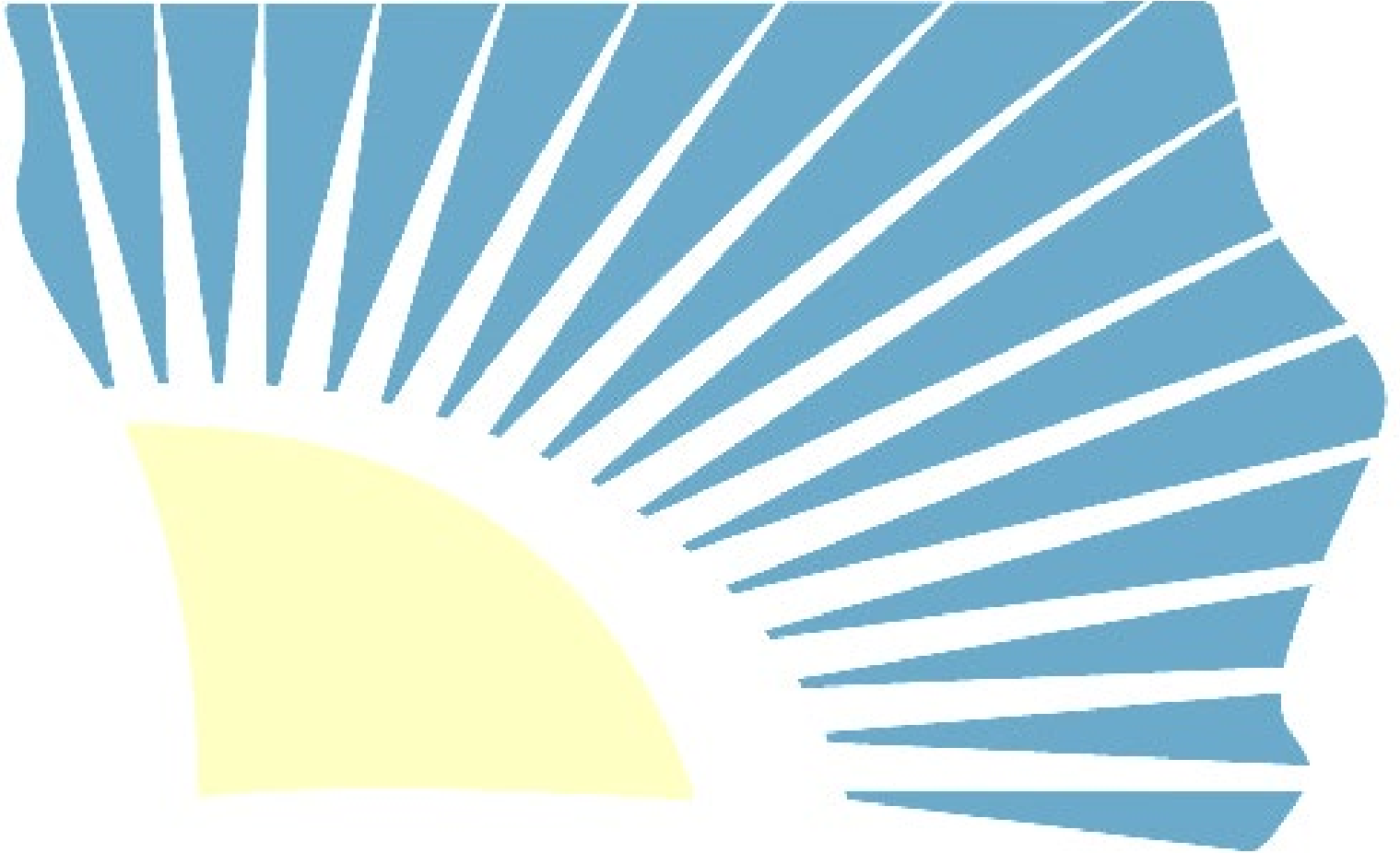


**SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL**



**REGIONAL PLANNING AFFILIATE 13  
AND  
SOUTHWEST IOWA TRANSIT AGENCY**

**Public Participation  
Process**

**FOR THE COUNTIES OF:  
CASS • FREMONT • MONTGOMERY • PAGE**

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*RESOLUTION*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### **Policy Board Members**

Todd Maher	Supervisor, Page County
Bernard Pettinger	Supervisor, Cass County
Chris Clark	Supervisor, Fremont County
Donna Robinson	Supervisor, Montgomery County
Gary McClarnon (Vice Chair)	City Administrator, City of Clarinda
Grace Garrett	Mayor, City of Atlantic
Shawna Silvius (Chair)	Mayor, City of Red Oak
AJ Lyman	City Administrator, City of Shenandoah

### **Transportation Technical Committee Members**

Karen Albert	County Engineer, Montgomery County
Trent Wolken (Vice Chair)	County Engineer, Cass County
Daniel R. Davis	County Engineer, Fremont County
JD King (Chair)	County Engineer, Page County
John Lund	City Administrator, City of Atlantic
Gary McClarnon	City Administrator, City of Clarinda
Shawna Silvius	Mayor, City of Red Oak
AJ Lyman	City Administrator, City of Shenandoah
Scott Suhr	Ex-Officio, IDOT
Mark Lander	Ex-Officio, SWITA Transportation Director

### **Southwest Iowa Planning Council**

John McCurdy	Executive Director
Erin Hudson	Community Development Director
Danielle Briggs	Lead Planner
Tammy DeBord	Grant Specialist 3
Mark Lander	Transit Director
Chris Parks	Community Coordinatoor

## **Introduction**

The Southwest Iowa Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA) has developed a Public Participation Process (PPP) for the Southwest Iowa RPA and Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA). This PPP was put together under the direction of the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) as a requirement of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which provides authorizations for the road network, highway safety, alternative modes, and mass transportation.

It is the purpose of the Southwest Iowa 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 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 RPA.

## **Overview**

### **Regional Planning Affiliations**

In 1992, Iowa established 18 Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) to assist with transportation planning as a regional level. These RPAs were established at the State level after the passing of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) at the Federal level in 1991. ISTEA worked to require increased public participation from states, cities and counties and required a statewide long-range plan to guide transportation facilities.

The Southwest Iowa Regional Planning Affiliation, RPA-13, was established in 1993 to serve the counties of Cass, Fremont, Montgomery and Page. The RPA was established under Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) which has served those counties plus Harrison, Mills, Pottawattamie and Shelby counties since 1975. In 1978, SWITA was formed under SWIPCO and started providing public transportation to the residents of the eight county region.

Within SWIPCO and the RPA there are the SWIPCO Board of Directors, RPA Policy Board and RPA Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) which help to govern their respective agencies. In addition to these groups, input is also received from the Transit Advisory Group (TAG) which also provides input to SWITA.

The RPA Policy Board is comprised of leaders from each urban city within the region and a county supervisor from each of the four counties while the RPA TTC is comprised of leaders from the urban cities and county engineers. The TAG is comprised of non-profits and services organizations within the region who meet semi-annually to discuss how transit needs are being met and where there is room for improvement.

### **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs (IIJA) Act**

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act which superseded the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. IIJA set out to

provide a robust funding package of \$1.2 trillion for not only transportation needs, but also broadband access, clean water and electric grid renewal.

## Regional Goals and Objectives

The Southwest Iowa 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.

<b><u>Goal 1</u> Receive input from various sectors of the public throughout the Southwest Iowa Regional Planning Affiliation.</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Who</b>
Involve the public in the development and programming of the IJA projects for the Southwest Iowa RPA.	Planners
Pro-actively seek input from the public.	Planners
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.	Planners/Grant Specialist
Publicize public meetings, hearings and opportunities for input as widely as is prudent and feasible through the methods in this process.	Grant Specialist
<b><u>Goal 2</u> Ensure that concerns and needs of the public are reflected in the planning documents produced for the Southwest Iowa RPA.</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Who</b>
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.	Planners/Grant Specialist
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.	Grant Specialist

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.

## **Documents and Public Participation Methods**

There are five major documents completed by the RPA which are outlined in this section. Several methods for seeking and gathering public input are discussed but this should not be considered an all-inclusive list of methods.

### **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

The Long Range Transportation Plan is a federally required document that discusses the existing status and future needs of an area's transportation system including highway, rail, aviation, transit and non-motorized modes. This document guides decision making for the next 20-30 years and is updated every five years.

#### **1. Draft LRTP**

- a. During the development of the draft LRTP, input will be sought from citizens, representatives of transportation modes (highway, rail, aviation, transit, non-motorized), affected public agencies, freight shippers and providers, representatives of persons with disabilities, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways, private providers of transportation and other interested parties.
- b. Focus groups will be utilized to represent various modes of transportation which may include highway, rail, aviation, transit and non-motorized.
- c. A draft LRTP will be developed by RPA staff with input from jurisdiction representatives, Iowa DOT and the Technical Advisory Group.

#### **2. Notices and Public Meetings**

- a. A minimum of one public input sessions will be held regarding the draft LRTP with an attempt to hold one in each of the four RPA counties.
- b. All meetings will be held in accessible buildings with at least one meeting being held in an area identified as being low-income or a minority neighborhood.
- c. Notices will be advertised through local media sources and may be posted at City Halls, public libraries, post offices, SWIPCO office and the SWIPCO website.
- d. Draft copies of the LRTP will be available at the SWIPCO office, SWIPCO website or upon request.

#### **3. Public Comment Period**

- a. Written and oral comments will be collected during all public input sessions. The public will have a 15 day comment period following the final public input session to submit comments via fax, mail, phone, email or in person.
- b. A public hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled RPA meeting during the adoption of the final version of the LRTP. Notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.
- c. Persons with sight, language or reading barriers should contact the SWIPCO office at least 72 hours in advance of the public hearing for accommodations.

#### **4. Final Document**



- a. After the public hearing, the RPA-13 policy board will adopt the final version of the LRTP.
- b. The final version of the LRTP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT and FHWA.
- c. Copies of the final LRTP will be available at the SWIPCO office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.
- d. The public participation process associated with the LRTP will be evaluated and updated as needed.

**5. Revisions**

- a. Amendments to the LRTP may be made as needed. These could include a change in project priority or a change in regional policies.
- b. Amendments will require a public hearing to be held at a regularly scheduled RPA Board meeting. Notice for the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The Transportation Improvement Program is a four year planning document that identifies planned transportation improvements within local regions that are expected to utilize federal-aid or swap funds. This document serves as a list of federal-aid eligible surface transportation improvements within the respective RPA.

**1. Draft TIP**

- a. The draft TIP will be developed by RPA staff with input from the Technical Committee.
- b. Draft is due on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

**2. Public Comment, Notices and Public Hearings**

- a. Following the development of the draft TIP, copies of the draft will be available at the SWIPCO office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request. A public notice will be advertised through local media throughout the region with a comment period of 15 days for people to submit comments via fax, email, letter or phone.
- b. A public hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled RPA board meeting during the adoption of the final TIP. A notice for this public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before said meeting.
- c. Persons with sight, language or reading barriers should contact the SWIPCO office at least 72 hours in advance of the public hearing for accommodations.
- d. Public comments will be gathered during the public hearing and a fifteen day comment period following the public hearing where comments can be accepted via fax, letter, email or phone.

**3. Final TIP**

- a. Following the public hearing, the RPA-13 board will adopt the final version of the TIP, including a summary of comments and responses.
- b. The final TIP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT, FHWA and the FTA.
- c. The final TIP will be available at the SWIPCO office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.

- d. The public participation process associated with the TIP will be evaluated and updated as needed.
- e. Final TIP is due on July 15<sup>th</sup>.

**4. Revisions**

- a. As time progresses and projects change the TIP may need to be revised between annual updates. There are two revision types—amendments and administrative modifications.
  - i. An amendment is a major revision which involves the addition or deletion of a project or projects and requires public review and comment. A public hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled RPA meeting to discuss and approve TIP amendments. A notice shall be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days prior to the date of the hearing.
  - ii. An administrative modification is a minor revision which can be made by RPA staff without public review or comment or TAG review. RPA staff is allowed to process administrative modifications without formal approval, however, the Policy board should still be notified of these changes.
- b. The following table outlines difference between amendments and administrative modifications:

	<b>Administrative Modification</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
<b>Project Cost</b>	Federal aid or swap funding is changed by less than 30% and total federal aid increases by less than \$2,000,000.	Federal aid or swap funding is changed by more than 30% or increases by more than \$2,000,000.
<b>Schedule Change</b>	Changes to the schedule of projects within the first four years of the TIP such as start date.	Adding or removing projects from the first four years of the TIP.
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Changing the amounts of existing funding sources.	Adding federal funding sources to a project.
<b>Scope Changes</b>	_____	All scope changes will require an amendment.

**Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)**

Passenger Transportation Plans are designed to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems. The PTP will be updated every five years with the purpose of improving passenger transit services throughout the Southwest Iowa region.

**1. Draft PTP**

- a. The draft PTP will be prepared by SWIPCO staff with input from the Transit Advisory Group (TAG) which consist of human services agencies, passenger transportation providers and users/advocates of transportation services.

- b. The draft PTP will be available in the SWIPCO office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.

**2. Public Comment and Public Hearings**

- a. Following the completion of the draft PTP, the TAG and public will have fifteen days to provide comments via fax, letter, email or phone.
- b. The draft PTP will be available in the SWIPCO office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.
- c. There will be a public hearing at a regularly scheduled RPA Board meeting for the adoption of the PTP. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days prior to the hearing.
- d. Persons with sight, language or reading barriers should contact the SWIPCO office at least 72 hours in advance of the public hearing for accommodations.

**3. Final PTP**

- a. Following the public hearing, the RPA-13 Board will adopt a final version of the PTP after considering all comments.
- b. The final PTP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT and the FTA and be made available on the SWIPCO website, in the SWIPCO office and upon request.

**4. Revisions**

- a. Revisions to the PTP will be made as necessary.
- b. Revisions will require a public hearing to be held at a regularly scheduled SWIPCO Board meeting. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days prior to the hearing.

## **Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)**

The Transportation Planning Work Program is a document which defines the budget and local, state and federal transportation activities the RPA will work on annually.

**1. Draft TPWP**

- a. The draft TPWP will be prepared by RPA staff with input from jurisdiction representatives, the Iowa DOT and oversight from the RPA Policy Board.
- b. The draft TPWP will be available in the SWIPCO office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.
- c. Draft TPWP is due April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**2. Public Comment and Public Hearings**

- a. Following the completion of the draft TPWP, a notice will be advertised through local media alerting the public that they will have fifteen days to provide comments via fax, letter, email or phone.
- b. The draft TPWP will be available in the SWIPCO office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.
- c. There will be a public hearing at a regularly scheduled RPA Board meeting for the adoption of the TPWP. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days prior to the hearing.
- d. Persons with sight, language or reading barriers should contact the SWIPCO office at least 72 hours in advance of the public hearing for accommodations.

**3. Final TPWP**

- a. Following the public hearing, the RPA-13 board will adopt the final version of the TPWP, including a summary of comments and responses.
- b. The final TPWP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT, FHWA and the FTA and will be available on the SWIPCO website, at the SWIPCO office and upon request.
- c. The public participation process associated with the TPWP will be evaluated and updated as needed.
- d. Final TPWP is due June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**4. Revisions**

- a. Revisions to the TPWP will be made as needed.
- b. Revisions will require a public hearing to be held at a regularly scheduled RPA Board meeting. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days prior to the hearing.

**Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

The Public Participation Plan details the process the RPA/SWITA will follow in regards to public involvement for transportation planning documents and decision making.

**1. Draft PPP**

- a. Input for the draft PPP will be sought from all interest parties and may be sought through SWIPCO Board meetings, public meetings, surveys, focus groups and any other effective means of communication with the public.
- b. The draft PPP will be prepared by SWIPCO staff with input from jurisdiction representatives, Iowa DOT and oversight from the RPA Policy Board and Technical Committee.
- c. The draft PPP will be available in the SWIPCO/SWITA office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.

**2. Public Comment and Public Hearings**

- a. Following the completion of the draft PPP, a notice will be advertised through local media alerting the public that they will have 45 days to provide comments via fax, letter, email or phone.
- b. The draft PPP will be available in the SWIPCO/SWITA office, on the SWIPCO website and upon request.
- c. There will be a public hearing at a regularly scheduled RPA board meeting for the adoption of the PPP. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days prior to the hearing.
- d. Persons with sight, language or reading barriers should contact the SWIPCO/SWITA office at least 72 hours in advance of the public hearing for accommodations.

**3. Final PPP**

- a. Following the public hearing, the RPA-13 Policy Board and Technical Committee and SWIPCO board will adopt the final version of the PPP, including a summary of comments and responses.
- b. The final PPP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT, FHWA and the FTA and will be available on the SWIPCO website, at the SWIPCO office and upon request.
- c. The public participation process associated with the PPP will be evaluated and updated as needed.

#### **4. Revisions**

- a. Revisions to the PPP will be made as needed.
- b. Minor revisions will be made in consultation with the RPA Policy Board and Technical Committee. Major update will be considered an update and follow the previously mentioned process.

## **Ongoing Public Involvement and Participants**

### **Routine Public Involvement Methods**

SWIPCO and the Southwest Iowa RPA actively seek ways to keep the public, various boards and committees and their jurisdictions involved in the planning process. These methods may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Monthly SWIPCO Board meetings open to the public
- Quarterly RPA meetings with the Policy Board and Transportation Technical Committee
- Newsletter publications
- Driver newsletters
- Information posted to the SWIPCO website or social media pages
- Newspaper articles
- Presentations to city councils or county boards of supervisors

### **SWITA Fare Increases and/or Major Reduction of Transit Service**

The following policy shall be followed when considering fare increases and major service reduction. A major service reduction is defined as a loss of an entire route.

1. Transit Director shall prepare a written proposal for a fare increase and/or major service reduction(s) and submit the proposal to the Executive Director who determines if the proposed changes are warranted and if so shall submit to the SWIPCO policy board for review. The SWIPCO policy board will review proposed fare increase or major service reduction and will approve or deny request.
2. If the request is approved a public hearing to notify the public and solicit input on the changes will be held the following month
  - a. Notice for the public hearing shall be published in the newspaper(s) of general circulation in the areas, the SWIPCO website and the entryway of the SWIPCO office 14 days prior to the scheduled hearing.
  - b. Notice for the public hearing shall contain the description of the contemplated fare change or major service change and the time and place of the hearing as well as instructions for public comments via e-mail, phone or walk in.

### **Participants**

There are several different boards, committees and individuals who actively participate in transportation planning activities. The following are non-exhaustive lists of current members and active participants in the transportation planning process.

## **Policy Board Members**

Todd Maher	Supervisor, Page County
Bernard Pettinger	Supervisor, Cass County
Chris Clark	Supervisor, Fremont County
Donna Robinson	Supervisor, Montgomery County
Gary McClarnon (Vice Chair)	City Administrator, City of Clarinda
Grace Garrett	Mayor, City of Atlantic
Shawna Silvius (Chair)	Mayor, City of Red Oak
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Karen Albert	County Engineer, Montgomery County
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Shawna Silvius	Mayor, City of Red Oak
AJ Lyman	City Administrator, City of Shenandoah
Scott Suhr	Ex-Officio, IDOT
Mark Lander	Ex-Officio, SWITA Transportation Director

## **SWIPCO Staff**

John McCurdy	Executive Director
Erin Hudson	Community Development Director
Danielle Briggs	Lead Planner
Tammy DeBord	Grant Specialist 3
Chris Parks	Communications Coordinator

## **Media**

Anita Tribune	Weekly Newspaper
Atlantic News-Telegraph	Daily Newspaper
Clarinda Herald-Journal	Weekly Newspaper
Griswold American	Weekly Paper
Hamburg Reporter	Weekly Newspaper
Shenandoah Valley News	Twice Weekly Newspaper
Red Oak Express	Weekly Newspaper
Malvern Leader/Beacon Enterprise	Weekly Newspaper
KJAN	Radio
KSOM/KSWI	Radio
KOAK/KCSI	Radio
KYFR	Radio
KMA/AM/FM	Radio

## How to Get Involved

Anyone who wishes to be involved in the transportation planning process is encouraged to contact the planning staff at Southwest Iowa Planning Council.

Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO)  
1501 SW 7<sup>th</sup> St  
Atlantic, IA 50022  
(712) 243-4196  
[www.swipco.org](http://www.swipco.org)

