

# **Southwest Iowa IV Regional Planning Affiliation**

## **Public Participation Process**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Policy Board Members

James Richardson	Supervisor, Page County
Frank Waters	Supervisor, Cass County
Earl Hendrickson	Supervisor, Fremont County
Glen Benskin	Supervisor, Montgomery County
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David Jones	Mayor, City of Atlantic
Brad Wright	City Administrator, City of Red Oak
Jim Davey	City Council, City of Shenandoah

### Transportation Technical Committee Members

Brad Skinner	County Engineer, Page /Montgomery County
Charles Marker	County Engineer, Cass County
Daniel R. Davis	County Engineer, Fremont County
Doug Harris	City Administrator, City of Atlantic
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Southwest Iowa IV Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA) has developed a **Public Participation Process (PPP)** for the Southwest Iowa IV Regional Planning Affiliation (hereinafter referred to as the “Region”) consisting of the counties of Cass, Fremont, Montgomery, and Page including the cities of Atlantic, Clarinda, Red Oak, Sidney, and Shenandoah. This PPP was put together under the direction of the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) as a requirement of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)*. SAFETEA-LU provides authorizations for the road network, highway safety, alternative modes, and mass transportation through Fiscal Year 2009.

It is the purpose of the Southwest Iowa IV Public Participation Process to provide the citizens of the Region an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns about the transportation issues of the Region’s multimodal and intermodal transportation planning vision and initiatives. The Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO), the designated planning agency for the Southwest Iowa IV RPA, was responsible for the preparation of this PPP, with guidance given by local and county officials, the Region’s Transportation Technical Committee (TTC), Policy Board, and through citizen input. The information in this plan represents the first step in a continuing participation process that will be reviewed and modified annually. The purpose of a PPP is to serve as a guiding document to receive input from the public throughout the Southwest IV RPA.

## **REGIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Southwest Iowa IV RPA developed Regional goals and objectives for the public involvement within the planning jurisdiction. The goals and objectives were developed from city and county representation, Transportation Technical Committee (TTC), and the Policy Board members. These Regional goals and objectives were developed to provide a foundation for utilizing public opinion in every stage of the planning process and decision-making.

### **Goal 1      **Receive input from various sectors of the public throughout the Southwest Iowa IV Regional Planning Affiliation.****

#### **Objectives**

1. Involve the public in the development and programming of the SAFETEA-LU projects for the Southwest Iowa IV RPA.
2. Pro-actively seek input from the public.
3. Form advisory committees in each county to review planning documents, provide input on projects, and serve as local contacts for citizens and groups in the various counties.
4. Publicize public meetings, hearings and opportunities for input as widely as is prudent and feasible through the methods in this process.

**Goal 2      **Ensure that concerns and needs of the public are reflected in the planning documents produced for the Southwest Iowa IV RPA.****

**Objectives**

1. Provide all written and oral comments from the public on proposed projects for the Region's Transportation Improvements Program (TIP) and other planning documents to the Transportation Technical Committee and Policy Board.
2. Publicize the completion of work products as widely as is feasible and possible, allowing for comments on the drafts. Any needed or necessary changes shall be made and all comments shall be provided to the authorizing board prior to the final approval of the work product.

The Regional goals and objectives, once achieved, will enable the Region to provide a safe, viable, and efficient multimodal transportation network which will meet the Region's needs. The Region's multimodal transportation network will enable the citizens of Cass, Fremont, Montgomery, and Page Counties, as well as citizens from outside the Region in Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri, to utilize a multimodal and intermodal network which accommodates the needs of the Region.

**INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

The following is a non-exhaustive list of individuals and organizations within the Southwest Iowa IV RPA boundaries that are to be contact about SAFETEA-LU processes and their implementation in the designated area. These entities will be contacted for involvement on the county committees and will be notified about work products. They include, but are not limited to the following:

*Boards of supervisors; city governments; county conservation boards; chambers of commerce; (for retail businesses and industry); county development corporations (for economic development interests and industry); public transit authorities (for public transit and its constituents); the Federal Transit Administration; railroad companies; airports; the Iowa Department of Transportation; the Federal Highway Administration; county historical societies; certified local governments; known trail and environmental organizations; county engineers; over-the-road shippers and haulers (possibly through their state organizations); and, significant agribusiness and agricultural interests.*

Additional organizations and individuals will be made aware of SAFETEA-LU through their involvement with the Southwest Iowa Planning Council and its normal method of information dissemination. They include the following:

*State legislators; Iowa's congressional and senatorial representatives; schools; rural electrical cooperatives; rural water providers; state economic development officials; statewide transit directors; planning agencies; Work Force Development Center; job training and other related organizations; and public transit clients in the Region.*

## PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The Southwest Iowa IV RPA will actively seek input for the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and other written documents and processes concerning SAFETEA-LU and its implementation within and beyond the Region. Several methods of seeking public opinion have been practiced in the past by SWIPCO and other agencies. These methods were revisited to ascertain their applicability to SAFETEA-LU and were grouped with new ideas from the SWIPCO staff. This list, like those found elsewhere in this document, is not all-inclusive. Methods to inform the public and receive their opinions and concerns about SAFETEA-LU and its work products will be added and tried when necessary and warranted. Conversely, methods which prove to be unreliable or unfeasible will be discarded when possible. Required public hearings will be maintained regardless of their performance. These methods will be used to varying degrees depending on the purpose for their use. All methods will be studied for use at any particular time and the greatest number of methods which prove practical and useful will be utilized. Public participation methods include the following:

### Media

**Minutes and Agenda Dissemination.** Currently, the Southwest Iowa Planning Council distributes approximately 120 monthly mailings to local and statewide officials. SAFETEA-LU updates will be included in these mailings, which are sent to every local government in the area. Also included are economic development officials, transit interests, legislators, and interested citizens.

**Newsletter dissemination.** Southwest Iowa Planning Council distributes a monthly newsletter to local and statewide officials. SAFETEA-LU updates will be included in this newsletter, which is sent to every local government in the area. Also included are economic development officials, transit interests, legislators, and interested citizens.

**News Releases.** News releases will be distributed to all newspapers and radio stations that either originate, or have significant coverage of circulation, in the area. No television station, with the exception of any local access cable channel, will be contacted as these are not feasible considering the location of the counties included in the organization. These news releases will announce any news or changes regarding Regional SAFETEA-LU efforts; informational meeting at the county seat or at the SWIPCO office; or the availability of plans and work products. Plans and work products (Public Participation Process, Transportation Planning Work Program, and Transportation Improvement Program) will always be made available for public review in at least one location per county.

### Gatherings

**Presentation to Organizations** Individual presentations to various organizations will occur when requested and may be done at the suggestion of the Southwest Iowa IV RPA should the need warrant.

**Meeting with Cities** SWIPCO staff will then be made available to speak at any City Council or other public meeting to discuss SAFETEA-LU or other transit developments.

**Public Meetings** Public meetings will be held at least quarterly in a county seat (Atlantic, Clarinda, Red Oak, and Sidney) or Shenandoah. These meetings will be informational in nature and will occur at least once before planning for the following year's TIP has begun. Active public involvement in the discussions of the topics covered at the meetings will be encouraged. Follow-up meetings will occur to receive input on the TIP and provide applications for projects to be included in the TIP.

**Public Hearings** Public hearings will primarily be held in one of the urban cities to approve such documents as the Long-Range Transportation Program and its amendments. The official notice for the public hearing will be placed in the Regional newspapers of the Southwest Iowa IV RPA.

**Open Meetings** The Regional TTC and Policy Board meeting of the Southwest Iowa IV RPA shall be open to the public. Notice of these meetings, in the form of regular agenda and minutes dispersal, will be sent to media outlets through the normal process.

### **AMENDMENTS AND REVIEWS**

The Southwest Iowa IV RPA planning area Public Participation Process (PPP) is a working document which will be updated and revised as various local, regional, state, and national characteristics, factors, and requirements change, which ultimately affect the transportation network in and around the Region. The PPP will be reviewed at least once annually. The review will insure continual citizen involvement and the PPP's overall viability as the Region's citizen involvement strategy.

This process for public participation in the SAFETEA-LU requirements of Southwest Iowa IV RPA shall be subject for public review for no less than thirty (30) days, announced in the Regional newspapers via public notice, and available in the courthouse of each county in the RPA. This process shall be approved by both the Transportation Technical Committee and the Policy Board of the Southwest Iowa IV RPA. Amendments to this process shall be made in similar fashion.

### **SUMMARY**

The Southwest Iowa IV Regional Planning Affiliation has developed this Public Participation Process utilizing cooperative involvement with various local, regional, state, and national transportation interests. The PPP expresses the Southwest Iowa IV RPA planning area's goals and objectives for achieving citizen involvement in every step of the planning process. The document enables the transportation interests in the Region to utilize it as a guide for public participation in future transportation planning and programming.

The Public Participation Process is a working document and will continually be updated on an annual basis or as the need arises in order to direct future programming and project development. It is also the intent of the document to allow and account for citizen participation and the needs of the various transportation interests of the Region.