



HIRTA

TITLE VI EQUITY ANALYSIS

**FACILITY SITE SELECTION:
BOONE MAINTENANCE FACILITY**

DRAFT REPORT

10/27/2025

217TH RD
BOONE COUNTY, IOWA 50036

TITLE VI EQUITY ANALYSIS

FACILITY SITE SELECTION: 217TH RD

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BACKGROUND

The Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) provides approximately 125,000 rides annually across our seven-county rural service area in central Iowa. While this figure reflects the unique needs and demographics of rural communities, HIRTA plays a critical role in ensuring access to healthcare, employment, education, and daily living activities for residents without access to personal transportation. Rural transportation disparities are often more amplified than in urban areas due to the lack of alternative options. HIRTA addresses these challenges by providing flexible, demand-response, door-to-door service rather than fixed routes. In addition to our core transit services, HIRTA also utilizes volunteer drivers and vanpools to expand access and fill mobility gaps for individuals who might otherwise have no transportation options.

HIRTA operates a responsive and community-centered transportation system available to the general public, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. Service is available Monday through Friday, with limited service on weekends in some areas, and scheduled through HIRTA's centralized call center or online ride request system. With a diverse fleet of accessible vehicles, HIRTA continually evaluates and modernizes operations to ensure safety, efficiency, and inclusivity. HIRTA has also embraced innovative mobility solutions through initiatives like the Health Connector, which improves coordination of healthcare-related transportation, and the integration of technologies such as NaviLens for enhanced accessibility. HIRTA continues to lead among our peers by piloting data-driven scheduling tools, expanding volunteer driver networks, and developing regional partnerships to create more seamless and equitable transit experiences across rural communities. HIRTA's commitment to rural mobility directly supports regional well-being, sustainability, and equity across central Iowa.

STUDY PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION

HIRTA currently operates without a dedicated facility in Boone County, which limits our ability to effectively house and maintain vehicles, support drivers, and ensure safe and efficient operations. Without proper storage and on-site amenities, HIRTA faces higher operating costs, increased safety risks, and reduced long-term sustainability. Developing a dedicated facility in Boone County will allow HIRTA to strengthen service reliability, improve efficiency, and support future growth in the region.

The proposed facility will be constructed on a subdivided parcel of approximately 2.5–3 acres from a privately owned 10-acre site. The building will total 21,400 square feet, including 19,900 square feet of vehicle storage and 1,500 square feet for driver support space. Designed as a one-story structure, the facility will provide indoor storage for 20

transit vehicles—enough to accommodate HIRTA’s current fleet of 17 buses and space for 3 additional vehicles to support anticipated needs over the next 40–50 years.

The facility will include a wash bay, a driver breakroom, a restroom that meets FTA drug and alcohol testing requirements, and a small administrative office. A drive-through design will allow vehicles to enter and exit without reversing, reducing accident risks and improving safety. The building will also be equipped with electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support fleet modernization.

In compliance with Boone County Planning and Zoning ordinances, the site will feature at least 20 outdoor parking spaces to support staff and visitors. HIRTA will engage a licensed surveyor to establish a boundary description, which will be used for planning, environmental review, and subdivision of the property following completion of the NEPA study.

Importantly, the facility will be designed to achieve LEED certification, reflecting HIRTA’s commitment to sustainability, energy efficiency, and long-term resilience.

This project directly supports HIRTA’s mission to provide safe, reliable, and accessible transportation for all rural residents. By addressing current operational limitations, the Boone County facility will improve efficiency, enhance connectivity, and ensure equitable access to vital services such as medical appointments, employment, and community connections.

This Title VI Equity Analysis will evaluate the site for HIRTA’s new facility.

TITLE VI COMPLIANCE

HIRTA is committed to ensuring no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1.B. Further, Title 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(3) states, "In determining the site or location of facilities, a recipient or applicant may not make selections with the purpose or effect of excluding persons from, denying them the benefits of, or subjecting them to discrimination under any program to which this regulation applies, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin; or with the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing the accomplishment of the objectives of the Act or this part." Finally, Title 49 CFR Part, 21, Appendix C, Section 3(iv) provides that, "The location of projects requiring land acquisition and the displacement of persons from their residences and businesses may not be determined on the basis of race, color or national origin."

The public can find HIRTA's current Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy and complaint process/form on the web at: <https://www.ridehirta.com/policies>

To comply with this regulation, HIRTA is required to conduct a Title VI equity analysis to demonstrate the facility site is selected without regard to race, color, or national origin.

SITE SELECTION PROCESS

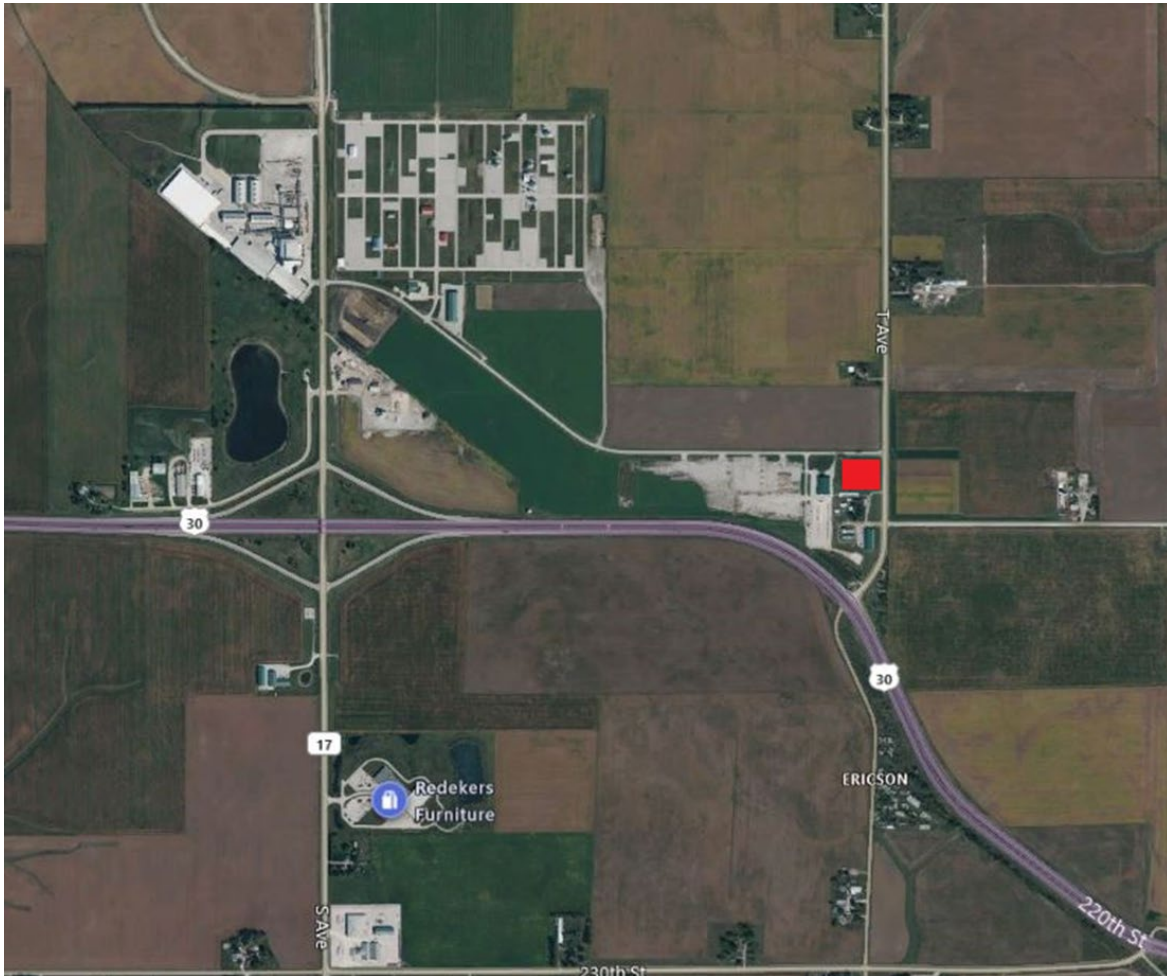
HIRTA's site selection process involved identifying vacant parcels of land within Boone county which could support current operational needs while allowing for future expansion. A comprehensive review was conducted with a focus on location, size, development potential, and alignment with long-term strategic goals. This process led to the identification of three candidate sites: 217th Rd & T Ave; Highway 17 & Highway 30; and 1920 Lakewood Dr.

Through a comparative scoring and evaluation process, the 217th Rd & T Ave site emerged as the preferred alternative. This location offers significantly greater development potential and long-term viability compared to the other sites. The 217th Rd & T Ave site meets the project's key criteria, including infrastructure availability, centrality within the county, and suitability for indoor fleet storage and essential fleet maintenance operations.

Land availability in the region is limited due to the overall demand for parcels that meet the specific needs of a transit facility. Boone was identified as the most suitable area due to its infrastructure and accessibility, and its more rural setting with extensive farmland offers larger parcels that can accommodate the facility's needs. Many sites were found to be either too small or excessively large (exceeding 40 acres), which would introduce unnecessary acquisition and development costs. The 217th Rd & T Ave site represents a rare and timely opportunity to secure a centrally located, appropriately sized property that aligns with HIRTA's operational, financial, mission, and vision. This investment will allow HIRTA to modernize operations, enhance regional mobility, and improve access to transit for all residents.

PROJECT LOCATION MAP

The proposed facility will be located on 217th Rd & T Ave.



BENEFITS AND BURDENS ANALYSIS

HIRTA evaluated the benefits and burdens of the identified site to determine any potential impacts to the surrounding community. The preferred location is currently used as farmland, and its development would not result in the displacement of any residents or businesses. While there are some residential properties near the site, none are directly adjacent, and the surrounding land use consists primarily of farmland and commercial development. As a result, the facility is not anticipated to have any adverse impact on nearby neighborhoods. The site is located along a major regional corridor in a rural area, and no cumulative impacts from surrounding businesses are expected.

Table 1: Benefits and Burdens

Benefits/Positive Impacts	Burdens/Adverse Impacts
217th Rd & T Ave • Central location between Boone and Ames minimizes deadhead time and operating costs • Parcel size (14 acres) allows HIRTA to purchase only what is needed while ensuring space is adequate • Anticipated acquisition costs are reasonable and comparable to similar properties • Minimal development costs due to existing paved roads and nearby utilities • Hard-surfaced county roads (217th Street and T Avenue) provide strong access for buses and staff • Utilities can be extended from nearby development, making the site suitable for operations • Minimal topography issues, which will reduce construction costs	• Site is privately owned, so acquisition costs could be higher than if owned by city or county • A water and energy easement exists on the property, which may impact design or construction • Some utility extensions may still be needed depending on final site design • Transit operations could add traffic and noise, although impacts are limited given surrounding land use

Table 1: Benefits and Burdens

- Adequate drainage based on USDA Soil Survey data
- Not located in a floodplain, reducing environmental and construction risks
- No known geotechnical problems that would affect construction
- No displacement of residents or businesses since the site is currently farmland
- Zoned commercial, which is compatible with transit operations
- Shared use potential for serving Boone and surrounding counties

EQUITY ANALYSIS

HIRTA analyzed area demographics and equity impacts (Tables 2 and 3) to ensure this site did not result in disparate treatment on the basis of race, color, or national origin. **The site at 217th Rd & T Ave is located in Boone County, Iowa in Census Tract 201.**

Table 2: Demographic Data

Impact Criteria	217th Rd & T Ave Site	Boone County
Total Population	3,197	26,669
White	2,976	24,883
Non-White	221	1,786
Non-White Percentage	6.9%	6.7%
Population Under Poverty Line	151	1,757
Percentage Under Poverty Line	4.7%	6.7%
Median Income (Households)	\$109,500	\$79,741
Limited English Proficiency Percentage (Less than Very Well)	0.2%	0.3%

Source: Data from U.S. Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In summary, the site's median income and non-white population are slightly higher but remain comparable to county-level statistics. Poverty and LEP rates are lower than the county.

Table 3: Equity Impact Comparison

Impact Criteria	217th Rd & T Ave
Who would be impacted by selecting this site?	• None
Will selecting this site require displacement of residents or businesses?	• No
Listed other similar facilities nearby including maintenance, storage, operations, etc.	• Manufacturing business (1) • Storage business (1)

In summary, the Equity Analysis found there were no adverse or cumulative impacts, or disparate impacts per the Title VI regulations.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HIRTA held a public hearing on 12/4/2024 for people to review the facility plan, ask questions of staff and make comments. Notification of the release of the study and public input opportunities was made in the following ways:

- Information on HIRTA's website included:
 - Draft Facility Feasibility Study and Equity Analysis
 - Public Hearing date/time/location/purpose
 - Comment Period
- Notice in local media
- Notices on HIRTA's website
- Social media notices on Facebook, X, and notifications on HIRTA's website

X individuals attended the Title VI Equity Analysis public meeting. X comments were received during the designated public comment period or submitted at the meeting itself. Accordingly, X feedback or input was documented for consideration as part of this analysis.

CONCLUSION

The preferred site identified and evaluated by HIRTA for our future facility was selected without regard to race, color, or national origin. An analysis of demographic data, including poverty rate, minority population rate, and limited English proficiency (LEP) rate in the surrounding area, indicates no disparate impact would result from selecting this location. The site is currently used as farmland, with no displacement of residents or businesses anticipated. Nearby properties are primarily commercial or agricultural, and no immediate residential adjacency exists.

Furthermore, the location is along a major regional transportation corridor and was chosen based on objective criteria, including centralized access, development readiness, and suitability for long-term operations. HIRTA's review of potential benefits and burdens found the project would not adversely affect the surrounding community and may result in improved access to regional services. X public comments were received indicating the proposed location would negatively impact minority or underserved populations.

Therefore, the conclusion of this Title VI Equity Analysis found there is no apparent disparate impact associated with the selection of this site for HIRTA's facility.