

RPA 14/ATURA
Transportation Planning Affiliation

Public Participation
Plan
FY2010

Approved by the RPA 14 / ATURA Policy Board

Anticipated Adoption Date – September 8, 2009

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PREFACE

This document is a plan for the implementation of the guidelines and procedures for public involvement, participation and outreach in the transportation planning process, as established in SAFETEA-LU (Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users). SAFETEA-LU is the federal legislation that establishes federal transportation funding programs for surface transportation modes. It is RPA 14 / ATURA's intent to provide the maximum feasible participation by the public in the regional planning process within the limitations of staff time and financial resources currently available. This document outlines what techniques the RPA will employ as standard public participation procedures and in outreach efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Public involvement in transportation decision-making is central to accomplishing the vision of SAFETEA-LU. SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit. This legislation recognizes that transportation investment decisions have far reaching effects and thus require that regional, metropolitan and statewide decisions consider a wide array of factors including land use impacts and the overall social, economic, safety, energy, and environmental effects of transportation decisions.

The process for developing such plans and programs must provide for consideration of all modes of transportation and shall be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate, based on the complexity of the transportation problems. The legislation also recognizes the diversity of views on transportation problems and investment options, and states that, prior to adopting plans or programs all citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other effected employee representatives, and other interested parties must be provided a reasonable opportunity to comment.

These regulations provide a basic set of performance standards indicating what the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration expect from public involvement with respect to plans, programs, and major transportation investments.

RPA 14 /ATURA is charged with the responsibility of gathering input from the public and involving the public in setting priorities in the planning process. Developing an effective public involvement program is a strategic effort that requires assembling a variety of techniques to meet the needs of the given transportation plan, program, or project.

RPA STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

- RPA 14 / ATURA is governed by a **Policy Board**, which includes one person from each county of the service area and each city with a population of 5,000 or more people. The service area shall include Adams, Adair, Union, Taylor, and Ringgold counties. The only city with a population currently over 5,000 is the City of Creston. Policy Board members shall be a county supervisor, mayor, or city council member from the jurisdiction they represent. Policy Board members are appointed by their respective Boards of Supervisors or City Councils and are the final RPA decision-making authority. The Policy Board guides and sets policy of the local transportation planning affiliation on matters necessary to comply with state and federal legislation. The Policy Board also has the power to conduct comprehensive transportation studies and master plans for the uniform and efficient development of surface transportation facilities within its service area. It allocates federal-aid funds to eligible projects within its service area.
- **Transportation Technical Committee** is composed primarily of lead technical staff from the member entities and provides recommendations to the Policy Committee. The Transportation Technical Committee shall consist of the five County Engineers from the service area, the Creston Public Works Director, the Regional Transit Operator, and an Iowa DOT representative. There shall be one Transportation Technical Committee vote for each member, with the exception of Iowa DOT and the Regional Transit Operator.
- **Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) Advisory Group** discusses issues of interest related to transportation needs and services in the region. They provide useful and valuable input into the preparation of the planning documents. Those involved in this group include the Transportation Advisory Council of Southern Iowa Trolley, made up of a county supervisor from each county in the region, representatives of five human service organizations, representatives of the Area Agency on Aging, and the Southern Iowa Trolley. The Region 14 Partners group of Iowa Workforce Development also provides input and consultation on these matters. It's membership consists of representatives of a variety of human service organizations that operate in the region, including: Iowa Workforce Development, Workforce Investment Act, Green Valley Area Education Agency, Disability Navigator Program, Southwestern Community College, Department of the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the local community action corporation (MATURA).
- The **Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG)** staff is responsible for performing the administrative and technical services necessary to operate the RPA.

A list of current RPA 14 / ATURA Policy Board members, Transportation Technical Committee members, and SICOG staff is included in Appendix A.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DOCUMENTS

RPA 14 / ATURA solicits public comments on the documents governing its policies and operations when these major documents are initially approved or undergo major amendment. These documents include:

Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP): The comprehensive annual TPWP coordinates all transportation and transportation-related planning activities that the RPA intends to accomplish during the program year utilizing federal, state, and/or local resources. The TPWP serves as a grant application for federal funds and also a management tool for directing staff activities throughout the year. A TPWP budget revision is defined as an amendment if it affects an amount greater than 10% of the budget. Such an amendment requires Policy Board approval. Adding a new task to the TPWP is also considered an amendment that requires Policy Board approval.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The TIP is the prioritized program for federally funded transportation improvements within the RPA over a minimum of four years. The TIP is updated annually. The purpose of the TIP is to provide members of the RPA, transportation providers, the general public, and other affected groups and individuals with a general description of the capital transportation projects to be accomplished during the time frame of the document. A public hearing on the TIP will be held at an RPA 14 / ATURA Policy Board meeting prior to final approval. Public input and comments will be sought throughout the planning process, on the draft document and at the public hearing on the TIP or for amendments to the TIP. Amendments are required for additions of projects, significant change in scope or cost of a project or additional federal funding source.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP): The purpose of this document is to provide members of the RPA, transportation providers, the general public and affected groups and individuals with a comprehensive Long Range Transportation Plan for the five-county area. The LRTP is based on a minimum twenty-year horizon that includes both short- and long- range implementation strategies and provides for an integrated future transportation system. The LRTP is updated approximately every five years. Focus group meetings open to the public are conducted in an effort to obtain input from interested parties. A public hearing on the LRTP is held at an RPA 14 / ATURA Policy Board meeting prior to final approval. The LRTP public participation process and a public comment period shall be governed by established guidelines.

Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP): The purpose of this document is to provide members of RPA 14 / ATURA, transportation providers, general public, human service organizations and the general public and affected groups with a coordinated passenger transportation development plan that addresses the needs of all residents of the region. Input into this plan and comments about the plan are sought from affected individuals and organizations. The PTP Advisory Group and the Region 14 Partners of Iowa Workforce Development consult with and meet with

SICOG staff in preparation of the PTP.

Other: Periodically, SICOG may generate documents from staff or consultant-based transportation planning studies. When appropriate, a specific schedule and plan for public participation will be developed for these studies.

PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

RPA 14 / ATURA's Public Participation Program will have two basic objectives: a.) to disseminate the maximum amount of information about the transportation planning process to as many interested members of the general public as possible; and b.) to actively seek responses from the region regarding transportation problems, priorities, and potential solutions.

The public involvement process is to be proactive and provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement. The process should meet the following requirements:

- Provide adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points and notify interested and affected individuals and agencies.
- Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.
- Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low- income and minority households.
- Review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process at least every five years.
- Work to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion.
- Written and oral comments will be provided to the Policy Board prior to action being taken.

Programs, policies, and activities that affect human health or the environment should identify and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations. Environmental Justice aims to ensure that no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group bears a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from government programs and policies.

Should the need exist, the RPA will make special efforts to offer translation for people who use languages other than English. Meeting facilities will be accessible, and interpretation for the hearing impaired will be provided upon request, when feasible.

Policy Board Regular Meetings: The RPA is a public body as defined in the Iowa State Open Meetings Law and are therefore subject to the requirements of that law. Meeting notices of regularly scheduled meetings are sent out to policy board and transportation technical committee members at least one week prior to a regularly scheduled meeting. Public notices include the date, time, and location of the meeting, as well as the agenda to be covered, and are published in a newspaper of general circulation in the town where the meeting will be held and in the Creston News Advertiser prior to the meeting. The public is invited and encouraged to attend RPA meetings through notices published in area newspapers, through periodic SICOG newsletter articles distributed to cities and counties and other interested parties, and through contacts made by SICOG staff. The public is notified that information pertaining to the meeting topics is available at the SICOG office and on its website. Meeting notices are also regularly posted on the SICOG website and at the SICOG office. Additionally, notice of meetings is included in the SICOG newsletter whenever feasible.

Public Hearings: The Policy Board periodically adopts a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Public Participation Plan (PPP) in accordance with Federal and state transportation planning guidelines. Prior to adoption of or an amendment to the TIP or LRTP the RPA will hold a public hearing. The hearing will be publicly advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in the town where the meeting will be held as well as in the Creston News Advertiser. The public will be given the opportunity to express their ideas, opinions, and offer input for consideration by the Policy Board at the public hearing.

Presentations to Organizations: Individual presentations to various organizations will occur when requested and may be done at the request of the Policy Board.

City/County Meetings: SICOG staff will be available to speak to any City Council or Board of Supervisors should these officials deem it necessary or useful.

Newsletters: SICOG publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Windmill* that includes articles dedicated to issues of transportation and meeting schedules. The newsletter is primarily distributed electronically but is also available in hardcopy and on the SICOG website. Copies are distributed to an established mailing list that includes all cities and counties in the region, elected officials (approximately 300 people/organizations), and to other interested public.

Website: SICOG has a website and email address and can be reached via telephone, fax, direct mail or in person at their office. SICOG maintains a website www.sicog.com to inform the public. Information posted on the website includes SICOG contact information, copies of "The Windmill" – the monthly newsletter of the SICOG organization, and a link for ATURA RPA Transportation related webpages. These web pages include RPA 14/ATURA Policy Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes, an overview of the RPA, a listing of Policy Board and Technical Committee members and their duties, copies of Regional Transportation Planning Documents, regional transportation enhancement applications, and other transportation related information.

RECORDKEEPING

The RPA will consider input from the public and incorporate it into the decision making process when appropriate. To ensure that the public input is valued and considered, SICOG will maintain records of its public involvement activities, and the input, comments, and issues identified by the public. SICOG will reply to requests for written documentation or published information within a reasonable time frame and, where feasible, will respond to input received during the public participation phase of information gathering.

PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN

RPA 14/ATURA has incorporated the public participation techniques described in this Public Participation Plan (PPP) and have followed the public involvement process described in this document throughout the development of this plan. The following Action Plan has been followed in the development of this document and a similar action plan will be followed in the development of RPA 14/ATURA's Long Range Transportation Plan:

- (1) Initial input for the draft PPP is obtained through consultation with members of the ATURA Policy Board, ATURA Transportation Technical Committee, PTP Advisory Group, and Iowa Department of Transportation. Among others, these groups include elected officials, transportation professionals, transit agency representatives, private providers of transportation, persons with disabilities or those who work for organizations that serve low-income persons and persons with disabilities, elderly persons and those who work for organizations that serve elderly persons, persons who utilize public transit, and persons who work for organizations that serve individuals who utilize public transit. Large employers, providers of freight transportation, freight shippers, and County Conservation boards and park and trail representatives are also invited to provide input.
- (2) Copies of the draft PPP are distributed prior to and at meetings of the ATURA Transportation Technical Committee, ATURA Policy Board, and PTP advisory group in order to solicit their further comments and input. Copies of the draft PPP Plan are also distributed to large employers, providers of freight transportation, freight shippers, county conservation boards, and park and trail representatives.
- (3) The draft PPP plan is posted on the SICOG website and made available in hard copy from the SICOG office, county engineer offices, and local public transit agency.
- (4) The SICOG newsletter is used to notify counties, cities and other interested parties of the availability of the draft plan and how to obtain a copy of that plan, as well as to solicit written comments from any interested parties. The newsletter article invites all interested parties to an ATURA Policy Board meeting at which they will be offered an opportunity to make comments on the draft PPP plan or to submit comments in writing.

(5) Notice of the public meeting of the ATURA Policy Board at which this PPP is to be discussed is also published in area newspapers. The notice explains how to obtain a copy of the draft PPP plan. In the notice the public is invited to attend the meeting and make comments. At the public meeting citizens are given the opportunity to make written or oral comments about the plan or to submit comments following the meeting.

(6) Following consideration of comments received, a Final version of the PPP is prepared, the Iowa Department of Transportation is consulted, approval of the Final PPP by ATURA Transportation Technical Committee is obtained, and the Final PPP is presented for approval and adoption by the ATURA Policy Board.

PROCESS REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND AMENDMENTS

At the time of each transportation planning document update, SICOG will make available the documents in draft form for public review and will seek public input and comments on the TIP, TPWP, PTP, PPP and LRTP. Draft planning documents will be posted on the SICOG website and will be available at the SICOG office and in the affiliated county engineers' offices in printed form.

When it becomes necessary to amend planning documents, the process requires a similar public participation procedure to obtain public input as when the document was initially approved.

Public Participation Plan: The Public Participation Plan is reviewed and updated every five years.

The Public Participation Plan of the RPA 14 / ATURA Policy Board is hereby passed and adopted this ____ day of _____, 2009

Mark Olive
Chairperson of the Board
ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation

Date

Robert Lundquist (ATTEST)
Vice Chairperson of the Board
ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation

Date

APPENDIX A

ATURA Policy Board Members (FY2010)

John Twombly	Adair County Board of Supervisors Member
Mark Olive	Adams County Board of Supervisors Member
Warren Woods	City of Creston Mayor
Kurt Shaha	Ringgold County Board of Supervisors Member
Rob Lundquist	Taylor County Board of Supervisors Member
Mike King	Union County Board of Supervisors Member

The BOARD guides and sets policy of the local transportation planning affiliation on matters necessary to comply with state and federal legislation. It annually adopts a four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) and Passenger Transportation Development Plan (PTDP). The BOARD periodically adopts a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Public Participation Plan (PPP) in accordance with Federal and state transportation planning guidelines. The BOARD also has the power to conduct comprehensive transportation studies and master plans for the uniform and efficient development of surface transportation facilities within its service area. The BOARD allocates federal-aid funds to eligible projects within its service area.

ATURA Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) Members (FY2010)

Charles Marker	Adair County Engineer
Eldon Rike	Adams County Engineer
Kevin Kruse	City of Creston Public Works Director
Dan Coulson	Ringgold County Engineer
Eldon Rike	Taylor County Engineer
Steve Akes	Union County Engineer
Scott Suhr	Iowa DOT Representative – ex-officio
Pam Stow	Southern Iowa Trolley Transit Manager – ex-officio

The Transportation Technical Committee shall be directly responsible to the BOARD for the initiation, review, and recommendations of transportation related activities.

Southern Iowa Council of Governments (FY2010)

The Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG) provides professional staff for the development and maintenance of ATURA planning and programming responsibilities. SICOG is the coordinating body responsible for the submission of various transportation documents to the Iowa DOT and for public distribution. SICOG works with the ATURA Policy Board and Transportation Technical Committee to fulfill the transportation planning and program requirements of federal legislation, such as SAFETEA-LU. Area citizens are provided the opportunity to comment on all aspects of the transportation planning process through ATURA Policy Board meetings, focus groups, public hearings, and individual correspondence. SICOG facilitates the development of the Transportation Planning

Work Program (TPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Transportation Development Plan (TDP), and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the processes involved in those documents, as well as the creation of this Public Participation Plan (PPP).

Timothy Ostroski, Executive Director
Becky Nardy, Transportation / Planner
Kristal Feldhacker, Office Manager/H-RLF Specialist
Judy Brimm, Finance Director
Jeremy Rounds, Regional Planner
Nicholas Schieffer, Disaster Recovery Coordinator/Planner
Clint Sloss, GIS/Planner Intern

Iowa Department of Transportation

The Iowa Department of Transportation provides technical assistance and guidance for the work carried out by RPA 14 / ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation in its duties.