



# Region 10 Public Involvement Plan



## RPA Region 10

A plan to foster public participation in the Region's transportation planning process

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# Region 10 Public Involvement Plan

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Transportation planning process*

## **Preface**

The Region 10 Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA), staffed by the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) is one of eighteen RPAs designated by the Iowa Department of Transportation to allow participation by local elected officials in the transportation planning process. The Region's public involvement plan outlines how the RPA will extend participation opportunities to the public. Public participation is a vital component of any government endeavor. Without input from the public, plans will be limited in scope and execution.

## **Introduction**

### **Background**

The RPA is responsible for transportation planning and programming of federal funds for Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington Counties. The RPA does not include the metropolitan areas of Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. Corridor MPO serves as the transportation planning agency for the cities of Cedar Rapids, Marion, Robins, Hiawatha and portions of rural Linn County. The Johnson County Council of Governments (JCCOG) provides transportation planning services for Iowa City, Coralville, North Liberty, Tiffin and a portion of rural Johnson County.

### **Regional Planning Affiliation**

The RPA is officiated by a Policy Committee that maintains decision-making and programming authority and a Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) that provides recommendations to the Policy Committee.

The Policy Committee membership includes two representatives from each affiliated county who are appointed by the respective County Board of Supervisors. Members to the Policy Committee must be an elected official or someone directly responsible to an elected official.

TTAC membership includes three representatives from each affiliated county, who are also appointed by the respective County Board of Supervisors. Selected members have the knowledge, skills or experience to provide technical recommendations regarding freight, passenger or pedestrian transportation issues.

## Major Documents

There are four major documents that the RPA is responsible for preparing. Public input is an important component to each of these documents.

### **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 Plan (PIP):**

The PIP is a guide that outlines public involvement in the transportation planning process.

### **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):**

The TIP is the prioritized program for federally funded transportation improvements within the RPA over a minimum of three years. The TIP is updated annually. The purpose of the TIP is to provide members of the RPA, transportation providers, the general public, and other affected groups and individuals with a general description of the capital transportation projects to be accomplished during the time frame of the document.

### **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 seven county area. The LRTP is based on a twenty-year horizon that includes both short- and long- range implementation strategies and provides for an integrated future transportation system. The LRTP is updated every five years.

### **Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP):**

This document is aimed at bringing passenger transportation providers and human service agencies in the region together to better understand available transportation services and result in more effectiveness and coordination

among providers. The PTP is the basis for efficient and effective passenger transportation resource allocation for operations, maintenance, and service development. This document also serves as a guidance mechanism for future transportation projects and programming decisions.

## Regulations and Requirements

Federal transportation legislation of recent years has included ISTEA, TEA\_21, and SAFETEA-LU. All three place significant emphasis on public participation in the transportation planning process. The current legislation, SAFETEA-LU, signed into law in 2005, governs federal surface transportation spending through 2010. New, reauthorizing legislation is not currently available. This section discusses the SAFTEA-LU guidelines, as well as other legislation the RPA adheres to.

### SAFETEA-LU (Federal Law)

SAFETEA-LU (23 CFR, Part 450.316(a)) establishes several guidelines for public participation. 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 must meet the following requirements:

Provide adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points.

Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.

Employ visualization techniques in the LRTP and TIP.

Make public information and meeting notices available through electronically accessible means and format.

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.

Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the LRTP and TIP.

Include a summary of significant comments received on the draft LRTP and TIP as part of the final LRTP and TIP.

Provide an additional opportunity for public comment if the final LRTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was originally made available for public comment.

Coordinate on the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes.

Periodically review the effectiveness of procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

Have a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the region.

## **Title VI, Environmental Justice and ADA**

The RPA's plans are 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 subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion.

The RPA's plans also comply with Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations. This requires 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 the negative environmental consequences resulting from government programs and policies.

The RPA's plans also comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This civil rights law protects individuals from discrimination based on disabilities.

## **Open Meeting Law**

The Iowa Open Meeting Law (Iowa Code, Chapter 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 Open Meeting 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 regional meetings. Regular meetings of the RPA Policy Committee occur on the last Thursday of the month in January, April, August and October. The meetings begin at approximately 2:00 pm at the offices of the East Central Iowa Council of Governments in Cedar Rapids. The TTAC meetings begin at 1:00 pm at the offices of the Johnson County Secondary Roads in Iowa City. TTAC meetings are typically held on the second Wednesday of the month, usually in January, April, July and October. All meeting times and locations are subject to change. The RPA's meeting notices and agendas are mailed to all media serving the region that request notification. Information about RPA meetings, including minutes and agendas are also available at the ECICOG office and online at the ECICOG website ([www.ecicog.org](http://www.ecicog.org)).

## **Public Records Law**

The Iowa Public Records Law (Iowa Code, Chapter 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 ECICOG office. Documents may be viewed during normal office hours, with a nominal fee for copies.

## **Public Outreach**

The RPA'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. When the need exists, the RPA will make special efforts to offer translation for people who use languages other than English. Meeting facilities will always be accessible, and interpretation for the hearing impaired will be provided when feasible.

In addition, the RPA will make every reasonable effort to incorporate visualization techniques into its public outreach activities. These visualization techniques may include large maps, graphs representing various types of data and /or flow charts to depict the planning process. The RPA is also considering the purchase of scenario planning software to enhance visualization techniques.

## **Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Regular Meetings**

The RPA and ECICOG are public bodies as defined in the Iowa State Open Meetings Law and are therefore subject to the requirements of that law. The public is invited and encouraged to attend the regularly scheduled RPA meetings. Meeting notices are generally sent out, electronically if possible, approximately one week prior to the meeting. The notices include the date, time, and location of the meeting and the agenda to be covered. The public will be informed that a detailed package of information pertaining to the meeting topics will be available prior to the meeting date at the ECICOG offices. Meeting notices are also included in the agency newsletter. At the beginning of meetings there is a public comment period that permits any member of the public to comment on agenda items. Written comments provided to the staff a minimum of two weeks prior to the meeting will be distributed to the Committee members.

## **Public Hearings**

Prior to the adoption of the LRTP or TIP, the RPA will hold a public hearing. The hearing will be publicly advertised and will offer the opportunity for the public to express their ideas, opinions, and input for consideration by the Policy Committee.

## **Presentations to Organizations**

Individual presentations to various organizations will occur when requested and may be done at the request of the Policy Committee.

## **City/County Meetings**

ECICOG will be available to speak to any City Council or Board of Supervisors should these officials deem it necessary or useful.

## Newsletters

ECICOG publishes a quarterly newsletter, *ECICOG Express* that includes articles dedicated to issues of transportation, and meeting schedules. The newsletter is primarily distributed electronically, but hardcopies are also available. Copies are available to an established mailing list (approximately 350 people/organizations) and to other interested public.

## Website

ECICOG has a website and email address and can be reached via telephone, fax or direct mailing to our offices. Current contact information can be found on our website. Although Internet connectivity is not available to everyone, more public libraries, public schools, and community organizations are making this form of electronic access more popular and possible.

ECICOG maintains its website to inform the public. Information posted on the website includes the following:

Overview of the RPA

RPA Committee Membership

Funding Opportunities

Application Forms

Eligibility Criteria

Regional Publications and Documents, when possible

Related Links

## 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, ECICOG will maintain records of its public involvement activities, and the input, comments, and issues identified by the public. ECICOG will reply to requests for written documentation or published information within a reasonable time frame and, where feasible, will respond to input received during the public participation phase of information gathering.

## Process, Review, Approval and Amendments

At the time of each update, ECICOG will republish the documents in draft form for public review. As a rule, ECICOG will advertise a fifteen (15) day public comment period for the TPWP, TIP and LRTP updates. A different public comment period may be implemented at the direction of the Transportation Policy Committee. All draft documents

will be posted on the ECICOG website for those with Internet access, and will be available at ECICOG and in the affiliated county engineers' offices in printed form.

When it becomes necessary to amend the planning documents, the process requires a similar 15-day public comment period and shall be governed by established guidelines:

### **TPWP**

A TPWP budget revision is defined as a). any change in total budget; b). an amendment if it affects an amount greater than 10% of the budget; or c). any other major changes to a work activity (e.g. timeframe for completion). Such an amendment requires Policy Committee approval. Adding a new task to the TPWP is also considered an amendment that requires Policy Committee approval.

### **TIP**

The TTAC has the authority to exercise and approve minor changes to the TIP during the program year. Minor changes are defined as "changes that result from moving a project from one fiscal year to another, or altering total project costs. Other larger changes, including a significant change in the project scope of work or a change in the federal funding requested, are defined as an amendment. The amendment will require Policy Committee approval, and must provide another opportunity for public review and participation.

### **L RTP**

The long-range plan will be updated approximately every five years and requires public participation at that time. A specific schedule and process will be formulated for the regularly scheduled updates.

### **PTP**

The PTP will be prepared every five years, with annual updates of progress and projects provided in between full updates, and required by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

### **PIP**

The PIP procedures are updated periodically on an as needed basis. Any update to the PIP will require a forty-five (45) day public comment period.

## Summary of Region 10 Document Development

Plan	Updated	Draft Development	Public Meetings/Draft Availability	Public Comment Period	Adoption	Availability
<b>TPWP</b>	Annually	Draft developed by RPA staff with input from interested parties.	Minimum of two public input sessions; draft available on ECICOG website, at ECICOG office, and available upon request.	At least 15 days for review following draft completion.	Adopted at regularly scheduled Policy Committee meeting.	ECICOG office and website
<b>TIP</b>	Annually	Draft developed by TTAC and TREC with input from interested parties	Draft available on CICOG website, at ECICOG office, and upon request.	At least 15 days for review following draft completion.	Public hearing will be held during regularly scheduled Policy Committee meeting.	ECICOG office and website
<b>L RTP</b>	Every five years	Draft developed by RPA staff with interested from interested parties	Draft available on CICOG website, at ECICOG office, and upon request.	At least 15 days for review following draft completion.	Public hearing will be held during regularly scheduled Policy Committee meeting.	ECICOG office and website
<b>PTP</b>	Every five years, with annual updates	Draft developed by RPA staff with input from designated advisory group and interested parties.	Draft available on CICOG website, at ECICOG office, and upon request.	At least 45 days for review following draft completion.	Adopted at regularly scheduled Policy Committee meeting.	ECICOG office and website
<b>PIP</b>	As needed	Draft developed by RPA staff with input from interested parties.	Draft available on CICOG website, at ECICOG office, and upon request.	At least 15 days for review following draft completion.	Adopted at regularly scheduled Policy Committee meeting.	ECICOG office and website

## Contact Information

The RPA believes in the role of the public in the transportation planning process, welcoming all comments from citizens or groups concerning transportation issues. Citizens can contact the RPA by:

Mail: East Central Iowa Council of Governments  
700 16<sup>th</sup> Street NE, Suite 301  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

Phone: (319) 365-9941

Fax: (319) 365-9981

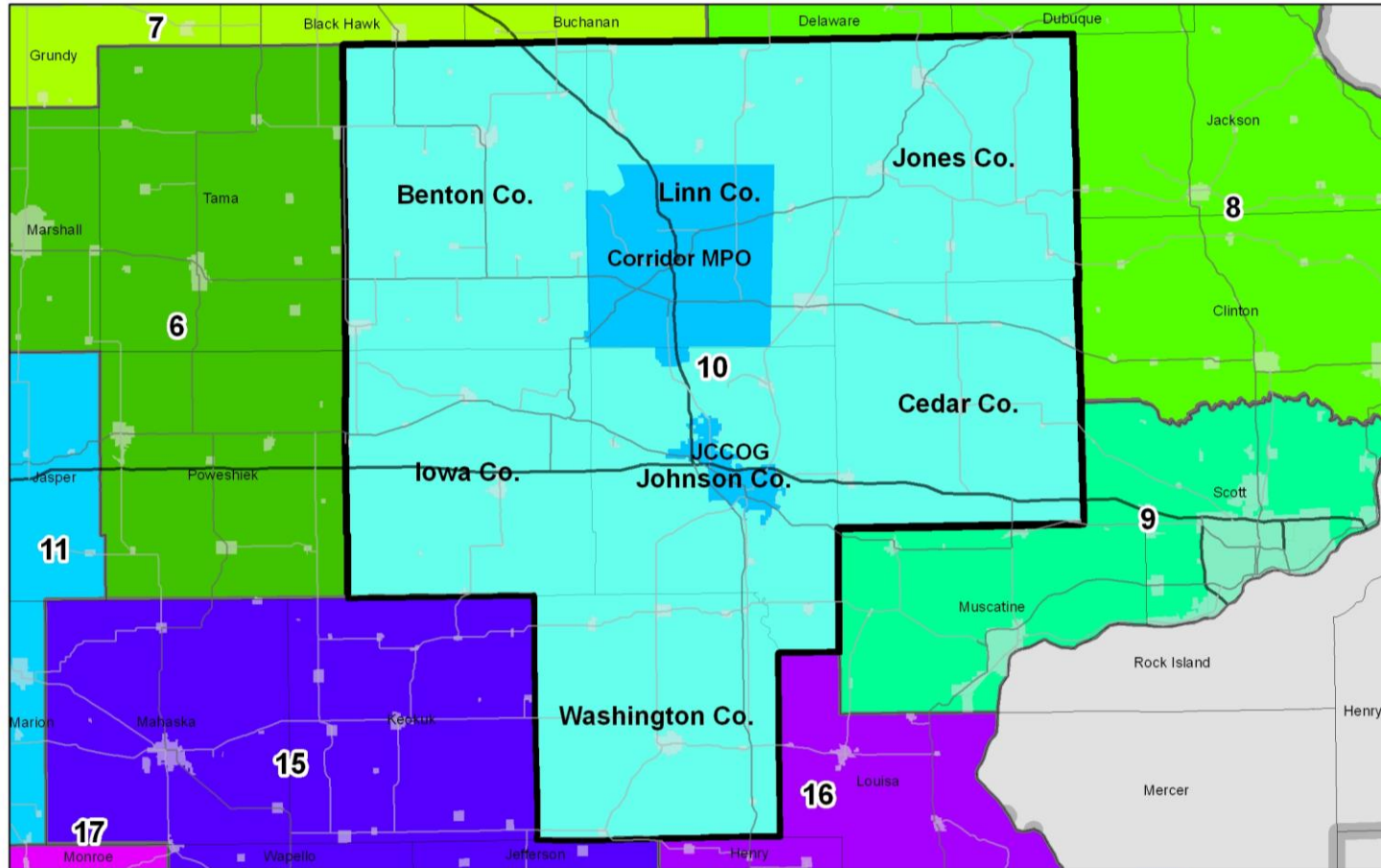
E-mail: [mary.rump@ecicog.org](mailto:mary.rump@ecicog.org)

Website: [www.ecicog.org](http://www.ecicog.org)

# Appendix A

Region 10 Regional Planning Affiliation Planning Boundary

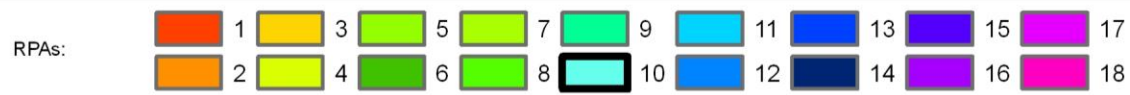
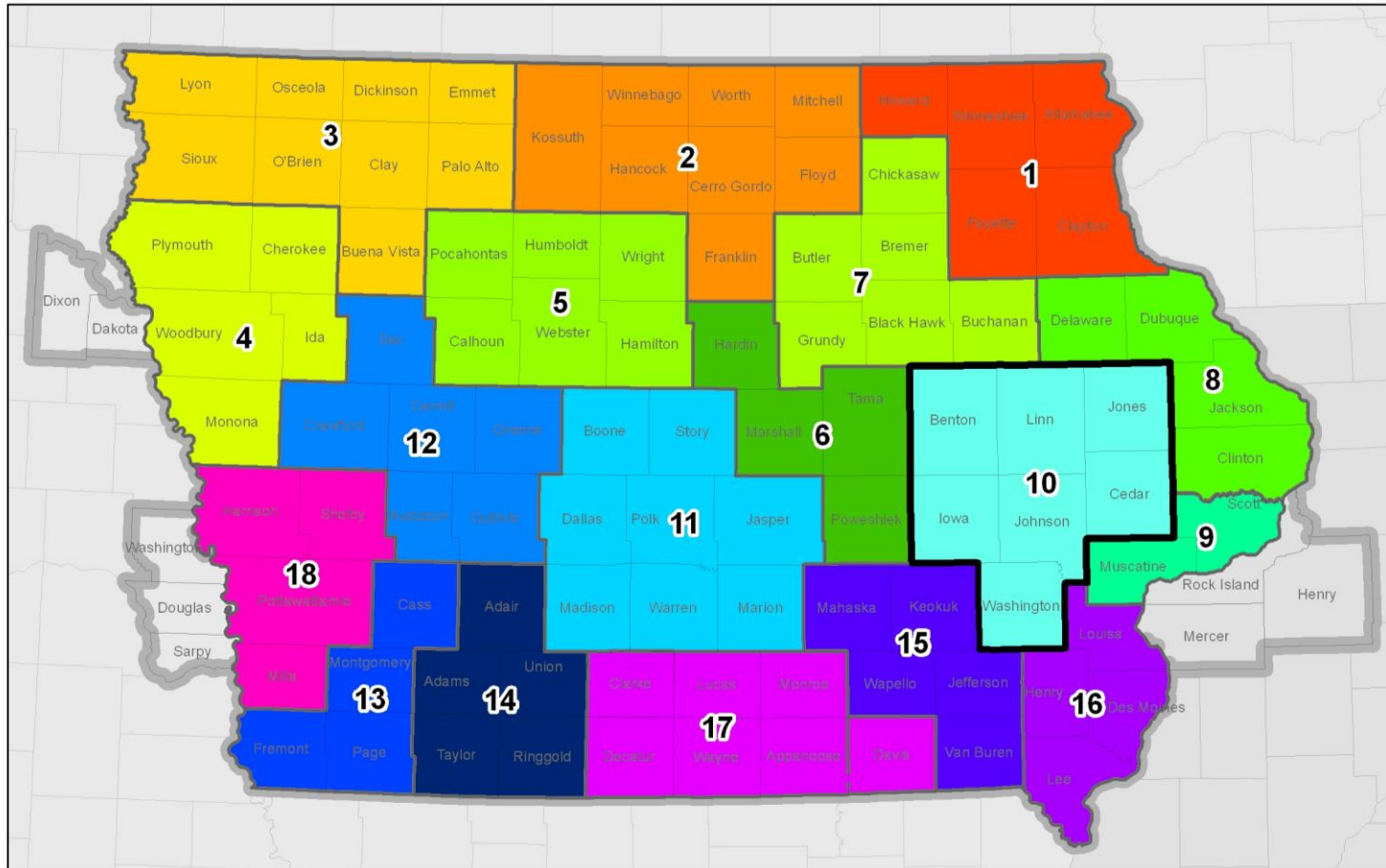
## Region 10 RPA



## Appendix B

Iowa Regional Planning Affiliations

# Regional Planning Affiliations



## Appendix C

### Region 10 RPA Committee Members

#### Policy Committee

David Vermedahl, Benton County Supervisor

Andrew Lent, Vinton City Administrator

Dennis Boedeker, Cedar County Supervisor

Robert Fangmann, Cedar County Engineer

Charles Montross, Iowa County Supervisor

Linda Yoder, Iowa County Supervisor

Sally Stutsman, Johnson County Supervisor

vacant, Johnson County representative

Leo Cook, Jones County Supervisor

Doug Herman, Monticello City Administrator

Lu Barron, Linn County Supervisor

Linda Langston, Linn County Supervisor

Adam Mangold, Washington County Supervisor

David Plyman, Washington City Administrator

#### TTAC

Myron Parizek, Benton County Engineer

Rick Erickson, Vinton Public Works

vacant, Benton County representative

Rob Fangmann, Cedar County Engineer

Richard Kordick, Cedar County Secondary Roads

Doug Boldt, Tipton City Administrator

Jin Yeen Nuemann, Iowa County Engineer

Linda Yoder, Iowa County Supervisor

Charles Montross, Iowa County Supervisor

Greg Parker, Johnson County Engineer

Sally Stutsman, Johnson County Supervisors

vacant, Johnson County representative

Mike McClain, Jones County Engineer

Todd Postel, Jones County Secondary Roads

Derek Snead, Jones County Secondary Roads

Steve Gannon, Linn County Engineer

Randy Burke, Linn County Conservation

Dan Swartzendruber, Linn County Planning and Zoning

David Patterson, Washington County Engineer

Adam Mangold, Washington County Supervisor

Rob Mc Donald, Washington City Engineer