

RPA-18 Policy and Technical Committees

MINUTES



Wednesday Feb 14, 2024

Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68102
402-444-6866

In attendance:

Policy Board Voting Members

- **Gene Gettys Jr.*** - City of Harlan
- **Angie Winquist** - City of Glenwood
- **Susan Miller** - Pottawattamie County
- **Steve Struble** - Harrison County

Technical Board Voting Members

- **John Rasmussen** - Pottawattamie County, Technical Committee Chair
- **Chris Fredericksen** - Shelby County
- **Jamey Clark** - City of Glenwood
- **Jacob Ferro** - Mills County
- **Gene Gettys Jr.*** - City of Harlan
- **Steve Struble** - Harrison County

Non-Voting/MAPA Staff

- **Lindsey Button** - MAPA
- **Rachel Goettsch** - MAPA
- **Jim Boerner** - MAPA
- **Carlos Morales** - MAPA
- **Scott Suhr** - Iowa DOT
- **Tammy Hinkel*** - City of Logan

**Attended virtually*

Lindsey Button called the meeting to order at 11:01am.

Button noted the meeting was being held in accordance with Chapters 21 and 22 of the Iowa Code and was being live streamed on MAPA's YouTube page.

Rasmussen asked what the protocol was for chairing RPA meetings. Button responded expressing uncertainty over whether a vice chair position had been filled, but confirmed that other members are welcome to chair the meeting, to which Rasmussen replied in the affirmative.

Action Items

A. Approval of the Agenda

Rasmussen called for approval of the agenda. No changes were made to the agenda.

Miller motioned to approve the Agenda. Motion was seconded by Struble. Motion passed.

Rasmussen inquired about the role of Policy and Technical members when making motions.

Morales and Button clarified, saying that for the purposes of this agenda item, only Policy will participate in the motion (i.e. state one's full motion and one's last name first, etc.).

B. Approval of the Minutes from the November 8, 2023 meeting.

Rasmussen called for approval of the minutes. No changes were made to the minutes. Rasmussen presented the minutes from the November 8, 2023 RPA Policy and Technical Committee Meeting.

Ferro expressed confusion over whether Technical Board members could vote for this agenda item, to which Button clarified that Policy members only will be participating in motions for the purpose of this singular meeting and noted that more comprehensive protocol will be forthcoming in following meetings.

Miller motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Struble. Motion passed.

C. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment

Button presented a TIP Amendment for the Mills County 400th Street off system Bridge Replacement of Jamison Rd. over Indian Creek (TPMS #35284). The amendment covers an increase in cost from \$750,000 to \$1,175,000, with \$1,150,000 coming from federal Highway Bridge Project (HBP) funding and \$25,000 coming from other, local sources. Mills County has requested an update to the TIP to reflect the new project cost. This cost increase does not impact regional RPA-18 funding, and simply needs to be reflected in the TIP for the project to move forward into letting.

Struble made a motion to approve the TIP amendment. Motion was seconded by Winqvist. Motion passed.

Discussion Items

D. FY2025 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Transportation Alternative Set Aside (TASA) Call for Projects

Button presented applications (4) and materials for Regional STBG and TASA, or what was formerly known as Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), funding, received during the FY2024 Call for Projects. The RPA opened the Call for Projects on October 16, 2023 and closed January 26, 2024. Public comment opened February 1, and will run through February 29. Project selection will occur at the March 13th meeting. Projects are as follows:

- Mills County M16 Asphalt Overlay - \$1,100,000 STBG
- Harrison County L-20 Asphalt Resurfacing & Shouldering - \$600,000 STBG
- City of Logan Safe Routes to School - \$333,205 TASA
- Shelby County Trails Board Ballpark to Ballpark Trail - \$309,618 TASA or STBG

- Struble asked whether TAP funding is at capacity and/or over and whether these projects would cause the RPA to be over obligated.
- Morales responded that those details will be further explored at the March meeting, but that with the year taken off per Iowa DOT guidance, he tentatively believed they should all be able to fit within current funding capacity.
- Button countered in the negative, saying that there is a spreadsheet that goes into more detail regarding the remaining available funding in each of the pools and pulled it up for viewing, in preparation of next month's meeting.
- Struble continued to enquire about TAP funding, specifically regarding the L-20 asphalt paving trail project he submitted for STIP funding that is a continuation of a project using TAP funds. He questioned whether it would be better to split it between TAP and STBG funding to use up available funds, but does not want to bother with that split unless it will not be used otherwise.
- In response, Button went into more detail explaining the STBG/TASA Programming FY25. In FY25, there is nearly \$3 million available for STBG funding, and notes fairly small carry-over between years, indicating tight programming. Take into account projects already programmed and the additional two projects proposed, there is closer to \$800,000 in available STBG funding.
- Morales noted that this spreadsheet is only a breakdown of last year's (Federal FY24) projects and explains the process of updating it. Between February and July of this year (MAPA's FY) the spreadsheet will be updated with incoming projects. Otherwise any projects not included before July will be moved to the next fiscal year for programming and letting. The four proposed projects would be programmed after FY25, dependent on funding and spending.
- Button added that TAP funding works much the same way as STBG in regard to funding and carryover.
- Morales noted that as of now there are no projects planned for Federal FY25. He does not know the current status of applications, but adds that the committee will be revisiting this topic once scoring is concluded.

Button continued with the project breakdown of each STBG/TASA application.

- **Project 1: Mills County asphalt overlay (\$1,100,000 STBG)**
 - The project involves the rehabilitation of existing concrete road (M-16) with an asphalt overlay from US Hwy 34, south 5.9 miles to H46 (Paddock Ave.). It is along a major collector and is farm-to-market (FTM).
 - Ferro noted that the project is pre-approved for \$400,000 and is a continuation on a project from last year.
 - Button asked whether the original project was scheduled for FY27, and Ferro confirmed. The ask is whether or not the project can be moved from FY27 to FY28 and increase the total project funding. Struble noted that there was a \$1M project he was going to try and have moved from FY27 to FY28 as well and that this would make that funding available in FY27 if Ferro wanted to push the project forward to FY27 instead.
- **Project 2: Harrison County L-20 asphalt resurfacing & shouldering (\$600,000 STBG)**

- The project involves asphalt resurfacing of L-20 with granular or paved shoulders on sections without paved shoulders from north corporate Missouri Valley, south 5.3 miles to the intersection of L-20 and L-23. It is along a major collector, is farm-to-market (FTM). This is a new application.
- Struble noted that he wants to move an existing \$1M project from FY27 to FY28, and has applied for this project for funding in FY27 as this road is in worse condition.
- **Project 3: Phase 1 of Logan's Safe Routes to School and recreational trail (\$333,205 TASA)**
 - The project involves final design and construction of the project includes establishing an 8' concrete trail from mainstream Logan to Logan-Magnolia CSD while also providing a safe crossing on heavily trafficked State Hwy 127. The City of Logan is currently awaiting potential award from a State TASA application, and if received the total funding request in this regional application may need to be reduced to ensure maintaining an 80/20 federal/local cost split. The City of Logan is seeking regional TASA funds for segments 3 and 8 of this trail project, but MAPA's recommendation is to apply a potential award to the entire project to streamline efforts and administration.
 - Hinkel thanked Button for the summary, and agreed with the recommendation to fund the entire project instead of individual segments. She also expressed how large of an undertaking this project is for a small town without a safe route to their school system, how much it would positively impact the local community and economy, and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to apply for the project and any amount of funding that came from it. She noted that Logan hopes to use this project as a jumpstart to a citywide trail system.
 - Suhr noted that they are working with Logan on the project and are aware of the crossing on Highway 127.
 - Rasmussen questioned the minimum trail width for funding, thinking that it was 10' and that this project is 8'.
 - Struble and Suhr noting that it used to be 10' but is now 8', and that there are stipulations for exceptions. Also they believed 8' was doable for this project going both directions.
 - Tammy noted that the 8' ft trail width is the minimum requirement as per the research their consultant did.
 - Button confirms that a great deal of thought and positive public input has been taken into consideration regarding this project.
- **Project 4: Phase 2 of Shelby County's ballpark to ballpark trail (\$309,618 TASA/STBG)**
 - The project involves construction of a 10' wide multi-use trail starting at F32 and proceeding to 1380th St. in Shelby County. It was originally an STBG application and then Button advised the applicants to follow-up with a TASA application as well as the project was eligible for both. MAPA invited Dean from the Shelby County Trails board to attend and provide comment, but he deferred.

- Miller asked whether there is an existing portion of the trail. Fredericksen noted that the section from F32 going North into Panama is complete. Suhr confirmed, adding that they consider existing paved shoulders part of the trail as well. Struble and Suhr discussed whether a trail requires it to be paved and confirmed that it must be off the roadway to be considered a bike trail.
- Struble questioned whether a section is actually considered a trail segment based on width. Suhr responded and they discussed the status of the trail and its standing with IDOT, with Struble expressing concerns over narrow 6' portions. Suhr also notes that this may be due to farm machinery and trail hedging as possible reasons why they are narrower than typical for bike trails. There was discussion on using donated containers to serve as bridges, but it was denied due to concerns about them being in the right-of-way. The larger trail plan is sections from Panama to Portsmouth, with one (Phase 1) already being completed.

Button notes that these are all of the projects applied for this year, noting that both TASA projects are within the \$300,000 range and that the current balance is also roughly \$300,000 for FY25, with nothing planned for FY25 and FY26. Both projects are eager to begin implementation.

Button also presented a summary of the STBG scoring criteria and its weighting, part of MAPA's competitive selection process as required by IDOT. Some of the scoring criteria was taken from the existing TIP, and if any changes are desired, this will need to be affected before the opening of the next call for projects. Scoring is set up by functional application ranking as opposed to numerical scoring (e.g. larger roads and poorer surface conditions will have higher ranks) of the following criteria:

- Functional Classification
- Annual Average Daily Traffic
- Pavement Condition and Age
- Bridge Factors
- Crash History
- Regional Significance
- Local Match
- Multit-Jurisdictional

Button will run through the scoring and present the results at the March committee meeting.

Struble asks whether scoring is a point or graduated scale system. Button responds that it is a graduated scale.

Button continues into the TASA scoring rubric, a numerical scoring which is based on criteria outlined in the Iowa DOT TASA Program Guidance. That document is also available to those interested in more information. Criteria are as follows:

- Completion of Application

- Project Costs and Matching Funds
- Project Development Milestones
- Safe Routes to School
- Narrative Questions
- Checklist

RPA will receive comments from any attending members of the public, with project selection taking place during the March 13th RPA meeting including the presentation of project scores and programming scenarios by MAPA staff and voting by the Technical Committee and Policy Board for inclusion in the FY25 TIP.

E. Safe Streets and Roads for All

Boerner presented the current status of the RPA18 and 13 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant, announced December 2023. This included a brief summary of the Safe System Approach, a review of the grant study area, and a description of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP). Work will begin shortly on the grant agreement, with another SS4A project already underway for the metro area. Between communities, these are not standalone plans and they need to work together to create a more comprehensive plan for the region and help communities apply for funds.

Button noted that two of the communities included with this plan are Glenwood and Harlan, and they will be coordinating with MAPA on implementation.

Rasmussen asked for clarification regarding the study area of the MPO project. Boerner and Morales clarified that there is no overlap and that the MPO side includes Council Bluffs, Crescent, Carter Lake, and McClelland. The RPA application excludes these jurisdictions.

Struble asked for clarification regarding the Post-Crash Care segment of the Safe Streets system graphic. Boerner continued to describe that this includes the entire post-crash care experience including the ambulance and hospital experience, transportation incident management, and overall getting care to those who need it.

Struble asked what Winneshiek County on the slides refers to. Boerner explained that Winneshiek County was the lead on a Statewide application, with the other counties as joint applicants.

Boerner continued to present example Implementation Grant awardees including Webster County, Iowa and Independence, Kansas. He noted that consistency across safety applications can be applied for under a singular project and can aid in securing funding and implementing accepted countermeasures.

Boener continued with a summary of the Southwest Communities Planning Grant, noting funding and administration details, HSIP funding in particular:

- Total Project Cost \$125,000
- Grant Award \$100,000
- Local Match \$24,000 of \$25,000 from Iowa State HSIP funds
- MAPA will receive funds directly and reimburse
- Consultant-led effort

MAPA (lead) will work closely with RPA-18 and RPA-13 (SWIPCO - joint applicant) on these efforts.

He concluded by going over a draft timeline, noting in particular the anticipated opening date of the FY26 SS4A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). He also noted that we're up against the clock on both the MPO and RPA side, but is hopeful of project results and future applications.

F. Additional Business and Public Comment

Suhr - Upcoming Online Meeting for the Missouri Valley Bypass

Original plan has changed significantly due to various obstacles. Project is now planned to grade for 2, pave for 2, and is not going to be built for levy standards.

Suhr - Snow Drifting on Highway 6

Narrow cuts on Highway 6 shut down under snow accumulation. There is a very preliminary effort looking for ways to allow the snow to move through the area better. They are considering purchasing right-of-way to open the area.

Struble asked for a tentative date. Suhr responded there is no set date yet and that they are waiting on work from the consultant. Originally he was hoping for March, but it is being pushed back with the appraisal and ROW process likely to start around July.

Struble asks whether Missouri Valley is going to ask for a change in any required costs. As Suhr sees it now, IDOT will pay for the project and Missouri Valley would apply for STBG for their portion, but they have yet to make any moves in that direction, and so it stands to be paid for fully by Iowa DOT. The City of Missouri Valley would they get business 30 which is the existing EJ to them. The area has either been resurfaced recently or it will be resurfaced soon, and then it will be in the Iowa DOT system.

Button continued with additional planned business, noting that the bylaws review is being put on hold due to staff changes:

RPA Policy Board Contact Lists - Per Section 4.03 (drafted in 1994) of the RPA bylaws which states "Members may officially designate, by written notice to the presiding officer, a maximum of two alternate officials to act in their behalf during such member's absence at official meetings of the policy board", Button requested updated contact information of alternates, even in the case of prior designation.

Struble asked what the format of contact information needs to be sent in. Button responds that virtually any mode of communication will suffice as long as it is via the official board member.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant - Button presented on the efforts MAPA and the City of Omaha have been working on to develop a Preliminary Climate Action Plan (PCAP) for the MSA. The PCAP is due March 1st and includes a GHG inventory and projects that may be then later included in the Implementation Grant applications. Implementation applications are due April 1st, and all projects must be those also included in the PCAP.

Button also requested for input via the Stakeholder Input Survey. More information and project updates can be found on MAPA's CPRG webpage (<https://mapacog.org/projects/cprg/>). Any other questions may be directed to Carlos Morales (cmorales@mapacog.org).

Suhr noted that there is a CO₂ monitor near Pisgah used to see if they are in attainment.

Morales broke down MAPA's goals with the PCAP of serving the RPA communities. He outlined several examples of what this might look like and asked how we develop incentives to make renewable alternatives available to the public, change the availability of sustainable energy and related infrastructure, reduce diesel use in agriculture. These Implementation grants are highly competitive, and many other communities are further ahead of the MAPA region in the process. Applications will be much stronger if they contain a large regional focus.

Ferro noted from the asphalt conference how less gas is used when constructing asphalt roads and that may be beneficial to include in the plan.

Button notes for scale that the grant range the EPA has been looking to award is generally \$2-500 million.

Morales continues that a large part of these applications is related to the funding and that MAPA is available to help.

Rasmussen asks whether county ride shares would be an eligible project. Morales responded that that may be an option, but that there is also additional assistance on the Nebraska stateside for funding vanpool/rideshare projects and that this might also be something that can be approached on the Iowa side. Suhr noted that there are some rideshare already occurring. Morales countered that these existing rideshares are limited and they do not always serve those who need them, when they need them, and this is an opportunity for enhancement.

Rasmussen asked whether the next meeting can be used to elect a new vice-chair for the committee due to the continued absence of the current Policy Board chair. Button notes that elections will take place in June but an interim can be appointed in the meantime, noting that she will need to review the bylaws first.

Struble motioned to adjourn the meeting at 12:06pm. Motion was seconded by Ferro and approved unanimously.

Future Meetings & Events

- **Next RPA-18 Meeting: March 13, 2024 at 11:00am**
 - Project Selection
 - Draft TPWP