



# FORWARD 2040

## *RPA 15 Long Range Transportation Plan*



May 2019

Prepared by the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission  
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This plan was prepared with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, and in part through local matching funds of the RPA member governments.

## **Adopting Resolution**

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE RPA 15 2020 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AS THE OFFICIAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15

WHEREAS, the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission did prepare a Long-Range Transportation Plan which identifies existing transportation facilities, current transportation needs, anticipated transportation projects for the next five years, transportation goals and objectives for the next twenty years for REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15; and

WHEREAS, it is a requirement of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) that the transportation planning process and long-range planning be continued, and that all modes of transportation be included in this process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15 adopts the 2020 Long-Range Transportation Plan as the official transportation plan for the region.

Passed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

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Chairperson  
Regional Planning Affiliation 15

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview**

The purpose of transportation planning is to develop and maintain a transportation system that will provide a safe, efficient and economic means of moving people and goods. The system should promote the movement using multiple modes. It should provide an easy transition from the local system within a community to the wider regional system. It should also enhance alternative modes for non-drivers including public transportation and bicycle and pedestrian systems.

An important part of developing and maintaining a transportation system is reviewing its current condition and identifying future needs based on existing conditions, usage and demographic and economic trends. Roads and bridges that experience heavy usage will deteriorate faster and need more maintenance or be replaced sooner. Areas experiencing growth may require additional capacity roads or in public transportation. Roads and streets with high traffic or truck traffic may require safety improvements. Bicycle and Pedestrian accommodations are becoming important in communities to enhance livability.

The 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan for Regional Planning Affiliation 15 will document the current conditions of the region's transportation system, identify the transportation needs and priorities. The plan has a horizon year of 2040 and attempts to look at the needs of the system in both the short term and the longer term. Shorter term needs are based on the current condition of the system and local capital improvement plans. Longer term needs include projects based on current condition that are deferred due to other projects taking priority or financial constraints. It will also include needs based on past trends and projected development. Since these needs are based on a snapshot in time, it is necessary to review and update this document to take into account changing developments and needs. To adjust for this, the document will be revised every five years.

Funding is necessary to achieve the goals of this plan and to implement the projects identified in this plan. There are funding sources available at the local, state and federal levels for implementing a project. Some of these sources have been discussed in previous chapters, others will be identified in this chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to compare the costs of projects identified during the regional planning process to the anticipated funding.

## **Purpose of the Long-Range Transportation Plan**

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) serves as means for the Regional Planning Affiliation to examine the region's existing transportation system and determine their adequacy for the region's population and economy. The plan considers all modes of transportation and discusses existing conditions, usage and needs. It also provides local officials the opportunity to explore the region's transportation needs based on existing conditions and projected revenues. This process is conducted in coordination with area stakeholders; including the RPA Policy Board, Technical Committee, the regional economic development group and the solicitation of public comment to discuss the region's transportation needs. The LRTP may serve as a guide for local jurisdictions to base their project selection for the transportation project programming process. Due to limited financial resources, local agencies need to be able to prioritize projects that best address the needs of their jurisdiction.

This plan will be divided into nine chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction and Overview: gives an overview of the purpose of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the development process and public participation process.
- Chapter 2 – Summary of Public Comment: provides a summary of the public comments received.
- Chapter 3 – Characteristics of the Region: provides an overview of the region's demographic, economic and commuting patterns.
- Chapter 4 – Roads, Highways and Bridges: focuses on roads and bridges, discusses existing conditions and identifies planned improvements, funding sources and discusses anticipated funding.
- Chapter 5 – Passenger Transportation Services: discusses public transportation services in the region including existing services and passenger transportation needs.
- Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: reviews area bicycle and pedestrian facilities, describes recent developments, discusses regional connections, existing and proposed facilities, funding sources and priorities.
- Chapter 7 – Rail, Air and Pipelines: discusses rail, air and pipelines. Provides an overview of the different rail lines and traffic density and rail crossing types. Reviews the level of service of airports and proposed improvements. Summarizes pipeline transportation in the region.
- Chapter 8 – Safety and Security: focuses on safety and security of the transportation system, including both state, regional and local levels. Provides an overview of planning efforts, reviews crash data and areas of safety concern.

- Chapter 9 – Environmental Mitigation: discusses the potential impacts of transportation projects on environment, strategies to avoid, minimize or mitigate the impacts.
- Chapter 10 – Financial Capacity: provides an overview of available funding sources, the history of STBG and TAP funds, future funding projections, identifies short-term fiscally constrained projects, discusses long-term projects and explains the RPA’s project selection process.

### **Description of RPA 15 and stakeholders**

Regional Planning Affiliation 15 (RPA 15) was formed in 1994 after the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act when the Iowa Transportation Commission decided to make funding available to local governments through regional planning organizations. The RPA was established under the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission, which was the Council of Governments serving already serving the region.

The Area 15 RPC provides the staff for the RPA’s planning activities, technical expertise is provided by the Technical Advisory Committee and decision-making authority rests with the Policy Board. The Technical Committee consists of people with expertise in engineering, public works, conservation, public transit or trails. The Policy Board is made up of local elected officials and is the governing body of the RPA. The board is responsible for making funding decisions and adopting planning documents including the LRTP.

The current membership of the Technical Advisory Committee and the Policy Board is as follows:

#### **Technical Advisory Committee**

##### *Membership:*

- Wapello County Engineer
- Ottumwa Transit Director
- 10-15 Transit Director
- Van Buren County Engineer
- Jefferson County Engineer
- Keokuk County Engineer
- City of Oskaloosa Engineer
- Mahaska County Engineer
- City of Ottumwa Public Works Director

- Jefferson County Conservation Director
- Mahaska County Conservation Director
- Wapello County Conservation Director
- Pathfinders RC&D Director
- City of Fairfield Engineer
- Van Buren County appointed representative for transportation alternatives

### Policy Board

#### *Membership:*

- Mahaska County Supervisor
- Wapello County Supervisor
- Jefferson County Supervisor
- Van Buren County Supervisor
- Mayor of the City of Ottumwa
- City Administrator of the City of Oskaloosa
- Keokuk County Supervisor
- City Council member of the City of Sigourney
- Mayor of the City of Fairfield

In addition, there are other groups that function as forums for input and comment on transportation activities and needs in RPA 15. These groups are as follows:

Transit Advisory Group: The group provides input into the passenger transportation planning process on mobility problems affecting seniors, students, persons with disabilities or with no vehicle, and lower incomes. This group serves as an advisory capacity to the Policy Board.

Wapello County Trails Council: This committee provides a forum to discuss non-motorized transportation issues related to the City of Ottumwa and Wapello County.

Area 15 Regional Planning Commission: This organization serves as the designated Economic Development District Organization. It provides assistance to local governments in the areas of community development, economic development, transportation, housing, land use and natural resources. The RPC provides staff for the Regional Planning Affiliation.

Opportunity<sup>2</sup>: This group coordinates economic development in Southeast Iowa and works to market the region to new and expanding businesses.

Additional stakeholders and resources in the development of the LRTP include:

- Neighboring Regional Planning Affiliations: RPAs 6, 10, 11, 16 and 17
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- Pathfinders Resource Conservation and Development
- Airports in the region: Fairfield, Keosauqua, Oskaloosa, Ottumwa and the new South-Central Regional Airport
- Railroads running through the region: Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Canadian Pacific, Union Pacific and Burlington Junction Railway
- Member cities and counties
- residents

**Plans reviewed**

RPA 6 – Region 6 Planning Commission  
2014 Long-Range Transportation Plan

RPA 10 - ECICOG  
CRDS 2040 (2014 Long-Range Transportation Plan)

RPA 11 CIRTPA  
Horizon Year 2034 Long-Range Transportation Plan

RPA 16 SEIRPC  
2018 Transportation and Development Plan

RPA 17 Chariton Valley Planning  
2017 Long-Range Transportation Plan

Iowa Department of Transportation  
Iowa in Motion 2045  
Iowa State Rail Plan – 2017  
Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan - 2019

Area 15 Regional Planning Commission  
2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

**Timeline of Plan Development**

May 2018: Reviewed other RPA websites for recent examples of LRTPs. Selected RPA 7, 9, 13, and 14 as possible examples. Reviewed and downloaded Iowa DOT guidance. Selected modal structure for RPA outline.

July 2018: Collected GIS data for region on pavement condition, federal functional classification, crashes, and traffic volume.

August 2018: Developed outline and timeline for LRTP. Identified resource agencies for consultation.

September 2018: Collected demographic information: housing ownership, travel time and distance to work traveled, mode of travel to work. Also collected bridge conditions and planned improvements beyond what is programmed in TIP.

October 2018: Collected information on railroads, airports and pipelines.

Discussed future projects, short and long term and safety, with the Technical Advisory Committee.

October – November 2018: Developed Chapter 3 Overview of Region (demographics, economic conditions and commuting) and Chapter 5 Passenger Transportation.

November – December 2018: Developed Chapter 4 Roads and Highways and Chapter 6 Trails.

December 2018: Review Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan and Top 200 Safety Improvement Candidate Location List.

December 2018 – January 2019: Developed Chapter 7 Rail, Air and Pipelines.

January 2019: Reviewed Environmental Strategies and resources.

February 2019: Developed Chapter 8 Safety and Security and Chapter 9 Environmental Mitigation.

March 2019: Developed Chapter 10 Financial Capacity.

Discussed strengths and weaknesses of the regions transportation system and goals for the Long-Range Plan with the Policy Board.

April 2019: Developed Chapter 1 Introduction and Overview.

April – May 2019: Completed revisions to chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

May - June 2019: Public review and comment.

June 2019. Adoption by the RPA.

### **Goals of the Long-Range Plan**

The goals of the Long-Range Transportation Plan were developed through a review of the previous LRTP, the needs of the region and consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Board. These goals will steer the prioritization of projects and the investment of public funds in the region. Applications for Surface Transportation Block Grant/SWAP or Transportation Alternative Program funds should address one or more of the goals of this plan and/or should be identified as a project within this document. STBG/SWAP and TAP projects will be scored according to how well they address the goals of the LRTP.

1. Provide a transportation system for users that is safe and dependable for the movement of people and goods by encouraging projects that:
  - a. Maintain or improve the condition of existing roads.
  - b. Maintain or improve bridges so that they are safe for their level of use.

- c. Improve safety, especially in areas with a history of crashes.
  - d. Reduce vehicle, freight, transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian conflicts.
  - e. Improve travel times or level of service.
  - f. Improve connectivity between cities or regions.
  - g. Maintain or improve passenger transportation services.
  - h. Preserve the integrity of the 4-lane highway.
2. Promote an efficient means of meeting the transportation needs of the region by:
    - a. Maximizing the useful life of existing transportation infrastructure.
    - b. Discouraging projects with high costs and low use.
    - c. Identifying federal, state and local sources to assist with the funding of projects.
    - d. Encouraging cooperation between governments on projects that benefit more than one agency.
3. Encourage economic development and improve quality of life in the region by:
    - a. Giving consideration to and promoting transportation projects that create or retain jobs in the region.
    - b. Developing connections between existing developments, new developments and/or redevelopments.
    - c. Promoting the use of transit, bicycling and walking as transportation and the creation of infrastructure to support their use.

### **Public Participation Process for Plan**

The public involvement process for the Long-Range Plan was based on the RPA's Public Participation Plan, which was last updated in 2017. This plan describes the federal and state requirements the Regional Planning Affiliation follows ensure participation by all interested parties. It also describes the methods the RPA uses for ongoing outreach, engaging marginalized and/or disadvantaged populations and for the development of major transportation plans.

The 2017 RPA 15 Public Participation Plan set the requirements for public involvement opportunities for the LRTP and guided the public input process. Public input actions required included the following:

- Public engagement:
  - Presented at RPA 15 TAC and Policy Board meetings.
  - Posted on Area 15 RPC website and available in the planning commission's office during normal business hours.
  - A minimum of one public input session will be held.
  - Presentations also made to interested organizations.

- Public Notice:
  - Legal notice published for public comment and hearing in the newspaper of widest circulation.
  - Notice may also be advertised through local media sources, RPC newsletter, posted on RPC Facebook page, sent to member cities, member counties, private transportation organizations and organizations serving disadvantaged populations.
  
- Comment period and adoption:
  - The public will have at least a 30-day comment period prior to adoption to submit comments by mail, e-mail, phone or in person during normal business hours or at the designated public hearing.
  - Following the 30-day comment period the RPA will adopt a final version of the LRTP including a summary of the comments received by resolution at a Policy Board meeting.