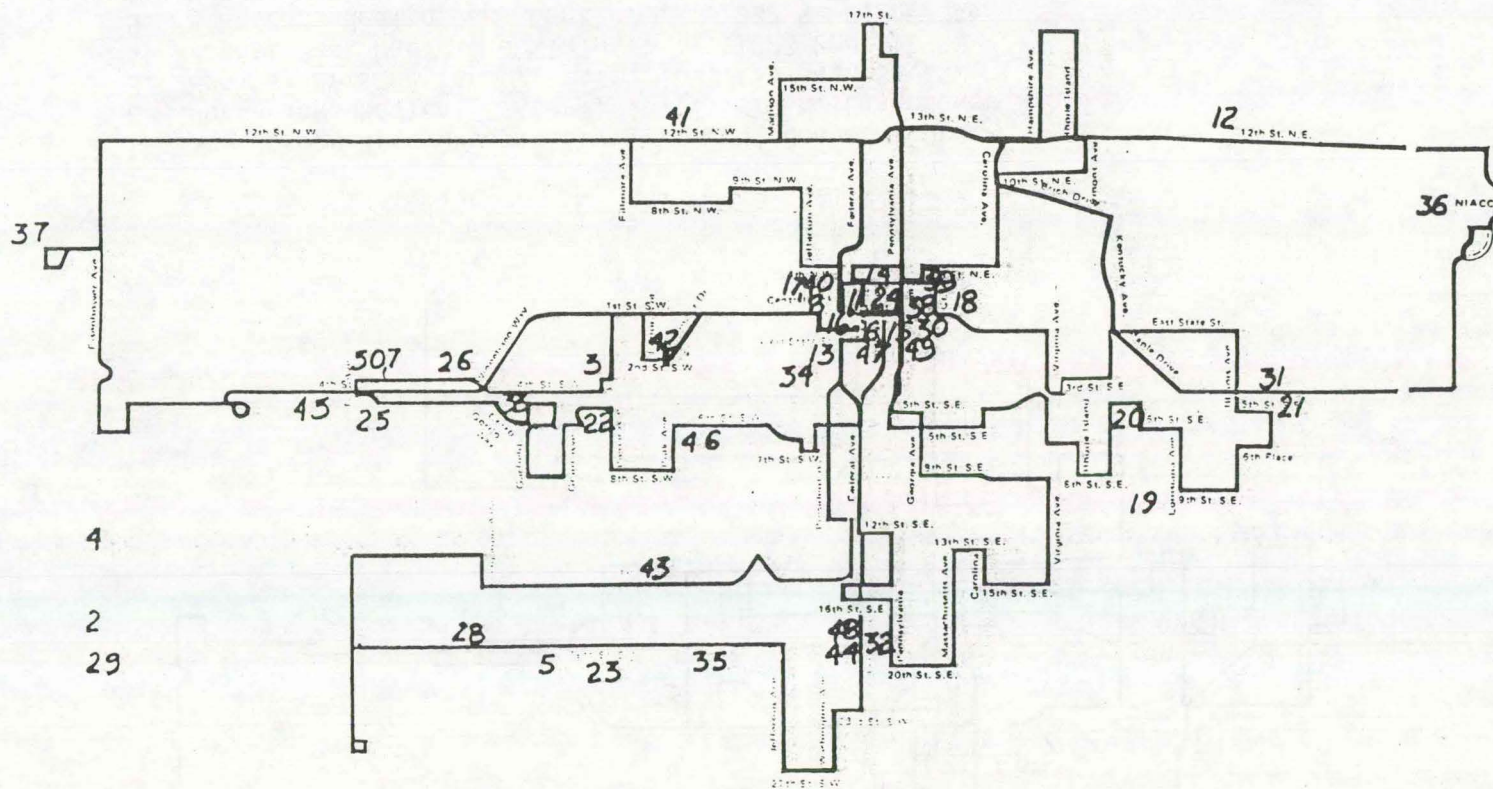
Major Shopping Centers in relationship to Mason City Transit Routes



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Name	Location	Year Opened	No. Stores	Area (Sq.Ft.)
1. Southbridge Mall and Central Business District	Fed. Ave. & State St.	NA	NA	NA
2. Sears-Target Shopping Center	1720 & 1510 S. Fed. Ave.	1959	20	200,000
3. Regency Square Shopping Center	U.S. Hwy. 18E	1976	19	107,000
4. Willowbrook Plaza	U.S. Hwy. 18W	1968	27	81,253
5. Westside Plaza Shopping Center	U.S. Hwy. 18W	1985		

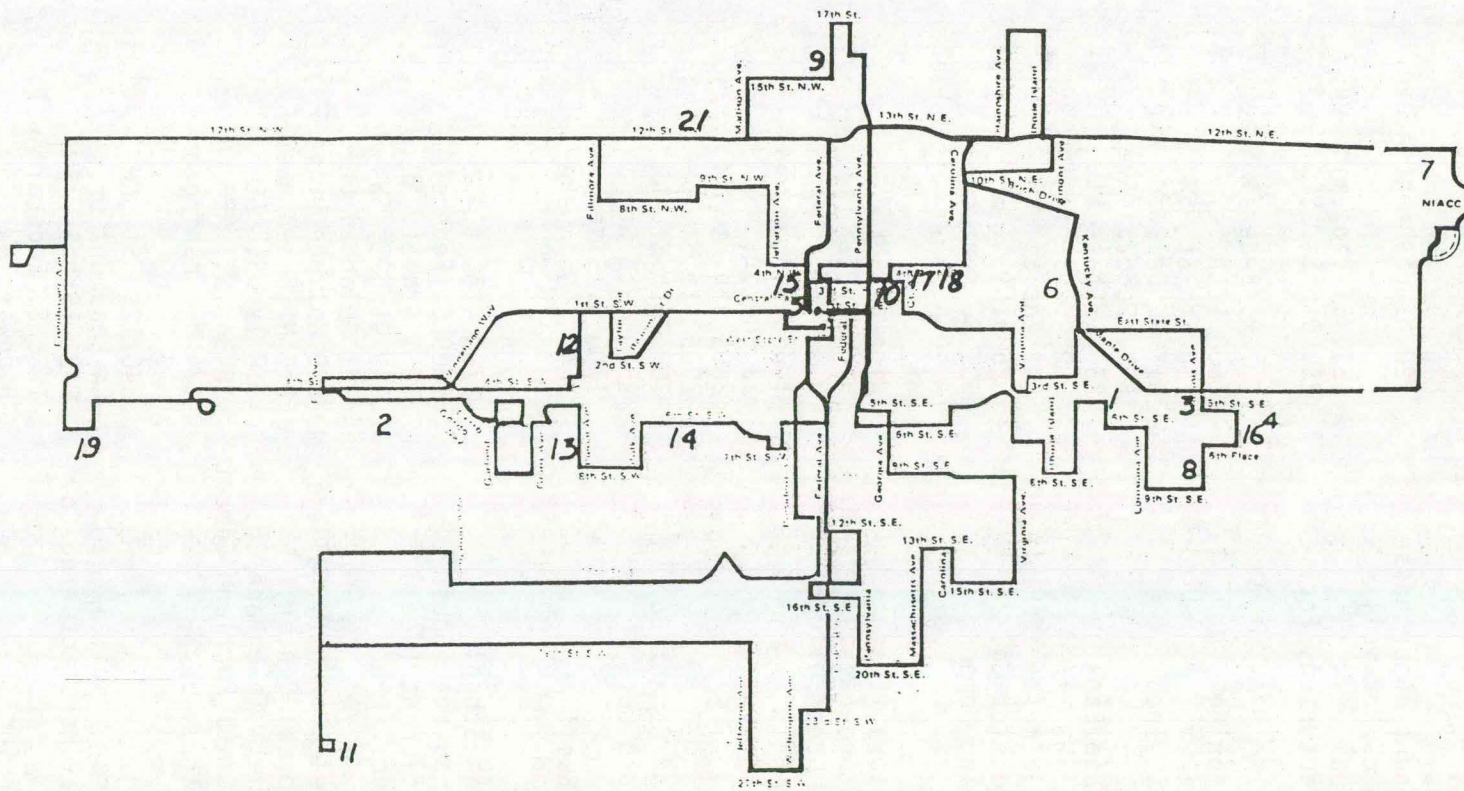
Major Employers in relationship to Mason City Transit Routes



Due to congestion of employers in the central part of the city,
locations are not exact but only approximations.

1	Alexander Manufacturing	1511 S. Garfield Place
2	Allied Mills, Inc.	1603 S. Eisenhower Ave.
3	Americana Health Center	222 S. Pierce Ave.
4	Armour and Co.	1401 S. Eisenhower Ave.
5	Associated Milk Producers, Inc.	1305 19th St. SW
6	Bergo's, Inc.	9 S. Federal Ave.
7	Cashwise Foods	Highway 18W
8	Cerro Gordo County Courthouse	220 N. Washington Ave.
9	Collins Avionics/Rockwell International	1511 S. Benjamin Ave.
10	Curries Manufacturing, Inc.	251 9th St. SE
11	Damons, Inc.	107 N. Federal Ave.
12	David Manufacturing	1600 12th St. NE
13	County Market	116 5th St. SW
14	Fareway Stores, Inc.	317 N. Delaware Ave.
15	Norwest Bank	5 N. Federal Ave.
16	First Interstate Bank	25 W. State St.
17	Globe Gazette	300 N. Washington Ave.
18	Good Shepherd, Inc.	302 2nd St. NE
19	Henkel Construction Co.	525 9th St. SE
20	Heritage Nursing Home	501 S. Kentucky
21	Hy-Vee Food Store (East)	Highway 18E
22	Hy-Vee Food Store (West)	Highway 18W
23	International Order of Odd Fellows Home	1037 19th St. SW
24	Intestate Power	22 2nd St. NW
25	Insurance Co.	2601 4th St. SW
26	K-Mart	2006 4th St. SW
27	Lehigh Portland Cement Co.	700 25th St. NW
28	Libby-Ownes-Ford Co.	2510 19th St. SW
29	Mach 3 Inc.	1700 S. Eisenhower
30	Marshall and Swift	214 N. Delaware
31	Mason City High School	1700 4th St. SE
32	McDonalds Restaurant (South)	1809 S. Federal
33	McDonalds Restaurant (West)	1651 4th St. SW
34	Metalcraft, Inc.	149 4th St. SW
35	Nielsen, A.C. Co.	221 Colonial Ln.
36	North Iowa Area Community College	500 College Drive
37	North Iowa Medical Center	910 N. Eisenhower Ave.
38	Northwestern Bell Telephone Co.	118 1st St. SE
39	Northwestern State Portland Cement	12 2nd St. NE
40	Pioneer Federal	124 N. Washington
41	Risto, Inc.	840 12th St. NW
42	St. Joseph Mercy Hospital	84 Beaumont Dr.
43	Schneider Metal Manufacturing Co.	2421 15th St. SW
44	Sears	1720 S. Federal Ave.
45	Sheraton Motor Inn	Highway 18W
46	Shopko	615 S. Monroe
47	Southbridge Mall	17 W. State St.
48	Target	1510 S. Federal Ave.
49	U.S. Postal Service	211 N. Delaware Ave.
50	Wal-Mart	Highway 18 W.

Apartment Complexes & Trailer Parks in relationship to Mason City Transit Routes



Apartments

Name	Address
Bel-Air Manor & DeVille IV Apts.	417 S. Tennessee Place
Briarstone Lake Apts.	Briarstone Dr.
Eastward Apts.	510 S. Illinois Ave.
Greenway Apts.	1601 6th Pl. SE
Kirk Modern Apts.	206 N. Federal Ave.
Key Apts.	600 N. Kentucky Ave.
NIACC Dormitory	1001 College Dr.
Regency Terrace Apts.	1000 S. Illinois Ave.
Schoolhouse Apts.	1510 N. Federal Ave
Sherlock Apts.	220 3rd NE
West Side Manor Apts.	2401 S. Taft Ave.
Westview Apts.	Pierce Ave. and SW 1st St.

Retirement Apartments

13 Autumn Park Apts.	710 S. Pierce
14 Grant Village Apts.	823 6th St. SW
15 Manor Apts.	4 Third St. NW
16 Regency Apts.	1531 6th Pl. SE
17 Shalom Tower Apts.	304 3rd St. NE
18 Shalom Tower II	Connecticut & 4th St. NE

Trailer Parks

19 Gracious Estates	U.S. Hwy. 18 West
20 Maple Crest	U.S. Hwy. 65 South
21 Quincy Terrace	Quincy Ave. & 12th St. NW
22 Rayburn Court	U.S. Hwy. 65 South

Transit Services Available

Mason City Transit was modified extensively for the first time since its inception July 1, 1986. An Ad Hoc Committee specifically appointed by the Mayor to examine routes made recommendations to the council which were accepted and the city changed from six fixed routes operating on half-hour headways to seven fixed routes with five on half-hour headways and two on a one-hour headway. The system is designed to provide more extensive coverage of the city. Some portions of routes were eliminated which had never produced sufficient ridership to justify continuation.

The system now operates five days per week, Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Five routes operate on half-hour headways and one paired route, or two routes operate on one-hour headways. The routes are color coded for ease in understanding coverage. The two one-hour routes operate with the bus going to the far east side of the city on the hour and then the same vehicle goes to the far west side on the half hour. The city also color coded the routes and printed new brochures, paid for by the city's financial institutions.

In addition to the route changes, the new central transfer facility has been completed. All transfers are made at the facility which serves as the focal point of the system. The facility is located in Central Park, the center of downtown Mason City. Its design was integrated into the total downtown redevelopment effort. Many items used in the construction of the facility were salvaged from the old downtown comfort station and old demolished buildings in the redevelopment area. This provides a historical and aesthetic combination which is pleasing yet functional. The facility met with opposition when it was first proposed for location in the park but many detractors have informed the city that after seeing the facility, they like the results and regret their initial opposition. The facility is a very visible reminder of the system's availability to the community and has provided a useful transfer facility, while further improving the system's operation.

Transit Provided by Other Systems

The city contracts with Easter Seals L.I.F.T.S. to provide demand-response service for the handicapped, who cannot use the regular route system. Easter Seals is also under contract with the schools, the North Iowa Vocational Center and Handicap Village to transport handicapped individuals to services.

Other providers in the city include Huffman Transportation, Christensen Transit and Yellow Cab Company, all private providers. Huffman contracts for school transportation, and Christensen for schools, railroads and special charters, in addition to a regional contract. Yellow Cab operates taxi service twenty-four hours per day and offers charters under the name of Northland Bus Company.

The Yellow Cab Company is the only regular transportation available when the city bus system is not operating, after 5:30 p.m., before 6:30 a.m. and on weekends. Little has been done to coordinate activities between the taxi and city service though the city is conscious of not infringing upon the operator's service.

Intercity Bus and Rail Service

Jefferson Bus Lines provides intercity bus service to Mason City. The city bus route serves the Jefferson depot providing access from throughout the city during regular hours. The Yellow Cab also provides rides to the bus depot, on a twenty-four hour basis.

Air transportation is available through a commuter service operating from the Mason City Airport. The airline provides feeder service to major airports in Des Moines and Minneapolis. The taxi provides transit service to the local airport as does a limosine service operated by Lane Brothers, Inc.

No passenger rail service is available.

Interaction Between City Service and Other Providers

Each of the operators in the city, including the city service, serves a separate need. There is no formal coordination at this time between providers, but the city makes referrals to private providers for charters and after hours service, or any service the city cannot provide. There is no regional operation in Cerro Gordo County, but when put into place, will be coordinated with the city's service.

Private operators are invited to participate in the planning process as described in Section I.

Summary

The primary groups in need of transit services are the elderly and handicapped, followed by persons with low incomes. The system meets these needs by serving high traffic areas for an economical fare during primary business hours. After hours and weekend service needs are met through private providers. Needs are met but the cost to riders is higher. The potential for reducing this cost is a possible area for study and action by the city. The possibility is remote of the city increasing service to operate on weekends or evenings, due to the costs. But, a potential for subsidy to existing operators could be examined as demand for evenings and weekends is there based upon the 1985 survey.

TRANSIT NEEDS AND POLICY

DIRECTIONS

REVIEW OF RECENT YEARS' EFFORTS

Fiscal Year 1986 saw the Mason City Transit System continuing to operate six fixed routes, eleven hours per day, five days per week, on half hour headways. The seventh route, added in fiscal 1985, proved to be too costly in comparison with ridership and the rest of the system, and was discontinued. The city continued funding for the Easter Seals L.I.F.T.S. to provide door-to-door service to the handicapped unable to utilize the city's service. Progress continued on the new central transfer facility. An Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Mayor studied the existing route network to determine the feasibility of increasing the area of coverage and improving efficiency of operation.

Fiscal Year 1987 brought many changes to the transit system. The Ad Hoc Committee made a number of recommendations to the city council which were accepted and instituted during the new fiscal year. The routes were changed to increase coverage of the city. The new system features seven routes. Five routes operate on half-hour headways and two routes operate on one hour headways. This enabled the system to cover a larger area without increasing the number of buses required or significantly increasing mileage, thereby controlling costs. Some sections of routes were eliminated which were unused, and others added to cover areas believed to be in need of service. Recent changes in the system satisfied often requested service needs to the west side of the city, in particular Gracious Estates Trailer Park and the North Iowa Medical Center.

Routes were also color coded to simplify use of schedules and for easy location of the correct vehicle for boarding. New color coded schedules were printed and paid for by the local banks.

The central transfer facility was completed in Fiscal 1987, a big addition to the system. Located in Central Park in downtown Mason City, the enclosed building provides a heated building in which riders can wait for the bus. Restrooms in the facility expand its usefulness. The facility incorporates design features which coordinate with other downtown redevelopment efforts. Items were salvaged from the old comfort station and incorporated into the building's construction. The building is unique in character and has become a point of pride for the community in addition to a focal point for the transit system.

The results of the route changes will be evident at the end of the fiscal year when comparisons can be made with previous years. Any judgement prior to that time would be premature and actually two to three years time would be a better time for evaluation. The old routes had been in place with only minor modifications for years, since the transit system began. Adequate time must be given for the public to adjust to and accept new routes. Preliminary figures show an initial reduction in ridership but it is hoped that this can be recovered and ridership increased due to improved city coverage. Judgement on modifications can be made after a full year's figures are available.

PUBLIC INPUT

The city receives regular daily input on the system from riders, drivers, council members and the general public. These people telephone, attend meetings, talk with staff or city officials, expressing their opinions on the system. More formally, the city conducts annual public hearings on the proposed plan of action. Periodic surveys are also used to monitor public opinion.

The most recent survey showed a desire for later evening, early morning, service, and weekends, in that order. But this desire was primarily that of present users and addition of any of these hours would not significantly increase ridership or attract non-riders. Generally the public showed support for the system even by non-users and agreed through their comments with the system's priorities.

RESULTS

In June, 1985, the North Iowa Area Council of Governments (NIACOG) mailed 800 survey questionnaires to Mason City households. Of the total 333 were returned, 41.63%. However, 88 surveys were returned as undeliverable, making the return rate of surveys actually received by households 46.77%. While the 400 desired for return was not realized, it is doubtful that the results would have changed appreciably.

On the following pages are the results of the survey. For each question, the total responses will vary from the total returned as not all respondents answered each question. In some cases, more than one answer was provided making the total more than the number returned. The responses were also cross-tabulated, that is selected questions and responses were compared to assist in the evaluation, summary and conclusions.

Survey Responses

Please mark an "X" beside the best answer for each question, in your opinion. If you have any comments which will not fit in the space provided, please use the back of the survey.

1. How do you usually meet your transportation needs?

78.9%	266	Drive own vehicle
1.1%	4	Ride with spouse
11.9%	40	Ride Mason City Transit
3.0%	10	Walk
3.6%	12	Ride with friend of relative
1.5%	5	Other, please explain
		1 sometimes
		1 taxi
		1 bicycle

2. How often do you use Mason City Transit?

80.9%	267	Do not use
14.3%	47	1 - 5 rides per week
0.0%	0	5 - 10 rides per week
.6%	2	10 - 15 rides per week
2.1%	7	15 or more rides per week
2.1%	7	Some

3. If you do not use the service, why?

86.6%	247	Have other means of transportation
6.3%	18	Service is not convenient for me
.4%	1	Didn't know it was available
.4%	1	Costs too much
6.3%	18	Other, please explain
		1 no money
		Easter Seals
		3 don't know schedule
		1 need car for job
		are not served
		unable to use
		already close to town
		no need
		don't go out

4. For what purpose do you use Mason City Transit? (check all that apply)

70.7%	258	Do not use
9.3%	34	Medical appointments
3.8%	14	Work, please specify where you work
.8%	3	School
7.7%	28	Recreation, social
7.7%	28	Other, please explain
		24 shopping
		when car is inoperable
		volunteer

5. Do you have a handicap which presents a personal transportation problem for you?

4.4%	14	Yes, please explain
95.6%	303	No

6. Would you use Mason City Transit on Saturdays if service were available?

19.4%	63	Yes
80.6%	262	No

7. What time of day would you most likely use Saturday service?

5.6%	5	6:00 a.m. - 7:00 a.m.
1.1%	1	7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
47.2%	42	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
29.2%	26	12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
14.6%	13	3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
2.3%	2	Other

8. For what purpose would you use Saturday bus service?

5.7%	6	Medical appointments
55.2%	58	Shopping
7.6%	8	Work, please specify where you work
0.0%	0	School
28.6%	30	Recreation, social
2.9%	3	Other, please explain
		church

9. *Would you use the transit system if it were available Monday through Friday beginning at 6:00 a.m.?*

13.6%	43	Yes
83.2%	263	No
3.2%	10	Maybe

10. *Would you use the transit system if it were available Monday through Friday until 6:00 p.m.?*

20.1%	64	Yes
79.3%	252	No
.6%	2	Maybe

11. *What is your sex?*

40.8%	135	Male
59.2%	196	Female

12. *What income bracket is your household in?*

26.3%	83	less than \$10,000
34.5%	109	\$10,000 - \$20,000
30.7%	97	\$21,000 - \$40,000
8.5%	27	Above \$40,000

13. *What age bracket are you in? Please give the number of persons in each category.*

13.1%	63	17 and under
34.2%	165	18 - 39
21.4%	103	40 - 59
31.3%	151	60 and above

14. *Using the streets shown as imaginary boundaries, in what section of Mason City do you live? Please circle the appropriate number.*

1.6%	5 - 1	2.5%	8 - 9
9.6%	31 - 2	6.2%	20 - 10
11.8%	38 - 3	7.5%	24 - 11
3.7%	12 - 4	5.3%	17 - 12
1.6%	5 - 5	7.1%	23 - 13
5.6%	18 - 6	9.6%	31 - 14
3.1%	10 - 7	14.9%	48 - 15
.6%	2 - 8	9.3%	30 - 16

SERVICE NEEDS

Maintenance of existing service is top priority for the city. Continuing existing coverage, and days and hours of service is essential to success of the system. The route changes made in 1986 improved coverage of the city without increasing costs. The next priority for the system is to increase ridership to increase revenues to the system due to reductions in state and federal funding. Of particular importance is increasing the use of the system by the non-captive rider. Improved marketing is needed to promote the system, and increase awareness of its availability. This includes much more than advertising. The color coding of the system and improved route maps was a starting point. Efforts at system improvement need to continue with activities such as special fares in coordination with special local events, contact with businesses and more outreach into the community.

In terms of expansion, late evening, early morning and Saturday service are areas for examination as the survey shows interest in these areas. There are periodic requests for this service but the public has generally accepted the fact that the money is not available for this type of expansion at this time. If funding were available these would be the time slots considered, but are regarded as hopeful dreams for the system only and not as feasible in the near future.

MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Management of the system is the responsibility of the City Finance Director. There is no full-time nor half-time director for the system. This dual responsibility affects the manager's ability to devote time to marketing, system analysis and other system improvements. Assistance for the manager in these areas would be helpful to the system.

The city might consider establishing an on-the-job training program or internship for a student to work on marketing the system and other system improvements. This could be done through NIACC, the local community college, or Iowa State University. This would alleviate the burden on the finance director and allow for some full-time attention to the transit system at minimal cost to the city.

The city does not want to hire a full-time manager for the system. The intern should be explored as well as the potential use of volunteers, committee or other means of gaining more time devoted to transit.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE ANALYSIS

The city system was operated by a private provider until 1981 when the city took over operations. At that time, the system was plagued with poorly maintained vehicles, lack of adherence to schedules and poor management. This resulted in numerous complaints and low ridership. The city took over operations in an effort to salvage the system and work on improvements.

The city is willing to consider private operation of the system, but past experience makes them leary of doing so. A combined private provider meeting with the regional system provided operators with the opportunity to examine operations and ask questions. Then proposals were solicited from the providers for system operation. Private providers are also provided the opportunity for input during the annual public hearing held on expenditure of funds and the plan of action.

VEHICLE NEEDS

Much of the success of the city's system is due to its well maintained fleet of vehicles. They are comfortable, attractive and reliable contributing greatly to the attractiveness of the system as a whole. A regular schedule of vehicle replacement/rehabilitation is critical to the continuation of this positive aspect of the service.

The city has established a schedule of two vehicles per year for replacement/rehabilitation. This method ensures that vehicles are used to their full extent while not being overextended resulting in excessive breakdowns or exorbitant maintenance costs.

SYSTEM OBLIGATIONS

The system has no financial obligations in the form of loans or any other form.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Provide the citizens of Mason City, particularly the transportation disadvantaged, with a convenient means of transportation to employment, goods and services.
2. Coordinate transportation services in the city to ensure maximum effectiveness.
3. Encourage the use of the transit system by the rider with a choice to increase local support.
4. Provide transportation service to accommodate the special needs of the handicapped not met through the standard route system.
5. Encourage the use of the transit system to reduce traffic congestion, promote energy conservation, and reduce environmental pollution.

OBJECTIVES

1. Improve public awareness of the system through effective marketing of the system.
2. Improve coordination of handicapped transportation service with the city buses through established guidelines for para-transit use.
3. Maintain existing system through safe, well maintained vehicles.

**DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY
AND FIVE YEAR PROGRAM**

Section IV

Section IV provides the developmental strategy and five-year program for the transit system. Specific action steps are detailed in relation to identified goals and objectives and to available funding. Fiscal Year 1988 is detailed as is Fiscal Year 1989. The following three years, 1990, 1991, and 1992 are in sketch form.

FISCAL YEAR 1988

Top priority for the Mason City Transit Service is maintenance of existing service as operated in Fiscal Year 1987. Adjustments to the service increased coverage of the city and while some areas suffered a reduction in service frequency, overall service availability to residents improved. Fiscal 1988 top priority is continuance of service.

The second priority is to continue with the capital improvement program to maintain an adequate fleet of dependable vehicles for system operations. The city has established a program of two replacement vehicles per year.

The city will also continue subsidy of handicap transportation to be provided by Easter Seals LIFTS, to meet the special needs of the handicapped not met by the regular route service. The city will not replace the lifts when it acquires new vehicles as the handicapped use Easter Seals. The lifts are rarely used and use much needed seating capacity. The city feels that the door-to-door service is a much better means of serving the handicapped and better meets their needs.

The city will also continue its marketing program to promote the service. This will be quite important as the change in routes has resulted in considerable drop in ridership the first six months of implementation. While the changes were good overall, adequate marketing to lure riders back to the system is needed. As always, it is needed to attract new riders also.

Funding for the system is provided by State Transit Assistance, Section 18, fares and general taxation. State Transit Assistance and Section 18 funds are used completely for operations.

Biennial Element Program Summary

Transit System Mason City Transit

Program Year. 1st 2nd Fiscal Year. 1988

Priority	Type	Activity Description	Goals/ Objectives	Cost
1	0	Continue operation of existing system, seven routes on half-hour and one hour headways operating eleven hours per day.		199,000
2	C	Continue vehicle replacement schedule with purchase of two (2) buses.		66,000
3	0	Continue subsidy to handicap transit provider to provide demand/response service for handicapped.		8,000
4	0	Continue marketing program to promote the system.		5,000
			Total	\$278,000

A.	Amount	
Operations		
Vehicle Operations	<u>208,000</u>	
Vehicle Maintenance	<u> </u>	
Non-Vehicle Maintenance	<u> </u>	
General Administration	<u>4,000</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>\$ 212,000</u>
Passenger Fares	<u>62,000</u>	
Contracts/Special Fares	<u> </u>	
Local Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>77,700</u>	
State Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>41,300</u>	
Federal Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>31,000</u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL FUNDING		<u>\$ 212,000</u>
 B.		
Capital		
Vehicles	<u>66,000</u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>\$ 66,000</u>
Local Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>16,500</u>	
State Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
Federal Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>49,500</u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL FUNDING		<u>\$ 66,000</u>
 C.		
Planning		
TDP	<u> </u>	
Special Projects	<u> </u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>\$ _____</u>
Local Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
State Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
Federal Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL FUNDING		<u>\$ _____</u>
 TOTAL EXPENSES (A+B+C)		<u>\$ 278,000</u>
 TOTAL FUNDING (A+B+C)		<u>\$ 278,000</u>

Biennial Element Program Summary

Transit System Mason City Transit

Program Year. 1st 2nd Fiscal Year. 1989

Priority	Type	Activity Description	Goals/ Objectives	Cost
1	0	Continue operation of existing system, same hours, days, headways and routes.		202,000
2	C	Continue capital improvement program implementation.		66,000
3	0	Continue subsidy for handicap demand-response service.		8,000
4	0	Continue marketing program.		5,000
Total				\$281,000

	Amount	
A.		
Operations		
Vehicle Operations	<u>210,000</u>	
Vehicle Maintenance	<u> </u>	
Non-Vehicle Maintenance	<u> </u>	
General Administration	<u>5,000</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ <u>215,000</u>
Passenger Fares	<u>64,000</u>	
Contracts/Special Fares	<u> </u>	
Local Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>79,000</u>	
State Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>41,000</u>	
Federal Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>31,000</u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL FUNDING		\$ <u>215,000</u>
B.		
Capital		
Vehicles	<u>66,000</u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ <u>66,000</u>
Local Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>16,500</u>	
State Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
Federal Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u>49,500</u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL FUNDING		\$ <u>66,000</u>
C.		
Planning		
TDP	<u> </u>	
Special Projects	<u> </u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ <u> </u>
Local Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
State Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
Federal Cash Grants/Reimb.	<u> </u>	
Other	<u> </u>	
TOTAL FUNDING		\$ <u> </u>
TOTAL EXPENSES (A+B+C)		\$ <u>281,000</u>
TOTAL FUNDING (A+B+C)		\$ <u>281,000</u>

SECOND YEAR PROGRAM - FISCAL YEAR 1989

The primary emphasis by the system for FY 1989 will be continuation of service. Available funding will be the primary factor influencing the accomplishment of this action step. Major service changes are not anticipated unless funding is reduced to the point where routes must be eliminated or service hours reduced.

The capital improvement program will also continue with the purchase of two replacement buses. The handicap subsidy will continue as will regular marketing.

Little change will be evidenced in overall system operation or function.

THREE YEAR SKETCH PLAN

The following three years, 1990, 1991 and 1992 will reflect the selected policy of service maintenance. No service increases are anticipated due to the anticipated reduction or at best maintenance of available funding. The economic and political climate does not allow for anticipation of additional monies to finance expansion. Continuation of the detailed capital improvement program will be critical to the success of the system. Steady marketing will also be important to increasing ridership.

TRANSIT FIVE YEARS FROM NOW

The Mason City Transit System should look quite similar in 1992 as it will in 1988. Little change is anticipated due to the recent major changes in the service and projected revenue picture. Service will continue to be provided to the developed portions of the city on seven routes on present headways and hours. Institution of and adherence to the capital improvement program will ensure that dependable, well maintained vehicles are available for use in the system. Handicap transportation will continue to be provided by Easter Seal or outside contractor.

Three Year Sketch Plan For Fiscal Years 1990, 1991, 1992

Transit System Mason City Transit

Date Prepared _____

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Priority	Type	Activity Description	Goals	Objectives	Projected Implementation Year		
					FY <u>90</u>	FY <u>91</u>	FY <u>92</u>
1	0	Continue operation of existing system with same days and hours of operation, headways and route coverage.	1-5	1, 2	X	X	X
2	C	Continue implementation of capital improvement program.	1	3	X	X	X
3	0	Continue handicap transportation subsidy.	2, 4	1, 2	X	X	X
Program Budgets					Comments		
Operations		FY <u>90</u> 216,500	FY <u>91</u> 218,000	FY <u>92</u> 219,500			
Capital		66,000	66,000	66,000			
Planning		-----	-----	-----			
Total		\$ 282,500	\$ 284,000	\$ 285,500			

Capital Improvement Program

Transit System Mason City Transit

A. Vehicles and Related Equipment									
Veh. Type	Seats/Wheelchairs	Vehicle Equipment	Type Purchase	Needs Reference	Acquisition Year/Programmed Costs				
					FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	1	33,000				
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	2	33,000				
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	3		33,000			
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	4		33,000			
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	5			33,000		
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	7			33,000		
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	6				33,000	
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	8				33,000	
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	9					33,000
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	10					33,000
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	11					
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	12					
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	13					
B	21 / 0	MR, F	Rep	14					
	/								
	/								
	/								
	/								
	/								
	/								
	/								
Total	/				66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000

Equipment: L = Lift, R = Ramp, MR = Mobile Radio, F = Farebox
Purchase Types: Rep. = Replacement, Rehab. = Rehabilitation, Exp. = Expansion
Needs Reference: Fleet ID# of vehicle to be replaced or rehabilitated or name of proposed new service(s) if expansion.

Capital Improvement Program

B. Non-Vehicle Equipment and Real Property						
Description	Type Purchase	FY <u>88</u>	Acquisition Year/ FY <u>89</u>	Programmed Cost FY <u>90</u>	FY <u>91</u>	FY <u>92</u>
Totals						

C. Annual Budget Summaries					
	FY <u>88</u>	FY <u>89</u>	FY <u>90</u>	FY <u>91</u>	FY <u>92</u>
Capital Expenses					
1. Vehicles and Related Equipment	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000
2. Non-Vehicle Equip.					
3. Real Estate (Bldgs.)					
4. Other					
Total	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000

APPENDICES

Transit System Fact Sheet

Data current as of _____
(date)

1. System Name North Iowa Area Regional Transit System
 Provider Contractors
 Address 121 Third Street NW, Mason City, IA 50401

2. General description of Transit Operations.

a. Type of Service(s) F, D

b. Groups Served E, H, CH, G

c. Service Area Region II

d. Service hours and days of operation.

Monday through Friday See contracts

Saturday _____

Sundays and Holidays _____

e. Number of Employees.

	Full-time	Part-time	Volunteers
Administrative		2	
Maintenance			
Drivers			

f. Union. Are any employee groups covered under collective bargaining agreements?

Yes No

Union _____

Local # _____

g. Receive public money? Yes No

3. Fare Structure.

As per contract

4. Vehicle Fleet.

Number of Vehicles: Buses 5 Vans _____ Trucks _____
 Station Wagons _____ Cars 4 Other _____
 Passenger Capacity: Seating 359 Standing _____
 Wheelchair Spaces 23
 Number of Vehicles with: Wheelchair Lifts 12
 Two-Way Radios 24
 Other Special Equipment _____

5. Performance.

	(Last Year) FY <u>86</u> Actual	(Current Year) FY <u>87</u> Projected
Operating Passengers	<u>218,225</u>	<u>219,000</u>
Wheelchair Lift Operations Performed	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Revenue Miles	<u>492,911</u>	<u>493,000</u>
Revenue Hours	<u>30,341</u>	<u>30,300</u>
Pass./Rev. Mile	<u>.44</u>	<u>.44</u>
Pass./Rev. Hour	<u>7.19</u>	<u>7.23</u>
Avg. Daily Pass. Carried	<u>614.72</u>	<u>616.90</u>
Financial		
Operating Expenses	<u>274,932</u>	<u>285,000</u>
Operating Revenues	<u>301,645</u>	<u>285,000</u>
Capital Expenses	<u>117,712</u>	<u>58,000</u>
Cost/Rev. Mile	<u>.56</u>	<u>.58</u>
Rev./Rev. Mile	<u>.61</u>	<u>.58</u>
Cost/Pass. Trip	<u>1.26</u>	<u>1.30</u>
Rev./Pass. Trip	<u>1.38</u>	<u>1.30</u>
Cost/Rev. Hour	<u>9.06</u>	<u>9.41</u>
Rev./Rev. Hour	<u>9.94</u>	<u>9.41</u>
Avg. Pass. Fare/Trip	<u>.50</u>	<u>.52</u>

Covers the period From 7/1/85 to 6/30/86

6. Other Information.

Transit System Fact Sheet

Data current as of _____
(date)

1. System Name Mason City Transit
 Provider City of Mason City
 Address City Hall, 19 South Delaware, Mason City, IA 50401

2. General description of Transit Operations.

a. Type of Service(s) F

b. Groups Served E, H, G

c. Service Area City of Mason City

d. Service hours and days of operation.

Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Saturday -----

Sundays and Holidays -----

e. Number of Employees.

	Full-time	Part-time	Volunteers
Administrative		2	
Maintenance			
Drivers		14	

f. Union. Are any employee groups covered under collective bargaining agreements?

Yes No

Union _____ Local # _____

g. Receive public money? Yes No

3. Fare Structure.

Elderly 25¢

Student 25¢

Adult 50¢

4. Vehicle Fleet.

Number of Vehicles: Buses 14 Vans _____ Trucks _____
 Station Wagons _____ Cars _____ Other _____

Passenger Capacity: Seating 258 Standing _____
 Wheelchair Spaces 3

Number of Vehicles with: Wheelchair Lifts 3
 Two-Way Radios 14
 Other Special Equipment _____

5. Performance.

	(Last Year) FY <u>86</u> Actual	(Current Year) FY <u>87</u> Projected
Operating Passengers	<u>159,663</u>	<u>160,000</u>
Wheelchair Lift Operations Performed	<u>104</u>	<u>104</u>
Revenue Miles	<u>238,574</u>	<u>240,000</u>
Revenue Hours	<u>16,500</u>	<u>19,250</u>
Pass./Rev. Mile	<u>.67</u>	<u>.67</u>
Pass./Rev. Hour	<u>9.68</u>	<u>8.31</u>
Avg. Daily Pass. Carried	<u>638.65</u>	<u>640</u>
Financial		
Operating Expenses	<u>208,231</u>	<u>210,000</u>
Operating Revenues	<u>208,231</u>	<u>210,000</u>
Capital Expenses	<u>-----</u>	<u>-----</u>
Cost/Rev. Mile	<u>.87</u>	<u>.88</u>
Rev./Rev. Mile	<u>.87</u>	<u>.88</u>
Cost/Pass. Trip	<u>1.30</u>	<u>1.31</u>
Rev./Pass. Trip	<u>1.30</u>	<u>1.31</u>
Cost/Rev. Hour	<u>12.62</u>	<u>10.91</u>
Rev./Rev. Hour	<u>12.62</u>	<u>10.91</u>
Avg. Pass. Fare/Trip	<u>.42</u>	<u>.40</u>

Covers the period From 7/1/85 to 6/30/86

6. Other Information.

Transit System Fact Sheet

Data current as of _____
(date)

1. System Name Easter Seal LIFTS
 Provider Easter Seal Society
 Address 525 First NE, Mason City, IA 50401

2. General description of Transit Operations.

a. Type of Service(s) D

b. Groups Served H, E, CH

c. Service Area City of Mason City, Handicap Village

d. Service hours and days of operation.

Monday through Friday 6:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.
 Saturday ----
 Sundays and Holidays ----

e. Number of Employees.

	Full-time	Part-time	Volunteers
Administrative	1		
Maintenance			
Drivers		3	

f. Union. Are any employee groups covered under collective bargaining agreements?

Yes No

Union _____

Local # _____

g. Receive public money? Yes No

3. Fare Structure.

\$2.00 per ride one-way

4. Vehicle Fleet.

Number of Vehicles: Buses 3 Vans 1 Trucks _____
 Station Wagons _____ Cars _____ Other _____
 Passenger Capacity: Seating 43 Standing _____
 Wheelchair Spaces 4
 Number of Vehicles with: Wheelchair Lifts 2
 Two-Way Radios 4
 Other Special Equipment _____

5. Performance.

	(Last Year) FY <u>86</u> Actual	(Current Year) FY <u>87</u> Projected
Operating Passengers	<u>24,000</u>	<u>24,000</u>
Wheelchair Lift Operations Performed	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>
Revenue Miles	<u>105,000</u>	<u>105,000</u>
Revenue Hours	_____	_____
Pass./Rev. Mile	_____	_____
Pass./Rev. Hour	_____	_____
Avg. Daily Pass. Carried	<u>92</u>	<u>92</u>
Financial		
Operating Expenses	_____	_____
Operating Revenues	_____	_____
Capital Expenses	_____	_____
Cost/Rev. Mile	_____	_____
Rev./Rev. Mile	_____	_____
Cost/Pass. Trip	_____	_____
Rev./Pass. Trip	_____	_____
Cost/Rev. Hour	_____	_____
Rev./Rev. Hour	_____	_____
Avg. Pass. Fare/Trip	_____	_____

Covers the period From 7/1/85 to 6/30/86

6. Other Information.

