

RPA 14/ATURA

Transportation Planning Affiliation

Final - July 14, 2015

Public Participation Plan FY2016



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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 MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act). MAP-21 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.

This plan is an update of past Public Participation Plans, the most recent of which was adopted in 2011. Increasing public awareness of and participation in the planning process is the sincere goal of the RPA.

Introduction

Public involvement in transportation decision-making is central to accomplishing the vision of MAP-21. MAP-21 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.

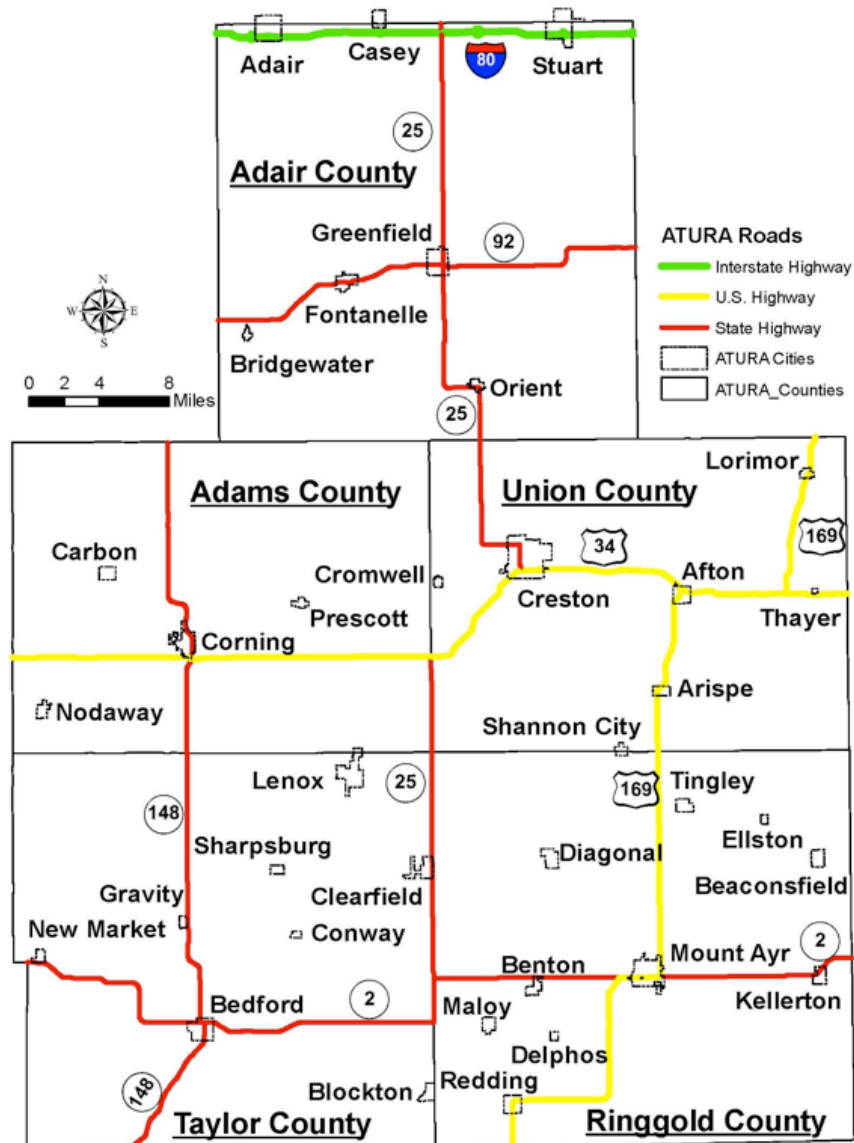
RPA 14 / ATURA is charged with the responsibility of gathering input from the public and involving the public in setting priorities in the planning process. Developing an effective public involvement program is a strategic effort that requires assembling a variety of techniques to meet the needs of the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

developed by planners. When ideal public participation occurs, transportation plans better reflect community values. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to be the initial step in the development of a new Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a framework for public participation in all transportation plans developed by RPA 14 / ATURA.

Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA) Structure and Operation

Map of RPA 14/ATURA Region

Regional Planning Affiliation 14 / ATURA (Admads, Taylor, Union, Ringgold and Adair Counties) is located in southwestern Iowa.



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

Policy Board

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 elected 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 Director, 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 Director.

Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) Advisory Groups discuss issues of interest related to transportation needs and passenger transportation services in the region. They provide useful and valuable input into the preparation of the planning documents. Those involved in these groups include representatives of numerous regional human service organizations, community action agencies, ministerial alliance, interested local citizens, and elected officials. The Iowa Workforce Development Region 14 Partners group (also known as the Sector Board) also provides input and consultation on these matters. It's membership consists of representatives of employment, educational, economic development and human services organizations that operate within the region, including: IowaWORKS, Experience Works, Workforce Investment Act, Southwestern Community College, Department of the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation, Chamber of Commerce, Union County Development Association, educators, and the local community action corporation (MATURA). In addition, employers from the area are invited to participate.

The **Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG)** staff is responsible for performing planning, administrative and technical services necessary to operate the RPA.

Transportation Planning Documents

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

RPA 14 / ATURA solicits public participation and comments on major documents governing its policies and operations while they are being developed, initially approved or undergo major amendment. The Public Participation Plan is updated on an as-needed basis or at least once every five years. The plan for public participation contained in this document applies to and will be followed in the development of this Public Participation Plan (PPP) and major planning documents described below:

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. Public input and comments are sought throughout the planning process. The Draft TPWP is developed early in the year and completed annually by April 1. The Policy Board holds a public hearing with notice made to the public prior to adoption of the TPWP or approval of any Amendments to the TPWP. The Policy Board approved Final TPWP document is due on June 1 each year.

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 development process begins with Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) applications submitted to RPA 14/ATURA. STP applications are due January 1 and TAP applications are due the second Tuesday of April and October. The TIP document is updated annually in the spring, with the draft completed by June 15. 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 is held at an RPA 14 / ATURA Policy Board meeting prior to final approval. Public input and comments are sought throughout the planning process, on the draft document, 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 sources. The Policy Board approved Final TIP is due by July 15 of each year.

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 guidelines for an integrated future

transportation system. The LRTP is updated every five years. The LRTP public participation process shall be governed by established guidelines utilizing this PPP as a framework for the public participation process to be followed. A variety of methods for public outreach to interested public and stakeholders will be employed during the development of the draft LRTP document. A resource agency/stakeholder consultation plan will be created and implemented during the development of the LRTP. A 45-day public comment period will be held following the release of the draft LRTP. All comments received from the public will be taken into consideration in the Final LRTP document. A public hearing will be held prior to final approval and adoption. The ATURA Transportation Technical Committee will review the Final LRTP and make recommendation of approval by the Policy Board. The Policy Board then adopts the Final LRTP at a meeting of the ATURA Policy Board. The next LRTP is due in the Fall of 2016.

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. The PTP is updated every five years, but coordination efforts and input gathering continue between updates. Input into this plan and comments about the plan are sought from affected individuals and organizations. The staff consults with and attends PTP Advisory Group meetings to gather input and comments during the development of the document. Surveys and other outreach tools are utilized to gather information, assess needs, and establish priorities, gaps in services, and other pertinent data. The next full PTP document is due in draft form on February 1, 2019 and the final Policy Board approved document is due May 1, 2019.

Other

Periodically, SICOG may generate documents utilizing their staff or produce consultant-based transportation planning studies. This PPP will guide that process. When appropriate, a specific schedule and plan for gathering public input and comments may be developed for use throughout that planning process.

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.
- Make draft and final transportation planning documents readily available to the public, both online and in hardcopy format.
- 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. Meetings will generally be held at times when public transportation is available.

Policy Board 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 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. These notices are published in a newspaper of general circulation in the town where the meeting will be held. Publication is done no fewer than four nor more than twenty days before the meeting. Meeting Agendas are also posted at the office of the Southern Iowa Council of Governments and on the ATURA website. The public is encouraged to attend RPA Policy Board meetings via notices published in

area newspapers, announced on local radio, through periodic SICOG newsletter articles (the newsletter is distributed to cities and counties and other interested parties), through notices posted at the SICOG office, 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. Policy Board meeting agendas are included in the SICOG newsletter when feasible.

Public Hearings

The Policy Board periodically adopts planning documents such as: (Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP), 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 these documents the RPA will hold a public hearing in accordance with state regulations. Notice of the public hearing will be placed in a newspaper of general circulation in the town where the meeting will be held as well as announced on local radio. Public Hearing notices will also appear on the ATURA website and be posted at the office of the Southern Iowa Council of Governments. The public will be given the opportunity to express their ideas, opinions, and offer input for consideration by the Policy Board either prior to or at the public hearing. Comments may be written or oral.

Presentations to Organizations

Individual presentations to various organizations will occur when requested and may be done at the request of the Policy Board. Transportation Technical Committee, or others.

City/County Meetings

SICOG planning staff is available to speak to City Councils or Board of Supervisors should SICOG staff or these officials deem it necessary or useful.

Newsletters

SICOG publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Windmill* that includes articles dedicated to issues of transportation and scheduled meetings. 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, economic development organizations, elected officials (approximately 300 people/organizations), and to other interested members of the public.

Website

SICOG maintains a website www.sicog.com. RPA 14/ATURA has a website presence on the SICOG website: <http://www.sicog.com/affiliates/atura>. This site informs and provides access to RPA information, including: an RPA overview, staff contact

information, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and transportation planning documents (both draft and final) and RPA policies. Information also included on the website includes Policy Board members and their duties, Transportation Technical Committee members and their duties, By-Laws, Title VI policies, and access to copies of “The Windmill” – the monthly newsletter of the SICOG organization. Applications and guidelines for funding for transportation related projects may also be downloaded from the RPA website.

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 copies of documents within a reasonable time frame and, whenever feasible, will respond to input received during the public participation phase of information gathering.

Title VI, ADA, and Environmental Justice

RPA plans are required to be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ensures 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. RPA plans also comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This is a civil rights law that protects individuals from discrimination based on disabilities. RPA plans must also observe Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. This requires that programs, policies, and activities that affect human health or the environment should identify and avoid disproportionately high or 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 as the result of governmental programs and policies.

Open Meeting Law

The Iowa Open Meeting Law (Iowa Code, Ch. 21) is designed to facilitate public access to government decisions. It applies to government bodies, including boards, councils, commissions, and task forces created by the state or its political subdivisions. The law defines what constitutes a meeting and lists requirements for public notices, agendas, meeting procedures, and minutes, as well as regulations concerning closed meetings. The RPA operates in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend RPA meetings. RPA meeting notices are published in area newspapers and area radio stations receive meeting notices. Information about RPA meetings, including minutes and agendas, is also available at the SICOG office and online on the RPA 14/ ATURA website (<http://www.sicog.com/affiliates/atura>).

Public Records Law

The Iowa Public Records Law (Iowa Code, Ch. 22) provides for openness from government agencies with regard to public records. With the exception of certain confidential records, every person has the right to examine and copy public records. The RPA complies with the Public Records Law, and public documents are available for review at the SICOG office. Documents may be viewed during normal office hours, with a nominal fee for copies.

Participation Action Plan

RPA 14 / ATURA has incorporated the public participation techniques described in this Public Participation Plan (PPP) and will follow the public involvement process described in this document throughout the development of this plan and each of the major transportation planning documents described above.

(1) Initial input for the PPP or other major planning documents will be obtained through consultation with members of the ATURA Policy Board, ATURA Transportation Technical Committee, and the Iowa Department of Transportation. Input from PTP Advisory Group members or other interested groups and individuals will be obtained when appropriate. Appropriate data will be gathered.

(2) Copies of the Draft PPP and other major planning documents are distributed to the ATURA Transportation Technical Committee, ATURA Policy Board, Iowa DOT, and the area transit agency for comments and input. Comments and input will be solicited from the general public, transportation stakeholders, and other interested parties and incorporated into the final versions of these major transportation planning documents prior to approval and adoption by the Policy Board.

(3) The Draft PPP, like all major planning documents will be posted on the ATURA website and made available in hard copy form at the SICOG office. The Draft PPP will be made available to the public for a 45-day period of review during which comments will be invited. Public comment periods for other major planning documents are typically thirty (30) days.

(4) The SICOG newsletter and ATURA website are used to notify counties, cities and other interested parties of the availability of draft transportation plans and methods to obtain a copy of that plan, as well as to solicit written or oral comments from any interested parties. SICOG newsletter articles invite interested parties to review the Draft PPP and other draft planning documents and notice is made of ATURA Policy Board meetings at which the public will be given an opportunity to make comments on the PPP document or to submit comments in writing either prior to or at the meeting.

(5) A resource agency/stakeholder consultation plan will be developed to determine the preferred method of contacting and requesting input from a variety of organizations and agencies for use during the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Large employers, providers of freight transportation, freight shippers, County Conservation Boards and park, trail and/or biking groups and public transit users will be specifically targeted to provide input and comments during the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Public participation will also be sought from elected officials, transit agency representatives, low-income persons, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, or those who work for organizations that serve these populations.

(6) Notice of the public meeting of the ATURA Policy Board at which the PPP or other major planning documents are to be discussed will be published in an area newspaper and broadcast on local radio stations. Meeting notices will also be posted at the SICOG office and on the ATURA website. Notices will direct the public in ways to obtain a copy of the proposed draft plans. The public will be invited to attend the meeting and make comments. Citizens also will be given the opportunity to make written or oral comments about the plan prior to the meeting.

(7) The Iowa DOT will be consulted and provided an opportunity to review and make comments on the Draft PPP and other major planning documents. Following consideration of comments received from all sources, a final plan will be prepared and a public hearing will be conducted. The ATURA Transportation Technical Committee will review the final plan and make a recommendation to the Policy Board that it be approved. The final Plan will then be presented to the ATURA Policy Board for approval and adoption.

Process Review, Approval and Amendments

At the time of transportation planning document update, the RPA 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 ATURA 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, including a public hearing, and approval by the policy board. The TIP and TPWP documents specifically spell out the process to be followed when making amendments.

Public Participation Plan Update

The Public Participation Plan is reviewed and updated at least every five years, either as a part of the development of a new Long Range Transportation plan or as

needed to meet new regulations, adapt to new goals, or better address the needs of the region.

Long Range Transportation Plan

This Public Participation Plan will be utilized in the development of the next RPA 14/ATURA Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and will be incorporated as a part of that document.

This Public Participation Plan of the RPA 14 / ATURA Policy Board is hereby passed and adopted this ____ day of _____, 2015.

Ron Riley, Union Co. Supervisor
Chairperson, RPA 14/ATURA Policy Board
ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation

Date

ATTEST:

Royce Dredge, Ringgold Co. Supervisor
Vice Chairperson/Secretary, RPA 14/ATURA Policy Board
ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation

Date

Appendix A

ATURA Policy Board Members

John Twombly	Adair County Board of Supervisors Member
Merlin Dixon	Adams County Board of Supervisors Member
Warren Woods	City of Creston Mayor
Royce Dredge	Ringgold County Board of Supervisors Member
Charles Ambrose	Taylor County Board of Supervisors Member
Ron Riley	Union County Board of Supervisors Member

The ATURA Policy 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) and Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP). The Board also adopts a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), and Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) at least every five years in accordance with Federal and state transportation planning guidelines. The Board 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

Nick Kauffman	Adair County Engineer
Eldon Rike	Adams County Engineer
Kevin Kruse	City of Creston Public Works Director
Zachary Gunsolley	Ringgold County Engineer
Eldon Rike	Taylor County Engineer
Steve Akes	Union County Engineer
Scott Suhr	Iowa DOT Representative – non voting
Leesa Lester	Southern Iowa Trolley, Transit Director – non voting

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

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 MAP-21. Area citizens are provided the opportunity to comment on all aspects of the transportation planning process through ATURA Policy Board meetings, focus and advisory groups, public hearings, surveys, and individual correspondence. SICOG facilitates the development of the Transportation

Planning Work Program (TPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) 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
Nancy Groth, Office Manager/H-RLF Specialist
Judy Brimm, Finance Director
Jeremy Rounds, Regional Planner
Christopher Lee, Regional Planner / GIS

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.