

RPA18

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 11:00am

Training Room

Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68102

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84588317471>

402-444-6866

In attendance:

Policy Board Voting Members

- **Charles Parkhurst** - Shelby County, Policy Board Chair
- **Jacob Ferro** - Mills County
- **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
- **Gene Gettys Jr.** - City of Harlan
- **Steve Struble** - Harrison County

Non-Voting/MAPA Staff

- **Lindsey Button** - MAPA
- **Rachel Goettsch** - MAPA
- **Carlos Morales** - MAPA
- **Scott Suhr** - Iowa DOT*
- **Pat Stessman** - Shelby County Trails
- **Dean Kloewer** - Shelby County Trails
- **Tyler Hinkel** - City of Logan*

**Attended virtually*

Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

The slides 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.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the Agenda

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



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

B. Approval of the Minutes from the February 14, 2024 meeting.

Parkhurst called for approval of the minutes. No changes were made to the minutes.

Winquist motioned to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Miller. Motion passed unanimously.

C. RPA-18 Policy Board Officer Interim Elections (Action Policy Board)

Button presented the option to elect a Vice-Chair to run the RPA-18 meetings in the case the Policy Board Chair is absent. The current Chair is Charles Parkhurst. There is no currently elected vice-chair. Historically, this body has operated such that the Chair of the Technical Committee would operate as chair in the absence of the Policy Board Chair, which would be the extent of the responsibilities of a vice-chair, should one be selected. It was raised in the February meeting a desire to elect a Policy Board vice-chair to serve as chair in the chair's absence.

The option was given to the board to elect a vice-chair. If desired, the staff would open the floor for nominations.

Rasmussen queried whether or not it was worth changing since elections will be in June. Miller seconded the sentiment, and it was agreed that it would be best to wait until elections to make any changes.

D. FY2025 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Transportation Alternative Set Aside (TASA) Project Selection (Action Technical Committee / Action Policy Board)

Button reviewed the applications and materials for Regional STBG and TASA (formerly TAP) funding received during the FY2024 Call for Projects as follows:

Application Review

- Mills County M16 Asphalt Overlay - \$1,100,000 STBG

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- 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

STBG Project Selection

Button reviewed the rubric MAPA used in the scoring of these projects, which is a ranking of the projects in order of their alignment with scoring criteria (as opposed to a numerical score).

After questions about funding source and disbursement decisions from Miller, Button confirmed that this is an Iowa DOT-allocated pool for both STBG and TASA funding. She continued to explain the fiscal constraint requirement, wherein projects must be programmed with the amount of funding for each year allotted.

Rasmussen asked about the updated regional equity spreadsheet. Button explained that the spreadsheet is no longer available and that MAPA has been advised by Iowa DOT to ensure that projects are selected based on merit, not funding distribution between the four counties.

Morales added that the process is meant to encourage project selection based on merit alone, to develop a competitive process, and not to prohibit smaller communities from applying and receiving funding. He also added that the Committee has the ability to adjust the scoring criteria if they felt it was ineffective.

Struble asked how much funding is available. Button presented the STBG Program from FY24 through FY28, along with project rankings based on established selection criteria. Harrison County's L-20 asphalt resurfacing and shouldering project ranked ahead of Mill's County M16 Asphalt overlay project. The RPA does not have enough funds to program all projects at their full requested amount.

Harrison County requested to reprogram their F20 project from FY27 to FY28.

The topic of Mill County's M16 project was also addressed. Phase 1 was previously approved, but later it was pushed to 2028, which put it beyond the TIP forecast years and resulted in it being left out of the TPMS. Due to this, the project remained in the previous TIP instead of being rolled over

to the current iteration. The project needs to be approved to be added back into the TIP in FY2028. There was also a funding increase required for this project from \$400,000 to \$1.1 million. However, if the requested increase (\$700,000) and the new Harrison County Project (\$600,000) is approved, this puts the TIP out of fiscal constraint by \$166,000. Options to resolve include retaining the original funding amount approved for the Mills County project or push one of the projects out to illustrative letting FY29 for next year.

After questions from Struble, Ferro, and others, Button confirmed that if Mills County reduces their project by \$170,000 the TIP would be within fiscal constraint, and that Pottawattamie County had an illustrative on the last TIP for \$2.2 million in FY28.

Struble notes that it makes more sense to cut the Pottawattamie County project funding over the other two, as it has not been officially added to the TIP when approved last year.

Rasmussen noted that the Pottawattamie Project is a wishlist item based on regional equity for his part, which Ferro and Struble agreed with.

Rasmussen also communicated his efforts to save up a large balance to be able to put it towards a larger project, as the federal paperwork for smaller versus larger projects is comparable. Struble agreed that it would be more effective to do a larger project every three or five years instead of a smaller one every year. Rasmussen added that the problem with this structure is that there would not be an opportunity to build up a balance for funds. Struble notes that federal projects are getting increasingly more intrusive and difficult to close out and that it would be more effective to stop approving smaller projects.

Struble also established that Harrison County wants to ensure fair distribution of funds based on population throughout the RPA, and that this will be done between the jurisdictions regardless of whether the Committee outright commits to such a disbursement process. Rasmussen establishes that he wants to be able to know he will get a certain amount and be able to build up to \$3 million.

Gettys asked when the funds for Pottawattamie County will be approved. Morales said his understanding was that the project will be programmed in the out year with the first knowledge that it is the first one that will get

funded. Struble noted that it's still dependent on looking at the scoring and equity. Morales stated that MAPA can rescore Rasmussen's project to see where that puts it in the priority ranking and present it to the Committee if that is desired.

Ferro stated that if we do not give out funds via an equity framework, there is \$2 million for next year and the Committee can relook at the funds at that point and disperse according to the decision of the group. Morales noted that the groups should avoid the appearance that this is only funding for counties and make sure the funding is available to smaller jurisdictions that apply and are eligible.

Rasmussen stated that the towns do not have a route to make use of federal funding and that makes them ineligible, or that they do not have eligible projects to apply for anyway. Struble noted that 15-20 years ago, this funding was more available to cities and they were more equipped to receive an equal share. All of the counties are handling the process similar to Rasmussen, where they are trying to develop broad projects that serve the broader county as well as the towns, with the exception of town-specific infrastructure such as sidewalks, gutters, and parking. Morales interjected that the sidewalks and similar infrastructure is what is more important to these areas than those larger projects.

Struble asked for confirmation that the Committee had determined those smaller projects were not eligible for TASA and STBG funding.

Ferro, Morales, and others confirm that if the circulation path is disrupted while using funds on town work, then town-specific infrastructure, such as ramps and sidewalks, must be addressed as well. Morales noted that if it was of interest, additional guidance could be brought before the Committee regarding the subject.

Morales redirected to the projects at hand and asked whether the projects in FY25 and 26 should be moved to later years to address the issue of being out of fiscal constraint. Struble asked to look at Rasmussen's projects and determine if there are any that would be delayed due to the

issue of fiscal constraint. Rasmussen asked to look at the Pottawattamie County L-34 construction project balance. After thinking about it, he stated that he was not prepared to discuss these projects today, but that the L-34 project cost would not significantly alter the funding available for

a larger project. He also was not sure if his funding was pooling fast enough to cover a larger project's costs.

Morales confirmed that was fine, noting that if those projects need to be shifted out, that would impact some of the balances in the later years, which might influence the decision on what to fund. In addition, he presented two major thoughts:

1. Are the projects that are listed in FY24 and FY25 realistically going to be let in those years? If yes, then they should remain as programmed.
2. If there is a project that was supposed to be in the TIP that appears to be missing, let MAPA staff know and it will be corrected.

Button noted that federal FY24 is concluding at the end of September, and asked if the relevant Glenwood and Mills County projects have been let. Ferrro confirmed his project had been let. Winqvist was unsure, but said she would get back to the Committee with more information. Rasmussen asked if they have to let through the DOT. Winqvist responded in the affirmative.

Button asked Struble to confirm what programming adjustments need to be made for the F-20 project. Struble asked to put the new project in for \$600,000 in FY27 and to move the Pisgah project from FY 27 to FY28 for \$1,145,000.

Struble stated that once the projects are moved, like Ferro's M-16 project, those new dates should be respected. Morales agreed, and noted that the M-16 project was approved for FY28 and then moved out, and was only an issue due to the request for the increase from \$400,000. He asked if that increase was something the Committee wanted to approve, and if not, should the project be retained at all?

Struble noted that the Committee is flexible, except from July to October. Morales stated that the first two years are the most critical and other years projects are more flexible in the ability to be pushed out.

Struble asked if there was a way that the members could give MAPA updates and make sure that those projects are moving along, besides checking in TPMS, and whether there was overall a way for MAPA staff to see the development progress of projects. Button stated that we have access to the county five-year plans and TPMS and have only that information to use to determine project development status, adding that often communication has to be initiated via email to projects sponsors around March to get a general update on how far along the project is and if it is still on track for letting for the year it was originally approved. Struble suggested that MAPA can request these regional project updates from Nikki or someone else at local systems once every three months or so once most of the criteria has been met. Morales agreed with this suggestion, and noted that getting these project updates has historically been difficult.

Winqvist interjected, confirming that, after having checked with the administrator, the Glenwood projects have been let by Iowa DOT and will not require moving out.

Gettys asked about the Harlan river project and whether the \$273,000 would be carried over. Button noted that although it is coming out of the STBG allocation, Iowa DOT has switched it over to TAP funding, but it will still be accounted for as before. Gettys added that the project will be let in December.

Button requested that either at this meeting or the potential April meeting, the Committee determine which projects to approve and with what funding amount, in order to reach fiscal constraint.

Miller noted that she does not see the project scoring for the projects. Button explained that this scoring is ranked and not numerical, directing Miller to where on the Project Scoring sheet those rankings are recorded. She added that this is the current system the Committee has been working from, but that it can be altered for the next project selection cycle if the Committee wants to reevaluate how projects are scored.

Rasmussen asked whether the Mills County project funding is being increased from \$400,000 to \$1.1 million for this year or the following, and if it is in FY28, whether it can be increased only to \$930,000, noting that Struble has until FY28 to find an additional \$160,000 to make up the difference. Ferro proposed that all jurisdictions decrease their projects by \$50,000, which Struble rejects.

Struble then asked Rasmussen why Pottawattamie County could not take the decrease, since it has a greater percentage of federal money compared to local money. Rasmussen responded saying he was currently trying to build up funds for an \$8 million project, noting that he was perpetually unsure whether it would be better to request multi-year funding to directly do a complete project, or program a larger project and build up the balance to do it over multiple years. Struble suggested that Rasmussen could break the project in half and program it over two years. Rasmussen explained that since it is only a five mile project, he does not want to break it down any more than it already is.

Miller asked if the project connects to Harrison County. Rasmussen responded in the negative.

Ferro noted that all members of the Committee agree that an equity disbursement is the most desirable solution and asked whether the narrative can be that funding is based on scores but effectively is more equity consideration, noting that otherwise, all jurisdictions will build their applications to ask for the highest funding and adjust them to meet the criteria and obtain a higher project ranking. Some members agreed, but Struble dissented, saying he does not think the Committee should do that.

Rasmussen noted that this project amount was his portion of regional equity and that he was out of the running for any other funding that might be available. Struble asked Rasmussen to lower it by \$170,000-\$200,000, since the Harrison County project is only asking for \$600,000, whereafter Rasmussen reiterated that he is due a regional equity share. Ferro noted that Mills County is likely over their hypothetical regional equity share, and that he does not see how it is unfair that the towns have been excluded by following this equity dispersal system. He also stated that Glenwood should be included in this system. Rasmussen pushed back at this concept, and noted that population drives what money comes to the RPA, regardless of what the state says. Struble noted that historically the

apportionment was separated between the towns and counties, but now it is in a single pot that everyone gets to fight over.

Button interjected, asking in the interest of time and other topics yet to be covered, whether the Committee would like to defer the rest of this conversation to the next Committee meeting.

Rasmussen agreed to defer the conversation.

Struble disagreed, saying he does not want to put it off any longer and that it should be decided now how the committee wants to handle the funding and fiscal constraint. Rasmussen deferred, deciding not to agree to decrease his projects as he is trying to build up funding. Both Struble and Ferro agreed to decrease their projects by \$50,000, with Ferro noting that he would like to see it come back to Mills County later for equity purposes. Struble noted that if projects are funded strictly by ranking, there is no assurance of that. Button noted that there was no ranking for the Pottawattamie County project available as it was submitted in a previous year, but that the Harrison County L-20 Asphalt Resurfacing & Shouldering project ranked higher than the Mills County M16 Asphalt Overlay project.

Struble noted that it does not make sense to rank the projects instead of numerically score. Button reiterated that the scoring process can be adjusted for the next project selection cycle if the Committee chooses to do so.

Ferro asked whether the Existing Final Balance can be zero, and Button confirmed that this is allowable and will only result in zero rollover of funds. Ferro made a motion to reduce the Mills County M16 Asphalt Overlay project by \$125,000, and decrease the Harrison County L-20 Asphalt Resurfacing & Shouldering project by the remainder. This adjustment still put the RPA programming out of fiscal constraint, so the committee adjusted total funding amounts accordingly to bring the projects within the total funds available.

Button clarified the voting procedure, noting that the technical committee would make a recommendation to approve the motion, and the policy board would then vote on that recommendation, also noting Ferro is acting as an alternate for Mills County.

Technical Committee: Ferro made a motion to recommend the Policy Board:

- **Reprogram Harrison County F20 HMA resurfacing project from FY2027 to FY2028**
- **Reapprove the Mills County M16 Asphalt Overlay project, increasing total funding from \$400,000 to \$975,000 in STBG, for letting in FY2028**
- **Approve Harrison County L-20 resurfacing and shouldering project for \$550,000 in STBG for letting in FY2028**

Motion was seconded by Struble. Motion passed unanimously.

Policy Board: Gettys motioned to approve the technical committee recommendation. Motion was seconded by Parkhurst. Motion passed unanimously.

Button proceeded to present the TASA project selection scoring. The City of Logan's Safe Routes to School project scored a total of 71 points, and the Shelby County Trails Board Ballpark to Ballpark trail phase 02 project scored a total of 65 points. Button had not programmed either project yet, as she wanted to present to the Committee first.

Miller asked about the Shelby County project's funding variation , and Button confirmed the request for reimbursement on the application was \$309,618 but that was not including the required 80/20 federal split. The accurate federal funding request was \$247,694.

Button noted that she discussed the funding with Dean from Shelby County Trails to get to the number that is currently being requested in the application. Dean confirmed. She also noted that Logan applied for State TASA funding, and that it had been favorably recommended.

Struble asked to make a motion that the City of Logan Safe Routes to School project be funded in FY25 and the Shelby County Trails Board Ballpark to Ballpark Trail in FY26.

Dean confirmed that they are required to have construction for one project completed by Fall 2024, but not finalized in its entirety. They only need to spend the portion that was received as a matching grant from Wellmark

for \$100,000. Button asked whether he is okay with receiving funding in 2025, confirming the earliest letting date of October 2025.

Technical Committee: Struble made a motion to recommend the Policy Board to:

- **Approve the City of Logan Safe Routes to School project's for \$333,205 in TASA funding with letting in FY25**
- **Approve the Shelby County Trails Board Ballpark to Ballpark Trail in for \$247,694 TASA in FY26 for**

Motion was seconded by Rasmussen. Motion passed unanimously.

Policy Board: Parkhurst made a motion to approve the technical committee recommendation. Motion was seconded by Gettys. Motion passed unanimously.

E. FY2025 Draft Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) (Action Technical Committee / Action Policy Board).

Morales presented the Draft TPWP and led discussion on work tasks for the upcoming fiscal year. He gave a preliminary summary of the purpose of the TPWP and MAPA's role. The measure of success being how much funding can MAPA bring to the region. This is done through the TPWP. The upcoming TPWP outstanding item is the RPA-13 and RPA-18 joint SS4A project. He noted, referring to the budget slides that there is clearly not enough funding for everything.

His goals were to work with and provide funding to the communities that are over 2,500 in RPA 18 and 13.

Focus Areas for FY 2025 Work plan

- Update to Long Range Transportation Plan
- "Block Talks," coordination with local communities
- Trail Development assistance
- Discretionary funding assistance
- Administer Joint RPA-13/18 Safe Streets for All

Draft TPWP Work Program Budget

This included the Draft TPWP Work Program Budget including the recently awarded Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant received by MAPA on behalf of RPA-18.

Draft TPWP Timeline

Morales then went over the draft TPWP timeline as follows, also noting that the May, June, July meeting are particularly important to this work timeline on MAPA's part:

- *March*
 - DRAFT TPWP Due to Iowa DOT: This will open the 30 day public comment period for the Draft TPWP. The 2025 Draft TPWP is due to Iowa DOT March 29.
- *May*
 - Final TPWP due to Board & Iowa DOT: May 1st Iowa DOT returns comments on TPWP. For the May RPA board Final TPWP will be presented with final signatures and resolution. Due to Iowa DOT May 31.
- *June*
 - Draft RTIP due to Iowa DOT: June Board meeting will present Draft RTIP and open public comment period. Draft RTIP due to Iowa DOT June 15.
- *July*
 - Final RTIP due to Iowa DOT: Final RTIP due to Iowa DOT July 15.

Struble explained the meaning of HSIP with Button interjecting with additional notes about the funding source.

Technical Committee: Rasmussen made a motion to recommend the Policy Board to:

- **Approve the Draft Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)**
- **Open the public comment period for the Draft Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)**

Motion was seconded by Ferro. Motion passed unanimously.

Policy Board: Parkhurst motioned to approve the technical committee recommendation. Motion was seconded by Miller. Motion passed unanimously.

Button noted that with the finalized project selection an April meeting is no longer required and will not be planned.

Parkhurst called for a motion to adjourn.

Winquist motioned to adjourn the meeting at 12:01pm. Motion was seconded by Struble. Motion passed unanimously.

FUTURE MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **RPA-18 Meeting: April 10th at 11:00am**
 - Project Selection (if needed)
- **RPA-18 Meeting: May 8th at 11:00am**
 - Final TPWP approval
 - Draft TIP approval

