RPA-18 Policy and Technical Committees
MINUTES

Wednesday   Nov 8, 2023
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68102
402-444-6866

In attendance:

Policy Board Voting Members
- **Richard Crouch** - Mills County
- **Susan Miller*** - Pottawattamie County
- **Gene Gettys* -** City of Harlan
- **Steve Struble*** - Harrison County (Proxy)

Technical Board Voting Members
- **Jacob Ferro** - Mills County
- **John Rasmussen*** - Pottawattamie County
- **Jamey Clark*** - City of Glenwood
- **Brandon Burmeister*** - Shelby County

Non-Voting/MAPA Staff
- **Travis Halm -** MAPA
- **Lindsey Button** - MAPA
- **Bob Mortensen*** - Shelby County Trails
- **Lance Brisbois*** - Golden Hills

*Attended virtually

Travis Halm called the meeting to order at 11:03am.

Action Items

1. **Approval of the Agenda**

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

   Policy: Gettys motioned to recommend the Policy Board approve the Agenda. Motion was seconded by Miller. Motion passed.

2. **Approval of the Minutes from the October 11, 2023 meeting.**

   Halm presented the minutes from the October 11, 2023 RPA Policy and Technical Committee Meeting.

   Policy: Crouch motioned to approve the technical committee recommendation. Miller seconded the motion. Motion passed.

3. **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment**

   Iowa DOT has requested an amendment to the TIP in the amount of $500,000 for Misc. Federal Aid Funding to rehabilitate Southgate Rec Area and Gravel Improvement to Boat Ramp Parking. The sponsor of this project is the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Iowa DOT has requested this amendment as it is a transportation project with federal funding within the RPA-18 region.

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Technical Committee: Rasmussen made a motion to recommend that the Policy Board adopt the TIP Amendment. Motion was seconded by Farro. Motion passed.

No further discussion.

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

Discussion Items

4. **Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA) 18 Bylaw Review**

    Halm opened discussion on a bylaw update for the RPA Policy Committee. The current Bylaws on file originate from 1994 and include many outdated regulations, including I-Stea. Halm's goal is to provide an official framework for the Policy and Technical committee, as the current bylaws do not include any framework for the Technical Committee.

    MAPA would also like to update to include compliance aspects from Iowa DOT's review, which increase representation on the technical committee to include organizations like trail boards to allow for these perspectives to be included in TA Set-Aside project selection.

    Iowa DOT recommended that RPA-18 include public transit on the Policy Board, which would mean elevating SWITA to the policy board, and a representative from a small town that would be appointed every year or every few years.

    The current RPA-18 policy indicates that all cities above 5,000 persons in population are automatically on the policy board. Since then Harlan has gone under 5,000. In order to keep the membership of the committee even between counties. Halm recommends lowering the city definition in the bylaws from 5,000 to 2,500, which would put Harlan membership back in compliance with the bylaws, and would add Missouri Valley as eligible.

    Farro asked if this would change eligibility for STBG funds. Halm noted that all of these jurisdictions are already eligible for funding, but this would allow them to be included on the board, but they would need to approve this position through their city council as well.

    The current bylaws do not contain any requirements for the Technical Committee, and Halm would want to include this Committee in the bylaws.

Gettys asked "what dictates that we need a technical committee in addition to a policy board?" Halm is basing this off the MPO structure, which has a Technical Committee that makes recommendations to the Board / Policy Makers who are elected officials. Gettys appreciated the clarification, but noted that having both a Technical and Policy Board have made meetings slightly cumbersome when it comes to votes etc. Rasmussen noted that one reason we got to this point is that it was difficult to obtain quorum for the Policy Committee, so a lot of the Technical Committee ended up proxy voting for the Policy Board. Maybe the Technical Committee doesn't need to vote on action items. Halm noted that he is not proposing two separate meetings, but that there is some benefit to having the two separate votes.

Gettys noted that Harlan's population is currently around 4,897, which is very close to the current definition.

Halm asked if the board would be agreeable to MAPA starting work on a Bylaws update. Rasmussen would like more discussion as he does not believe that Missouri Valley would have the capacity to spend funds, so should not be included in the committee. Halm would propose Missouri Valley to have a vote rather than Harrison county having two because although there may not be a way for Missouri Valley to spend funds, because RPA-18 manages additional funds, and performs more work tasks than STBG funding allocation. Struble noted that other communities in the county may object if Missouri Valley was included in the RPA-18. The present circumstance allows for the smaller cities to band together and select their own representative from those smaller cities. Struble proposed to continue to encourage them to do this as opposed to selecting one city arbitrarily.

Halm noted that this selection was not arbitrary, but was based on a population value that the Committee has mentioned several times. There is also the opportunity for this Board to appoint one additional member to be the small town rep that would include communities under 2,500 which would provide representation opportunity for these smaller communities. Struble would want to go back and review the federal guidelines for RPA operation. It is his understanding that 5,000 is a federal government requirement. Crouch inquired if all incorporated communities are still eligible for funding. Halm noted that yes, they are still eligible There have been discussions at this board about these smaller towns being able to run a federal funded project, but regardless of their capabilities, they are still eligible. Halm noted that State and Federal funding requires an open call for projects where anyone eligible is welcome to apply. However, this does not pertain to bylaws, as bylaws just dictate who is in the room during these meetings.

Rasmussen asked for the Iowa DOT recommendations to be distributed as he is unclear as to what in the bylaws needs to be fixed. Halm reiterated that Iowa DOT recommended inclusion of public transit agency. Burmeister noted that there was representation from small towns several years ago, but it was very difficult to get them to attend meetings. Rasmussen noted that there is nothing currently preventing them from attending meetings. Halm reiterated that the decision is not regarding who is eligible for funding but who is at the table making decisions.

Struble suggested that we follow up with that and encourage the small towns to band together to send a representative. This wouldn't guarantee that they show up at the meetings. Halm noted that updating

the bylaws would include regulations as to how individuals are added to the board, or removed due to inactivity.

Burmeister would want to see the Iowa DOT review prior to any bylaw updates.

Halm stated that he would try to craft a modern version of the current bylaws.

Rasmussen asked if the new member would also pay dues. Halm noted that would be on the table and would need to be discussed for inclusion in the bylaw updates.

This discussion will be brought back up in the Spring.

5. **FY 2025 RPA-18 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Call for Projects**

Halm invited potential funding applicants to attend this meeting for review of the Regional STBG and TAP guidance. There are two potential applicants in attendance. Halm presented the current call for project timelines and guidance for these funding programs, the current funding availability, and the current application. Halm also reviewed specific updates to the TA Set-Aside guidance (TAP is now called TA Set Aside). Halm then reviewed the Statewide TA Set Aside guidance and what kinds of projects that may be eligible or competitive for this program. The Statewide TA Set-Aside applications are due November 27th to Iowa DOT and require a resolution from the applicant's governing body. Regional TA Set-Aside is due to RPA-18 by January 26th.

Halm opened for questions. Struble asked for clarification on the due dates of each application. No other questions were received.

6. **Additional Business and Public Comment**

Button made the committee aware of an FHWA training opportunity for member jurisdictions on Designing Pedestrian Facilities for Accessibility (DPFA). Please reach out with your name and email by the end of the day today if you are interested in participating.

Upcoming meetings:
- December 13, 2023 - RPA-18 Policy and Technical Committee Meeting

Crouch motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:43. Motion was seconded by Gettys and approved unanimously.