

SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL

REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATE 13

Transportation Planning
Work Program
FY 2024

FOR THE COUNTIES OF:

CASS • FREMONT • MONTGOMERY • PAGE

Approved May 31, 2023



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RESOLUTION

Adoption of Final FY2024 Transportation Planning Work Program

WHEREAS, The RPA-13 Transportation Planning Affiliation is organized to provide transportation planning services for Region Planning Affiliation 13 (Cass, Fremont, Montgomery and Page Counties), and;

WHEREAS, the RPA-13 Policy Board has reviewed and approved the FY 2023 Transportation Planning Work Program;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the RPA-13 Transportation Planning Affiliation adopts the FY2023 Transportation Planning Work Program.

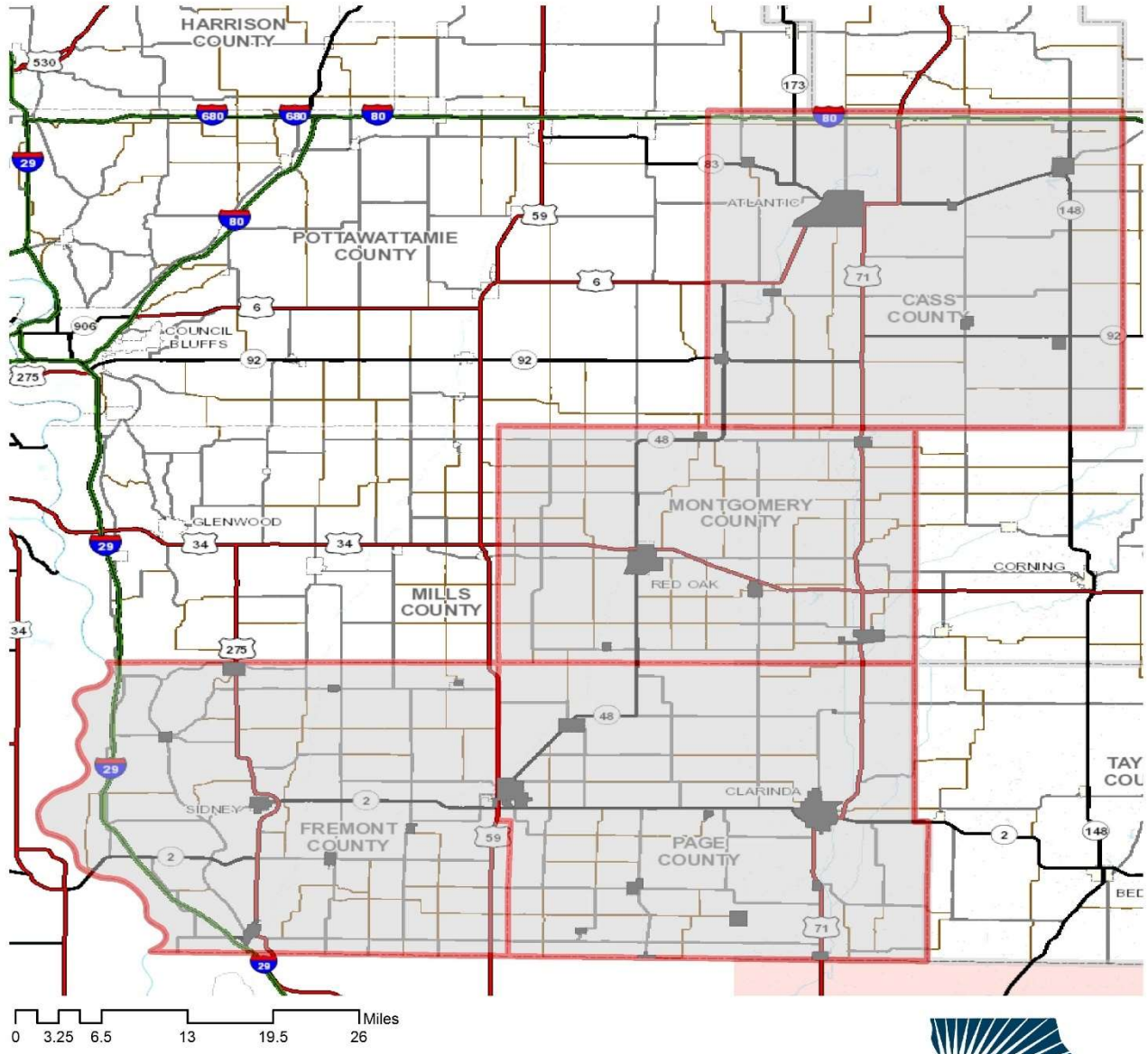
Adopted by the RPA-13 Policy Board on May 31, 2023.

RPA-13 POLICY BOARD

Signed: Shawna L. Silvius
Shawna L. Silvius, Chairman

Attest: Tammy DeBord
Tammy DeBord, Recording Secretary

RPA-13 Area



Legend

-  RPA 13 Cities
 -  RPA 13 Counties
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1. TPWP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Region is responsible for the creation of the **Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)** utilizing budget information distributed by IDOT. A public meeting is held with the Region's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) and Policy Board in March to review the draft. Information of this public meeting is distributed throughout the Region by the Southwest Iowa Planning Council website and newsletter. Any appropriate comment received at the TTC public meeting is considered and then incorporated into the plan prior to submission of the draft to IDOT, FTA, and FHWA. Comments are then received from the IDOT, FTA, and FHWA and incorporated into the plan for final approval and adoption at a public meeting of the Policy Board and Technical Committee joint meeting.

INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Iowa Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA 13) has developed a TPWP for the Southwest Iowa planning area (herein after referred to as the "Region") consisting of the counties of Cass, Fremont, Montgomery, and Page. This TPWP was put together under the direction of the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) as a requirement of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)*. IIJA was signed into law November 21, 2021. The Act uses a mix of funding determined by a formula, and money that will be available only through competitive grants. IIJA replaces the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST). IIJA provides \$550 billion over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 in new Federal investment in infrastructure, including in roads, bridges, and mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband.¹

It is the purpose of the Southwest Iowa Transportation Planning Work Program to provide the citizens of the Region, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Iowa Department of Transportation with the Region's multimodal and intermodal transportation planning work program, including RPA 13's schedule and budget. RPA 13 is responsible for the preparation of this TPWP, with guidance from city and county officials, the TTC, the Policy Board, and citizens. The purpose of a TPWP is to serve as a guiding document of information addressing current and projected transportation needs for the Region from a planning perspective. This TPWP will be used to identify areas of need and develop a means to address them. Additionally, this document outlines other work elements that RPA 13 will accomplish through the administrative and planning staff. The Public Participation Plan is reviewed annually. The Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Public Participation Plan are fully updated every 5 years and will be due for an update in 2024. The Passenger Transportation Plan is also updated every 5 years and was updated in 2023. The Transportation Improvement Program is updated every year. Every year, RPA 13 works on special projects that are requested or identified.

The information contained in the following pages will provide a better understanding of the Region's transportation planning work program as it is today. Decisions made with this planning process utilize current transportation network characteristics; current and projected social, physical, environmental, and economic characteristics; as well as various local and county citizen participation, and local official

¹ A Summary of Funding Provisions. (2021, November 21) Retrieved March 23, 2022, from <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>

involvement. Several public meetings were held throughout the development of the RPA's planning process to encourage and receive diverse information and participation.

The scope of RPA's 13 planning process is in line with 23 CFR § 450.306 and shall be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors:

- (1) Support the economic vitality of the non-metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- (2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- (4) Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- (5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- (6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- (7) Promote efficient system management and operation;
- (8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- (9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- (10) Enhance travel and tourism.

PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

As communities evolve and change a need to monitor commuting trends and patterns are essential in providing the necessary infrastructure to the region that is safe and reliable. The ability to adapt and change can allow communities to use their existing infrastructure more efficiently and expand in areas that would provide growth and development to the community.

Budgets for all transportation modes are tight and it is crucial to ensure those dollars are being spent on high-priority projects. The Long-Range Transportation Plan provides the planning framework by establishing goals and priorities for all modes of transportation. Priorities are constantly changing so maintaining and updating this plan to reflect current priorities ensures money is spent where it is most useful. Going together with this plan in the Transportation Improvement Program. This plan requires constant updates as plans and projects change throughout the region. This plan allows flexibility in project planning as new funding sources become available to address the highest need areas.

As noted in the appendix, the dispersed population in the region poses many complications related to transportation and transportation planning. The Public Participation Plan works to minimize the disconnect with communication by establishing best practices regarding public communication for transportation planning. This ensures that all avenues are taken to reach the largest number of residents. An even bigger threat caused by the dispersed population is the toll it has on public transportation services. Completion of the Passenger Transportation Plan works to address this threat by actively working with neighboring areas to identify the needs of residents. This allows for limited resources to be used where they are most needed.

Special Projects can allow for the most flexibility in transportation planning as they can be used for a variety of things. In recent years, discussions of trail development and expansion in RPA-13 have increased. Even though this is on the rise, there is still a disconnect between trail groups and the public. As noted in the appendix, this can come from a lack of public knowledge of local trails, incomplete trails, and safety issues. Establishing an interactive map for public use would provide the necessary knowledge to residents and visitors about the trails and their conditions. This map would show where trails are located, what level of difficulty it is, and overall, what the user can expect. Making this information easily accessible will give the trail users confidence, increasing the likelihood that they will venture out and use the trails.

The rural nature of the region poses many unique challenges that other regions may not face. Several miles of infrastructure are required to adequately transport people and goods. This combined with the limited budgets for transportation infrastructure requires that an extensive amount of planning goes into all activities.

2. POLICY BOARD AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF

POLICY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Name	Title	County, City or Agency
Bernard Pettinger	County Supervisor	Cass County
Chris Clark	County Supervisor	Fremont County
Donna Robinson – Vice Chair	County Supervisor	Montgomery County
Todd Maher	County Supervisor	Page County
Grace Garrett	Mayor	City of Atlantic
Gary McClarnon	City Administrator	City of Clarinda
Shawwna Silvius – Chair	Mayor	City of Red Oak

AJ Lyman	City Administrator	City of Shenandoah
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TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Name	Title	County, City or Agency
Trent Wolken – Vice Chair	County Engineer	Cass County
Daniel R. Davis	County Engineer	Fremont County
Karen Albert	County Engineer	Montgomery County
JD King -- Chair	County Engineer	Page County
John Lund	City Administrator	City of Atlantic
Gary McClarnon	City Manager	City of Clarinda
Shawwna Silvius	Mayor	City of Red Oak
AJ Lyman	City Administrator	City of Shenandoah
Mark Lander- non-voting	Transit Director	SWITA
Scott Suhr – non-voting	District Planner	IDOT

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Name	Title
John McCurdy	Executive Director
Mark Lander	Transit Director
Erin Hudson	Community Development Director
Tammy DeBord	Grants Specialist II/RPA Administrator
Danielle Briggs	Lead Planner (Transportation Planner)
Mindy Jensen	Communications Specialist

3. PLANNING ACTIVITIES/WORK ELEMENTS

A breakdown describing the activities taking place under the Transportation Planning Work Program is as follows:

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Task Objective: The Community Development Director completes a Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) for the following fiscal year. The TPWP identifies previous and future work completed by the RPA-13 staff and outlines the budget under which such work will be completed.

Previous Work: Completion of the TPWP is an annual task. A Draft TPWP was forwarded to the Iowa DOT, Federal Transit Administration, and the Federal Highway Administration on or before April 1, 2023 for their review and comments. This input was incorporated into the document. The Draft FY2024 TPWP is also presented to the Technical Committee and Policy Board for review,

comments, and a recommendation of approval before June 1, 2023. The TPWP is a document incorporating a description of the transportation issues to be addressed, planning and programming activities, schedules, and the products that will be produced. The Policy Board and Technical Committee also holds a joint Public Hearing prior to adopting a Resolution approving the Final FY2024 TPWP.

Project Description: The Community Development Director, with the assistance of the Executive Director and staff writes the document and conducts public meetings. An open public meeting is held in a county seat city within the region for review of the document draft with the Technical Committee and Policy Board. Notice of the meeting is facilitated by the Communications Specialist and is dispersed to all cities, counties, media outlets, and other public agencies through the process outlined in the PPP. A summary of the document and public participation process are described in the monthly newsletters and dispersed through the regular mailing. Comment is received over the following month. Review and adoption of the document by the Policy Board and Technical Committee takes place following the public comment period. Assistant staff completes all mailing and disbursement of notices, agendas, minutes, and newsletters and assists with copying and other administrative duties.

Budget: \$2,698

Product: The Final FY 2025 TPWP will incorporate comments received and will be submitted to the Policy Board for their adoption and approval before submission to the Iowa DOT on or before June 1, 2024. The estimated time of completing a draft TPWP is April 1, 2024, with final completion June 1, 2024. The plan will be effective for SFY2025.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Task Objective: The Transportation Planner along with the Communications Specialist and other staff updates the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the region at minimum every five years, and this is a year for a major update. The PPP outlines how the RPA will involve the public in the planning process and explains the way in which RPA staff shall inform the communities of updates and new information that is relevant to them. Greater emphasis will be placed on the new plan on online outreach and social media.

Previous Work: The PPP was reviewed annually. This review included making changes to the media outlets used for distribution of information and frequency of distribution.

Project Description: The Transportation Planner and Communications Specialist will review the document for administrative updates and evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures and outreach strategies. These include changes in dates, demographics, and media outlets. Measuring participation and revising techniques as appropriate will also be included in the evaluation. Public engagement will be undertaken to identify the best ways to reach the public, since these strategies have evolved over time.

The Transportation Planner and administrative staff update the document and conduct public meetings. An open public meeting is held in a county seat city within the region for review of the document draft with the TC. Notice of the meeting is dispersed to all cities, counties, media outlets, and other public agencies through the process outlined in the previous PPP. A summary of the document and public participation process is described in the monthly newsletters and dispersed through the regular mailing. Comment is received on the draft over the following month. Review and adoption of the document by the Policy Board takes place following the public comment period. Administrative staff completes all mailing and disbursement of notices, agendas, minutes, and newsletters, and assists with copying and other administrative duties. At the December Policy Board meeting, the Policy Board reviews the previous PPP for any necessary updates or improvements. Other activities include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employment of visualization techniques to describe its plans and TIPs, making sure public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input, and periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the participation plan.

Budget: \$6,933

Product: The final product is a new and more effective PPP. The PPP is reviewed with the Policy Board and Technical Committee in December with an estimated time of completion June 30, 2024. The plan review and any amendments will be effective for SFY2025.

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Task Objective: The RPA Administrator, Community Development Director, Transportation Planner, Executive Director, Communications Specialist, and Transit Director will utilize the LRTP to assist with initiation and prioritization of projects in the area. This is a comprehensive transportation planning effort that will involve stakeholders in the RPA 13 Region. It will identify priorities and opportunities in the region as well as challenges.

Previous Work: Data was reviewed and collected as new information became available. The plan was reviewed by the committee and the public.

Project Description: This year is our major update and a new 5-year LRTP will be developed. Special attention will be paid to integrating the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) into the LRTP, along with county level hazard mitigation plans.

Budget: \$34,979

Product: Long Range Transportation Plan elements will include, but may not be limited to:

1. Analysis of how LRTP is being implemented in region.
2. Increased coordination efforts with identified partners.

3. Coordinate transit deployment for regional transit system.
4. Staff regional planning affiliation meetings.

The Long Range Transportation Plan is considered by SWIPCO planners as they work on multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans, comprehensive plans, and the economic development plan for the region to gain a better understanding of current and future transportation needs, and to incorporate elements from the LRTP into the other plans.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Task Objective: The RPA Grant Administrator updates the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for the region.

Previous Work: Updating the TIP is an annual task. A draft FY 2023-2026 TIP was presented to the Technical Committee and Policy Board for a recommendation of final approval and maintenance/amendments of FFY 2023-2026 TIP and development of FFY 2024-2027 TIP. Amendments throughout the year are made to the plan based on changes in projects or additions.

Project Description: The RPA Administrator updates the document and conducts public meetings with the assistance of other staff including the Communications Specialist. An open public meeting is held in a county seat city within the region for review of the document draft with the TC and PB. Notice of the meeting is dispersed to all cities, counties, media outlets, and other public agencies through the process outlined in the PPP. A summary of the document and public participation process is described in the monthly newsletters and dispersed through the regular mailing. Comment is received on the draft over the following month. Review and adoption of the document by the Policy Board and technical committee takes place following the public comment period. Assistant staff completes all mailing and disbursement of notices, agendas, minutes, and newsletters and assists with copying and other administrative duties. TPMS is used to develop the TIP. Additionally, the RPA administrator manages the STBG and TAP applications and awards.

Budget: \$3,123

Product: The final product is a completed TIP to be included with the STIP. TAP applications are due by the end of February with review and approval by the Technical Committee and Policy Board in June. The estimated time of completion for a draft TIP is June 15, 2024, with final completion July 15, 2024. Product is final approval and maintenance of FY 2024-2027 TIP: development of FFY 2025-2028 TIP. The plan will be effective for FFY2024. Development of the FFY2025-2028 TIP will commence in February 2024 and be completed in July 2024.

PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Task Objective: The Passenger Transportation Plan is the result of a process to inventory the available transportation services, assess the transportation needs of the residents, explore the effectiveness and shortcomings of current services, and explore options to better meet the needs of the citizens of the Iowa Regional Planning Affiliation 13 & 18, and SWITA Service Area. The

Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is designed to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems.

Task Objectives of the Passenger Transportation Plan

1. Improve transportation services to lowans.
2. Increase passenger transportation coordination.
3. Create awareness of unmet needs
4. Develop new working partnerships.
5. Assist decision-makers, advocates, and consumers in understanding the range of transportation options available.
6. Develop justification for future passenger transportation investments.
7. Save dollars and eliminate overlapping of services.
8. Coordination efforts with health and human service agencies. (At least semi-annually)

Previous Work: A major update of the PTP was completed in 2022 through a joint effort with RPA 18 and SWITA.

Project Description: The RPA Administrator and Transportation Planner, in conjunction with the Transit Director, will work to maintain and amend the PTP document and implement outlined opportunities and improve deficiencies in the region with the task objectives listed above in mind. RPA 13 will continue to meet with the Transportation Advisory Group (Human Services Advisory Council) and discuss what is being done for transit services. Meetings will be conducted at a minimum semiannually to present information and gain feedback on the rural transit system.

Budget: \$3,018

Product: RPA 13 will submit semiannual meeting minutes to IDOT for review. Minutes will be retained to show progress of the PTP implementation.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special Project Objective: The objective is to maintain the most efficient, safe, and reliable transportation system for southwest Iowa.

Previous Work: Previous special project last year was the Cass County Trails Plan update. A similar project to the one proposed below was planned for FY23 but not accomplished in that time frame.

Project Description: Creation of an online GIS map usable by the public to access information on existing trails such as location, surface type, difficulty level, and amenities as well as proposed

trails. Completion of this will require some footwork to gather information related to amenities and difficulty level.

Objective: Individuals who are not avid trail users can often feel intimidated by unknown conditions and this can prevent them from utilizing the trail system. The goal of this project is to encourage more people to utilize the local trails by taking some of the unknowns out and promoting user confidence.

RPA Staff Budget and Description of Work: \$7,446; development of online GIS map

Consultant Budget and Description of Work: \$27,534; exploration of trails to document necessary data for mapping.

Schedule: July 1, 2023-May 31, 2024

Product: Interactive online GIS map for public use that can be embedded on various existing websites in the region including, but not limited to, city website, county websites, county conservation websites, trail group websites, and SWIPCO's website.

ADMINISTRATION

Task Objective: The objective is to administer the RPA-13 to maintain the most efficient, safe, and reliable transportation system for southwest Iowa.

Previous Work: Previous administrative services include:

1. Attending state RPA quarterly meetings,
2. Attending pertinent conferences,
3. Managing regional RPA meetings,
4. Preparation of quarterly reimbursement requests.

Project Description: Administration will include:

1. Assistance to counties and cities on as need basis for transportation and transit related projects and grant applications that have been increasing in availability and the need for technical assistance from our office increased from previous years,
2. Attending state RPA quarterly meetings,
3. Managing regional RPA Policy Board quarterly meetings and annual RPA Technical Committee meetings,
4. Attending conferences,
5. Preparation of quarterly reimbursement requests.

Administration work will largely be the responsibility of the RPA Administrator. All RPA staff participate and attend RPA quarterly meetings.

Budget: \$6,769

Product: The product will be an RPA program that facilitates and administers funding for an efficient, safe, and reliable transportation system that meets the needs of southwest Iowa. Administrative work will be ongoing throughout the year.

4. BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES

WORK HOURS ELEMENT SUMMARY

Work Element	Exec. Dir.	Transit Dir.	CD Dir.	Planner	RPA Admin	Comm. Spec.	Total
TPWP	10	0	10	5	10	0	35
PPP	10	2	10	10	40	40	112
L RTP	20	20	120	240	120	20	540
TIP	5	5	10	10	10	5	45
PTP	5	5	5	10	10	10	45
Special Projects	10	0	40	40	10	10	110
Administration	5	2	20	10	60	10	107
Totals	65	34	215	325	260	95	994

BUDGET SUMMARY

Work Element	Percentage of Time	FTA 5311	FHWA SPR	FHWA SPR Carryover	FTA 5311 Carryover	Local Match	Total
TPWP	3.52%	1,079.00	1,079.00	-	-	540	\$ 2,698
PPP	11.27%	2,773.00	2,773.00	-	-	1,387	\$ 6,933
L RTP	54.33%	13,992.00	13,992.00	-	-	6,996	\$ 34,979
TIP	4.53%	1,249.00	1,249.00	-	-	625	\$ 3,123
PTP	4.53%	1,207.00	1,207.00	-	-	604	\$ 3,018
Special Projects (Staff and Contractor)	11.07%	2,707.00	2,707.00	22,057	1,906	7,344	\$36,720
Administration	10.76%	2,708.00	2,708.00	-	-	1,354	\$ 6,769
TOTAL	100.00%	\$ 25,715	\$ 25,715	\$ 22,057	\$ 1,906	\$ 18,848	\$ 94,241

5. COST ALLOCATION PLAN

Southwest Iowa Planning Council allocates project costs through a cost-based system, which is allowed by Circular A-87, in the following manner:

Total Claim = Allowable Direct Costs + Allocable Portion of Allowable Indirect Costs - Applicable Credits.

RPA-13 planning services are accounted for as account #1997 in SWIPCO's annual accounting procedures.

Direct Costs - Are those costs attributable to salary, employee benefits, employee withholdings, use of a vehicle, postage, printing, and contracts or miscellaneous directly attributable to IJJA planning. These costs are verified by individual journals or reports signed monthly.

Indirect Costs - Are those costs that cannot readily be assigned to a particular cost objective without effort disproportionate to the benefits received. Southwest Iowa Planning Council determines indirect costs each month, for each planning activity or contracted service, as a proportion of each activity item based on the amount of time spent on that activity in relation to the overall amount of time spent agency wide.

Indirect costs include but are not limited to; building operation and maintenance, depreciation, insurance premiums, general office supplies, utilities, assurance bonds, car insurance, consulting fees, and similar miscellaneous costs that apply agency wide as opposed to specific activities.

Applicable Credits - Are receipts or reductions of expenditure that offset or reduce costs allocable to Federal awards as direct or indirect costs. These are to be credited to the cost objective or the award, or refunded to the awarding agency, depending upon the circumstances and the timing of their accrual or receipt. SWIPCO credits accounts for any rebates, alternative funds or returns received during the awarded project.

The budgets prepared for this plan on the previous page are estimates of the proposed activities covered by this plan. Actual costs replace budgeted figures as the various elements are completed. The various work elements above are not accounted for separately in SWIPCO's accounting scheme but fall under the general cost account #1997. Cost deviations more than the total award will not be funded without amendment to this plan, and approval of the STIP.

VII. AMENDMENTS AND REVIEWS

TPWP REVISIONS

OVERVIEW

2 CFR 200 describes the uniform administrative rules for Federal grants and cooperative agreements and subawards to State, local and Indian tribal governments. These requirements

apply to metropolitan planning (PL) and State Planning and Research (SPR) grants. FTA has similar requirements documented in FTA Circular 5010.1C, which apply to FTA metropolitan planning grants. Iowa uses a Consolidated Planning Grant where FHWA and FTA planning funds are combined into a single fund managed through FTA's TRAMS system. The uses of these funds are documented in the work programs of the Iowa DOT, MPOs, and RPAs.

WAIVER OF APPROVALS

All work program changes require prior written Federal approval, unless waived by the awarding agency. 2 CFR 200.308 outlines different types of revisions for budget and program plans, and this FHWA memo on prior approvals summarizes revisions that require prior Federal approval, as well as other miscellaneous actions and allowable costs that require prior Federal approval.

Types of TPWP revisions that require Federal approval include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Request for additional Federal funding.
- Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity.
- The transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense.
- Change in the scope or objective of the project or program.
- Transfers of funds between direct cost categories or programs, functions, or activities, which exceed 10% of the total work program budget as last approved.
- Change in a key person specified in the application of the federal award.

Types of revisions that require Iowa DOT approval include:

- Transfers of funds between categories, projects, functions, or activities which do not exceed 10% of the total work program budget, or when the Federal share of the budget is less than \$150,000.

Types of revisions that require MPO/RPA approval include:

- Revisions related to work that does not involve federal funding.

REVISION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

All revision requests from MPOs and RPAs should be submitted electronically to the Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau and the agency's District Planner. If all necessary information is provided, the request will then be forwarded to the FHWA and FTA for review and any necessary approvals.

Revision requests shall, at a minimum, include:

- A resolution or meeting minutes showing the revision's approval.
- Budget summary table with changes highlighted/noted.
- Modified section(s) of the plan's work elements with changes highlighted/noted.
- Revisions where FHWA/FTA is the designated approving agency shall require written approval by FHWA/FTA prior to commencement of activity, purchasing of equipment, or request for reimbursement.
- Revisions where the Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau is the designated approving agency shall require written approval by the Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau prior to commencement of activity or request for reimbursement.
- Revisions where the MPO or RPA is the approving agency shall be approved by the Policy Board.
- Notification by the approving agency will be in writing.

NOTE: All necessary TPWP approvals shall be in place prior to the commencement of activity, purchasing of equipment, or request for reimbursement. More specifically in regard to the procurement of equipment and services, there should be no notification of award, signed contract, placement of an order, or agreement with a contractor prior to receiving the necessary TPWP approvals.

VIII. SUMMARY

The Southwest Iowa Regional Planning Affiliation has developed this TPWP utilizing cooperative involvement with various local, regional, state, and national transportation interests throughout the development. The TPWP expresses the Southwest Iowa planning area's objectives for achieving efficient transportation planning in the Region. The document is multimodal and intermodal in its composition and will enable the transportation interests in the Region to utilize it as a guide for future transportation planning and programming.

APPENDIX. PLANNING PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

ROADS, HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES

Weakness

Region has a dispersed population.

Within four counties, RPA-13 has 34 incorporated communities with populations ranging from approximately 20 to 6,700 with only 4 communities having a population of approximately 5,000 or above. This dispersed population raises problems for the transportation system including higher transit miles, more miles of roads and necessary roads with lower usage.

High costs associated with maintaining a rural network.

More roads will be needed to reach the dispersed population in RPA-13 which will lead to an increase in roads to maintain. Iowa sees all four seasons throughout a year from frigid snowy winters to hot summers. These weather changes bring snow removal, road repairs, pavement repairs and gravel road maintenance. Along with the typical weather, cities and those involved with transportation must be prepared for natural disasters that could impair roadways.

Several highways in poor condition

Being in a rural location with a smaller, dispersed population means that roads will see a lot of traffic from those commuting to work, farm equipment moving fields and trucks moving goods. Along with this heavy traffic, funding for rural areas can be lacking especially when spread over the large road system within the region and the state. This lack of funding can mean that smaller less utilized roads may fall to the bottom of the project list, often ending up in poor condition before they are repaired.

Opportunities

Economic development can be created along interstate and major highways.

With multiple major highway systems and interstates running through the region, there is an opportunity for economic development to take place along these networks. These road networks connect with two close by metropolitan areas that could also add to the appeal for development in the RPA-13 region.

Rural areas can capitalize on housing developments for commuters working in surrounding metropolitan areas.

Many residents live in the RPA-13 region and commute to metropolitan areas for work due to lower housing costs here and more employment opportunities there. Cities within RPA-13 could capitalize on the idea of being a bedroom community (a place where people live and sleep but work elsewhere) by initializing housing developments. This would increase regional population and the tax base.

Highways system allows for increased freight movement throughout the region.

The location of major road networks throughout the region and connecting to surrounding regions and states is appealing for freight movement. The ease to move items between regions mixed with the proximity to metropolitan areas would be very appealing to manufacturing businesses.

New funding sources such as gas taxes or other fees to maintain and develop network infrastructure.

Road departments have very tight budgets for a never-ending list of projects. All new funding sources makes a huge difference in how much road can be repaired each year or new road for a connection that needs to be made.

TRANSIT

WEAKNESS

COVID-19 has presented significant challenges to the rural transit systems.

Region is very rural with highly dispersed communities.

By nature, the region is a very rural setting with only four of the thirty-four cities considered urban areas. This rural setting produces a population that is very dispersed throughout the region requiring more miles to be driven to reach the residents, which increases the cost of operation and the cost to riders.

Low ridership levels to support non-stop fixed route services to all communities.

Within RPA-13, the largest city is Atlantic with around 6,700 residents. The low population levels of incorporated cities in the region prevent public transit from having non-stop fixed routes to all communities. The lack of these routes produces an uncertainty in the public about what services are available and when.

Lack in interest by the general public to use public transit.

Since the region is rural in nature, most residents have access to one or more vehicles to drive and the area is easily drivable due to the connected road network and lack of traffic congestion. These factors lessen the public's desire or need to utilize or seek out public transit.

OPPORTUNITIES

Potential funding opportunities through new contracts, better services, and outside grants

With a smaller population and limited ridership, it becomes difficult to fund the transit system. New and growing services such as work and school routes, better vehicles and grant funding allow for expanded and continued services. As new funding becomes available, transit services in the area will continue to improve and grow.

Economic development throughout the Region provides opportunity for employee shuttles and commuter routes.

As economic development throughout the region continues, the demand for transportation will increase. Large employers can find the idea of employee shuttles and work route beneficial to their company productivity and success rate. By offering designated routes to large employers, public transit can aid in additional economic development within the region while ensuring employees have reliable access to work transportation to maintain an income.

Opportunities to increase efficiency within the public transit system.

As new technology is developed and released, efficiency within the transit system will continue to increase. Better dispatching equipment, tracking programs and communication devices will free up valuable staff time that can be used on other transit projects within the office.

RAIL

WEAKNESS

Large cities without rail

Not every large community within the region has access to a rail line such as Clarinda and Sidney. This can deter development of businesses that would depend on the freight transportation provided by rail.

No Amtrak stops within the region.

Amtrak currently has a line that runs through southern Iowa entering the state from Nebraska in Council Bluffs and continuing through Burlington into Illinois. Although the line runs through RPA 13, there are currently no stops which means those wishing to utilize this service must travel to the nearest stop in either Omaha or Creston.

OPPORTUNITIES

Increased freight movement

Having multiple rail systems, one of which is a national line, running through the region increases freight movement in and out of the region. This allows for more resources coming in and the potential for more products going out.

Economic development can use existing rail transportation infrastructure.

When looking to expand or relocate, certain businesses will look for locations near rail lines for easier access to freight movement. By having multiple lines through the region, there will be more spots that are appealing to these businesses.

Amtrak route running through the region.

Amtrak currently has one line that runs across southern Iowa and through RPA 13. Although there are currently no stops within the region, the line runs through several towns with Red Oak being the largest opening the opportunity for a future stop.

AVIATION

WEAKNESS

No commercial passenger services located within the region

There are currently no commercial passenger services within the region which limits citizens from utilizing airports. The lack of citizen involvement and awareness in the region's airports hinders the knowledge of why the airports are critical for the area.

Limited capacity in airport services

By nature, airports located within RPA 13 are smaller in capacity due to the rural environment. The limited capacity (available hangers, runway size, staff, etc.) can severely hinder the airports and deter potential users who are accustomed to larger, more equipped facilities.

Not all airports are staffed

Due to funding constraints and limited capacity and use, not all airports within the region are staffed. Currently, Anita and Clarinda airports do have staff available at the airports during certain hours. This lack of staff can severely limit the use of the facilities by those interested.

OPPORTUNITIES

Runway capacity to assist in economic development

Four out of the five airports in the region listed potential projects to improve their runways by expanding, constructing, resurfacing or widening. Increasing runway capacity would allow for more and larger aircraft to be able to utilize the facilities in turn bringing more goods, services and potential companies to the area.

Development of facilities to accommodate aircraft

In the Individual Airport Reports for the region's airports, three airports has planned projects to increase hanger capacity to accommodate more aircraft. Hanger expansions would allow for more temporary or permanent storage of aircraft for personal or economic purposes.

Provide services such as fuel stations, staff, etc. to accommodate aircraft

While most of the airports in the region provide fuel and staffed hours, two of them don't. By providing these services, more aircraft would be able to utilize the facilities and bring more of an economic impact to the area.

Creation of a regional airport

With declining population and tighter budgets, the region may wish to explore the possibility of consolidating airports in smaller communities to create a regional one. This could consist of a detailed report exploring budgets, expenses and various scenarios such as leaving the airports as they are, combining them to an existing location or building a centrally located facility.

TRAILS

WEAKNESS

Many unconnected or incomplete trails

There are many trails missing connections scattered throughout the region. More often than not, these trails fail to make connections to their intended points due to lack of land owners willing to sell their land or grant easements.

Many trails have to share existing network infrastructure with other types of transportation rather than having a dedicated route

When connections can't be made off road, often times the connections are made via shared roadways. Shared roadways are also utilized because of the appeal of lower costs to construction. These shared networks can be hazardous to those utilizing it as a trail. Roads can be very busy and drivers can be distracted leading to dangerous conditions.

Possible conflicting use and safety issues of routes with having to share road or path infrastructure such as bicycles having to share roads with vehicles

If proper safety studies aren't completed prior to designating a roadway for a shared use between vehicles and bicycles, it can lead to hazardous conditions ending in injury or fatality.

Minimal local advertisement of trails

A lack of local advertisement of trails leads to a large number of residents not knowing they exist. These residents then drive farther away to utilize trails that are more recognized instead of the ones that are within their home county.

Funding

Funding can be difficult to acquire at a local level. Trails are expensive to develop and donations typically won't cover the construction costs in whole. Local funding often must be combined with state and federal funding to make up the difference. If communities are lacking on state and federal funding, local fundraising can become a burden on locals who have already donated.

Difficulty getting new people involved

Trails groups and boards have discussed the difficulty of succession planning and getting new people involved in trail development within the region. This lack of involvement puts a strain on those already committing time and leaves an uncertainty of what will happen in the future.

Lack of paved shoulders

An overall lack of paved shoulders within the region provides dangerous riding conditions for bicyclists wanting to share the highways with automobiles as not all locations are accessible by trails alone. Riding among cars on the highway greatly increases the risk of accidents between bicyclists and distracted drivers.

OPPORTUNITIES

Improved quality of life in communities due to increased recreational opportunities

By providing better connections between the existing trails, the region has the chance to put trails in close proximity to a large number of residents. Nearby trails would increase the likelihood that resident would utilize them, increasing their physical and mental health and overall quality of life.

Increased tourist opportunities and tourism development opportunities

By having several larger trails and trail connection within the region, the possibility for a tourist draw increases. The Wabash Trace, T-Bone Trail, Lewis and Clark Trail and American Discovery Trail all have the possibility to draw large numbers of users from around the state with the right connections.

Opportunities to create or show scenic routes in the region

From state parks to the rolling Loess Hills, the region has a range of natural beauty to be experienced. By connecting these places by trails, it would create beautiful scenic routes that would draw in people from around the state.

Development of county boards that can coordinate and plan trails within the region

The establishment of county trail boards will allow better coordination between counties and the development of countywide trail plans. Increased discussion and planning will lead to better routes spanning throughout the region.

Frontier Iowa Trail (FIT) Network

The Frontier Iowa Trail (FIT) Network is a multi-county group of trail advocates and planners who actively work throughout Western Iowa to establish trails. This network acts as a catalyst to bring people together to discuss ideas for trail development and connections across county and state lines.

People embracing the fact that trails are an economic driver

As more trails have been developed within the region and throughout the state, people are beginning to see the positive effects they have on the towns they traverse. A good local example would be the Wabash Trace that travels through eight different towns. People who ride the entire trail often stop in each town to rest, eat and explore often times spending money while they're there.

Potential permanent funding through Iowa Water and Land Legacy

The Iowa Water and Land Legacy established the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund in 2010. This trust fund would be used to enhance water quality, productive agricultural soils, wildlife habitats and outdoor recreational opportunities. However, this trust fund would be funded by a sales tax increase of 3/8ths of a cent, which has not yet been passed.

Future trail study

A possible future region wide trail study could aid in increased collaboration between counties while examining resources had by each. Planning on a regional scale would produce better connectivity throughout the region and to surrounding regions.