State of Iowa

Formal Documentation of the Iowa Department of Transportation's Process for Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation

DRAFT

Draft for review
October 2015

October 26, 2015

To the Citizens of Iowa:

The federal guidance 23CFR Part 450 requires that each state must address the effectiveness of their process for consultation with non-metropolitan local officials as it relates to the statewide transportation planning process.

Attached is a draft copy of documentation for the Iowa Department of Transportation's process for consultation with non-metropolitan local officials. This is being distributed throughout the state for review and comment.

Your comments concerning Iowa's consultation process are welcome. Please forward your comments by December 31, 2015 to andrea.white@dot.iowa.gov, phone at 515-239-1210, or mail your comments to:

Andrea White
Office of Systems Planning
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Thank you for your interest in transportation planning in Iowa.

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INTRODUCTION

The federal transportation funding legislation and subsequent planning guidance 23CFR Part 450 requires that each state must obtain comments concerning the effectiveness of the current process for consultation with non-metropolitan local officials in their statewide planning process. These pages describe Iowa's method of consulting with non-metropolitan local officials during development of the Statewide Transportation Plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This process must be "separate and discrete" from Iowa's general public involvement process.

Federal requirements stipulate that the public has a 60-day period in which to review and comment on the State's method of consulting with non-metropolitan local officials. Your comments concerning Iowa's consultation process are encouraged. Please forward your comments to andrea.white@dot.iowa.gov, phone at 515-239-1210, or mail your comments to:

Andrea White
Office of Systems Planning
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Comments must be received no later than Thursday, December 31, 2015.

Comments should address the effectiveness of Iowa's consultation process and any appropriate changes will be made accordingly, prior to a submittal to FHWA and FTA on or before February 24, 2016.

DEFINITIONS

- Non-metropolitan area: Includes all areas of the state which are located outside of Iowa's nine (9) metropolitan areas (Ames, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City, Sioux City, and Waterloo).

- Non-metropolitan local officials: Elected and appointed officials of general purpose local government in non-metropolitan areas with jurisdiction and responsibility for transportation. In Iowa, elected and appointed local officials are directly involved through the 18 Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs).

- Consultation: The Iowa DOT will confer with non-metropolitan local officials in accordance with the established process (described within this document). Prior to formal adoption of the State

Transportation Plan and the State Transportation Improvement Program. Iowa DOT will consider the views of the non-metropolitan local officials. Periodic updates will also be provided to the non-metropolitan local officials.

BACKGROUND

In 1991, President Bush signed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) which eliminated the distinct system level/jurisdictional FAP, FAS, and FAUS funding programs. Congress established a new flexible program (Surface Transportation Program (STP)) with set-asides and sub-state distribution requirements to replace FAP, FAS, and FAUS. However, Congress intentionally did not allocate separate pots of money by jurisdiction. Congress appropriated these STP funds to be administered by each state, along with the flexibility to establish their own specific in-state planning/programming procedures.

The State Transportation Commission saw a unique opportunity to foster partnerships. The Commission wanted a regional planning process that was flexible, participatory, inclusive of non-traditional partners, proactive, and that would provide better information to decision makers. The Commission used the framework that was already in place – annual Regional Transit Development Plans were prepared for the Iowa DOT by 16 existing regional agencies. The Commission designated these planning regions as the initial basis for organization. Local officials representing the cities and counties were provided the opportunity to choose from three options: remain in their current planning region, join with another region, or join with other counties to form a new regional planning affiliation for transportation purposes. Counties took advantage of each option, resulting in 18 RPAs to conduct transportation planning and programming.

The Commission focused on flexibility in the execution of this regional transportation planning process. The Iowa State Association of Counties, League of Iowa Municipalities, and Iowa DOT staff presented a consensus recommendation to the Commission. The Commission formally adopted Iowa's State/Regional Transportation Planning Partnership (which directly involves elected and appointed local officials) in 1993.

With each subsequent federal transportation bill (TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21), the Commission approved using the same STP regional funding distribution process as was used under ISTEA.

Federal STP and state planning and research (SPR) funds are distributed to Iowa's 18 RPAs for planning and programming purposes. These 18 RPAs cover all non-metropolitan areas of the state.

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CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Elected and appointed local officials have continual opportunities to be consulted on statewide transportation planning through their involvement in RPAs. Each RPA is required to have a Policy Board that includes local elected officials for the counties and cities within the region. These local elected and appointed officials are responsible for approving all plans and programs. All RPAs also have Technical Committees, which are made up of professional staff, including engineers and planners, from member cities and counties.

- Similar to any city or county within the region, the Meskwaki Indian Settlement is invited to Region Six Planning Commission meetings and is encouraged to attend. They are also mailed application materials for STP and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds.

- The Iowa DOT has seven District Transportation Planners who interact daily with various elected and appointed local officials. In addition, these planners also represent the department at meetings of the 18 individual RPA policy boards (which are comprised of elected and appointed local officials) and technical committees. Through the RPAs, the District Planners continually keep the elected and appointed local officials informed as to the progress in developing the State Transportation Plan and the STIP.

- RPAs will be solicited for input during development of the State Transportation Plan. Additionally, the draft State Transportation Plan will be widely distributed throughout the state for comment. Each RPA Policy Board (comprised of elected and appointed local officials) will be directly contacted concerning their comments on the draft plan.

- Annually, the draft STIP is widely distributed throughout the state for comments. Each RPA (local officials) is directly contacted concerning their comments on the STIP.

- The Iowa DOT holds quarterly meetings with the 18 RPAs as a group in Ames. These meetings are held to discuss a wide array of planning issues, particularly the development of RPA Transportation Plans, local TIPs, the STIP, and the State Transportation Plan.

- Annually, each RPA Policy Board (comprised of elected and appointed local officials) approves a transportation planning work

program that outlines their proposed work for the year related to updating their long-range transportation plan, development of their TIP, implementation of their public participation plan, and other transportation planning activities.

- Each year four of twelve Commission meetings are held at locations around the state to provide public input opportunities. Local elected and appointed officials regularly participate in these meetings and discuss transportation planning/programming issues.

- Continual communications are occurring between the Iowa DOT and the RPAs, including such items as: transportation planning guidance, document/process reviews, training needs, funding and legislative updates, modal planning efforts, Census and data issues, and RPA reviews.

- Iowa DOT central complex staff members are in communication with elected and appointed local officials on a daily basis to address numerous transportation planning and programming issues.

- Various public forums have been held and will continue to be held or sponsored by the department. Elected officials such as mayors, council members, and County Supervisors are specifically invited to participate in these forums. Notice will also be provided to RPA staff.

- The Iowa DOT is typically represented at the monthly IARC (Iowa Association of Regional Councils) meetings in Des Moines and is available to provide updates and answer questions. Any relevant transportation-related information from these meetings will be transmitted to RPA staff.

RESULTS

The non-metropolitan area local officials are consulted on a continuing basis by the Iowa Department of Transportation concerning statewide transportation planning and programming as mandated in 23CFR Part 450.

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