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Notice of Meeting

**Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

**Executive Committee**

**11:30 a.m., Wednesday, October 8, 2014**

**Des Moines Area MPO Mead Conference Room**

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**Tentative Agenda**

*The established protocol for minutes of this meeting will be to list all attendees, and with each item on which a vote is conducted in the ordinary course in order to take formal action, those voting nay or abstaining will be identified by name. Any member who is absent from the meeting for any period of time during which a vote of the body is taken, is expected to notify the recording secretary at the conclusion of the meeting so that the absence can be duly noted in the minutes. Roll Call votes will be taken as required by law or upon the request of any member that is approved by the chair, and the vote of each member for or against the proposition, or abstention, will be incorporated in the minutes or recorded on a separate sheet attached to the minutes.*

1. **Call To Order**
2. **VOTE: Approval of Agenda**
3. **VOTE: Approval of Meeting Minutes** Page 2
	* Approve the September 10, 2014, meeting minutes.
4. **REPORT and VOTE: *Des Moines Area Rail Port Study*** Page 5
	* Consider approval of the *Des Moines Area Rail Port Study*, presented at the September meeting.
5. **REPORT and Optional Vote: *Federal Fiscal Years 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program* Amendment Request** Page 6
	* Report on a request to move funds for the Neal Smith Trail rehab project up one year; consider approval.
6. **REPORT: *Ames-Des Moines Corridor Transit Feasibility Study*** Page 8
	* Report on the conclusions from the study and review of the final draft document.
7. **REPORT: *Mobilizing Tomorrow*** Page 9
	* Discussion on *Mobilizing Tomorrow*, including updates on the required public input process and effects on plan approval.
8. **REPORT: Purple Heart Highway Interstate Designation** Page 11
	* Update regarding efforts to designate the US 65/Iowa 5 bypass as an interstate.
9. **Other Non-Action Items of Interest to the Committee**
10. **VOTE: Approval of the October 16, 2014, MPO Agenda**
11. **Next Meeting Date**
	* 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, November 12, 2014, Des Moines Area MPO Office
12. **Adjournment**
13.

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Item No. 3

**ISSUE: Approval of Meeting Minutes**

VOTE: Consider approval of the September 10, 2014, MPO Executive Committee meeting minutes.

**BACKGROUND:**

The minutes of the September 10, 2014, MPO Executive Committee meeting are enclosed on the following pages.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the minutes of the September 10, 2014, MPO Executive Committee meeting.

**STAFF CONTACT:**

Jennifer Ratcliff, jratcliff@dmampo.org;

(515) 334-0075.

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Item No. 4

**ISSUE: *Des Moines Area Rail Port Study***

REPORT and VOTE: Consider approval of the *Des Moines Area Rail Port Study*.

**BACKGROUND:**

The MPO has been working with McClure Engineering and their partners, Engineered Rail Solutions, and Via Rail Logistics on the completion of the *Des Moines Area Rail Port Study*. The project consists of three primary deliverables:

* A transloading feasibility study;
* A rail track and ownership analysis; and,
* An updated list of freight impediments.

The draft of these three components is now complete, and results were presented by the consultant team at the September meeting.

Included, as a supplemental item, is a copy of the three deliverables for the final draft study.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommend approval of the *Des Moines Area Rail Port Study*.

**STAFF CONTACT:**

Zach Young, zyoung@dmampo.org;

(515) 334-0075.

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Item No. 5

**ISSUE: *Federal Fiscal Years 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program* Amendment Request**

REPORT and OPTIONAL VOTE: Consider approval of a request to amend the *Federal Fiscal Years 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program.*

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Des Moines requests the following revision to the *Federal Fiscal Year 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program* (FFY 2015-2018 TIP):

Sponsor: Des Moines

Project: Neal Smith Trail Rehabilitation

Federal Aid Amount: $300,000 in Federal Lands Highway Program Funds

Total Cost: $412,000

Change: Move funds from FFY 2016 to FFY 2015

Included, immediately following, is a map showing the location of the project.

The MPO staff notes that amendments to the TIP are subject to the approval of the MPO and a public comment period. The public will have the opportunity to comment at the October 16, 2014, MPO Policy meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommend approval of the requested revision to the FFY 2015-2018 TIP.

**STAFF CONTACTS:**

Zach Young, zyoung@dmampo.org;

(515) 334-0075.

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Item No. 6

**ISSUE: *Ames-Des Moines Corridor Transit Feasibility Study* Update**

REPORT: Discussion of conclusions presented in the final draft of the *Ames-Des Moines Corridor Transit Feasibility Study*.

**BACKGROUND:**

There has been interest for several years by planning, economic development, and transit agencies along the Ames-Des Moines corridor to study mass transportation options along the corridor. The MPO’s *Horizon Year 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* and the Iowa Department of Transportation’s 2009 *Passenger Transportation Funding Study* recognize the Ames-Des Moines corridor as a candidate for potential transit service. The study of transit service between the two metropolitan areas also is a major priority in the *Capital Crossroads Strategic Plan* under the Physical Capital.

Over the past year, staff has worked with Olsson Associates to complete the Ames-Des Moines Corridor Transit Feasibility Study. MPO staff will review the study’s results at the October 8, 2014, Executive Committee meeting. Representatives from Olsson Associates will provide the MPO Policy Committee with an overview of the study’s findings at the October 16, 2014, meeting.

The final draft report is included as a supplemental item.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

None. Report and discussion only.

**STAFF CONTACTS:**

Zach Young, zyoung@dmampo.org;

(515) 334-0075.

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Item No. 7

**ISSUE: *Mobilizing Tomorrow* Update**

REPORT: Brief report on *Mobilizing Tomorrow*, including updates on the required public comment period and effects on the approval process.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Overview**

The MPO has worked throughout 2014 on development of Mobilizing Tomorrow. As noted in previous agendas, the Long Range Transportation Plan Steering Committee recommended an investment strategy to address identified performance targets and transportation needs within the region. The recommended strategy looks at Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds and required local match projected to be available within the region. The plan assumed a funding strategy that allocated funds as follows:

* 15% of funds for bridges;
* 15% for transit;
* 10% for maintenance/preservation; and,
* 60% for priority roadway projects.

**Project List**

With direction on anticipated funds available for roadway projects, MPO staff worked with member communities to finalize the roadway project list over the last few weeks. As the Steering Committee proposed, the list includes each member community’s top priority, which MPO solicited in mid-August, regardless of the project’s performance ranking. Projects on arterial roadways and higher then were added, from highest to lowest ranking, until all funding capacity is used. MPO staff allowed communities to make final adjustments to the list once the selection methodology was finalized. All projects submitted for consideration in the plan that were not able to be included in the constrained list will be included as illustrative projects.

**Public Input**

At its August meeting, the Steering Committee approved issuing a draft plan for public review, consistent with the MPO’s Public Participation Process. The MPO must provide a 45-day comment period and hold at least one public meeting prior to final action by the MPO. The 45-day comment period began September 2, 2014, which would have allowed the plan to be voted on by the MPO at its October 16, 2014, meeting. Staff held three public input meetings in late September and early October to receive feedback on the plan.

On October 1, 2014, the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) contacted MPO staff requesting that the 45-day comment period be reset due to the project list being adjusted in the middle of the 45-day comment period. The Steering Committee discussed the Iowa DOT/FHWA request at its October 1, 2014, meeting and agreed to restart the 45-day comment period. MPO staff has posted notice of the extended review timeline on its website, <http://dmampo.org/mobilizing-tomorrow/>, and has sent notice to its contact list.

**Adjusted Plan Approval Timeline**

In addition to addressing the Iowa DOT/FHWA concerns about public input, the Steering Committee also felt that delaying the MPO vote until the November would allow the MPO more time to discuss their recommended investment strategy, particularly the target of at least 15% of STP funds for transit. The Steering Committee voted to move the final project list and the draft plan document forward to the MPO for review and approval, subject to the new 45-day comment period. However, the Steering Committee respectfully requested that any substantial changes to the plan suggested by the MPO to be sent back to the Steering Committee for feedback before action is taken.

The new target date for the MPO vote on the plan is November 20, 2014. DART will be prepared to provide information about the benefits of increased transit funding at the October meeting.

**Impact of Delaying Action**

The *Horizon Year 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* lapsed in September 2014. Because the MPO is operating without a valid long-range transportation plan, its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is considered “frozen” by the Iowa DOT and FHWA. Projects currently in the TIP are able to expend funds as normal and minor administrative revisions may be made, but no major amendments to the TIP can be made until the long-range plan is approved. MPO staff is unaware of any critical amendments that will be affected by delaying a vote on *Mobilizing Tomorrow* until November.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

None. Report and discussion only.

**STAFF CONTACTS:**

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Item No. 8

**ISSUE: Purple Heart Highway Interstate Designation Update**

REPORT: Discussion about efforts to designate the US 65/Iowa 5 bypass as an interstate.

**BACKGROUND:**

Efforts continue by members of the Purple Heart Highway Collaborative to designate the highway as an interstate facility. MPO staff will update the committee on recent activities related to the effort.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

None. Report and discussion only.

**STAFF CONTACTS:**

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