



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REVIEW REPORT

East Central Intergovernmental Association Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA) 8

Review Date: July 17, 2024
Report Issued: August 19, 2024

NOTE: Every Iowa Regional Planning Association (RPA) receives Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) financial assistance. As a result, each RPA is responsible for the development of key transportation planning products and programming federal transportation funds in an established process that is consistent with state and federal guidelines. It is the joint responsibility of the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), FHWA, and FTA to ensure that the federal transportation program and federal funds are administered by each RPA in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

Introduction

On July 17, 2024, the Iowa DOT met electronically, via Microsoft Teams, with the staff of the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority, which serves as the RPA for Region 8 (East Central Intergovernmental Association), to conduct a planning review of the RPA.

The oversight of compliance with state and federal guidelines is largely accomplished throughout each year with the 18 RPA organizations throughout the State of Iowa. In general, the transportation planning review process for each RPA consists of three activities: a review of planning products in advance of the planning review, a review and discussion of planning review questionnaire responses, and preparation of a planning review report that summarizes the review and offers commendations and recommendations.

Goals

The primary goals of the RPA planning review are as follows:

- Gain a better understanding of the transportation planning process being conducted within the RPA;
- Outline/clarify areas for potential improvement of the region's transportation planning and programming process;
- Discuss how transportation planning funds are being used to support the development of the key transportation planning products, including the transportation planning work program, public participation plan, transportation improvement program, long range transportation plan, and passenger transportation plan;
- Ensure that the planning process is continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive, and operates in a manner consistent with federal guidelines;
- Provide an opportunity for discussion of how the region's transportation planning process is working or not working; and
- Strengthen the planning partnership between the RPA, Iowa DOT, FHWA, and FTA, including determining the need for additional guidance, assistance, and training to improve the overall RPA transportation planning process.

Each of these goals is addressed throughout the planning review report, which is tailored to focus on the following topics of significance: RPA Organization, Public Participation, Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Transit, Transportation Planning Work Program, Title VI, Financial Accountability, and Other. As we reviewed and discussed these topics, we gained a better understanding of how RPA 7 operates, learned about their challenges and successes, and listened to their thoughts and concerns regarding the cooperative relationship between the RPA, Iowa DOT, and public transportation providers.

Participants

Those participating in the RPA 8 review were:

East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA)

Chandra Ravada, Interim Director

Daniel Fox, Planner

Iowa Department of Transportation

Sam Shea, District 2 Transportation Planner

Travis Halm, Systems Planning

Samuel Hiscocks, Systems Planning

Zac Bitting, Program Management

Jamie Wingert, Public Transit

Tracey Bradley, Civil Rights

Federal Highway Administration

Dakin Schultz, FHWA-Iowa

Danielle Gibson, Civil Rights, FHWA-Iowa

Review Process and Findings

In order to expedite the review process, provide structure to the review, and ensure thorough consideration of the major issues, the reviewing agency provided a list of questions prior to the review. Questions were categorized by the following topics: RPA Organization, Public Participation, Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Transit, Transportation Planning Work Program, Title VI and Related, Financial Accountability, and Other. The following sections summarize the questions, written responses, and discussions of issues.

RPA ORGANIZATION

1. Provide a general overview of the RPA planning area and any notable transportation activities or issues in the area that the organization is dealing with at this time. Example items to discuss could include any notable demographic or economic trends or issues; transportation planning activities that are occurring beyond standard document development and updates; and projects or transportation planning issues of note or concern.

Written Response:

(RPA provided a detailed overview of demographic and planning issues within the RPA 8 Region)

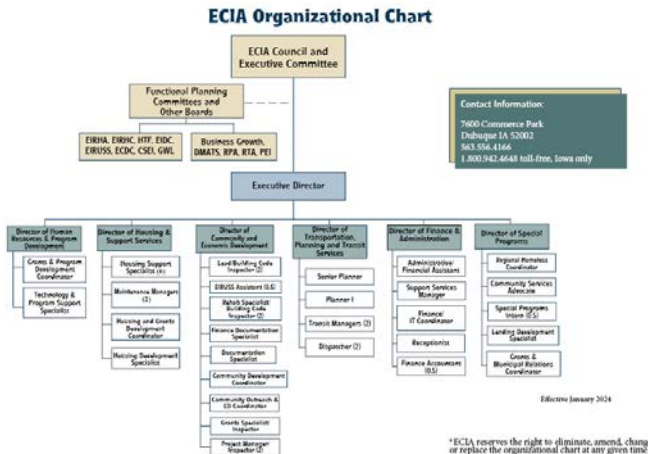
Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT staff asked RPA staff to elaborate on what is seen as the most significant transportation activity/issue in the region that the RPA is dealing with today, and also elaborate on how the RPA is addressing the top priority facing the region. RPA 8 is currently doing planning work using MEGA and RAISE grant funding sources. Some other existing issues include river crossings of the Mississippi River at US 30 and US 52, limited transit resources which do not match demand, continual freight issues along the river, and housing affordability.

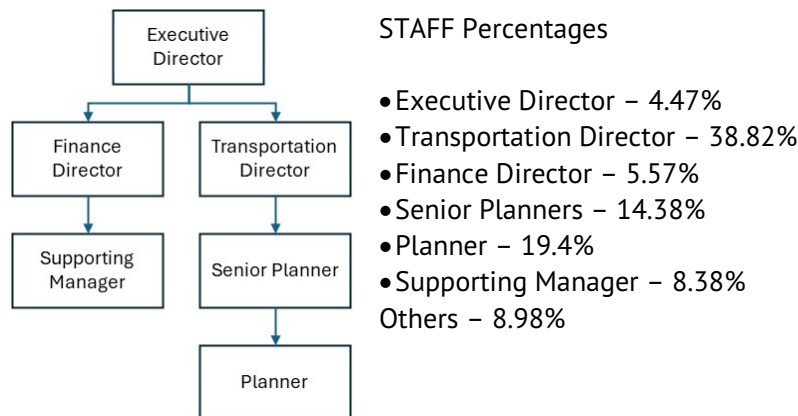
- Attach a chart showing the organizational structure of your overall agency. Note below the employees who work with transportation planning activities and the approximate percentage of their time that is spent on those activities.

Written Response:

The RPA 8 is hosted by East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) a council of governments for Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson Counties.



ECIA has the following staff working for RPA 8. ADD Staff Percentages



Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT staff inquired about the selection process for the next executive director. ECIA staff noted the process has begun.

3. What percentage of your overall agency's total budget is spent on transportation planning and programming?

Written Response:

Agencies Total Budget: \$5,924,327

RPA 8 Budget: \$253,510

Percentage : 4.28%

Review Discussion:

Similar budget ratio to 2018.

Additional DOT Comments:

None

4. Provide membership lists for your Policy Board and Technical Committee.
 - a. If your RPA is housed in a COG, is the RPA Policy Board the same as the COG's Board or separate from it?
 - b. If membership for either committee does not directly include cities under 5,000 or public transit representatives, describe how those entities interact with the RPA's committees.
 - c. Describe any additional standing committees that your RPA utilizes.

Written Response:

RPA 8 BOARDS:

The RPA8 is governed by a board of twelve elected officials from the member jurisdictions. The Policy Board is responsible for establishing overall policy, making decisions related to transportation planning, project funding priorities, project programming and monitoring the direction of studies of transportation conditions in the region. There is a board member from each of the four counties, and a board member from each of the four large urban areas. The remaining four Board members are from a non-urban city in each of the four counties which are elected by caucus every two years.

Scott Maddason
Chair

Jeff Madlom
Vice-Chair

Vacant
Secretary

Section 1 (a) County Board of Supervisors

Jackson County Don Schwenker (proxy Todd Kinney)

Clinton County Erin George (proxy Todd Kinney)

Delaware County Jeff Madlom (proxy Rafe Koopman)

Dubuque County Wayne Kenniker (proxy Harley Pothoff)

Section 1 (b) Mayor or designated Representative of cities with a population of at least 5000

DeWitt Steve Hasenmiller (proxy Steve Lindner)

Clinton Scott Maddason (proxy Matt Brooke, Jason Craft)

Manchester Connie Behnken (proxy Tim Vick)
 Maquoketa Tom Messerli (proxy Josh Boldt)

Section 1 (c) Mayors or formally designated representatives of city governments chosen by a caucus of cities under 5000 population,

Clinton County Andrew Kida (Camanche)
 Delaware County Linda Gaul (Earlville) (Proxy Donna Boss)
 Dubuque County Mary Ann Knapp (Rickardsville)
 Jackson County Kelley Brown (Jackson County Economic Alliance)

Section 1 (d) Representation of the Iowa Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration (non-voting members)

IA DOT Garrett Pedersen (proxy Sam Shea)
 FHWA Timothy C. Marshall (proxy Darla Hugaboom)
 FTA Mark Bechtel (proxy Daniel Nguyen)

Section 1 (e) A formally designated representative of any other public board or commission having jurisdiction in the operation of transportation facilities: as such board or commission may hereafter become signatory to this Agreement at the consent of the Policy Board

East Central Intergovernmental Association ECIA Executive Director (ECIA)
 Transit Representative Nin Flagel (RTA)

RPA8 Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee consists of professional staff persons from the RPA member jurisdictions. The Technical Committee reviews, studies, and makes recommendations to the Policy Board related to technical issues affecting spending and study priorities.

Todd Kinney Chair Tim Vick Vice-Chair Kelley Deutmeyer Secretary

County Engineers
 Jackson County Todd Kinney (Proxy Don Schwenker)
 Clinton County Todd Kinney (Proxy Erin George)
 Delaware County Rafe Koopman (Proxy Jeff Madlom)
 Dubuque County Russell Weber (Proxy Harley Potoff)

Designated Representative of cities with a population of at least 5,000

DeWitt Steve Lindner (Proxy Steve Hasenmiller)
 Clinton Jason Craft (Proxy Matt Brooke)
 Manchester Tim Vick (Proxy Connie Behnken)
 Maquoketa Josh Boldt (Proxy _____)

Representatives of the Transit Systems
 River Bend Transit Randy Zorbist (Clinton County)
 MTA Dennis Hart (City of Clinton)

Regional Transit Authority Stacie Scott (Proxy Gail Kuhl)

Representation of the Iowa Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration (non-voting members)

IA DOT Sam Shea
FHWA Darla Hugaboom
FTA Daniel Nguyen

A formally designated representative of any other public board or commission having jurisdiction in the operation of transportation facilities: as such board or commission may hereafter become signatory to this Agreement at the consent of the Technical Advisory Board

East Central Intergovernmental Association ECIA Executive Director

- a. If your RPA is housed in a COG, is the RPA Policy Board the same as the COG’s Board or separate from it?

The RPA is housed in the COG but the RPA and COG have two different boards with some duplication.

- b. If membership for either committee does not directly include cities under 5,000 or public transit representatives, describe how those entities interact with the RPA’s committees.

- The RPA 8 Tech board has three votes for transit agencies but no representation for small cities
- The RPA 8 Policy Board has four representatives representing cities with a population below 5,000 within each county and one representative representing transit.

- c. Describe any additional standing committees that your RPA utilizes.

The RPA 8 uses the following Committees for RPA 8 planning purpose:

Transit Action Group (TAG): The TAG group is made up of transit agencies, human service agencies, and RPA 8 staff. Transit Action Group (TAG) conducts surveys to list and prioritize needs and develop needs for consumers through the Transit Action Plan. Staff continues to stay involved and in touch with the TAG group and use the Transit Action Plan to develop the Passenger Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program for the region.

Grant Wood Mississippi River Region: Grant Wood Mississippi River Region (GWMRR) is a group formed by Jackson, Jones, and Dubuque Counties as the pilot Parks to People region. The GWMRR is a regional partnership with diverse stakeholders representing the region’s four state parks, two Scenic Byways, three county Conservation Boards, three Community Foundations, numerous economic development and tourism organizations, and other local, county, and regional interests. The RPA 8 staff are active participants in this group.

Hometown Pride

The Hometown Pride program assists and improves communities through a five-year coaching commitment. Keep Iowa Beautiful accepted three RPA 8 counties into the Hometown Pride program in 2017. Communities across Dubuque, Jackson, and Clinton counties have established Hometown Pride committees and are receiving coaching through the program. RPA 8 staff have helped with planning

and transportation projects to KIB staff. The area’s Hometown Pride committees have identified a range of projects, from downtown revitalization and economic development to recreation and trails.

Having active local groups focused on improving the community is invaluable to the RPA planning process. When compared to a local group, RPA 8 is relatively unknown to many people who live in the area. Participating in the community through KIB staff gives us an opportunity to match local needs and projects to RPA services and programs. By attending meetings, RPA staff can hear about the transportation needs of each community firsthand.

Clinton MDST Group: The Clinton Multi-Disciplinary Safety Team (MDST) is made of emergency responders, County, City, IADOT, and RPA 8 staff. The group helps to address safety issues in Clinton County and plays a vital role in conducting safety audits on Primary and local systems within Clinton County.

Clerks Groups: ECIA hosts city clerk’s meetings in each County within the RPA 8 region on a quarterly basis. ECIA staff have used these meetings to educate small city clerks on funding sources and the eligible projects to use these funds. These meetings help RPA 8 staff provide technical assistance and identify needs within small communities. The staff has also used these meetings to explain other transportation topics, including the gas tax increase and system needs.

ECIA Council: The RPA 8 staff presents information to ECIA Council as needed to provide updates on major transportation initiatives such as transportation bills, gas tax, freight studies, etc. ECIA has both private and public-sector representatives so this helps RPA 8 staff by providing information to both sectors.

Prosperity Eastern Iowa (PEI): The RPA 8 staff presents information at Prosperity Eastern Iowa meetings (regional economic developers, community college, and utility reps) as needed to provide updates on major transportation initiatives such as transportation bills, gas tax, freight studies, etc. and seek their input. PEI has both private and public-sector representatives so this helps RPA 8 staff by providing information to both sectors. The PEI group helped RPA 8 staff in conducting one-on-one interviews with businesses for the Eight County Freight Study.

Review Discussion:

ECIA has good representation on their committees, and has a robust list of stakeholder and community groups.

Commendation:

ECIA includes small communities in their committee membership, which provides representation and additional access to funding opportunities for these municipalities.

5. How often do your RPA Policy Board and Technical Committee meet?

Eight to nine times a year

- a. Are these joint meetings with both Policy members and Technical staff or are they separate meetings?

The RPA 8 board chair determines if we need to have a joint or separate meeting based on the topics we need to address at the meeting.

- b. If they meet separately, describe how communication occurs between the Technical Committee and Policy Board.

The technical board meets at 9:00 AM, and the Policy board meets at noon, when we have separate meetings. Staff provides input received from the technical board to the policy board before the board members make a decision. However, Staff will have the technical board chair provide an update to the policy board when RPA 8 addresses topics that might trigger more discussion with the technical board.

- c. Are you satisfied with the level of attendance and participation by Iowa DOT, FHWA, and FTA at your meetings?

We are very pleased with Iowa DOT staff attendance at RPA 8 meetings. We also understand that we don't need FHWA and FTA at our meetings regularly, as the District Planner does a good job of getting clarification from the Iowa DOT central office, which consults with FHWA and FTA.

Written Response:

Responses above.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

6. Are the different roles and responsibilities of an RPA, the Iowa DOT, the FHWA, and the FTA clearly understood by your agency, Policy Board, and Technical Committee? Note any questions or concerns that you have regarding these roles.

Written Response:

The RPA 8 staff and the RPA 8 Technical and Policy Committees are very clear on the roles of Iowa DOT, the FHWA, and the FTA and are very pleased with the way things are working.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

7. Provide the web address for your current Public Participation Plan (PPP).

Written Response:

https://www.eciatrans.org/dmats/organizational_information/planning_documents.php

8. When was your PPP last approved?
 - a. Is an update to the PPP planned at this time?
 - b. If so, what changes or improvements to the plan is the RPA considering?

Written Response:

The Final Public Participation Plan was approved on June 27, 2024

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT Staff noted that their PPP met all requirements.

Recommendation:

Develop an executive summary for the PPP during the next update process (or prior) to similar best practices statewide.

9. Describe any unique public participation techniques your agency uses during the development of the LRTP, PPP, PTP, TIP, TPWP, and special planning studies.

Written Response:

The core RPA 8 documents are developed using a standardized process to ensure consistency and encourage resident participation. Figure 1.8 below provides a summary of the RPA 8 document development process.

RPA 8 Public Involvement Plan

The RPA 8 Public Involvement Plan (PIP) guides the public participation in the regional transportation planning process. The plan outlines recommended methods to engage the public during the transportation planning & decision-making process and informs members of the public how they can be involved.

In keeping with the spirit of public involvement and participation, RPA 8 follows a systematic approach that allows the public to become involved in the transportation planning process. RPA 8 consistently adheres to established guidelines as a means of heightening public involvement. This includes the Title VI population, persons with a disability, the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population, the Environmental Justice (EJ – low income and high minority) zone populations, and other traditionally underserved groups.

Utilizing various techniques to solicit public involvement has proven to be the most effective means by which to attract citizen involvement. RPA 8 remains committed to using a variety of resources to reach

out to the public and attempt to encourage public participation. Figure 9.1 lists available participation methods.

RPA 8 is committed to the concept of public participation and will work to ensure that the public plays an active role in transportation planning. The hope is that public participation will reduce unfavorable public opinions of transportation projects by incorporating public sentiment into the planning process.

L RTP Input

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

RPA 8 altered its typical process to keep the community healthy and limit the spread of the virus, while continuing to provide everyone with the opportunity to participate in the development of the L RTP. During the L RTP development process, RPA 8 staff took mitigation steps including holding meetings virtually, when practical, and distributing information through the RPA 8 website. Staff monitored the Covid-19 situation throughout the L RTP development process and adjusted its mitigation strategies as needed. During the L RTP development process, pandemic conditions generally improved, and While some meetings were still virtual, RPA 8 was able to hold many of its public meetings in person.

RPA 8 L RTP INPUT MEETINGS

The RPA 8 area is made up of distinct communities containing diverse populations that require different public services. To adequately serve the needs of these unique communities and to ensure that all communities are represented in the L RTP, RPA 8 created a public input strategy where RPA 8 staff attended meetings of a variety of community groups, including city councils and county boards of supervisors. Staff gave a short presentation on the L RTP and engaged in discussions with group members. City and County staff and elected officials attended several of the meetings and contributed to the discussion.

At the meetings, RPA 8 staff provided a presentation and a handout that included basic information about RPA 8 and the L RTP and directed people to additional sources of information, including staff email addresses and the RPA 8 website.

In all, RPA 8 staff collected input at eight meetings during the winter and spring of 2022. The table below includes a list of the meetings attended.

Date	Meeting	Areas Covered
1/31/2022	Delaware County Board of Supervisors	Rural areas and small cities in Delaware County
2/14/2022	Dubuque County Board of Supervisors	Rural areas and small cities in Dubuque County
2/14/2022	Manchester City Council	City of Manchester
2/15/2022	Jackson County Board of Supervisors	Rural areas and small cities in Jackson County
2/21/2022	Maquoketa City Council	City of Maquoketa
2/22/2022	Clinton City Council	City of Clinton
2/28/2022	Clinton County Board of Supervisors	Rural areas and small cities in Clinton County
3/7/2022	DeWitt City Council	City of DeWitt

TIP INPUT

The TIP will list projects scheduled to be carried out within a 4-year period from when they were initially adopted into the RPA 8 TIP. The TIP will include a financial explanation of the improvement projects that details how each will be implemented, as well as an indication of what public and private resources can be expected to be made available to complete the transportation improvement.

Before the RPA 8 Policy Committee can approve any transportation improvement, it will give citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private transportation providers, and other interested parties reasonable notice of and an opportunity to comment on the proposed improvement.

TPWP INPUT

The Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) outlines various transportation planning activities to be conducted by the staff for RPA 8. It is prepared and adopted each year and contains transportation planning activities for the current fiscal year.

The TPWP outlines the status of RPA 8 planning activities, details work done in the previous year, and describes work scheduled for the upcoming year. This annual work program document is drafted by the RPA 8 staff in consultation with IADOT, local agencies, and area transit providers. Technical Advisory Board members also help draft the TPWP.

RPA 8 staff draft a new TPWP for the coming year and have it ready for the initial Technical Advisory Board review in March. Typically, the final TPWP for the next year is approved at the May RPA 8 meeting. The TPWP also requires IADOT and FHWA/FTA approval.

RPA 8 staff follows the Public Involvement Policy to seek input from the public on the draft TPWP.

PIP INPUT

RPA 8 will review the PIP every two years to determine if revisions are necessary. RPA 8 will make revisions to the PIP available for public review for 45 days. Following the 45-day review period, the RPA 8 Policy Board will hold a hearing on the revisions as part of a regularly scheduled RPA 8 meeting. Following the hearing, the policy board may vote to approve the revisions. The Policy Board meeting will be held at an accessible location to transit-dependent and disabled residents. RPA 8 staff follows the Public Involvement Policy to seek input from the public on the draft TPWP

PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION PLAN (PTP)

RPA 8 and Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS) formed a Transit Action Group in 2008. The group comprises human service providers, transportation providers, and other interested individuals within the community. Members of the group are charged with resolving transportation barriers for consumers in the community. There are three TAG groups, each representing a county within the RTA and Jule service area (Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson counties). The TAG groups meet quarterly, and members can choose to attend regularly or attend as needed as a resource to the group. Group notices are sent out via email or conventional mail, and information is available on the RTA website if anyone is interested in participating. RPA 8 staff follows the Public Involvement Policy Plan to seek input from the public on the draft PTP.

SPECIAL PLANNING STUDIES

The Safe Routes and Streets for All (SS4A) follows a unique public input process by conducting one-on-one meetings with each city, either online or in person, for 58 cities seeking input on safety issues within the communities.

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT inquired about innovative public participation techniques utilized by RPA 8. ECIA Staff noted that online surveys through Survey Monkey and ESRI were used. ECIA also noted that they were utilizing summer farmers markets for surveying the public.

Commendation:

Utilizing innovative public participation methods, including online surveys and existing community events like farmers markets, provides additional access to the public.

10. How effective has your public participation process been in the past?
 - a. Have you tried different ways to increase the level of public participation?
 - b. Has the RPA received comments from the public on the existing public participation process?

Written Response:

Have you tried different ways to increase the level of public participation?

The public input process adopted for the LRTP effectively collects input from the region during COVID-19. The RPA 8 members do seek input from the public through their county five-year plans and the city CIPs. Hence, there is less participation from the public at RPA meetings for TIP approvals.

Has the RPA received comments from the public on the existing public participation process?

The RPA 8 staff received very positive support from the Cities and Counties as we are using the city and county meetings to seek input rather than creating a separate process.

Discussion

Iowa DOT staff inquired whether time restrictions limited the ability to gather public input for projects selected. ECIA noted that they were proactive and attended local meetings when County Five-Year Plans were being approved .

11. How is reasonable public access provided at public meetings, and are persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency individuals accommodated at public meetings and in the publication of transportation documents?

Written Response:

All RPA 8 public meetings are held at city halls, county offices, and the RPA 8 office. The chosen locations have transit access and are close to neighborhoods dominated by low-income households and Limited English Proficiency (LEP). All meeting locations are ADA-accessible.

Review Discussion:

ECIA staff noted that they use the same facilities Iowa DOT uses for their public meetings in the region.

12. Is your website up to date, with your current planning documents and meeting agendas and minutes easily accessible online for the public and other interested parties to view?

Written Response:

Yes.

Meeting Agendas and Minutes:

https://www.eciatrans.org/rpa8/organizational_information/agendas__minutes.php

Planning Documents:

https://www.eciatrans.org/rpa8/organizational_information/planning_documents.php

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT staff noted that they were able to adequately find items on their website while preparing for the review process.

13. Is adequate guidance being provided by the Iowa DOT for the public participation process?

Written Response:

Yes

Review Discussion:

No discussion

LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

14. Provide the web address for your current LRTP.

Written Response:

https://www.eciatrans.org/rpa8/organizational_information/planning_documents.php

15. Your current LRTP was completed in 2020. Discuss any significant successes and/or challenges you encountered during its development, as well as how the plan is being implemented by staff today.

Written Response:

Successes:

- Vision & Goal Setting: The RPA 8 technical and Policy board members participated in developing Goals and objectives for the Plan with performance measures.
- Analysis:
 - Staff developed system maintenance costs for roads and bridges for existing and future
 - Able to develop on-road and off-road trail systems
 - Able to assess operation and maintenance costs for transit systems in the region with future capital improvement costs
 - Able to analyze crashes in the region and come up with a list of high crash locations that need to be addressed through safety audits. RPA 8 worked with INTRANS and IADOT staff to conduct safety audits in Clinton and Jackson counties.
 - The freight chapter is updated with the Eight County Freight Plan, which has a detailed analysis of existing and future commodities using the system with the region.
 - Staff is able to conduct detailed financial analysis for funds used in the federal aid system and project them to the year 2045. The analysis uses historical funding received by RPA 8 and the expenditures and revenues that local cities and counties have incurred over the past five years.
- Public Participation: Staff engaged all members within RPA 8 and had more input for the plan than the previous updates. The outcomes of the public input are listed below:
 - Most of the funding will be used for system operation and maintenance

- The crash locations are eye-opening during the public input process, and most of the entities suggested that RPA 8 staff need to work with RPA 8 members and conduct safety audits.

Challenges:

- The RPA 8 board supports the financial analysis but wants RPA 8 to be more inclined towards strategically preserving existing infrastructure and focusing future investments in maintaining areas already served by significant public infrastructure investment as the system did not have any capacity issues.

Review Discussion:

ECIA staff noted that local money is rarely used for new projects, as that is usually done through earmarks and discretionary grants that are not developed in the LRTP. Most direction received by the board tells staff to focus on maintenance of system, since funding does not exist for adding capacity.

ECIA also added that they use their INTRANS safety audits to provide an idea of costs for project improvements.

- 16.** How were long-term projects treated in your last LRTP? For example, were they specifically identified? Was fiscal analysis or constraint discussed? How do you plan to address long-term projects in your next update?

Written Response:

- The RPA 8 LRTP updates did not specifically identify long-term projects, as most of the project needs were to maintain the existing system, which did not have any capacity issues for existing or future traffic.
- The RPA 8 staff conducted a detailed financial analysis as part of the LRTP update, but the board decided to keep the list of projects to be maintenance projects.

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT Staff inquired whether any new needs were left out of the LRTP process due to the focus on maintenance and preservation. ECIA staff noted that they still performed analysis of all needs.

- 17.** Please describe the relationship between your LRTP and TIP? Are goals or priorities from the LRTP incorporated into the TIP development process?

Written Response:

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a financially constrained four-year program covering the most immediate implementation priorities for transportation projects and strategies from the region. It is the region's way of allocating its limited transportation resources among the various capital and operating needs of the area, based on a clear set of short-term transportation priorities.

The TIP is developed by following the RPA 8 2045 LRTP. It will be developed annually, taking into consideration the goals and objectives of the LRTP and following the project recommendations in the LRTP. Most of the projects listed in TIP will be maintenance-oriented, as the RPA 8 2045 LRTP lists projects that need to maintain the existing system.

Review Discussion:

ECIA staff noted that the LRTP has been a good source of quantitative data for predicting projects 6-20 years out, and translated well to the TIP over time. Staff noted that this process allows municipalities to identify new needs and projects for TIP and discretionary grant project funding.

Iowa DOT staff inquired about intersection tiers in the LRTP, and ECIA staff noted that INTRANS data is applied to these intersections and many do become STBG and discretionary grant applications.

Commendation:

RPA 8 utilizes INTRANS data for intersection tiers in their LRTP, which have then led to STBG and discretionary grant applications.

18. How are your Policy Board and Technical Committee involved in the LRTP update process?

Written Response:

The RPA 8 Policy and Technical Board are very actively involved in the development of the RPA 8 LRTP.

- Staff conducted workshops for the development of vision, goals and objectives, performance measures, and performance targets;
- Staff presented the methodology for data collection and future projects to RPA 8 boards on the following:
 - Existing transportation system conditions;
 - Forecasts future population and employment growth;
 - Identify transportation needs and deficiencies and analyze, through detailed technical analysis,
 - Update on proactively engaging the public and other interested stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process, including, as appropriate, local, state, and/or federal agencies;
 - Identify projects to encourage transit usage and a seamless transit network within the region and establish transit linkages between affordable housing locations and major regional employment centers;
 - Identify projects and policies that enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety and walkability;
 - Identify and evaluate potential projects for social and environmental justice concerns and mitigation needs
 - Develop a financial plan for securing sufficient revenues to cover the costs of implementation strategies, including operating costs, system maintenance, and system preservation

- Develop long-range and short-range capital improvements and operational strategies to improve safety, reduce congestion, and facilitate the movement of people and goods;

Review Discussion:

- 19.** How are various transportation stakeholders (such as aviation, freight, rail, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, economic development, environmental, safety/emergency, tribal, etc.) involved in the development of your LRTP?

Written Response:

Staff worked with the following entities during the development of RPA 8 2045 LRTP

Aviation:

- Dubuque Regional Airport
- Clinton Regional Airport

Bike & Pedestrian:

- Grant Wood Mississippi River Region
- Clinton bike group
- City of Clinton Engineering
- Hometown Pride
- Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Transit:

- Transit Action Group
- Region Transit Authority
- Clinton MTA

Economic Development

- Prosperity Eastern Iowa

Environmental

- Dubuque County Conservation
- Jackson County Conservation

Safety/emergency

- Clinton Multi-Disciplinary Safety Team

Freight

- Barge Facilities
- Rail
- Trucking industries
- Major businesses in the region

Tribal

- There are no tribal agencies with the RPA 8 region

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT inquired how the agency reaches out to marginalized communities.

Recommendation:

Using US Census/ACS Data, identify particular marginalized communities, including but not limited to Limited-English Proficiency households and tailor special outreach or meetings to include these communities in the public involvement process.

20. How do you utilize the State Transportation Plan or other statewide planning documents for your LRTP? What could be done to make the State Transportation Plan more useful?

Written Response:

The RPA 8 staff took into consideration the following Plan from Iowa Dot while developing the RPA 8 plan:

- Iowa in Motion
- State Freight Plan
- Iowa State Rail Plan
- Iowa State Strategic Highway Safety Plan
- Iowa Bicycle and Pedestrian Long-Range Plan

The RPA 8 staff considered these plans' vision, goals, and objectives and made sure the recommendations listed in RPA 8 region are accommodated in RPA 8 2045 LRTP.

Review Discussion:

ECIA staff noted that there were many components of Iowa DOT planning outputs that they use to provide a framework to their planning work. These included the State Bike Plan, safety plans for SS4A, and freight plans.

21. How do you coordinate with resource agencies (Iowa DNR, Iowa EDA, State Archeologist, etc.) in the development of your LRTP?

Written Response:

Several Federal, State, Tribal, and local government agencies were notified when the draft LRTP document was available for review and comment. Feedback on topics relevant to their field of expertise was requested.

Review Discussion:

In 2018, Iowa DOT recommended broader state and federal resource agency outreach for the LRTP. ECIA noted that they have specifically increased coordination with Iowa DNR since the last review.

22. Has the Iowa DOT guidance for the LRTP been helpful? How can it be improved?

Written Response:

The Iowa DOT's LRTP guidance has been very helpful for the development of our RPA LRTP. The documents available in the Planning Resource Guide, especially the LRTP Guidelines, help us design our planning process and give us a check list to make sure we are meeting all the requirements. We appreciate having Iowa DOT staff review and comment on our draft chapters. These comments are constructive and help us improve our plan. With the last LRTP update, we appreciated that Iowa DOT staff were able to review the drafts and provide comments in an efficient way.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

23. Provide the web address for your current TIP.

https://www.eciitrans.org/rpa8/organizational_information/planning_documents.php

24. Discuss the process for developing your region's TIP and selecting projects.

- a. How are eligible applicants notified of funding availability and the submittal and review process for STBG and TAP projects?
- b. For both STBG and TAP funding, what type of project information do you request? Do you use application forms?
- c. For both STBG and TAP projects, how are projects submitted, prioritized, and selected?
- d. Do you have any type of award letter or agreement that is used for STBG and TAP projects?

Written Response:

STP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The following documents and narratives must be attached to this application. In the upper right-hand corner of each document or narrative, write the corresponding letter, as shown below.

- A **MAP** identifying the location of the project (11 x 17 or smaller).
- An **OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT** from the authority stating its commitment of matching funds and commitment of project maintenance. For the project maintenance portion of the resolution, it should state, "The Sponsoring Agent shall maintain, or cause to be maintained, the completed improvements in a manner acceptable to the IDOT and the FHWA."
- A **TIME SCHEDULE** for the total project development.
- An **ITEMIZED BREAKDOWN** of the total project costs. If safety improvements are part of this project, be sure to include and highlight these improvements in the cost estimate.
- **DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS** showing the existing conditions and the location of the project.

Classification of project (eligible to apply):

- Construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation
- Capital costs for transit projects for publicly or privately owned intra-city or inter-city bus terminal or facilities

- Highway and transit safety or facilities
- Capital and operating costs for traffic management and control
- Surface transportation planning, highway and transit technology transfer activities, and research and development
- Operational improvements
- Fringe and corridor parking facilities
- Most transportation control measures in the Clean Air Act
- Development and establishment of management systems
- Environmental Provisions (i.e., natural habitat mitigation, stormwater retrofit, and anti-icing and deicing)
- Modifications of sidewalks to meet ADA requirements
- Infrastructure-based ITS capital improvements

The RPA 8 has an application for STBG funds. Please see Attachment A for a copy of the application.

TAP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The RPA 8 follows the IADOT TAP application and follows the requirements listed on the application. Please see Attachment B for a copy of the application.

- e. For both STBG and TAP projects, how are projects submitted, prioritized, and selected?

STBG PROCESS:

In order to bring a greater level of objectivity to its project selection process, the RPA 8 staff developed a formal project ranking process for use in screening projects prior to inclusion in the Plan/TIP. The projects are ranked quantitatively and qualitatively. System Preservation, Safety, Integration and Connectivity, and Local and Regional Factors are based on numeric values obtained from data analysis and are the categories in which a project is ranked quantitatively. Economic Vitality, Accessibility and Mobility, and local regional Impact are subjective categories that rank a project qualitatively. The actual factors the process considers are derived from the various federal, state, and regional policies that help define RPA 8's overarching planning priorities. The process simplifies decision-making by providing a standardized tool for comparing projects.

1. Projects are submitted to RPA 8 with all required information no later than the final submittal date set by RPA.
2. Applications will be compiled for the Subcommittee for STBG funding distribution. The Subcommittee will then meet and rank the projects based on the evaluation criteria

adopted by the Board. The subcommittee will submit the list to RPA 8 Tech and Policy Boards.

3. The Tech Board will provide their input to the Policy Board. The Policy Board will review the ranking list and associated documentation and prepare a draft Transportation Improvement Program for inclusion into the Iowa State Transportation Improvement Program.

Project Selection Criteria

1. Economic Vitality: 275 Points (27.5%)
2. System Preservation: 200 Points (20%)
3. Safety: 200 Points (20%)
4. Accessibility and Mobility: 125 Points (12.5%)
5. Integration and Connectivity: 75 Points (7.5%)
6. Local and Regional Factors: 125 Points (12.5%)

TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE: 1000 (100%)

TAP PROCESS

RPA 8 follows the IADOT TAP process and uses its application to solicit projects in the region.

WHO RANKS THE PROJECTS?

The RPA 8 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and RPA 8 Policy Board form a subcommittee. The subcommittee members recommend rankings in the subjective categories based on the projects' merits. DMATS staff will provide subcommittee members with project information and data analysis to determine the projects' merit for quantitative ranking. Staff will then provide the recommendations from the subcommittee to TAC. The TAC member's recommendations are then provided to the Policy Board for final approval.

- f. Do you have any type of award letter or agreement that is used for STBG and TAP projects? Yes, please see Attachment C for the Award Letter and Attachment D for the Project Agreement.

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT inquired if the STBG process that was discussed for counties and cities receiving a suballocation or for all applicants. ECIA noted that it was for all applicants.

25. If your RPA suballocates funding, discuss your Board's reasoning for doing so within the context of a regional planning process. Would it be helpful for the Iowa DOT and FHWA to visit with your Policy Board concerning the benefits of not suballocating federal transportation funds?

Written Response:

The RPA 8 policy board has opened 87% of the annual STBG allocation to projects from counties and cities with a population of more than 5,000. A city or county within this group can exceed its allocation to fund a project by using other members' allocations.

The board approved that a city or county with a population of more than 5,000 can use its four-year TIP allocation in one year, provided that the overall RPA 8 STBG balance is not negative. This change in process assisted in funding projects like the Platt Street project in the city of Maquoketa and the Manufacturing Dr project in the city of Clinton, some of the major projects that received BUILD and RAISE grant funding.

The RPA 8 policy board has set aside the remaining 13% of the annual STBG allocation for projects from cities with less than populations less than 5,000. The board awards funds to cities through a competitive application process.

In cities with populations below 5,000, transit agencies can compete each year through an application process for 13% of the STBG funds set aside by the RPA Policy Board. Transit agencies providing services within cities with a population greater than 5,000 can request funds from cities with a population over 5,000.

In the past, Iowa DOT staff has presented to the RPA 8 board the benefits of not suballocating federal transportation funds.

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT staff inquired whether ECIA receives applications for projects from counties and cities over 5,000. ECIA noted that Maquoketa receives STBG money and is over 5,000 people. Staff also inquired how the policy became 13% for small city set-aside, and ECIA noted that there were various proposed amounts between 10-15% and 13% was where it settled due to inflation. RPA 8 receives \$62,000 in STBG planning money.

26. Describe how each of the following types of project sponsors is included in the programming process. Also, note whether any STBG funding has been allocated to each of these entities in the past.

Written Response:

- a. Cities under 5,000: 4 million
- b. Public transit providers: None from previous review
- c. Iowa DOT: none

Review Discussion

In 2017, RTA received three vehicles and Clinton received two vehicles. Since COVID, many other funding streams have been made available to acquire vehicles.

27. How comfortable are you with the TPMS system? Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

Written Response:

Pretty comfortable.

Review Discussion:

Developing project numbers with Local Systems has been done recently. Two years ago, conditional grants needed a project number but wasn't in the TIP yet, and they have worked to close this gap.

28. In an average year, how often do you process amendments to your TIP?
- a. What types of amendments do you typically process?
 - b. What is the public input process (in terms of public notification, review period, public hearing requirements, etc.) for TIP amendments?

Written Response:

Three to four a year

What types of amendments do you typically process?

Change in project scope, change in dollar amounts and funding sources

What is the public input process (in terms of public notification, review period, public hearing requirements, etc.) for TIP amendments?

The TIP Amendment Process will include the following steps:

- RPA 8 staff will collect the amendment information from the members requesting.
- RPA 8 staff will inform the public of the amended TIP's availability by sending notices to the organizations on the RPA 8 public participation process list and

publishing legal notices in local newspapers and on the ECIA website. These notices will be posted and published 4-20 days before the scheduled meeting.

- The public hearing meeting will be held at the RPA 8 Policy Board meeting, and the meeting will be open for public input during the process.
- The DOT and FHWA staff will be provided with updated TIP with amendments once approved by RPA 8 Policy and Tech boards.
- The public hearing meeting will be held at the RPA 8 Policy Board meeting, and the meeting will be open for public input during the process.

Review Discussion:

Amendments usually receive zero public comment

29. Is the status of projects, including Iowa DOT projects, discussed on a regular basis at Policy Board and Technical Committee meetings?

Written Response:

Yes. There is a regular discussion about project updates at RPA 8 Tech and Policy meetings. Most of the time board members request an update on IADOT projects. During the amendment process the entity requesting the amendment needs to provide an explanation to the board for the amendment.

Review Discussion:

Anthony provides updates on all Iowa DOT projects, while Sam provides updates on bigger Iowa DOT projects. Updates are never formal but everyone is kept updated.

30. Has the Iowa DOT guidance for the TIP been helpful? How can it be improved?

Written Response:

Very Helpful

Review Discussion:

None

TRANSIT

31. Provide the web address for your current Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP).

Written Response:

https://www.eciatrans.org/rpa8/organizational_information/planning_documents.php

Review Discussion:

The next update is underway.

32. Has the planning process for the PTP been successful in fostering new relationships between the RPA and transit operator(s) and among passenger transportation providers?

Written Response:

Yes. The RPA has very good relationships with the RTA, River Bend, and Clinton MTA.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

33. Describe the relationship between RPA transportation planning staff and the regional transit operator(s). Is the region's transit agency housed within the same organization as the RPA? If not, describe the agency or agencies providing public transit in the region.

Written Response:

RTA 8 and RPA 8 are housed within ECIA. RPA 8 has a good working relationship with Clinton MTA and River Bend Transit.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

34. Do human service agencies actively participate in the PTP development process?
- If not, can you explain why you believe this has not occurred?
 - If so, have new relationships been formed between the human service agencies and the RPA? Between the human service agencies and the transit operators?
 - Have any passenger transportation projects or services emerged because of these relationships?

Written Response:

Yes. Human Service agencies have been very active in the PTP development process. The area's TAG, coordinated by RTA staff, has been very active. The TAG is very active in the PTP process.

- If not, can you explain why you believe this has not occurred?**
- If so, have new relationships been formed between the human service agencies and the RPA? Between the human service agencies and the transit operators?**

Yes. Because of the TAG, the RPA has good relationships with many of the area's human service providers and transit operators that it otherwise may not have. TAG members are very good about providing their input and identifying needs in the community and are happy to support each other in achieving their respective missions. TAG members are always ready to provide a letter of support for a grant application where one is needed or help brainstorm solutions to an issue faced by a fellow member.

- Have any passenger transportation projects or services emerged because of these relationships?**

The TAG has identified the need for coordination among RTA contracts to improve the efficiency of the transit system. The TAG worked with RTA staff in selecting a vendor for software deployment. The TAG has identified people who can benefit from the transit system. RTA is trying to find grant funding to conduct a gap analysis of the system to enhance system usage.

Review Discussion:

Input that ECIA receives from human resource agencies is largely based upon delays in the transit system.

35. Briefly describe any notable changes within the rural transit service (increased ridership, decreased ridership, new service, reduced service, etc.).

Written Response:

COVID had a major impact on the transit system, and ridership dropped substantially. Transit systems recognized the changes in the communities and adopted solutions that met their needs.

Review Discussion:

- Free rides for riders under 15 years old
- Scheduling capabilities for parents and children
- Provides free rides to events like farmers markets
- Ridership is down post-COVID
 - Some has been due to taxi cabs taking Medicare/Medicaid trips

36. What are some of the top transit priorities for your planning area? What role did the PTP process play in determining or affirming these priorities?

Written Response:

The tables below come from the current (FY 2021-2025) PTP and list the top service needs and projects for the RTA, Clinton MTA, and River Bend Transit. These projects have been identified through the PTP development process.

RTA Service Needs and Projects				
Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
Residents in the rural areas of Delaware County in need of transportation to wellness appointments	RTA, Delaware County Connections	FTA Rides to Wellness grant expanding the service area and hours within Delaware County. The project was to be sustained by volunteer drivers.	2015	Grant awarded and implementation began FY17 with purchase of minivan using FTA grant funding. As of FY20 RTA has four volunteer drivers supporting the program with intentions of adding more. Implementation; ongoing.
Improve attendance and action from the TAG. More accountability and influence as a group	RTA, TAG	Form a TAG Technical Group to identify gaps in transportation within each County, devising strategies to address the gaps, and obtaining funds to support creative transportation solutions.	2019	Status as of March 2020. Determined new TAG structure, roles and responsibilities by County, and timing and process for the meetings. Implementation; ongoing
Advancement and improved structure for RTA with set goals	RTA, TAG	Develop a five year Strategic Plan	2018	Status as of March 2020. During FY19 RTA sought input from the RTA Board and TAG via a regional assessment consisting of surveys, questionnaires, meetings, and visioning sessions to determine our primary goals and create this document. Plan is in final stages. Implementation; FY21

Clinton MTA Service Needs and Projects				
Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
Camanche - Fulton Route	Residents in Camanche, Clinton and Fulton	Assess need for fixed route services to include Clinton to Camanche and Clinton to Fulton and summer expand services to City of Clinton.	2012	Project Pending due to operational funding need. City of Camanche is in the planning stages for a route during the summer of 2020.
Provide access to real time route information online.	MTA Riders	Secure funding for technology such as Google Transit.	2012	MTA has implemented AVL/GPS on all buses so the office and the public has access to up-to-date information on fixed route bus locations. MTA was included in implementation of Google Transit through IDOT.
Provide transportation to Davenport, Iowa City, & Dubuque for Medical Appointments.	MTA Riders	Assess Medicaid TMS Services Contract.	2012	Project Pending due to funding. Implementation FY 2016. Status; still a viable project if there is funding and a need.

River Bend Transit Service Needs and Projects				
Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
Replace aging buses	RBT	Replace buses on 15-year schedule	2020	Project Pending. Staff working to identify additional funding sources.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

- 37. Have any of the region’s public transit providers requested the RPA to conduct transit planning studies? (Examples could include route planning, facility feasibility studies, passenger surveys, etc.)
 - a. If so, did the RPA perform the study?
 - b. If not, would the RPA consider such a request?

Written Response:

Yes. The RTA and Clinton MTA staff approached RPA to create a Title IV and Limited English Speaking plans. The RTA completed these plans for the systems. The RTA staff requested census analysis for the amount the senior population by census tract, and RPA 8 staff fulfilled it.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

- 38. Has the Iowa DOT guidance for the PTP been helpful? How can it be improved?

Written Response:

Yes

Review Discussion:

No discussion

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (TPWP)

39. Provide the web address for your current TPWP.

Written Response:

https://www.eciatrans.org/rpa8/organizational_information/planning_documents.php

Review Discussion:

Links work

40. Besides the required 20% local match, do you have any other funding sources beyond the FHWA's State Planning and Research (SPR) or Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds and the FTA's Section 5311 or Section 5305e funds to finance transportation planning activities?

- a. If your agency is not spending all its federal transportation planning funds and thus has carryover funding from year to year, please describe why.
- b. Do you see a need for additional planning funds to support transportation planning activities?
- c. How is your local match provided, and do you have difficulty meeting the local match for the federal planning funds?

Written Response:

The RPA 8 staff receive funding from cities that need help with administering BUILD and RAISE projects.

- a. If your agency is not spending all its federal transportation planning funds and thus has carryover funding from year to year, please describe why.

RPA 8 does not have any huge carryover.

- b. Do you see a need for additional planning funds to support transportation planning activities?

The RPA 8 staff coordinates local planning, land use, and economic development for members within the RPA 8 region. However, staff would like to provide more technical assistance to local officials, facilitate more forums for public participation in regional planning, and coordinate more plans and programs with neighboring RPAs, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and tribal organizations.

- c. How is your local match provided, and do you have difficulty meeting the local match for the federal planning funds?

The local match for RPA 8 is provided by RPA 8 members.

Review Discussion:

Discussion included COG dues and STBG TIP fees.

41. How are the agency's TPWP activities chosen and prioritized? Is this list of activities developed solely by staff, or are Policy Board and/or Technical Committee members also involved?

Written Response:

The RPA 8 staff solicits information from member jurisdictions for special projects that need to be included in the TPWP. Staff discussed the TPWP with the RPA 8 technical and policy boards before developing it. Please go through Attachment E for a copy of the agenda.

RPA 8 develops its TPWP annually with input from the following:

- Regional Planning Affiliation 8 (RPA8) Policy Board
- Regional Planning Affiliation 8 (RPA8) Technical Advisory Committee
- Region 8 Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- Clinton Municipal Transportation Administration (MTA)
- Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Iowa Division
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Region VII

RPA 8 staff develops the draft TPWP based on the discussions at following meetings:

- IADOT quarterly meetings
- RPA 8 Board meetings
- TAG meetings
- MDST group meetings,
- Grant Wood Mississippi River Region
- City clerks and mayors meetings
- PEI meetings

The RPA 8 Policy and Technical boards and IADOT staff review the draft TPWP and staff make any necessary changes to the final version before presenting it to the RPA Policy Board for final approval.

Commendation:

ECIA has a January agenda item of which elements should be in the next FY work program. This was a recommendation in 2018 that ECIA has implemented.

42. What method is used to document staff work hours?

Written Response:

The biweekly timesheet has line items for work elements in the work program. Staff charge their time when they work on a specific activity.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

43. Does the agency have any difficulty estimating how much time and budget will be spent on each work element?

Written Response:

RPA 8 staff spending is mostly within the estimated budget. Most of the amendments to the work program occurred when we had special projects, such as Federal aid project administration, SS4A, etc., in the budgets.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

44. Has the Iowa DOT guidance for the TPWP been helpful? How can it be improved?

Written Response:

Very helpful

Review Discussion:

Good TPWP for FY2025 with minimal things to change, mostly related to SS4A, which was new for everyone.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

45. Do you claim indirect costs in Federal Aid billings?
- If no, please explain how costs incurred for a common or joint purpose (not readily assignable to the RPA, such as “Facilities” (e.g., depreciation on buildings, equipment; and operations and maintenance expenses), or “Administration” (e.g. general administration and general expenses, such as the director’s office, accounting, personnel, and all other types of expenditures)) are assigned and billed to the RPA’s federal transportation planning.
 - If yes, please list the types of indirect costs?
 - What specific method does the agency use for allocating indirect costs and computing indirect cost rates?

Written Response:

Yes

- If no, please explain how costs incurred for a common or joint purpose (not readily assignable to the RPA, such as “Facilities” (e.g., depreciation on buildings, equipment; and operations and maintenance expenses), or “Administration” (e.g. general administration and general expenses, such as the director’s office, accounting, personnel, and all other types of expenditures)) are assigned and billed to the RPA’s federal transportation planning.**

- If yes, please list the types of indirect costs?**

Office Supplies, Conference and Training, Business & Travel Expense, Equipment Rent/Maintenance, Office Maintenance, Insurance, Dues & Subscriptions, Telephone, Postage, Agency Vehicle Expense, Utilities, Advertising, Professional Services, Depreciation, Occupancy Expense, Interest Expense, Miscellaneous Expense.

- What specific method does the agency use for allocating indirect costs and computing indirect cost rates?**

Cost Allocation Methodology Used for the Program Funding Reimbursement and the Indirect Cost Rate Development:

Salaries and Wages:

Time & Attendance System: All employees utilize an Excel spreadsheet template to record their time by grant or program activity based on established program codes. (Sample timesheets and Coding sheet are provided in Attachment F)

Personnel Time Allocation Policy: Personnel time is documented with timesheets showing time distribution for all employees and allocated based on time spent on each program or grant. Salaries and wages are charged directly to the program for which work has been done.

Indirect Salaries: Costs that benefit the entire agency are charged to an indirect cost pool and are allocated to all grants/programs based on the ratio of each program’s direct salaries & fringe benefits to the total of all direct salaries & fringe benefits. Each individual codes time directly to the program(s) benefited when working on specific projects.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

46. When was your last Cost Allocation Plan completed? What agency approves it?

Written Response:

7/7/23 was the last date the Cost Allocation Plan was completed. Agency that approves this is the United States Department of the Interior.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

47. What is your process for allocating costs such as staff time, fringe benefits, and supplies/overhead to projects?

Written Response:

ECIA has created an Administrative Services (Indirect) Pool consisting of salaries, fringe benefits and other costs. The Administrative Services (Indirect) Pool is charged with all the indirect costs as defined above. The pool is distributed to the various program activities on the basis of direct salaries and wages, including fringe benefits.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

48. Over the course of the past four years, what level of Federal Aid was budgeted and expended each year for planning activities?

Written Response:

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR	PLANNING	GRANTS	NOTES
FY 21	\$124,562	\$0	
FY 22	\$105,603	\$20,000	Grant Administration one RAISE grant
FY 23	\$131,519	\$30,000	Grant Administration two RAISE grants
FY 24	\$132,153	\$126,927	SS4A

Review Discussion:

Some reimbursement issues have arisen with SS4A since it is noew

- 49.** Is your independent audit conducted annually or bi-annually?
- a.** Did the agency have any corrective findings in any audit over the last six years? If so, what was the finding(s)?
 - b.** Does the Policy Board receive and/or review the agency's audit?

Written Response:

Annually. Auditors present the audit report to the ECIA Council.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

- 50.** What do you consider the most challenging aspect of managing/administering federally funded projects?

Written Response:

Tight budgets

Review Discussion:

No discussion

- 51.** Do the agency have any challenges with submitting reimbursement requests in a timely manner?
- a.** Is adequate guidance being provided by Iowa DOT for the agency billings and progress reports?
 - b.** How could the Iowa DOT's processing of the agency reimbursement requests be improved?

Written Response:

Yes

Review Discussion:

Items are reviewed and reimbursed in a timely manner.

OTHER

52. Do you have any special studies/projects you are working on or considering? Examples could include trail plans, bicycle/pedestrian plans, freight studies, safety studies or analyses, etc.

Written Response:

The RPA 8 staff is working on the following special projects:

- Working on Hazard Mitigation Plans
- Updated Bike & Pedestrian Plan
- Conducting Safety Audits
- Working on Downtown Master Plans
- Working on Comprehensive plans
- Working on Land use Plans
- Working on Housing Studies

Review Discussion:

No discussion

53. How do you coordinate with your neighboring RPAs and/or MPOs?

Written Response:

RPA 8 staff work very closely with surrounding MPOs and RPAs on projects and issues that are common to both entities. RPA 8 Coordinated with RPA 9 and the Bi-State Regional Commission on issues on the Mississippi River and in developing Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) for RPA 8. The PTP includes information for River Bend Transit and its future projects. RPA 8 staff coordinated with RPA 10 on a project which is seeking trial funding. RPA 8 maintains a close relationship with INRCOG in Waterloo by working on the passenger rail project and sharing information. RPA 8 staff also contacts other MPOs and RPAs in Iowa and surrounding states for best practices that can benefit the RPA 8 region.

Review Discussion:

ECIA works with RPAs 7 and 9 on transit and passenger rail issues.

54. Do you understand the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) process well enough to feel comfortable that the goal setting/reporting information you provide to the Iowa DOT is accurate and complete? If not, how could the Iowa DOT be of more assistance?

Written Response:

ECIA staff are very well versed with DBE process and are comfortable with the goal setting/reporting information submitted to Iowa DOT is accurate and complete.

Review Discussion:

No Discussion

55. How well do you believe the regional transportation planning process is working? What obstacles stand in the way, and how could these be addressed?

Written Response:

The regional transportation planning process is working great in RPA 8 region. We are able to address the needs of 56 members in our region. The needs vary from community to community but the RPA 8 staff are able to address these issues as the RPA 8 Tech and Policy Boards support the planning process.

Review Discussion:

ECIA staff stated that they have a good understanding of what is required and they work well within the regulations and the framework of regional, state and federal resources.

56. Are you getting what you need/want from the RPA quarterly meetings?

Written Response:

a. What do the agency like about the quarterly meetings?

The quarterly meetings provide a good opportunity to learn about what is going on at the DOT and with RPAs across the state. It is nice to have updates presented in this way because it is good to know what topics Iowa DOT staff are important for us to be aware of. It is also helpful to have an opportunity to learn from what other RPAs have experienced. The meeting format is good because it is not always easy to absorb this information from a newsletter or email. It is nice to have presentations on a variety of topics because it is difficult to keep up with everything that is going on and sometimes you don't know what you don't know. The quarterly meetings also provide a good opportunity for networking with Iowa DOT staff and our counterparts at other RPAs.

b. What changes would you suggest for improving these meetings?

In general, we find the RPA quarterly meetings to be quite helpful. The only challenge we sometimes have is the distance between Dubuque and Ames. While we definitely see that in-person meetings are much more productive than online meetings, but six hours in the car can be difficult to accommodate in our schedules. We are grateful that an online attendance option is currently being offered for some of these meetings. We request that Iowa DOT staff continue to consider travel time when planning future meetings.

Review Discussion:

No discussion

57. Are there any special training sessions you would like Iowa DOT, FHWA, or FTA to sponsor?

Written Response:

Training opportunities on the federal-aid project development process would be helpful.

Review Discussion:

Quarterly meetings or ICOG could be utilized in this way.

58. Is there anything else which could be done to improve the working relationship with the Iowa DOT, FHWA, and FTA? Is the Systems Planning Bureau adequately meeting your needs?

Written Response:

Good relationships overall.

Review Discussion:

Iowa DOT staff noted that they have a good working relationship in return with RPA 8.

Recommendations and Commendations

Recommendation

- Develop an executive summary for the PPP during the next update process (or prior) to similar best practices statewide.
- Using US Census/ACS Data, identify particular marginalized communities, including but not limited to Limited-English Proficiency households and tailor special outreach or meetings to include these communities in the public involvement process.

Commendation

- ECIA includes small communities in their committee membership, which provides representation and additional access to funding opportunities for these municipalities.
- Utilizing innovative public participation methods, including online surveys and existing community events like farmers markets, provides additional access to the public.
- RPA 8 utilizes INTRANS data for intersection tiers in their LRTP, which have then led to STBG and discretionary grant applications.
- ECIA has a January agenda item of which elements should be in the next FY work program.