

For Transportation Planning

May 2022

Prepared by the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission
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Adopting Resolution

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING RPA 15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission prepared a Public Participation Plan which identifies the process for providing information to and receiving comment from the public for REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15; and

WHEREAS, it is a requirement of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA Act) of 2021 that the transportation planning process be continued, and that public participation is required as part of that process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATION 15 adopts the RPA 15 Public Participation Plan for the 5-county region.

Passed this _____ day of _____.

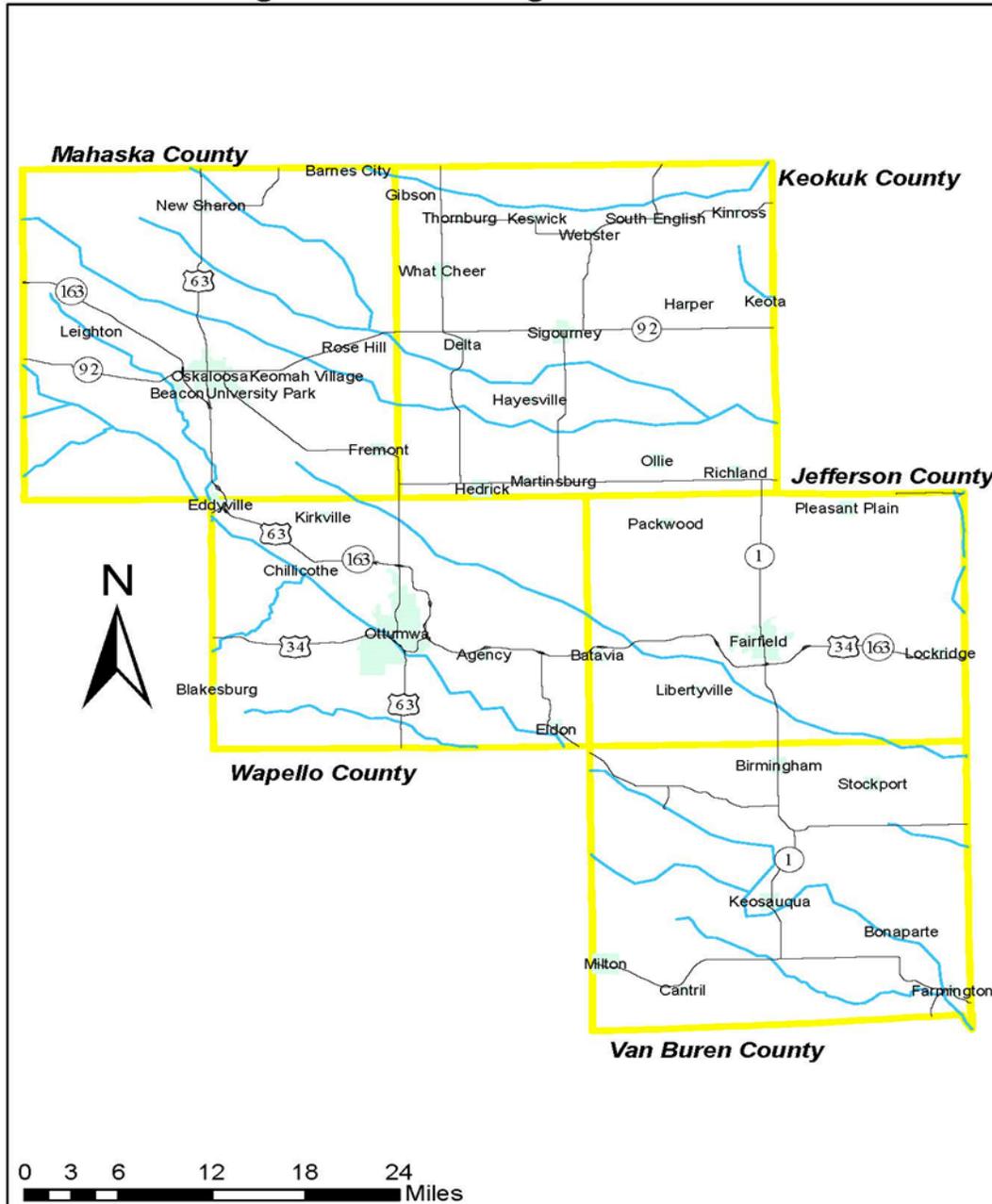
Chairperson
Regional Planning Affiliation 15

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RPA 15 Map

The Regional Planning Affiliation 15 Area



Section One: Introduction and Overview

Introduction

This document provides guidelines and procedures for public participation in the transportation planning efforts of Regional Planning Affiliation 15 (RPA 15). The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is responsible for transportation planning and programming in RPA 15. RPA 15 is located in southeast Iowa and includes Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren and Wapello counties. The public participation process in this document describes ways the RPA will inform the public and ways the public can become involved in RPA 15's transportation planning activities. This includes anyone who lives, works or has an interest in the region and could be affected by transportation decisions. It is the RPA's goal to engage all sections of the public, including those traditionally underserved by transportation including; minorities, low-income, elderly, and the disabled, through multiple means in order to encourage participation in transportation planning and programming.

This document replaces past Public Participation Processes for RPA 15, the most recent of which was adopted in 2006. The new process revises and expands on efforts from the previous plan by incorporating new federal and state guidance, adding new strategies to encourage public participation, and expanding the strategies that work.

Structure of the RPA

The structure of Regional Planning Affiliation 15 includes the Policy Board, Technical Advisory Committee, Transit Advisory Group, and the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission.

Policy Board

The Policy Board guides and sets the policies for the RPA's transportation planning efforts, is responsible for approval of projects and the final adoption of the region's transportation planning documents. This board is made up of ten representatives which includes one representative from each of the five member counties, one from each of the three urban areas, and one from a city in each of the two member counties that do not include an urban area.

Policy Board meetings are held on an as needed basis and are typically held at the 10-15 Transit Office on the fourth Thursday of the month at 11:30am. Agendas are available

the week before the meeting. People needing accommodations to participate in the meeting should be submit requests three days before the meeting.

Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee provides technical guidance and advisory to the Policy Board, is responsible for reviewing, rating, and recommending projects to be considered for approval by the Policy Board and providing input for the region's transportation planning documents. This committee is made up of sixteen members which includes one engineer and one enhancement representative from each of the five counties, one engineer/public works director from each of the three urban areas, one transit administrator from each of the two public transit agencies, and one regional representative from the RC&D which represents the scenic byway.

Technical Advisory Committee meetings are held on an as needed basis and are typically held at the Ottumwa Transit office during the second or third Wednesday or Thursday of the month at 10:00am. Agendas are available the week before the meeting. People needing accommodations to participate in the meeting should submit requests three days before the meeting.

Transit Advisory Group

The Transit Advisory Group discusses items of interest relating to passenger transportation services, provides information for and feedback on the Passenger Transportation Plan. The group's membership includes: public transit agencies, private transportation providers, health and human service agencies, and local elected officials.

Transit Advisory Group meetings are held a minimum of twice a year. Meeting times and locations vary and do not have a specific schedule.

Area 15 Regional Planning Commission

The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission serves as the Regional Planning Affiliation for Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren and Wapello counties. The planning commission provides staff for the RPA, receives project applications, keeps records of RPA activities and prepares the transportation planning documents required of the RPA by the Iowa Department of Transportation or requested by the RPA's Policy Board.

Transportation Planning Documents

The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission solicits participation from the public in the development of and comments on major documents governing the RPA's policies and operations when these documents are initially approved or are amended. There are five

primary documents that the RPC is responsible for and that public participation is important in developing. These documents are:

Long Range Transportation Plan

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a document that provides a look at the 5-county region's current transportation system and identifies both short term and long-term strategies and projects. The plan looks at all modes of transportation within the RPA, their condition and usage, identifies transportation problems and needs and discusses strategies to address those needs. The plan also identifies projects for the next five years and funding to implement the projects and discusses longer range policy goals and strategies for improving the region's transportation system.

Passenger Transportation Plan

The Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) looks at the region's passenger transportation services to provide information on available services and to identify areas where there is a need for service or additional service. The plan identifies passenger transportation services provided by public transit agencies, private transportation companies, health and human service organizations and schools and discusses the strengths and gaps of the region's passenger transportation services to develop strategies and projects for improvement over the next five years.

Public Participation Process

The Public Participation Process (PPP) outlines the process for involving the public in the development of documents and the decision making for transportation planning in RPA 15.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) describes the process for identifying projects funded using federal aid in RPA 15 for the next four years. It also describes all city, county and state transportation projects that will be receiving federal highway or federal transit funds over this time period. The TIP is fiscally constrained and contains only projects that can be funded with anticipated revenue.

Transportation Planning Work Program

The Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) is a document describing the transportation planning activities that RPA 15 intends to carry out over the next year to support the cities and counties and the Iowa Department of Transportation in maintaining and improving the region's transportation system. The TPWP identifies work elements as they relate to implementing the work program, developing and implementing the TIP, public participation, long range planning, and passenger transportation. For each of these

elements the TPWP identifies the amount of time and cost anticipated to be spent and lists major projects and milestones to be completed for that element during the year.

In addition to the five primary documents listed above, the RPC may engage in additional transportation planning initiatives or develop additional documents for the RPA. As appropriate and necessary, public participation will be solicited according the guidelines within this document.

Section Two: Regulations and Requirements

Planning and Public Involvement

Federal regulations related to statewide transportation planning and public involvement are found in 23 CFR 450.316. These regulations require that a state use a documented public involvement process that provides public review and comment opportunities at key decision points. At a minimum, this process shall:

- Establish an early and continuous public involvement opportunities to provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making to individuals, public agencies, public transit providers, freight providers, private transportation providers, public transportation advocates, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, advocates of the disabled, and other interested parties.
- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Provide adequate notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan.
- To the maximum extent practicable, use visualization techniques in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and other supporting plans.
- To the maximum extent practicable, make information available electronically in accessible format and means.
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Include a process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.
- Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that it provides full and open access to all interested parties.

- Provide a public comment period for a minimum of 45 days before a public participation process is adopted or major revisions to the existing process is adopted.

Other Federal Regulations

The RPC has also developed RPA 15's public participation process and the Title VI plans to be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, US Code Title 23 Section 109(h), Executive Order 12898, and Executive Order 13166.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, nation origin, age, sex, disability, or religion.

Age Discrimination Act of 1975 protects against discrimination based on age in programs and activities receiving federal funds. It requires that public involvement be open to people of all ages.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 expands on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination by public entities in their programs and activities.

United States Code Title 23 Section 109(h) requires the US Department of Transportation to ensure that transportation investments are in the best interests of the public.

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations states that 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. It aims to ensure that no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group bears a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from governmental programs and policies.

Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency states that efforts should be taken to evaluate all services provided by a federal agency, to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency are able to meaningfully access the services provided, without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of the agency.

State Regulations

Chapter 21 of the Code of Iowa: Iowa's Open Meetings Law applies to government bodies, boards, councils, commissions, and task forces created by the state or its political subdivisions. The law is designed to facilitate public access to government decisions. It defines a meeting and identifies the requirements for public notices, agendas, meeting procedures and minutes, as well as regulations concerning closed meetings.

Chapter 22 of the Code of Iowa: Iowa's Public Records Law provides for government agencies to be open with public records and states that every person has the right to examine and copy public records.

RPA 15 is operated in accordance with both Chapters 21 and 22 of the Code of Iowa. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend RPA meetings, and information about meetings, agendas, and minutes are available at the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission offices or at the RPC's website www.area15rpc.com. The RPA's public documents may be reviewed at the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission offices during normal business hours.

Section Three: Public Participation Techniques

Providing Information and Collecting Input

RPA 15 provides information on and collects input from the public throughout the year on transportation related plans and activities. Feedback is specifically sought when there are changes being made to projects receiving federal aid and when transportation plans, policies and strategies are being developed for the RPA.

General Outreach

To provide information to the public on the RPA's activities, the following methods of outreach are used:

- A website that provides access to all of RPA 15's transportation plans for the region, and the latest agendas and minutes for the RPA's Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Board.
- Articles in Area 15 RPC's Newslines, a quarterly newsletter, on transportation planning activities, public input opportunities and key projects.
- Press Releases to local newspapers in the 5-county RPA region on transportation planning activities and requesting public input.
- Presentations to county boards of supervisors, city councils, economic development organizations and other interested groups as needed or requested.
- Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Board meetings that are open to the public.

Transportation Planning Documents and Document Changes

To provide information on specific transportation planning documents and document changes, the RPA will use the following methods:

- Inviting the public to offer input or make comment by submitting feedback during the designated comment period or by attending the designated public hearing.
- Proposed Transportation Planning Documents may be reviewed on the Area 15 RPC's website, or in the planning commission's office during normal business hours.
- Comments may be mailed, e-mailed, called in, given in person during normal business hours to the RPA 15 Transportation Director, or presented at the designated public hearing.
- Public forums may be hosted within the RPA or targeted project area to obtain input.
- Focus or stakeholder groups may be established to obtain project specific input.

Marginalized and/or Disadvantaged Populations

To assist marginalized and or Disadvantaged populations in engaging in RPA 15's public participation process the RPA will use the following tools:

- Meetings, public hearings, forums and stakeholder groups will be held at locations accessible for people with disabilities.
- To the extent possible, meetings, public hearings, forums and stakeholder groups will be held at times and locations accessible by public transit.
- As appropriate, meetings, public hearings, forums and stakeholder groups will be held at locations most affected by the proposed plan or planning activity.
- For people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the RPA follows a LEP plan that provides for translating transportation planning documents and providing oral translation services at meetings.
- The RPA maintains a Title VI Plan to address any civil rights or discrimination issues or complaints.
- The RPA uses visualization techniques such as maps, graphs and tables to help the public understand the proposed plans or changes.

Development of Major Transportation Plans

RPA 15 is responsible for developing five primary transportation planning documents. The development cycle and public participation process for each document is outlined below:

Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)

- Updated: Annually.
- Development: Developed by RPC staff with oversight by the RPA 15 Policy Board.
- Draft Review: IDOT, FHWA and FTA.
- Public Notice: Legal notice published for public comment and hearing in the newspaper of widest circulation.
- Comment Period: A minimum of 15 days.
- Public Engagement: Draft presented at RPA 15 Policy Board meeting. Posted on Area 15 RPC website and available in the planning commission's office during normal business hours.
- Adoption: Adopted by resolution at an RPA 15 Policy Board meeting.
- Approval: IDOT.
- Availability of Document: RPC website, offices and upon request.
- Revisions: Require a public hearing at a regularly scheduled Policy Board meeting. Notice of a public hearing will be published a minimum of four days and a maximum of 20 days before the hearing.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Updated: Annually.
- Development: Developed by RPC staff with input from the TAC.
- Draft Review: IDOT.
- Public Notice: Legal notice published for public comment and hearing in the newspaper of widest circulation.
- Comment Period: A minimum of 15 days.
- Public Engagement: Draft 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.
- Adoption: Recommended for adoption by TAC. Adopted by resolution at an RPA 15 Policy Board meeting.
- Approval: IDOT, FHWA and FTA.
- Availability of Document: RPC website, offices and upon request.
- Revisions: Two types of revisions: an amendment and an administrative modification.
 - **An AMENDMENT** involves a major change to a project within the TIP. This includes the addition or deletion of a project, changes in federal funding that increases federal aid by more than 30% or more than \$2 million, the addition of a federal funding source, or a change in concept or scope. Changes that affect the fiscal constraint of the TIP must also be by amendment. An amendment requires public review and comment and re-demonstration of fiscal constraint.

RPA 15 processes amendments through a review by the TAC at a regular meeting and then a public hearing by the Policy Board at a regular meeting. A notice of a public hearing for an amendment will be published a minimum of four days and a maximum of 20 days before the hearing.

- **An ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION** involves a minor change such as a change in project costs that do not increase the federal aid by more than 30 percent or more than \$2 million, scheduling changes to projects within the four-year TIP and changing funding from one source to another. An administrative modification does not require public review and re-demonstration of fiscal constraint.

The RPA processes administrative modifications involving competitive funds (STBG-Special Projects and TAP) through a review by the TAC at a regular meeting and approval by the Policy Board at a regular meeting. Administrative modifications involving sub-allocated funds may be processed by RPC staff without TAC review or Policy Board approval. The TAC and Policy Board are notified of the modification.

- A project requesting to increase the awarded amount less than 30% or no greater than \$300,000, whichever is less, may be submitted using the shorter revision (amendment/modification) form and not go through a full application cycle. Other changes to a TIP will continue to use the revision request form.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

- Updated: Every five years.
- Development: Developed by RPC staff with input from the RPA members, TAC, Policy Board and interested organizations and individuals.
- Draft Review: IDOT.
- Public Notice: Legal notice published for public comment and hearing in the newspaper of widest circulation. Notices may also be advertised through local media sources, published in the RPC newsletter, posted on the RPC Facebook page, sent to member cities, member counties, private transportation organizations, and organizations serving disadvantaged populations.
- Comment Period: A minimum of 30 days.
- Public Engagement: Draft 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 sessions will be held regarding the draft LRTP. Presentations on the plan will also be made to interested organizations.
- Adoption: Recommended for adoption by TAC. Adopted by resolution at an RPA 15 Policy Board meeting.
- Approval: IDOT.
- Availability of Document: RPC website, offices and upon request.
- Revisions: Require a public hearing at a regularly scheduled Policy Board meeting. Notice of a public hearing will be published a minimum of four days and a maximum of 20 days before the hearing.

Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)

- Updated: Every five years.
- Development: Developed by RPC staff with input from the TAG.
- Draft Review: IDOT and FTA.
- Public Notice: Legal notice published for public comment and hearing in the newspaper of widest circulation.
- Comment Period: A minimum of 15 days.
- Public Engagement: Legal notice published for public comment and hearing in the newspaper of widest circulation. Notices may also be advertised through local media sources and sent to private transportation organizations and health and human service agencies.
- Adoption: Adopted by resolution at an RPA 15 Policy Board meeting.

- Approval: IDOT.
- Availability of Document: RPC website, offices and upon request.
- Revisions: Require a public hearing at a regularly scheduled Policy Board meeting. Notice of a public hearing will be published a minimum of four days and a maximum of 20 days before the hearing.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

- Updated: Reviewed every five years, updated as needed.
- Development: Developed by the RPC staff with oversight by the Iowa DOT and RPA 15 Policy Board.
- Draft Review: IDOT.
- Public Notice: Legal notice published for public comment and hearing in the newspaper of widest circulation.
- Comment Period: A minimum of 45 days.
- Public Engagement: Draft presented at RPA 15 Policy Board meeting. Posted on Area 15 RPC website and available in the planning commission's office during normal business hours.
- Adoption: Adopted by resolution at an RPA 15 Policy Board meeting.
- Approval: IDOT.
- Availability of Document: RPC website, offices and upon request.
- Revisions: Minor revisions will be made in consultation with the Policy Board. Major revisions will be considered an updated and follow the process outlined above.

Documentation of input and Evaluation of Process

The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission is committed to considering all public input and incorporating it into RPA 15's decision making process when appropriate. To ensure that all public input is considered, the Area 15 RPC will maintain a record of its public involvement activities and comments and input received from the public. The RPC will reply to requests for written documentation or published information within a reasonable amount of time, and when feasible or necessary, respond to input received during the public participation process. To ensure that the strategies contained within this Public Participation Plan are effective, outreach and feedback will be evaluated on a regular basis. Public attendance at meetings will be documented along with written or oral comments submitted during the comment period. Strategies will be reviewed after the completion of primary documents and adjusted if necessary. The entire Public Participation Plan will be reviewed at least every five years and updated as needed.

Summary of Transportation Planning Document Development

	Updated	Draft Development	Public Notice	Comment Period	Adoption	Availability
Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)	Annually	Developed by staff with oversight by Policy Board.	Legal notice published for public comment and hearing.	A minimum of 15 days.	By resolution at a Policy Board meeting.	RPC website, offices and upon request.
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Annually	Developed by staff with input from the TAC.	Legal notice published for public comment and hearing.	A minimum of 15 days.	By resolution at a Policy Board meeting.	RPC website, offices and upon request.
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	Every five years.	Developed by staff with input from RPA members, TAC and interested stakeholders.	Legal notice published for public comment and hearing.	A minimum of 30 days.	By resolution at a Policy Board meeting.	RPC website, offices and upon request.
Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)	Every five years.	Developed by staff with input from the TAG.	Legal notice published for public comment and hearing.	A minimum of 15 days.	By resolution at a Policy Board meeting.	RPC website, offices and upon request.
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	Reviewed every five years, updated as needed.	Developed by staff with oversight by Iowa DOT and Policy Board.	Legal notice published for public comment and hearing.	A minimum of 45 days.	By resolution at a Policy Board meeting.	RPC website, offices and upon request.

