



MPO Extends Public Comment Timeline for Long Range Transportation Plan

Plan guides millions of dollars of future transportation investments.

Residents of Greater Des Moines can weigh in on how the region invests approximately \$600 million in transportation over the next 35 years.

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has extended the public comment period due to the addition and shift of future transportation projects included in the draft plan. The MPO seeks public comment on the draft *Mobilizing Tomorrow*, a long-range transportation plan that will guide the allocation of approximately \$13 million in annual federal funding. The draft plan can be viewed on the MPO website found [here](#).

The MPO will host an additional public comment open house on Wednesday, October 29 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the MPO office located at 420 Watson Powell Jr. Parkway, Suite 200 in downtown Des Moines. Comments on the plan will be accepted through Wednesday, November 19 and can be emailed to info@dmampo.org. The MPO is scheduled to vote on the draft plan on November 20.

The long-range plan is significant due to the region's steady growth in population, expected to increase from approximately 480,000 people today to 750,000 people by 2050. For the last year the MPO has worked with the 17 member governments to determine growth trends, model the needs of the future transportation network and outline trends in transportation planning. The federal government mandates that MPOs plan 20 or more years into the future and account for all regionally significant road, transit, freight, ITS, walking, biking and trail projects. The 2050 plan mirrors the goals and strategies outlined in the newly adopted *The Tomorrow Plan*.

Highlights of the *Mobilizing Tomorrow* plan include:

Regional Transportation Projects: The draft plan includes long range projects from the DOT, DART, the Des Moines International Airport and local governments, including approximately 60 regionally significant projects potentially requesting federal funds by local communities. Some of the federal funds will be dedicated to support maintenance and multi-modal transportation. Draft ratios are 15% to fund repair aging bridges, 15% to fund transit, 10% to fund repair of major roads and approximately \$1 million a year to address regional trail gaps and on-street bike facilities. A transportation project has to be included in the MPO's long range plan in order to be eligible to receive federal funding.

Performance Measurements: The MPO will track important transportation indicators such as pavement and bridge conditions, transit ridership, congestion, crash incidences, impacts on natural areas, on-street bike facilities, and regional trail gaps. Measuring the performance of the transportation system allows for consideration of safety, more mobility options for citizens (including transit, walking and biking), environmental health, and system preservation. *Mobilizing Tomorrow* outlines current levels and targets for the region.

Maintenance First: Currently, 19% of the roads in the MPO area are rated as poor or very poor and 100 of 409 bridges are considered deficient or obsolete. Due to declining local, state and federal funds, the region will shift to focus more on maintaining the system and capitalize on current investments.

Demographic Shifts: A change in demographics will require more diverse transportation options. In the future, all age categories increase but the largest increase will be in the 65+ age group which will increase by 191% by 2050, doubling the percentage of the population from 11% to 22%. By age 75, 31 percent of seniors *must* seek alternatives to the driving their own car in order to get around. Research also indicates young professionals are driving less and are choosing to live in communities with robust transit and on-street bike facilities networks. *Mobilizing Tomorrow* begins to shift funding to focus on moving people not just cars.

Best Practices: *Mobilizing Tomorrow* also includes suggested policies and ordinances for regional and local adoption including those that support methods to decrease congestion, designs for streets for all users including accommodations for pedestrians such as sidewalks, transit users such as bus shelters and bikers such as protected bike lanes and environmental resiliency including building roads that improve water quality and mitigate floods.