



## APPENDIX

### **Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Five-Year Strategic Plan  
September 30, 2017**

# Appendix

- » Strategic Planning Process
- » Federally Required Activities 2017
- » DMAMPO Other Contracts 2017
- » Requests and Unmet Needs 2017
- » Needs Assessment Summary June 2017
- » 2017 Stakeholder Survey Report
- » Small Group Economic Development & Chambers Summary
- » Small Group Housing Summary
- » Small Group Public Health Summary
- » Small Group Small Cities Summary
- » Small Group State-Federal Agencies Summary
- » Small Group Water & Trails Summary
- » Small Group Watershed 1 Summary
- » Small Group Watershed 2 Summary
- » DMAMPO History
- » MPO Organizational Structure
- » Federal Performance Report Executive Summary September 2017
- » 2016 Report of Performance Survey of Members

# Planning Process

Developing a five-year strategic plan requires a deliberate process that ensures input from local governments and critical stakeholders at various points in the planning process. Through a competitive Request for Qualifications process, the MPO selected State Public Policy Group (SPPG) as the third-party consultant. SPPG designed the process based upon input from the MPO, conducted the input activities, and facilitated the deliberative process of the Steering Committee.

Members of the Steering Committee were appointed by the Chair of the Executive Committee in early 2017. Fourteen members represented elected officials from MPO member communities. A 13-member Advisory Group was also identified to provide expertise and input as requested. The rosters of these groups are listed in the introductory section of the Strategic Plan.

The planning process began in early February 2017 and concluded on September 30, 2017.

Elements of the process included:

- » Holding individual conversations with an array of internal and external stakeholders to provide perspectives to ground the planning work.
- » Reviewing materials, plans, and relevant documents to frame and inform the strategic priorities.
- » Facilitating sector-based meetings with stakeholders providing opportunities for stakeholders working the same sector – such as housing or employment – and across jurisdictional lines to hear and provide their thoughts and priorities specific to their areas of interest as well as for the greater community.
- » Conducting Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) and Political, Economic, Social, and Technological (PEST) analyses formally with the Steering Committee and less formally with individuals and small groups.
- » Fielding an electronic survey to local government stakeholders to assist in identifying level of need for specific services and priorities of issues.
- » Holding periodic sessions with the MPO Policy Committee and with MPO staff.
- » Facilitating regular sessions with the Steering Committee to guide, deliberate, and develop the strategic plan.

## Process Elements and Timeline

Element	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Monthly Steering Committee Sessions								
Individual Conversations								
Review of Documents								
SWOT and PEST analyses								
Survey developed and fielded								

Element	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Steering Committee develop framework for plan – vision and mission								
Steering Committee develop goals and strategies								
Plan elements reviewed and finalized for approval								

### Steering Committee Meetings

This strategic plan is the product of multiple meetings between SPPG staff and MPO Steering Committee and Advisory members to discuss community and regional needs related to transportation in general and the MPO’s role in meeting these needs. With a few exceptions due to logistical concerns, the Steering Committee met on the fourth Tuesday of each month for 90 minutes between February and September of this year at the MPO office.

- February 28, 2017
- March 28, 2017
- April 25, 2017
- May 23, 2017
- July 6, 2017 (rescheduled from June)
- July 27, 2017
- September 6, 2017 (rescheduled from August)
- September 15, 2017 (additional work session)
- September 26, 2017

At each meeting detailed notes were taken of the discussion and summaries were provided to Committee members following each meeting.

### Individual Conversations

Senior staff at SPPG met one-on-one with MPO stakeholders identified by Steering Committee members, staff, and SPPG. There were 58 individual meetings; participants included Steering Committee members, MPO staff, as well as mayors, city managers and administrators, members of City Councils, and Boards of Supervisors. Also included were representatives from organizations impacted by the MPO such as DART, the Des Moines Partnership, Polk County Housing Trust Fund, Public Health, the Community Foundation, water and surface trails, Polk County Taxpayers Association and large employers.

The individual conversations were conducted between March and May as part of the needs assessment portion of the planning process. Their purpose was to gain context and information, including how the person interviewed was involved with the MPO, their job, identify community needs, how those needs are changing in terms of challenges and opportunities, which of these

are best addressed regionally, and what, if any, role the MPO could or should play in the process.

### Small Group Meetings by Sector

As part of the needs assessment process, SPPG staff facilitated eight sector meetings in June attended by more than 60 participants. The purpose of these sessions was to identify key issues in that sector, consider the appropriate role, if any, of the MPO in addressing the issues, and create a record of the discussion for the Steering Committee's consideration.

The sectors included:

- » Housing
- » Public Health
- » State-Federal Government Officials
- » Watershed Management – 2 sessions
- » Paved and Water Trails
- » Economic Development
- » Small Cities

### Discussion and Education Regarding Councils of Governments

A discussion on a Council of Governments, or COG, was initially part of the Strategic Plan Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and SPPG's Response. The RFQ asked for "education of MPO member governments on what a Council of Governments (COG) is, what benefits a COG might bring to the region, and how the MPO might be involved." However, it became clear in the early stages of the planning process that any discussion of a Council of Governments, including educational information, was a divisive topic and opposed by some members of the Steering Committee. As a consequence the leadership of the Steering Committee took any discussion of a COG off the table as it would be a distraction from completion of a strategic plan.

### Strategic Plan Approval Process

The Steering Committee reviewed and agreed to the contents of the Strategic Plan Drafts at each step of the process. The Steering Committee reviewed and agreed to the final draft of the strategic plan, with any necessary edits. The Steering Committee's approval of the Strategic Plan will then move it to the Policy Committee for final adoption.



## Federally Required Activities

The section below outlines the planning process required of MPOs, as prescribed in the US Code of Federal Regulations and overseen by the US Department of Transportation (DOT), and the activities the MPO undertakes to fulfill these requirements. The federal requirements can be found in the US Code under Title 23, Chapter I, Subchapter E, Part 450, Subpart C. The MPO is reviewed every four years by the US DOT to ensure the MPO is meeting these federal requirements. Failure to comply with federal requirements can lead to a loss of federal funding. The MPO underwent its quadrennial review in April 2017, and the US DOT found that the MPO's activities meet or exceed all federal requirements, and in some cases, are national best practices.

Section 450.306 "Scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process" outlines 10 planning factors that MPOs are required to address locally based on consideration of various issues including:

- transportation system
- land use, employment
- economic development
- human and natural environment, and
- housing and community development

The following table is categorized by the 10 planning factors. For each, the initiatives and activities are listed that the Des Moines Area MPO is working on that align with the planning factor.

Planning Factor 1: Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
<p><u>Freight Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate conversations with freight stakeholders via the Freight Roundtable</li> <li>• Study and implement a transload facility in partnership with the Freight Roundtable, City of Des Moines, Greater Des Moines Partnership, and rail operators</li> <li>• Develop the Container Locator website in partnership with ISU and Freight Roundtable</li> </ul> <p><u>Workforce Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed a Water Trails and Greenways plan for the region and is administering a subsequent engineering feasibility study</li> <li>• Development of regional trails, bicycle/pedestrian, and transit systems</li> </ul> <p><u>Greater Des Moines Partnership Involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical advisor to the Partnership's effort to enhance economic development, such as contributing to Capital Crossroads, providing information to the Regional Data Hub, and participating in the Transit Future Work Group and related efforts.</li> </ul> <p><u>Growth and Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and supports regional growth models and scenario planning tools to assist communities understand the economic return on growth decisions</li> </ul> <p><u>Transportation Studies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts and/or support transportation studies to ensure adequate traffic flows for commuters and freight</li> </ul>

**Planning Factor 2: Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users**

US DOT Safer People, Safer Streets Initiative

- Complete streets policy development
- Best practice series on roadway design
- Data analysis on crash locations and causes
- Safe Routes to Schools planning

Incident Management

- Develop policies for the safe clearance of freeway incidents with the Iowa DOT
- Facilitate conversations among emergency management staff, traffic engineers, towing companies, and other stakeholders via the Traffic Management Advisory Committee (TMAC)
- Work with TMAC to review crash footage to determine opportunities for crash response improvements

**Planning Factor 3: Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users**

Emergency Routes

- Identify diversion and emergency routes on critical transportation facilities with TMAC, Iowa DOT, and Polk County Emergency Services

Flood Mitigation

- Share best practice information on Green Streets
- Participate in stormwater conversations and Watershed Management Authority efforts to reduce stormwater impacts to transportation networks

**Planning Factor 4: Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight**

Transit Planning

- Coordinate with DART on transit planning efforts, including DART 2035 update
- Develop corridor studies such as the Ames-Des Moines Feasibility Study
- Participate in City of Des Moines' zoning update to include transit oriented development policies
- Develop and maintain transit component to regional travel demand model

Complete Streets

- Undertake complete street efforts to encourage transportation facilities that accommodate all modes

Freight Planning

- Facilitate conversations with freight stakeholders via the Freight Roundtable
- Study and implement a transload facility in partnership with the Freight Roundtable, City of Des Moines, Greater Des Moines Partnership, and rail operators

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

- Facilitate coordination among land managers, bike/ped stakeholders, and community staff on bike/ped issues at the monthly Bike/Pedestrian Roundtable
- Map bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities and gaps within the systems
- Best practice series on bicycle facility design

Human Service Transportation

- Hosts a Transportation Advisory Group to address underserved population transportation issues
- Develops a Passenger Transportation Coordination Plan

Roadway Planning

- Participate in corridor and interchange studies
- Maintain a travel demand model to evaluate system scenarios

Planning Factor 5: Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns

Environment Roundtable

- Facilitate conversations among environmental stakeholders through the Environment Roundtable
- Work to develop best practices, review project proposals, receive guidance on planning efforts

Energy Conservation

- Education and planning for electric vehicle charging

Growth and Land Use Coordination

- Tomorrow Plan development and implementation
- Facilitate conversations about regional needs with area planners and engineers through Planning & Engineering Subcommittees
- Nodes and corridors efforts
- Water trails and greenways efforts
- Stormwater/watershed management efforts

Public Health Coordination

- Coordination with public health stakeholders
- Wellmark grant funding
- Step It Up Challenge
- Walking College
- Health + Transportation Model

Planning Factor 6: Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight

Multimodal Coordination

- Facilitate stakeholder conversations at the Freight Roundtable, Bike/Ped Roundtable, Transportation Advisory Group, Planning and Engineering Subcommittees

Transportation Management Association Efforts

- Promote alternatives to single occupancy vehicles
- Interact with business community on considering transportation alternatives in location decisions

Freight Planning

- Study and implement a transload facility in partnership with the Freight Roundtable, City of Des Moines, Greater Des Moines Partnership, and rail operators
- Develop the Container Locator website in partnership with ISU and Freight Roundtable

Complete Streets

- Undertake complete street efforts to encourage transportation facilities that accommodate all modes
- Facilitate adoption of complete streets policies within MPO communities
- Made Wellmark grant funding available for implementation of complete street projects

Planning Factor 7: Promote efficient system management and operation

Congestion Management Process

- Develop and maintain a congestion management process to evaluate system and implement demand management, operations, and capital solutions
- Collect and analyze traffic flow data
- Develop and maintain travel demand modeling
- Host Traffic Management Advisory Committee

Intelligent Transportation System Plan

- Develop plan for maintenance and expansion of ITS infrastructure

Maximizing Use of Existing Infrastructure

- Right-sizing roadways by reallocating space based on actual use within the right-of-way
- Promote smart city solutions

**Planning Factor 8: Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system**

System Preservation

- Collect and analyze data related to bridge condition and roadway and trail pavement condition
- Review jurisdictional CIP and budget information to determine investments into maintenance
- Work with policy makers to administer funding to address critical infrastructure needs

Stormwater Resiliency

- Share best practice information on Green Streets
- Participate in Watershed Management Authority efforts to reduce stormwater impacts to transportation networks
- Coordinate the development of regional approach to stormwater policies

Water Trails Planning

- Developed a Water Trails and Greenways plan for the region and administer a subsequent engineering feasibility study

Bicycle/Pedestrian Efforts

- Conduct trail counts to determine high use areas
- Worked with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to develop a mobile application for the trail system
- Work with Des Moines Bicycle Collective on bike/ped system marketing
- Expand travel options for visitors by supporting the B-Cycle bike share system
- Assist in the development and coordination of standardized Central Iowa Trail signage
- Collect trail system photos for uploading to Google Street View through the Data Bike project

Travel Management

- Assist with mapping and traffic routing for special events
- Identify special traffic generators for consideration in the travel demand model

**Planning Factor 9: Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation**

Stormwater Resiliency

- Share best practice information on Green Streets
- Participate in Watershed Management Authority efforts to reduce stormwater impacts to transportation
- Coordinate the development of regional approach to stormwater policies

**Planning Factor 10: Enhance travel and tourism**

Water Trails Planning

- Developed a Water Trails and Greenways plan for the region and administer a subsequent engineering feasibility study

Bicycle/Pedestrian Efforts

- Conduct trail counts to determine high use areas
- Worked with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to develop a mobile application for the trail system
- Work with Des Moines Bicycle Collective on bike/ped system marketing
- Expand travel options for visitors by supporting the B-Cycle bike share system
- Assist in the development and coordination of standardized Central Iowa Trail signage
- Collect trail system photos for uploading to Google Street View through the Data Bike project

Travel Management

- Assist with mapping and traffic routing for special events
- Identify special traffic generators for consideration in the travel demand model

In addition to addressing the 10 planning factors in its planning process, the MPO is required by Title 23, Chapter I, Subchapter E, Part 450, Subpart C to produce certain work products. Section 450.306 also states that a MPO's process and work products must be performance based and be in consultation with the state DOT and transit agencies.

The following work products are required by US Department of Transportation and activities the MPO undertakes to meet the requirements. These are typically cyclical and completed by the Des Moines Area MPO on time and with adequate documentation.

US DOT Required Work Products	
Requirement	MPO Activities
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Section 450.324)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and maintain long-range transportation plan</li> <li>• Produce monthly performance reports on the system and progress towards regional goals</li> </ul>
Transportation Improvement Program (Section 450.326)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop annual Transportation Improvement Program</li> <li>• Administer federal funding</li> </ul>
Unified Planning Work Program (Section 450.308)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop annual UPWP and budget</li> </ul>
Public Participation Plan (Section 450.316)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker series</li> <li>• Ongoing education of stakeholders via mini workshops, accessing national-level technical assistance and trainings for staff and elected officials</li> <li>• Guest speakers at committee meetings</li> </ul>
Congestion Management Process (Section 450.322)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Congestion Management Process</li> <li>• Facilitate the Traffic Management Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
Passenger Transportation Plan (Section 450.306)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Passenger Transportation Plan</li> </ul>
Multi-modal systems-level corridor or subarea planning studies (Section 450.318 - Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop modal studies and plans, such as the On Street Bike Facility Feasibility Study, the Ames-Des Moines Transit Feasibility Study, and the Transload Feasibility Study</li> </ul>
Environmental Mitigation Plans (Section 450.320 – Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of programmatic mitigation plans that may include environmental resource assessments, identification of environmental resources that may be impacted and considered for mitigation, assessment of potential opportunities to improve the overall quality of the identified environmental resources, and adoption or development of standard measures or operating procedures for mitigating impacts</li> <li>• Examples include participation in watershed management assessments and the regional water trails planning effort</li> </ul>



## Other Des Moines Area MPO Contracts as of 2017

The following list outlines MPO activities provided under contract with funding other than traditional dollars received through the US DOT or member assessments. Funds from these contracts help the MPO diversify its revenue stream and reduce the reliance on member assessments.

Note that some activities in this list may also be included in the required list.

- **Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA)** – administer and staff their regional planning affiliation
- **Iowa Department of Public Health** – Speaker Series, data bike, complete streets policy development and education, safe routes to school
- **Iowa Department of Natural Resources** – One time funding for water trails planning and ongoing funding to MPO staff for ongoing coordination
- **Polk Soil and Water Conservation District** – funding to coordinate regional approach to watershed policies
- **Comprehensive Plans** – funding for the development of comprehensive plans
  - Melcher/Dallas Comprehensive Plan
- **Grant Writing** – contract to assist in grant writing services
  - Martensdale USDA grant application
- **Sidewalk Facilitation** – funding to facilitate the community conversation and to assist in technical aspects of developing sidewalk ordinances
  - City of Carlisle
  - City of Windsor Heights
- **Wellmark Foundation** – two rounds of funding from the foundation’s Community Health Grant Program
  - Round 1: Complete Streets mini-grant program
  - Round 2: Step It Up Program infrastructure funding
- **AARP Assistance** – funding to produce custom maps and prepare technical documents
- **Boone County Trails** – funding to develop a county trails plan
- **Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation** – partnership to staff Data Bike deployment



## Requested Services and Needs Unmet by the MPO as of 2017

This section outlines services that have been requested of MPO staff, as well as roles in which the MPO has been suggested as a good fit, yet currently no services are provided.

**This list does not constitute a full list of unmet needs.** A compiled list is being developed by SPPG as part of the outreach process and will be reviewed later in the strategic planning process.

- **Comprehensive Plan Development** – MPO staff has been approached about providing services, yet staff has turned down due to lack of staff capacity.
- **Economic Development District development (via CIRTPA)** – MPO staff was asked by CIRTPA members to explore ability of forming an Economic Development District, an intergovernmental body charged with regional economic development planning required for accessing certain federal funding sources.
- **Regional Planning Support** – at meetings facilitated through the Capital Crossroads Local Government Collaborative, the MPO was identified as a potential resource to assist in developing and/or facilitating the development of regional ordinances/policies via the MPO's Planning Subcommittee. Examples include fireworks, bee keeping, food trucks, urban chickens, AirBnB, restaurant bars/patios, encroachments within the right-of-way, and residential occupancy regulations. The MPO also was proposed as a possible long-term home to the Central Iowa Code Consortium in Capital Crossroads 2.0.
- **Regional Trails Coordination (Including Water Trails)** – provide a more formal process for regional trail maintenance, planning, funding, and marketing to create efficiencies for area jurisdictions. This was identified in the MPO's 2016 performance survey as an effort worth pursuing with the MPO in a lead role.
- **Smart City Preparation** – provide a regional approach to smart city technology implementation to create efficiencies for area jurisdictions.
- **Utility Coordination** – facilitate the discussion among utility providers and area jurisdictions to coordinate utility construction and maintenance. This was identified in the MPO's 2016 performance survey as an effort worth pursuing with the MPO in a lead role.
- **Post Construction Erosion Inspection Policy** – facilitate the development of policies to provide regional consistency in the inspection of construction site erosion control and enforcement of violations.
- **Regional Bike/Ped Coordinator** – share resources among member government to hire an expert in bike/pedestrian needs, infrastructure, and policy to advise and support local governments.

- **Urban Wildlife Partnership** – support area government entities in engagement with US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **ADA Transition Planning** – support member government requirements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Legislative and Policy Efforts** – the MPO’s 2016 performance survey identified legislative and policy involvement on MPO-related topics as an effort worth pursuing with the MPO in a lead role.
- **Data/GIS Repository** – the MPO’s 2016 performance survey identified the MPO serving as a regional clearinghouse for data and GIS information as an effort worth pursuing.
- **Growth Management** – the MPO’s 2016 performance survey identified an increased role in regional growth management as a an effort worth pursuing. Capital Crossroads 2.0 mentions the MPO as one of several entities that could assist in studying growth management tools not currently available in Iowa.



# Needs Assessment Summary

*June 28, 2017*

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The MPO's strategic planning process includes a significant array of inputs designed to provide internal and external information for consideration of the Steering Committee members as they develop the plan. These opportunities for input include:

- Steering Committee Meeting Discussions
- Steering Committee SWOT/PEST Discussion
- Steering Committee Federally Funded Requirements and Whiteboard Activity
- Steering Committee Discussions of Regional Collaborative Efforts
- 55 Individual Interviews Conducted by SPPG
- Six Topic Group Discussions Conducted by SPPG

From the various activities and input opportunities taken as a whole, five themes emerged.

- » MPO is a natural convener with its members from throughout the region.
- » Community and regional economic growth and success is a common ultimate goal.
- » Transportation planning and allocations must be strategic and consider related factors.
- » MPO is welcomed as a collaborator in regional initiatives.
- » There is a leadership void for some regional issues and services in the area.

The following pages illustrate the key inputs for each of the five themes. A sample of the inputs related to each theme are aligned with which type of activity elicited the comment. For example for each theme, you may see inputs arising from the SWOT/PEST, some from individual conversations, etc.

In this way, it is clear the origin of various inputs elicited through the planning process. This information can be applied by the Steering Committee in its deliberations on vision, mission, goals, strategies, and other decisions related to the strategic plan.

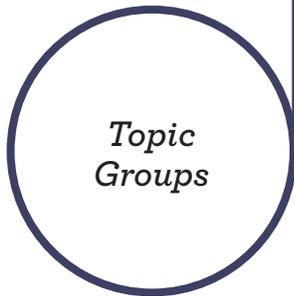
# 1

## MPO is a natural convener with its members from throughout the region.

Regional planning and transportation organization  
 Conduit for funds  
 MPO is best board for regional collaboration  
 Provides consistency on transportation issues in the region  
 Water trails system has been beneficial  
 Staff does a great job

Includes 10 planning factors and specific work products  
 PF 2: Safety of system for motorized and non-motorized users  
 PF 5: Protect & enhance...growth and economic development patterns  
 PF 6: Enhance integration and connectivity of system  
 PF 8: Preservation of existing system  
 PF9: Resiliency & reliability of system & mitigate stormwater impacts  
 Metropolitan Transportation Plan  
 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)  
 Public Participation Plan  
 Congestion Management Process  
 Passenger Transportation Plan

MPO has unique access to convene decision makers and test ideas.  
 MPO has greatest footprint with reach into communities. Natural to convene drinking water discussions.  
 MPO is necessary and brings influence of elected officials.  
 MPO focus on moving people and things around.  
 If there are additional needs, MPO should be part of the work.  
 MPO could convene and facilitate work to implement Tomorrow Plan.



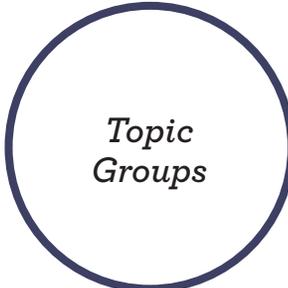
Strong regional collaboration  
 MPO facilitates discussions among jurisdictions  
 Brings people together to discuss ideas for the region  
 Repository of information  
 Staff willing to help; strong skills

Neutral, trusted convener  
 Has access to all key parties and communities  
 A leader in the area  
 Change is driving regionalization;  
 MPO is good at this

\* Activities Matrix refers to the sticky-note and whiteboard activity completed to identify activities that are federally required, provided, special contracts, or requested but not provided. It also includes the federally required activities summary.

# 2

## Community and regional economic growth and success is a common ultimate goal.



MPO increasingly focuses on return on investment.  
MPO recognizes assets of different communities.  
Transportation helps attract people to the region.

Collaborative organizations focused on economic growth and success:  
Greater Des Moines Partnership  
Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Capital Crossroads and 2.0  
CIRTPA

MPO can bring people together to allow communities to be Thriving Communities.  
Workforce attraction and retention cut across all topics to ultimate goal of community and economic development.  
Workforce, housing, and infrastructure are top 3 issues for economic development.  
Workforce attraction is at least a regional issue.  
MPO should be helping plan and fund paved and water trails, especially with small cities.  
Watershed related issues are part of quality of life.

CIRTPA serves non-MPO counties and communities.  
PF 1- economic vitality of metro area  
PF 5: Protect & enhance...growth and economic development patterns  
PF 10: Enhance travel & tourism

Common ultimate goals for economic development is a priority.  
Workforce is critical.  
Skilled workforce is challenging.  
Housing impacts economic growth and success.  
Education/schools are critical for community success.

\* Activities Matrix refers to the sticky-note and whiteboard activity completed to identify activities that are federally required, provided, special contracts, or requested but not provided. It also includes the federally required activities summary.



# 3

## Transportation planning and allocations must be strategic and consider related factors.

### Steering Committee

MPO is effective at promoting the common good (sometimes hard to define).

Everyone is involved for best interests of the region.

### SWOT/PEST

MPO puts historical context around current projects.

MPO has good data for decision making.

Challenge for some to represent the region and set aside their local jurisdiction's interests.

MPO should expand its funding beyond a roadway and determine criteria for investment.

Technology changes will impact transportation in ways we don't yet know.

### Activities Matrix\*

CIRTPA serves non-MPO areas and must also be strategic.

PF 4: Accessibility and mobility of people & freight

PF 5: Protect & enhance... growth and economic development patterns

PF 7: Promote efficient system mgmt and operation

PF 8: Preservation of existing system

### Individual Interviews

MPO thinks big picture.

MPO thinks regionally.

MPO leaders collaborate.

MPO understands urgency and timing.

Consider amenities, quality of life, recreation when planning.

Technology will impact transportation priorities.

Impact on public health should be considered.

CIRTPA is a collaboration of smaller and more rural cities.

Wastewater Reclamation Authority is an effective collaboration

### Collaboration

Consider public health in all policy: obesity, safe roads and crossings; Safe Routes to Schools, connected trails inside communities.

Workforce attraction and retention cut across all topics to ultimate goal of community and economic development.

Housing choices need to match demographics of the workforce in all subareas of the metro.

MPO can support a sense of neighborhood through its planning and funding work.

Consider land use far into the future.

Quality of life amenities keeps the area competitive in workforce attraction.

MPO involvement in public education with regional lens: latest research, best practices on land use, transportation related topics, etc.

Jobs and transportation go hand in hand.

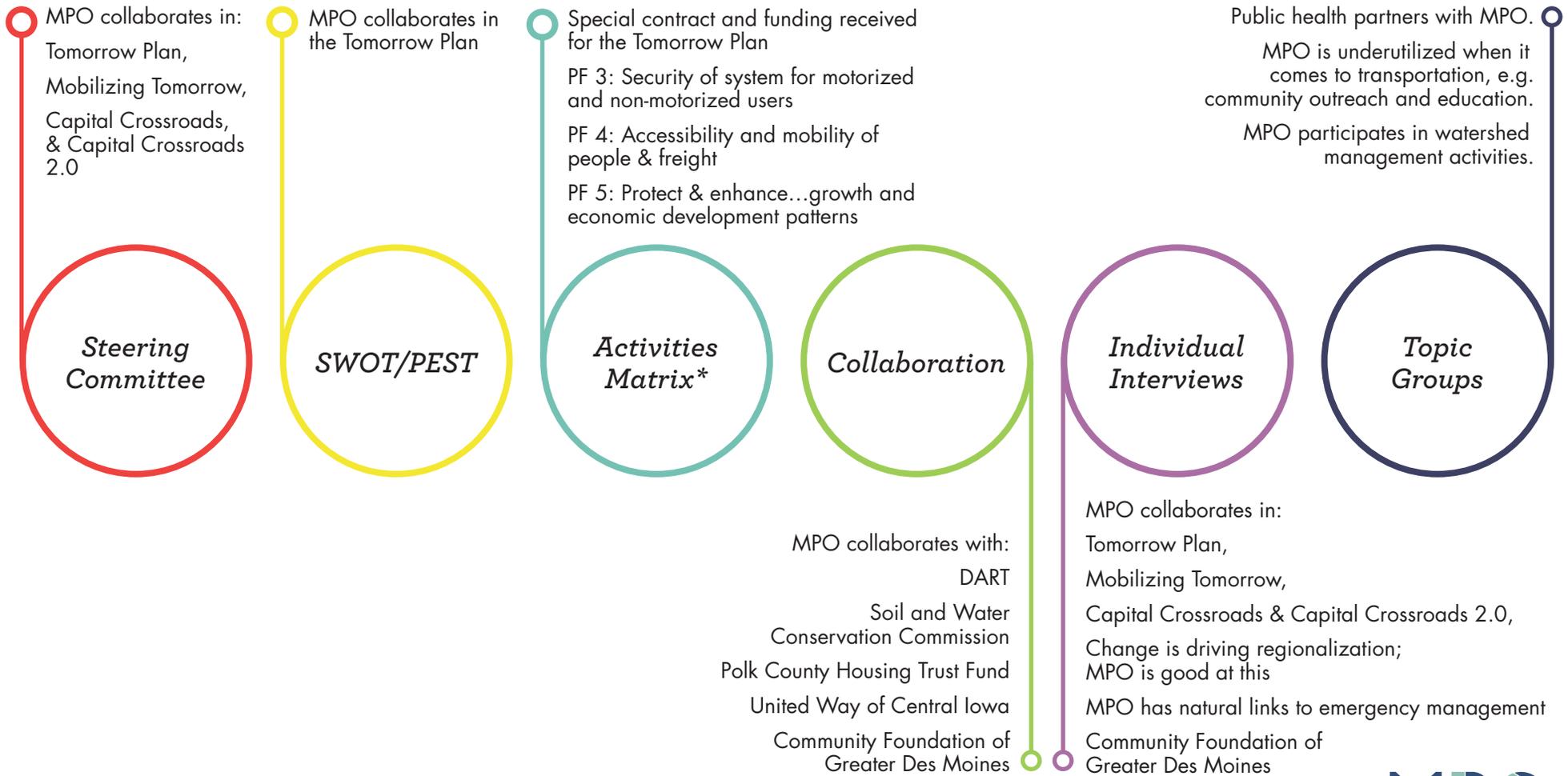
Aging population wants to age in place. Need to build sense of community to help.

Connect dots between transportation, watershed management, and water quality.

Paved trails and water trails are inextricably linked and should be considered together in a system.

# 4

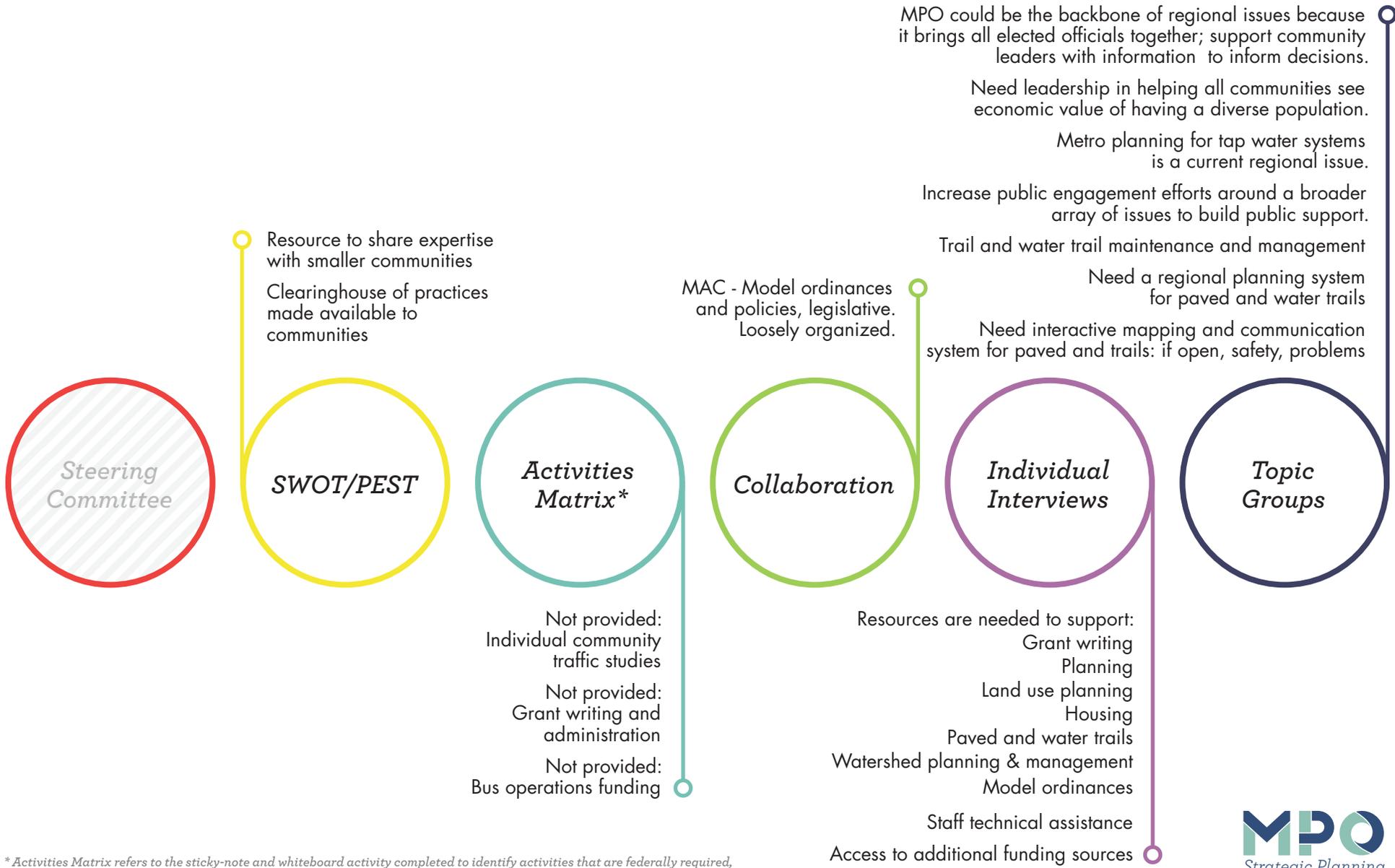
## MPO is welcomed as a collaborator in regional initiatives.



\* Activities Matrix refers to the sticky-note and whiteboard activity completed to identify activities that are federally required, provided, special contracts, or requested but not provided. It also includes the federally required activities summary.

# 5

## There is a leadership void for some regional issues and services in the area.



\* Activities Matrix refers to the sticky-note and whiteboard activity completed to identify activities that are federally required, provided, special contracts, or requested but not provided. It also includes the federally required activities summary.



# FINAL REPORT

## Strategic Planning Survey

July 2017

Conducted by



**Central Surveys, Inc.**

a **DSRA** company  
Decision Sciences Research Associates, Inc.

## Contents

Background, Data Collection, Sample	3
Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities	9
Importance of Improving and Expanding Options for Community Activities	25
Importance of Collaborating on Common Issues	40
MPO's Role in Coordinating Activities	55
Preferred Methods for Paying for Services	68
Summary of Findings/Conclusions	74
Appendix	78



# Background & Methodology

## Strategic Planning Survey



**Central Surveys, Inc.**

a **DSRA** company  
Decision Sciences Research Associates, Inc.

## Background

- The Strategic Planning Committee of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is gathering feedback to consider when developing the MPO's priorities, focus, and strategic plan. MPO is a formal organization through the Iowa legal process. The organization consists of 50 members representing cities, towns and counties across Iowa. Specifically, the organization is interested in the services that are available to communities and seeks to understand if there are unmet needs or ways of collaborating that would benefit central Iowa.
- MPO commissioned Central Surveys, a DSRA company, to conduct an online survey to gather information from community representatives throughout Iowa. The information gathered is necessary to complete the following objectives of this study:
  - Identify what needs are currently being met and what resources are used to meet those needs.
  - Assess the importance of expanding or improving current services offered or not offered.
  - Determine the most preferred way of paying for offered services.
  - Identify the importance of collaboration or an inter-jurisdictional strategic approach for delivering various services.
  - Assess communities' preference for MPO's role in delivering services to the community.
- Information from this study will assist MPO in distributing resources to best meet community needs.

## Data Collection

- To gather information to complete the objectives of this research, information was gathered from elected officials, appointed individuals, staff and representatives via an online survey.
- The survey was conducted from June 20th to July 3rd of 2017.
- The online questionnaire covered the following topics:
  - How Community Needs Are Met- Participants were asked to identify if their community accomplishes various community activities and services by using either internal capacity, shared services, professional associations, contract services or the service is not applicable to their community.
  - Importance of Expanding/Improving Activities – Participants were asked to rate the importance of expanding or improving various community services and activities.
  - Paying for Activities – Participants were asked to rank, in order of preference, methods for paying for various community activities and services.
  - Collaboration Efforts – Participants were asked to rate the importance of using a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach to address various community needs.
  - MPO Role – Participants were asked about the role MPO should play in delivering community services and activities.
  - Respondent information – Participants were asked about the jurisdiction they represent, the role they have in decisions for their jurisdiction and membership status in MPO and CIRTPA.

## Sample

- MPO provided a list of community officials to which invitations to complete the survey were sent via email. Approximately 653 invitations were emailed. Of those, 141 individuals completed the survey (21.6%). The margin of error for a sample size of 141 is +/- 8.2% (see appendix for margins of errors for smaller samples).
- Of Iowa's 3.1 million residents, the counties represented in this study account for 26% of the total population. Geographically, individuals participating in this study represent the following counties:

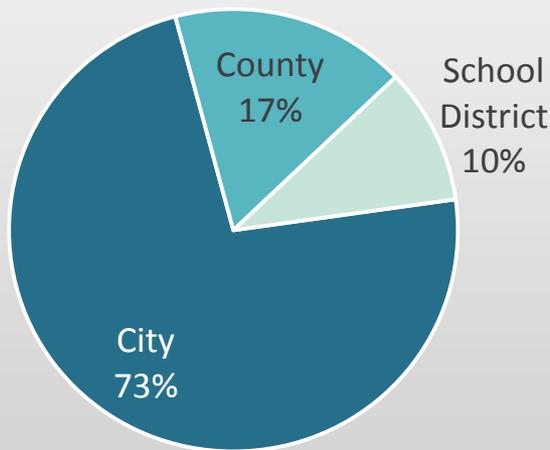
	Population <sup>1</sup>		Sample	
	2016 Population Estimate	% of Iowa Population	Sample Count	% of Sample
Polk	474,045	15%	30	21.3%
Dallas	84,516	3%	20	14.2%
Story	97,090	3%	19	13.5%
Jasper	36,708	1%	16	11.3%
Warren	49,691	2%	16	11.3%
Boone	26,532	1%	10	7.1%
Marion	33,189	1%	9	6.4%
Polk/Dallas/Warren			9	6.4%
Polk/Warren			8	5.7%
Madison	15,848	1%	4	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>817,619</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Participant Profile

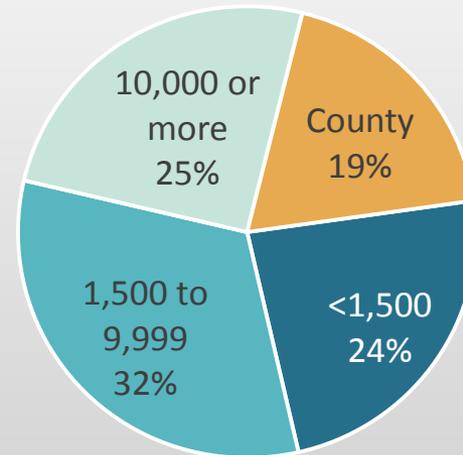
- Most participants in this study represent city level jurisdictions (73%). City populations range from under 1,500 to over 50,000. About one-third of city populations are over 10,000 (31%).

Type of Jurisdiction



Source: Q7. For which type of jurisdiction do you work?  
(n=141)

City Population

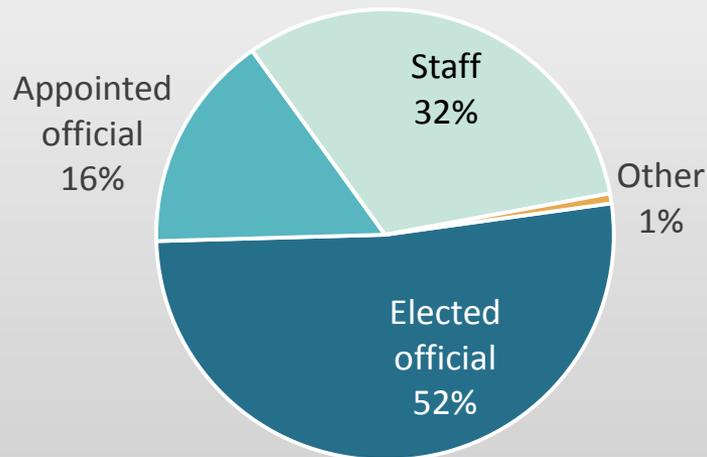


Source: Q8. What is the population of your jurisdiction?  
(n=127, school districts omitted)

## Participant Profile Continued

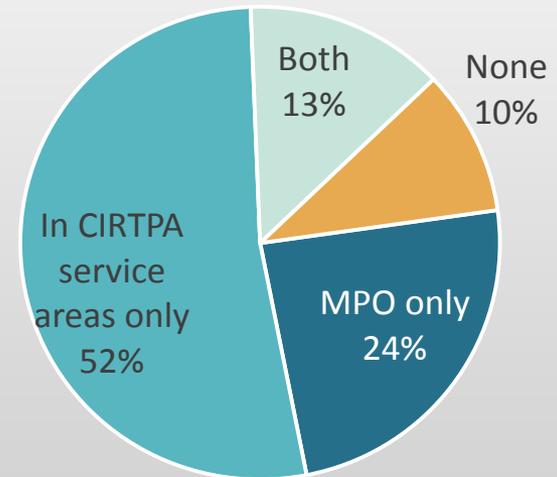
- Most participants in this study are elected officials (52%). MPO members account for 24 percent of participants and CIRTPA members account for 52 percent. Approximately 13 percent of participants are members of both organizations.

Position with Jurisdiction



Source: Q9. Which best describes your position with your jurisdiction?  
(n=141)

Member Affiliation



Source: Q10/Q11. Is your jurisdiction a member of the MPO/ Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA)?  
(n=141)



# Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities

## Strategic Planning Survey



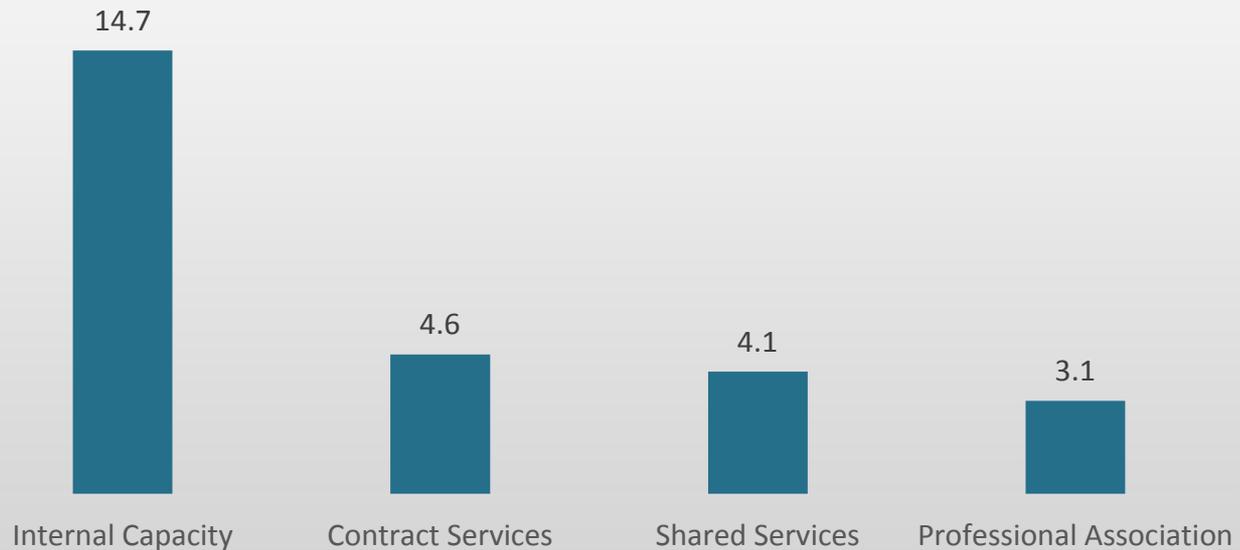
## List of Community Activities Queried About

- Participants in this study were asked, “Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.” In total, the survey queried respondents about 24 different community activities shown below (random order).

1. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance planning
2. Administrating contracts
3. Annual budget development
4. Ordinance development
5. Procurement
6. Neighborhood planning
7. Site planning
8. Consultant solicitation, selection, and management
9. Population and employment forecasting
10. Business incentive programs
11. Comprehensive planning
12. Emergency preparedness and planning
13. GIS (Geographic Information System) services
14. Grant writing and management
15. Housing programs
16. Transit planning (vanpools, rideshare, paratransit, route planning, etc.)
17. Urban renewal planning (required for TIF)
18. Transportation planning
19. Safe routes to school planning
20. Watershed planning
21. Corridor planning
22. Zoning code updates
23. Zoning code enforcement
24. Public participation

## Average Number of Activities Accomplished Using Indicated Resources

- On average, 14.7 of the 24 of the community activities tested are achieved using internal resources (61%). Contract services are used for 4.6 services, on average (19%). Professional associations are the least used resource with an average of 3.1 activities tied to this resource (13%).



Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(n=141)

## Average Number of Different Resources Used to Accomplish Activities

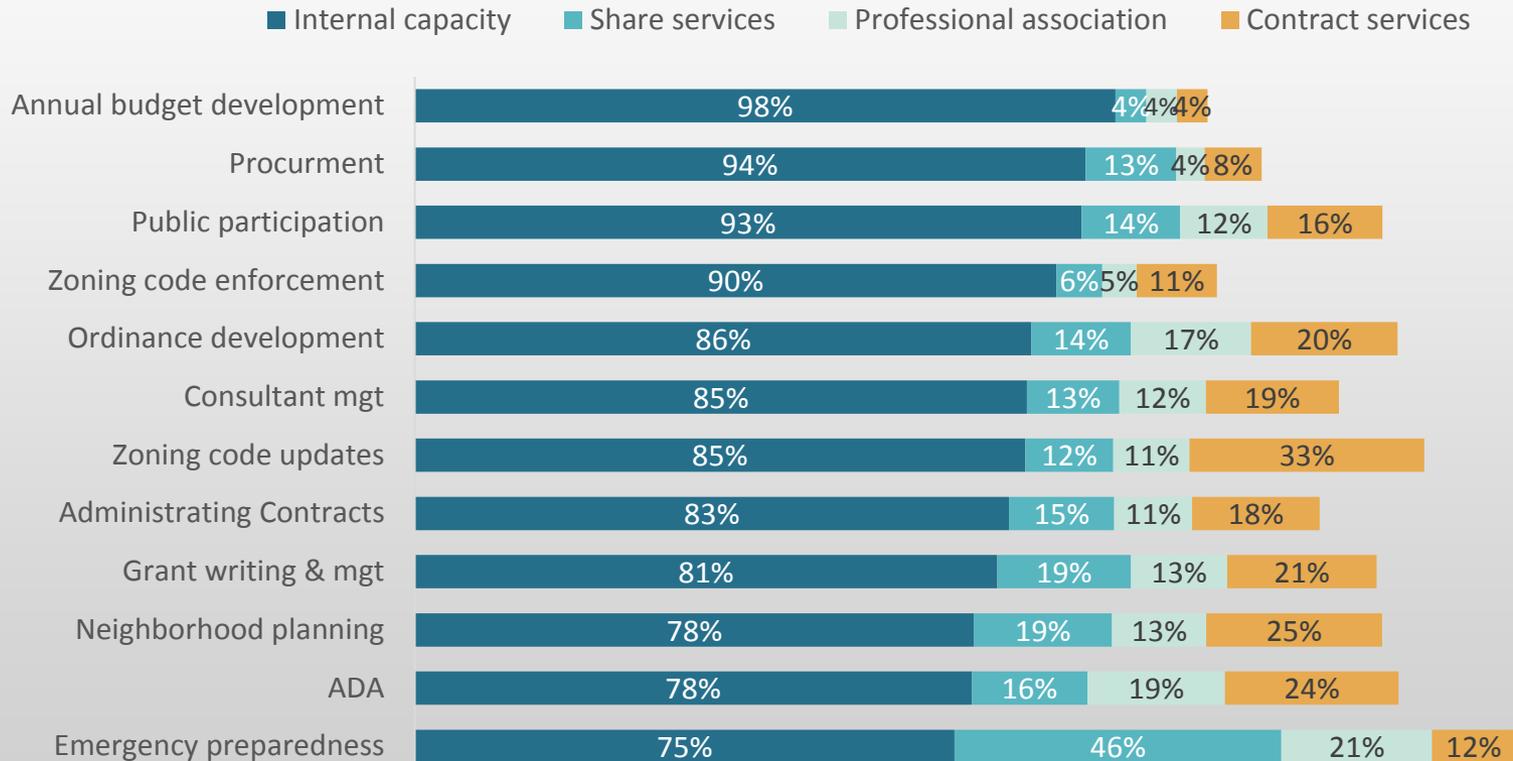
- Jurisdictions are more likely to use multiple resources (of the four tested) to accomplish activities related to watershed, emergency preparedness, corridor planning, transportation planning and comprehensive planning.

Activity	Average Resources Used	Activity	Average Resources Used
Watershed planning	1.6	Public participation	1.4
Emergency preparedness	1.5	Grant writing & management	1.3
Transportation planning	1.5	Transit planning	1.3
Corridor planning	1.5	Housing programs	1.3
Comprehensive planning	1.5	Site planning	1.3
Urban renewal planning	1.4	Population employment forecasting	1.3
Zoning code updates	1.4	Consultant mgmt.	1.3
Safe routes to school planning	1.4	Business incentive programs	1.3
GIS Services	1.4	Administrating Contracts	1.3
Ordinance development	1.4	Procurement	1.2
ADA	1.4	Zoning code enforcement	1.1
Neighborhood planning	1.4	Annual budget development	1.1

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(n=141)

## Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities % of Those Offering

- Most respondents report using internal resources to accomplish most of their communities' activities. The exceptions are watershed planning, population/employment forecasting and transit planning.
- Shared services are used mostly for emergency preparedness (46%), watershed planning (42%) and housing programs (41%).

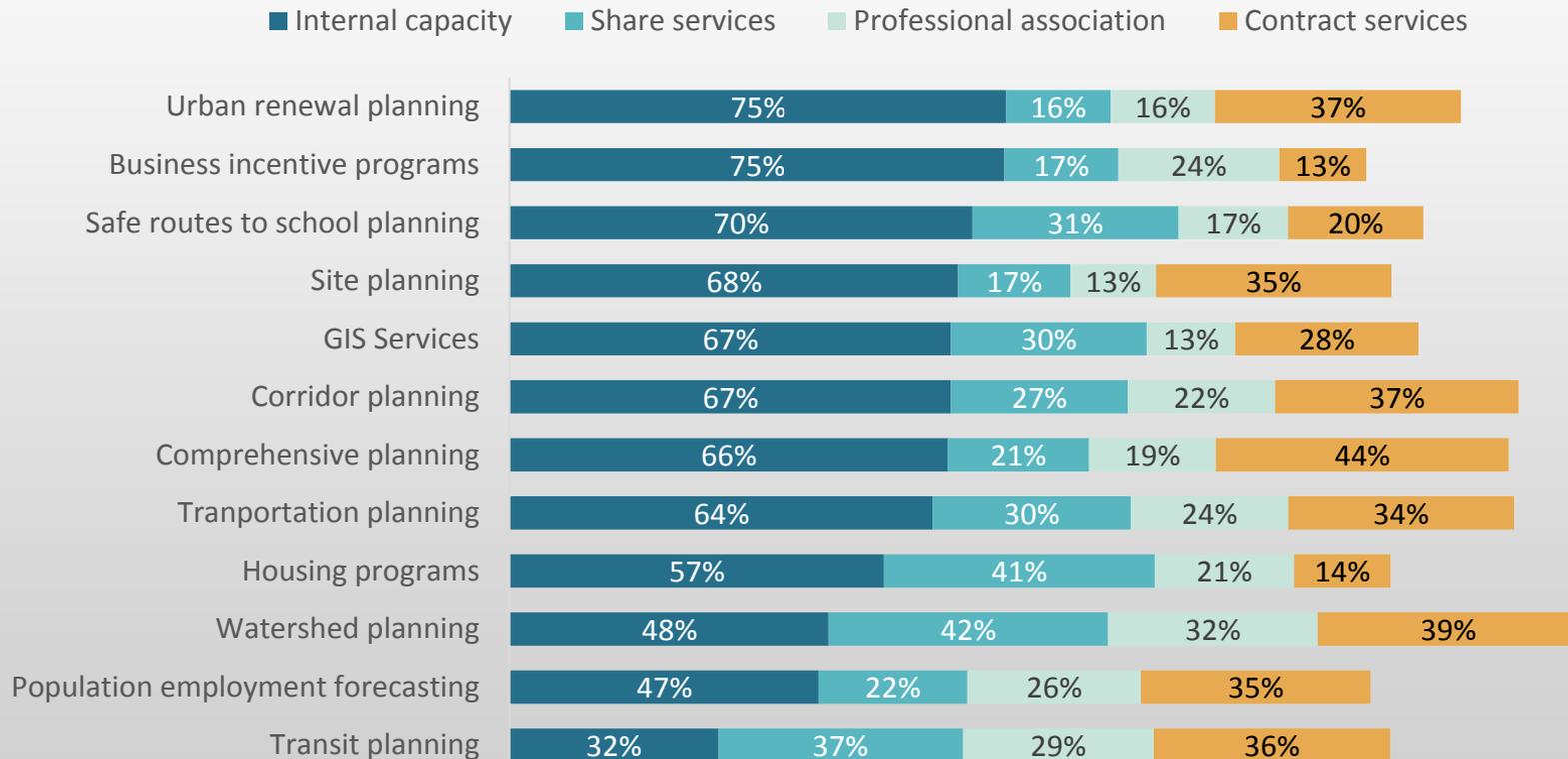


Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(min n = 73, max n = 140)

# Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities

## % of Those Offering Continued

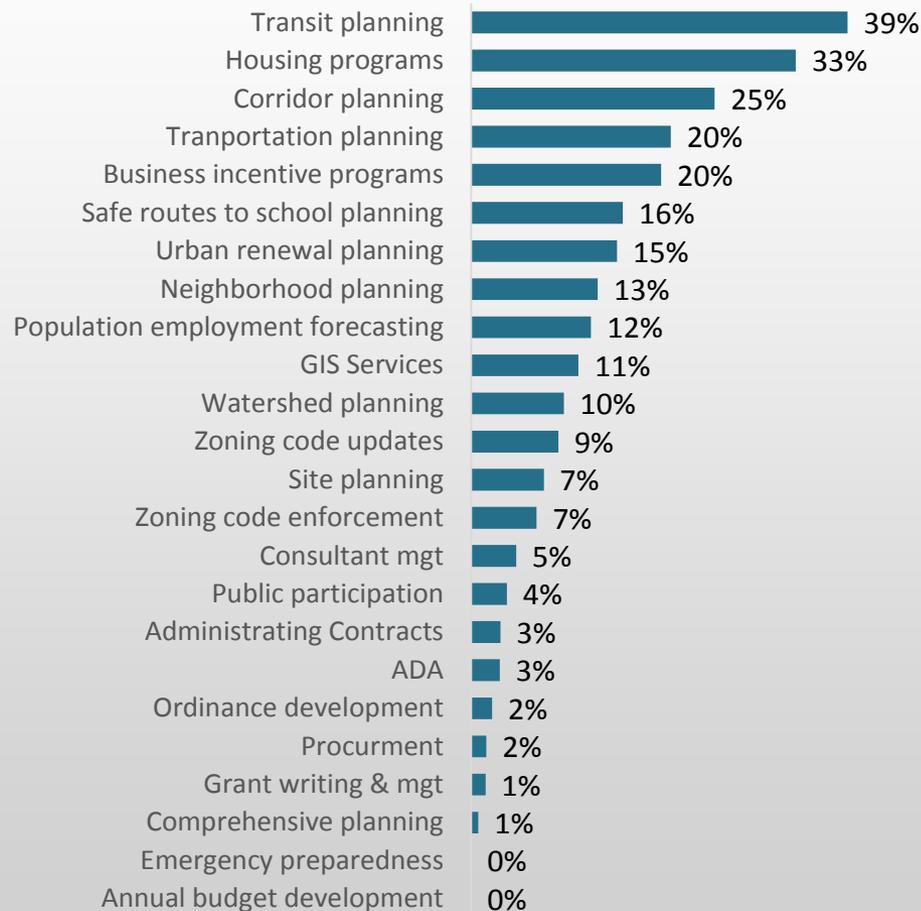
- Contract services are used for a wide variety of activities, but mostly for comprehensive planning (44%).
- Professional associations are the least used resource for accomplishing community activities.



Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(min n = 73, max n = 140)

## Services “Not Applicable” to Communities

- *Transit planning, housing programs, transportation planning, business incentive programs and corridor planning are activities least likely to be applicable to communities.*



Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(min n = 102, max n = 140)

## Average Number of Activities Using Indicated Resources by City Population

- Regardless of size, cities use internal resources to accomplish more activities than any other resource. Cities with higher populations use contract and share services for more activities than smaller cities.



Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
 (n= <1.5k=30, 1.5k-9.9k=41, 10k +=32, county = 24, school districts omitted) Use caution interpreting results due to low bases.

## Services “Not Applicable” to Communities by City Population

- *Transit planning, housing programs* are services least likely to be applicable to cities of all sizes, but especially smaller cities (<10,000 population).
- *Urban renewal and neighborhood planning* are also least likely to be applicable to larger cities (populations of 10,000 or more).

	<1,500	1,500 - 9,999	10,000 +	County
Transit planning	50%	44%	28%	32%
Housing programs	31%	38%	14%	33%
Corridor planning	26%	27%	10%	28%
Transportation planning	29%	27%	19%	5%
Business incentive programs	30%	14%	0%	29%
Safe routes to school planning	22%	11%	10%	32%
Population employment forecasting	21%	13%	0%	24%
Neighborhood planning	7%	8%	3%	38%
Urban renewal planning	7%	8%	3%	39%
Site planning	10%	5%	0%	23%
Watershed planning	14%	5%	4%	10%
GIS Services	23%	3%	0%	4%
Zoning code updates	13%	5%	3%	10%
Consultant mgt	14%	3%	3%	0%
Zoning code enforcement	7%	5%	0%	10%

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.

(min n <1.5k=21, 1.5k-9.9k=29, 10k+=21, county = 14, max n <1.5k=30, 1.5k-9.9k=41, 10k+=32, county = 24)

Use caution interpreting results due to low bases.

## Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities Among Cities with Populations Under 1,500

- Small cities are least likely to use internal capacity for *GIS services, transit planning, watershed planning* and *housing programs*. They are more likely to use contract services for *corridor planning* and *transportation planning*. Share services are mostly used for *emergency preparedness*.

Population < 1,500		Resources Used				Resources Used			
Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.	Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.
Annual budget development	93%	0%	7%	7%	Ordinance development	80%	17%	10%	20%
Public participation	93%	11%	11%	4%	Business incentive programs	76%	10%	10%	29%
Procurement	92%	12%	8%	4%	Transportation planning	75%	45%	25%	25%
Zoning code updates	88%	23%	8%	12%	Urban renewal planning	74%	22%	7%	26%
Consultant mgt	88%	13%	4%	13%	Site planning	73%	27%	8%	15%
Grant writing & mgt	86%	10%	10%	17%	GIS Services	70%	25%	30%	10%
Safe routes to school planning	86%	33%	14%	14%	Population employment forecasting	68%	27%	9%	32%
Zoning code enforcement	86%	11%	7%	7%	Emergency preparedness	67%	10%	43%	17%
Neighborhood planning	85%	19%	15%	7%	Comprehensive planning	66%	38%	14%	21%
ADA	84%	32%	0%	16%	Housing programs	61%	17%	22%	22%
Administrating Contracts	81%	15%	11%	11%	Watershed planning	54%	33%	38%	42%
Corridor planning	80%	45%	20%	15%	Transit planning	36%	21%	43%	36%

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.

(min n = 14 max n = 30) Use caution interpreting due to low bases. May total to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

## Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities Among Cities with Populations Between 1,500 and 10,000

- Cities with populations of less than 10,000 are least likely to use internal capacity for *watershed planning*, *transit planning* and *population/employment forecasting*. Contract services and professional associations are used mostly for transit planning. Share services are used mostly for emergency preparedness and housing programs.

Population 1,500-10,000		Resources Used				Resources Used			
Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.	Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.
Annual budget development	100%	5%	0%	7%	Urban renewal planning	70%	49%	14%	19%
Procurement	95%	8%	5%	5%	Site planning	68%	45%	8%	16%
Ordinance development	93%	20%	13%	15%	Comprehensive planning	68%	41%	20%	20%
Public participation	93%	18%	13%	13%	Emergency preparedness	68%	7%	49%	32%
Zoning code enforcement	87%	13%	5%	10%	GIS Services	58%	23%	23%	13%
Consultant mgt	87%	10%	13%	10%	Safe routes to school planning	56%	22%	31%	13%
Administrating Contracts	84%	19%	19%	16%	Corridor planning	56%	37%	22%	30%
Grant writing & mgt	82%	21%	21%	10%	Transportation planning	48%	30%	30%	22%
Business incentive programs	78%	9%	13%	28%	Housing programs	48%	4%	48%	26%
ADA	75%	25%	21%	18%	Population employment forecasting	45%	27%	27%	21%
Zoning code updates	74%	38%	15%	15%	Watershed planning	35%	38%	27%	35%
Neighborhood planning	71%	26%	17%	20%	Transit planning	15%	10%	40%	40%

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(min n = 20, max n = 41) Use caution interpreting due to low bases. May total to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

## Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities Among Cities with Populations of 10,000 or More

- Larger cities with populations of 10,000 or more are least likely to use internal capacity for *transit planning* and *population/employment forecasting*. For these services they mostly use contract services.

Population 10,00 or more		Resources Used				Resources Used			
Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.	Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.
Annual budget development	97%	9%	3%	0%	Ordinance development	81%	28%	9%	9%
Public participation	97%	21%	10%	17%	Corridor planning	81%	42%	27%	15%
Zoning code enforcement	94%	6%	6%	0%	Emergency preparedness	80%	13%	53%	10%
Procurement	93%	7%	14%	0%	ADA	76%	32%	12%	12%
Safe routes to school planning	88%	19%	38%	15%	Site planning	70%	30%	20%	7%
Zoning code updates	87%	37%	17%	7%	Transportation planning	67%	33%	43%	19%
Grant writing & mgt	87%	27%	13%	13%	Administrating Contracts	67%	27%	17%	7%
Urban renewal planning	86%	39%	21%	4%	Watershed planning	63%	52%	67%	30%
Housing programs	83%	22%	33%	6%	GIS Services	61%	32%	32%	14%
Neighborhood planning	83%	31%	14%	3%	Comprehensive planning	58%	58%	23%	19%
Consultant mgt	82%	14%	7%	14%	Population employment forecasting	46%	46%	27%	19%
Business incentive programs	81%	11%	26%	22%	Transit planning	44%	44%	39%	17%

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(min n = 18, max n = 32) Use caution interpreting due to low bases. May total to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

## Resources Used to Accomplish Community Activities Among County Level Jurisdictions

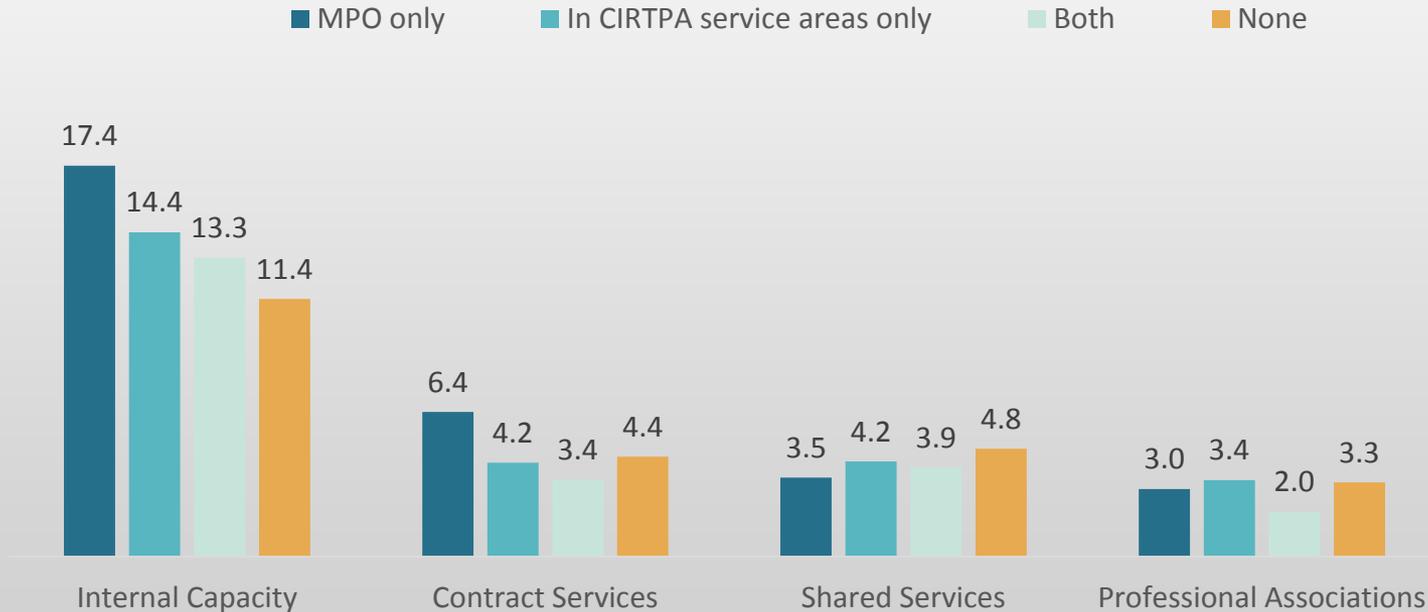
- County level jurisdictions are least likely to use internal capacity for *transit planning*. For this service they mostly use contract services. Share services are mostly used for *housing programs* and *watershed planning* while professional associations are most used for *population/employment forecasting*.

County	Resources Used					Resources Used			
Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.	Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.
Zoning code updates	100%	32%	11%	5%	Urban renewal planning	82%	18%	18%	0%
Zoning code enforcement	100%	11%	11%	0%	ADA	72%	6%	28%	22%
Procurment	100%	8%	13%	4%	Grant writing & mgt	71%	25%	33%	13%
Annual budget development	100%	0%	8%	0%	Comprehensive planning	68%	50%	23%	14%
Public participation	96%	21%	17%	17%	Transportation planning	67%	28%	28%	33%
Administrating Contracts	96%	13%	13%	8%	Corridor planning	54%	15%	31%	31%
Emergency preparedness	92%	21%	33%	13%	Watershed planning	50%	39%	44%	11%
Ordinance development	92%	17%	25%	21%	Business incentive programs	50%	17%	25%	17%
GIS Services	91%	32%	27%	9%	Population employment forecasting	38%	38%	15%	54%
Site planning	88%	24%	24%	18%	Safe routes to school planning	38%	0%	38%	31%
Consultant mgt	86%	24%	29%	5%	Housing programs	33%	8%	50%	25%
Neighborhood planning	85%	15%	31%	31%	Transit planning	0%	62%	31%	23%

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(min n = 11, max n = 24) Use caution interpreting due to low bases. May total to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

## Average Number of Activities Using Indicated Resources by Organization Membership Status

- MPO only members use internal resources and contract services for more activities than exclusive in CIRTPA service areas.



Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
 (n: MPO only member=34, in CIRTPA service area only=74, both=19, non-member=14) Use caution in interpreting due to low bases.

## How MPO Member Communities Accomplish Activities

- The table below shows the percent of respondents who report activities are accomplished via indicated resources among all MPO members (including those who are members of both MPO and in CIRTPA service areas). Internal resources are least likely to be used for transit planning, where contract services or share services are mainly used.

All MPO Members		Resources Used				Resources Used			
Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.	Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.
Annual budget development	98%	4%	2%	0%	Neighborhood planning	78%	29%	12%	15%
Public participation	96%	26%	6%	17%	GIS Services	77%	32%	23%	14%
Procurement	96%	2%	8%	0%	Business incentive programs	76%	15%	15%	15%
Zoning code enforcement	94%	12%	4%	4%	Transportation planning	75%	33%	40%	20%
Consultant mgt	88%	8%	10%	10%	Safe routes to school planning	74%	18%	31%	13%
Zoning code updates	88%	38%	10%	10%	Corridor planning	73%	41%	27%	19%
Ordinance development	87%	28%	9%	17%	Site planning	72%	32%	11%	13%
Emergency preparedness	85%	15%	40%	15%	Comprehensive planning	67%	55%	20%	16%
Grant writing & mgt	83%	21%	13%	8%	Watershed planning	59%	52%	41%	24%
Urban renewal planning	80%	44%	12%	7%	Housing programs	57%	14%	36%	14%
Administrating Contracts	78%	22%	16%	10%	Population employment forecasting	53%	40%	20%	25%
ADA	78%	24%	14%	22%	Transit planning	31%	41%	41%	17%

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities. (min. n=28, max n=53) Use caution in interpreting due to low bases.

## How Members in CIRTPA Service Areas Accomplish Activities

- The table below shows the percent of respondents in CIRTPA service areas who report activities are accomplished via indicated resources (including those who are members of both MPO and in CIRTPA service areas). Internal resources are least likely to be used for transit planning, where professional associations, contract services or share services are mainly used.

All MPO Members		Resources Used				Resources Used			
Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.	Activities	Internal capacity	Contract services	Share services	Prof. Assoc.
Annual budget development	98%	3%	4%	5%	Urban renewal planning	73%	30%	18%	16%
Procurement	94%	11%	10%	5%	Site planning	72%	32%	15%	14%
Public participation	93%	12%	14%	10%	Business incentive programs	69%	9%	23%	28%
Zoning code enforcement	89%	10%	8%	5%	GIS Services	64%	26%	29%	10%
Ordinance development	86%	15%	17%	14%	Safe routes to school planning	64%	20%	32%	18%
Zoning code updates	85%	30%	14%	9%	Corridor planning	61%	32%	27%	24%
Administrating Contracts	84%	14%	14%	10%	Comprehensive planning	61%	42%	22%	18%
Consultant mgt	80%	16%	18%	10%	Housing programs	57%	10%	39%	24%
Neighborhood planning	78%	19%	20%	14%	Transportation planning	57%	32%	27%	27%
Grant writing & mgt	78%	21%	21%	17%	Population employment forecasting	47%	30%	22%	31%
ADA	74%	20%	18%	14%	Watershed planning	42%	33%	45%	32%
Emergency preparedness	73%	11%	43%	18%	Transit planning	19%	30%	33%	37%

Source: Q1. Tell us how your community accomplishes each of the following types of activities.  
(min. n=43, max n=93)



# Importance of Improving and Expanding Options for Community Activities

## Strategic Planning Survey



**Central Surveys, Inc.**

a **DSRA** company  
Decision Sciences Research Associates, Inc.

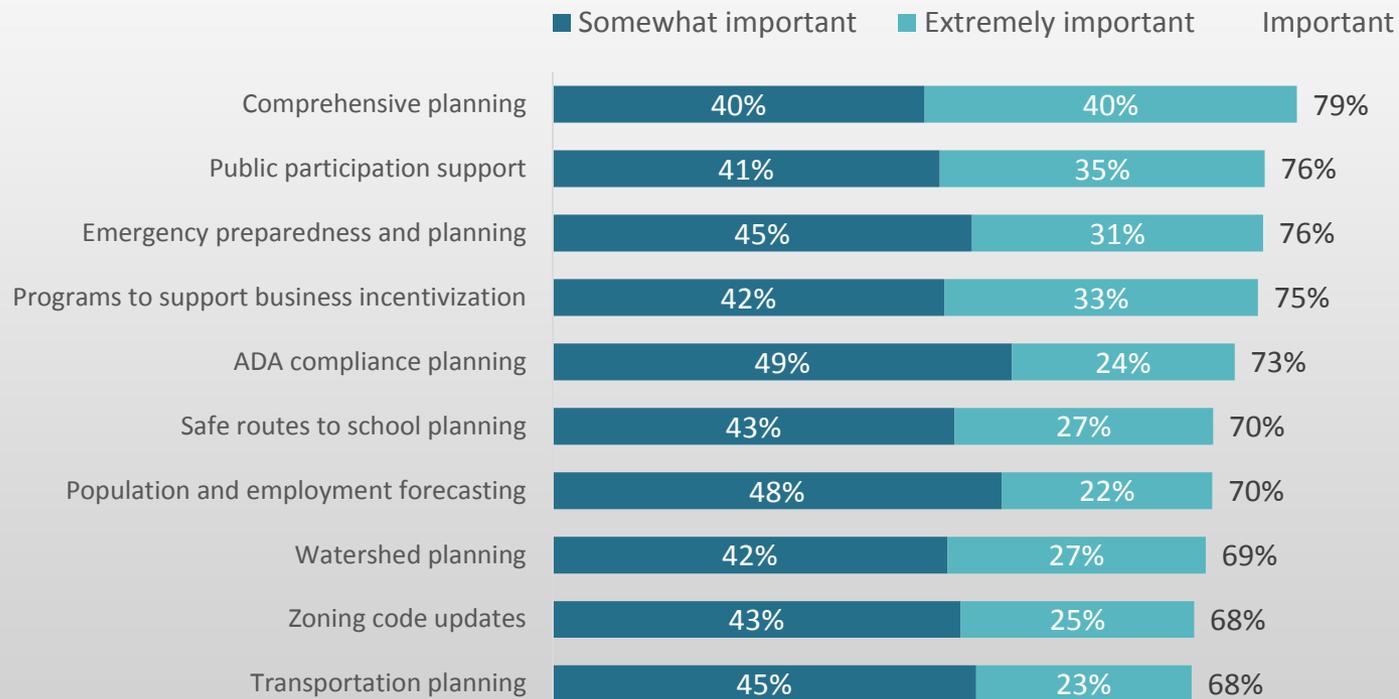
## List of Community Activities Queried About

- Participants in this study were asked, “For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options.” In total, the survey queried respondents about 24 different community activities shown below (random order). Respondents rated importance on a 4-point scale: 1-not at all important, 2-somewhat unimportant, 3-somewhat important, 4-extremely important.

1. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance planning
2. Administrating contracts
3. Assistance with annual budget development
4. Assistance with ordinance development
5. Procurement services
6. Neighborhood planning
7. Site planning
8. Consultant solicitation, selection, and management
9. Population and employment forecasting
10. Programs to support business incentivization
11. Comprehensive planning
12. Emergency preparedness and planning
13. GIS (Geographic Information System) services
14. Grant writing and management
15. Housing programs
16. Transit planning (vanpools, rideshare, paratransit, route planning, etc.)
17. Urban renewal planning (required for TIF)
18. Transportation planning
19. Safe routes to school planning
20. Watershed planning
21. Corridor planning
22. Zoning code updates
23. Zoning code enforcement
24. Public participation support

## Top Ten Activities Rated Important to Expand/Improve Options

- The chart below shows the percent of respondents who report it is somewhat/extremely important to expand and improve options for activities. In total, *comprehensive planning, public participation support, emergency preparedness and programs to support incentivizing businesses* are the top priorities for improving and expanding options.



Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options?  
(min n=124, max=139)

## Importance of Expanding/Improving Options for All Activities

- The table below shows the percent of respondents who report it is somewhat/extremely important to expand and improve options for activities (ranked by overall importance).

All Respondents		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Comprehensive planning	40%	40%	79%	Zoning code enforcement	40%	25%	66%
Public participation support	41%	35%	76%	Neighborhood planning	41%	24%	65%
Emergency preparedness and planning	45%	31%	76%	GIS services	43%	22%	65%
Programs to support business incentivization	42%	33%	75%	Site planning	43%	20%	64%
ADA compliance planning	49%	24%	73%	Housing programs	42%	20%	62%
Safe routes to school planning	43%	27%	70%	Urban renewal planning	36%	25%	61%
Population and employment forecasting	48%	22%	70%	Administrating contracts	36%	22%	57%
Watershed planning	42%	27%	69%	Transit planning	46%	10%	56%
Zoning code updates	43%	25%	68%	Assistance with ordinance development	34%	16%	50%
Transportation planning	45%	23%	68%	Consultant selection and management	33%	12%	45%
Grant writing and management	41%	25%	67%	Assistance with annual budget development	26%	18%	45%
Corridor planning	46%	20%	66%	Procurement services	35%	8%	43%

Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options?  
(min n=124, max=139)

## Importance of Expanding/Improving Options for All Activities Among Cities with Populations Under 1,500

- *Emergency preparedness, zoning code updates, watershed planning, public participation support are top activities to improve/expand for cities with under 1,500 population sizes. Other important activities include urban renewal planning comprehensive planning and zoning code enforcement.*

City Populations Under 1,500		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Emergency preparedness and planning	63%	20%	83%	Programs to support business incentivization	41%	26%	67%
ADA compliance planning	62%	19%	81%	Urban renewal planning	31%	34%	66%
Zoning code updates	39%	36%	75%	Site planning	36%	29%	64%
Watershed planning	50%	25%	75%	Neighborhood planning	46%	18%	64%
Public participation support	43%	30%	73%	Housing programs	41%	22%	63%
Safe routes to school planning	55%	17%	72%	Administrating contracts	41%	21%	62%
Population and employment forecasting	46%	25%	71%	Grant writing and management	43%	18%	61%
Transportation planning	44%	26%	70%	Assistance with ordinance development	31%	28%	59%
Corridor planning	46%	23%	69%	Assistance with annual budget development	31%	24%	55%
GIS services	50%	19%	69%	Consultant selection and management	38%	15%	54%
Comprehensive planning	38%	31%	69%	Transit planning	42%	8%	50%
Zoning code enforcement	38%	31%	69%	Procurement services	35%	13%	48%

Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options?  
(min n=23, max=20) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.

## Importance of Expanding/Improving Options for All Activities Among Cities with Populations Between 1,500 and 10,000

- Comprehensive planning, public participation support and programs to support business incentivization are top activities to improve/expand for cities with populations between 1,500 to 10,000.

City Populations 1,500 - 10,000		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Public participation support	38%	40%	78%	Emergency preparedness and planning	38%	25%	63%
Comprehensive planning	32%	44%	76%	Zoning code enforcement	37%	24%	61%
Programs to support business incentivization	35%	40%	75%	Population and employment forecasting	40%	20%	60%
Corridor planning	53%	18%	70%	Transportation planning	41%	18%	59%
Safe routes to school planning	38%	31%	69%	Administrating contracts	32%	26%	58%
Site planning	43%	25%	68%	GIS services	38%	18%	55%
Neighborhood planning	41%	26%	67%	Housing programs	37%	17%	54%
ADA compliance planning	46%	21%	67%	Transit planning	38%	10%	49%
Grant writing and management	32%	34%	66%	Assistance with ordinance development	33%	15%	48%
Watershed planning	42%	24%	66%	Procurement services	31%	13%	44%
Urban renewal planning	33%	33%	65%	Consultant selection and management	28%	13%	40%
Zoning code updates	37%	27%	63%	Assistance with annual budget development	23%	15%	38%

Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options?  
(min n=38, max=41)

## Importance of Expanding/Improving Options for All Activities Among Cities with Populations of 10,000 or More

- *Comprehensive planning, programs to support business incentivization, watershed planning and emergency preparedness are top activities to improve/expand for cities with populations of 10,000 or more.*

City Populations 10,000 or more	Importance				Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Comprehensive planning	42%	39%	81%	Grant writing and management	47%	16%	63%
Programs to support business incentivization	53%	23%	77%	Transportation planning	43%	17%	60%
Public participation support	55%	19%	74%	Neighborhood planning	42%	16%	58%
ADA compliance planning	58%	16%	74%	Corridor planning	37%	20%	57%
Emergency preparedness and planning	42%	29%	71%	Site planning	48%	6%	55%
Population and employment forecasting	55%	16%	71%	Transit planning	45%	7%	52%
Safe routes to school planning	50%	17%	67%	Urban renewal planning	35%	16%	52%
Zoning code updates	53%	13%	67%	Administrating contracts	39%	13%	52%
Watershed planning	32%	32%	65%	Assistance with ordinance development	43%	3%	47%
GIS services	42%	23%	65%	Consultant selection and management	42%	0%	42%
Housing programs	47%	17%	63%	Assistance with annual budget development	26%	10%	35%
Zoning code enforcement	50%	13%	63%	Procurement services	33%	0%	33%

Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options?  
(min n=29, max=32)

## Importance of Expanding/Improving Options for All Activities Among County Level Jurisdictions

- *Emergency preparedness, comprehensive planning, GIS services, public participation support, transportation planning, zoning code enforcement/updates, and safe school routes planning are top activities to improve/expand for county level jurisdictions.*

County Level Jurisdictions		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Emergency preparedness and planning	46%	46%	92%	Zoning code enforcement	35%	35%	70%
Comprehensive planning	46%	38%	83%	Corridor planning	55%	15%	70%
GIS services	48%	35%	83%	Safe routes to school planning	37%	32%	68%
Transportation planning	52%	29%	81%	Neighborhood planning	35%	25%	60%
Zoning code updates	50%	30%	80%	Site planning	45%	15%	60%
Public participation support	41%	36%	77%	Housing programs	50%	10%	60%
Watershed planning	50%	27%	77%	Consultant selection and management	30%	25%	55%
Grant writing and management	54%	21%	75%	Administrating contracts	33%	21%	54%
Transit planning	56%	17%	72%	Assistance with ordinance development	33%	21%	54%
Programs to support business incentivization	43%	29%	71%	Urban renewal planning	41%	12%	53%
ADA compliance planning	43%	29%	71%	Procurement services	38%	4%	42%
Population and employment forecasting	43%	29%	71%	Assistance with annual budget development	13%	17%	30%

*Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options? (min n=17, max=24) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.*

## Importance of Expanding/Improving Options for All Activities Among All MPO Members (Including Members of Both MPO and In CIRTPA Service Areas)

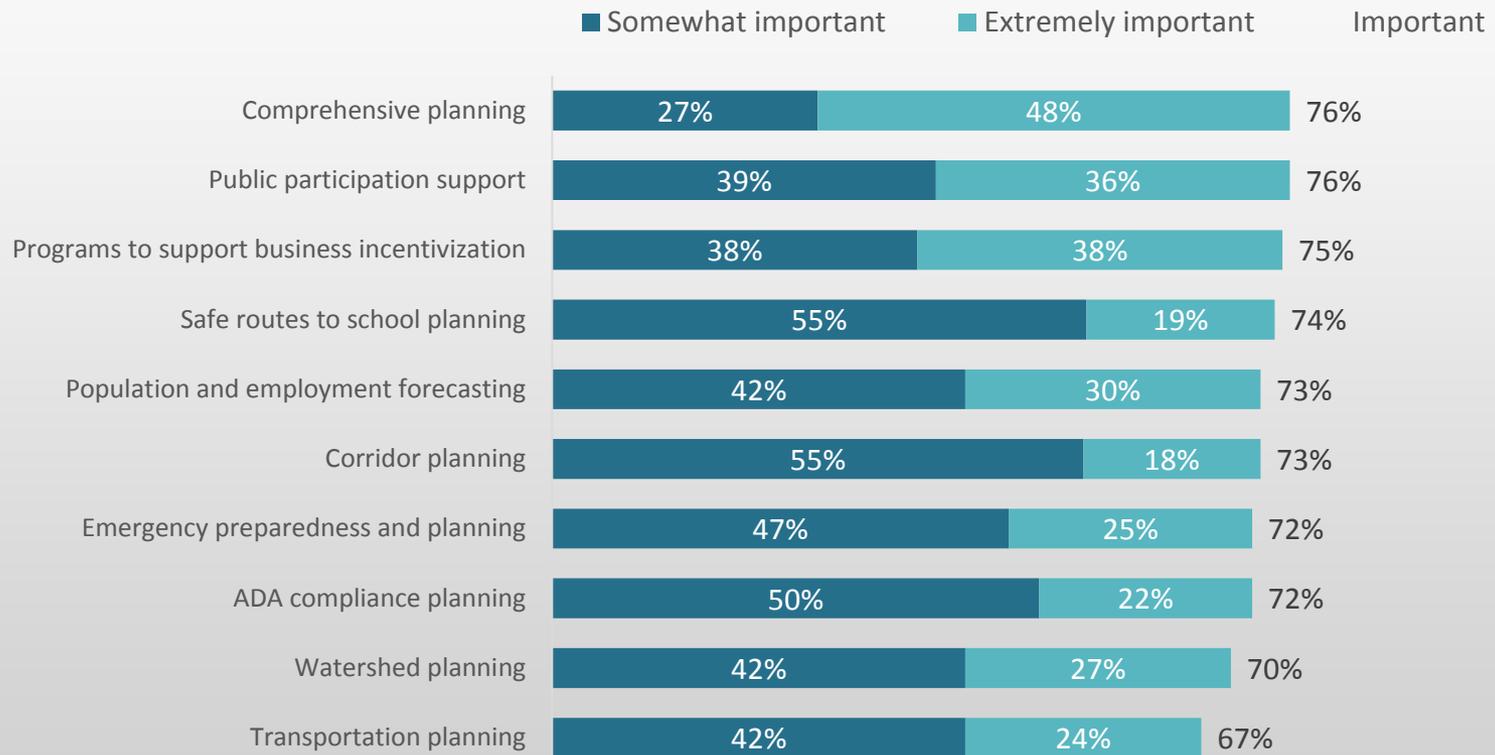
- *Comprehensive planning, emergency preparedness, programs to support incentivizing businesses and public participation support are top activities for MPO members to improve/expand.*

MPO Members		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Emergency preparedness and planning	47%	31%	78%	GIS services	40%	24%	64%
Comprehensive planning	33%	44%	77%	Zoning code enforcement	40%	23%	63%
Public participation support	43%	31%	75%	Transit planning	53%	9%	62%
Watershed planning	48%	26%	74%	Housing programs	47%	14%	61%
Programs to support business incentivization	41%	33%	73%	Neighborhood planning	32%	28%	60%
Corridor planning	56%	17%	73%	Site planning	43%	16%	59%
Population and employment forecasting	48%	24%	72%	Administrating contracts	34%	18%	52%
Transportation planning	47%	24%	71%	Urban renewal planning	30%	21%	51%
ADA compliance planning	54%	17%	71%	Assistance with ordinance development	31%	14%	45%
Safe routes to school planning	45%	26%	70%	Consultant selection and management	28%	14%	42%
Zoning code updates	48%	21%	69%	Procurement services	34%	8%	42%
Grant writing and management	45%	23%	68%	Assistance with annual budget development	16%	18%	33%

Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options?  
(min n=47, max=53)

## Top Ten Activities Rated Important to Expand/Improve Options Among Exclusive MPO Members

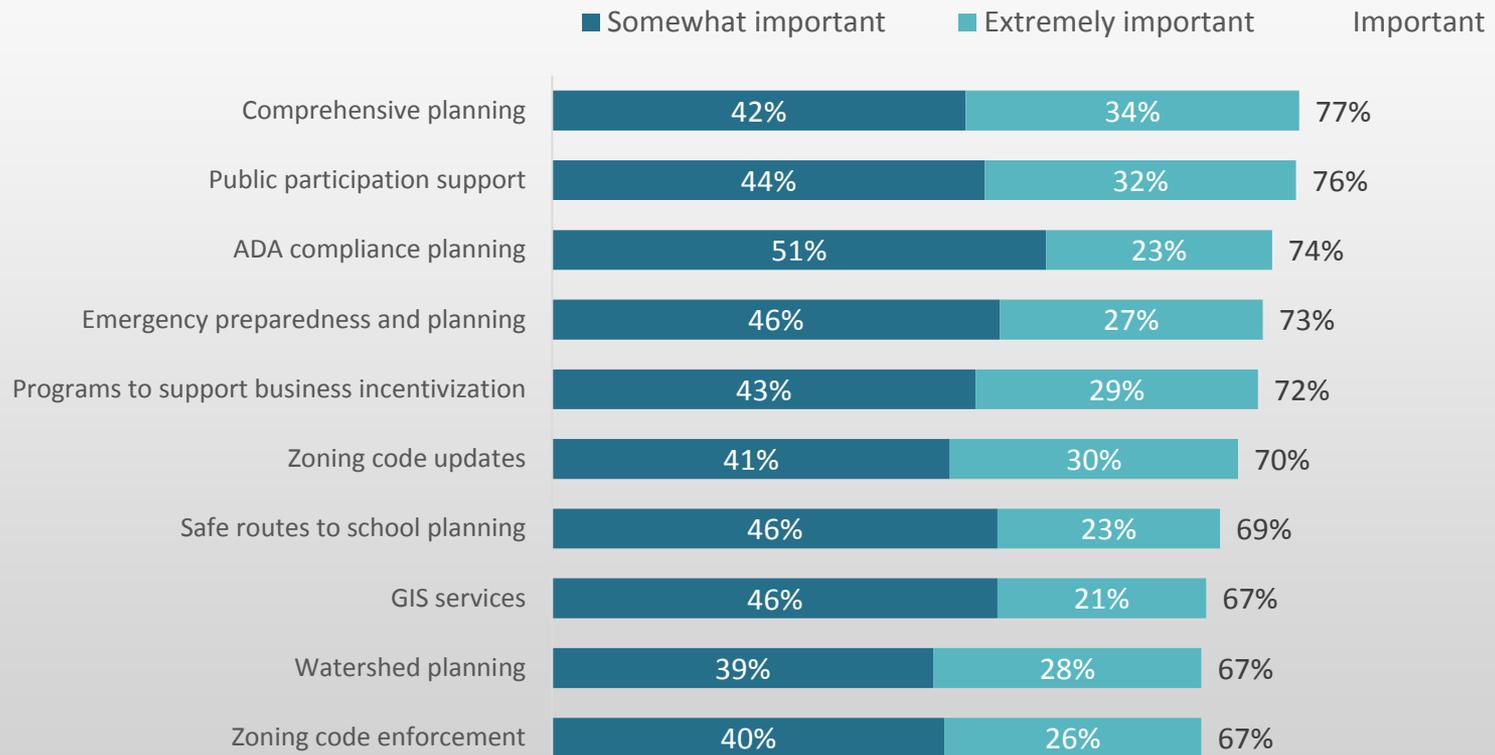
- Among exclusive MPO members, *comprehensive planning, public participation support and programs to support business incentivization* are top priorities for improving and expanding options.



Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options? (min n=31, max=34) Use caution in interpreting due to low bases.

## Top Ten Activities Rated Important to Expand/Improve Options Among Exclusive In CIRTPA Service Areas

- Among exclusive in CIRTPA service area (excludes members who are in both MPO and in-CIRTPA service areas), *comprehensive planning*, *public participation support* and *ADA compliance* are top priorities for improving and expanding options.



Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options? (min n=65, max=74) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.

## Improvement and/or Expansion Areas

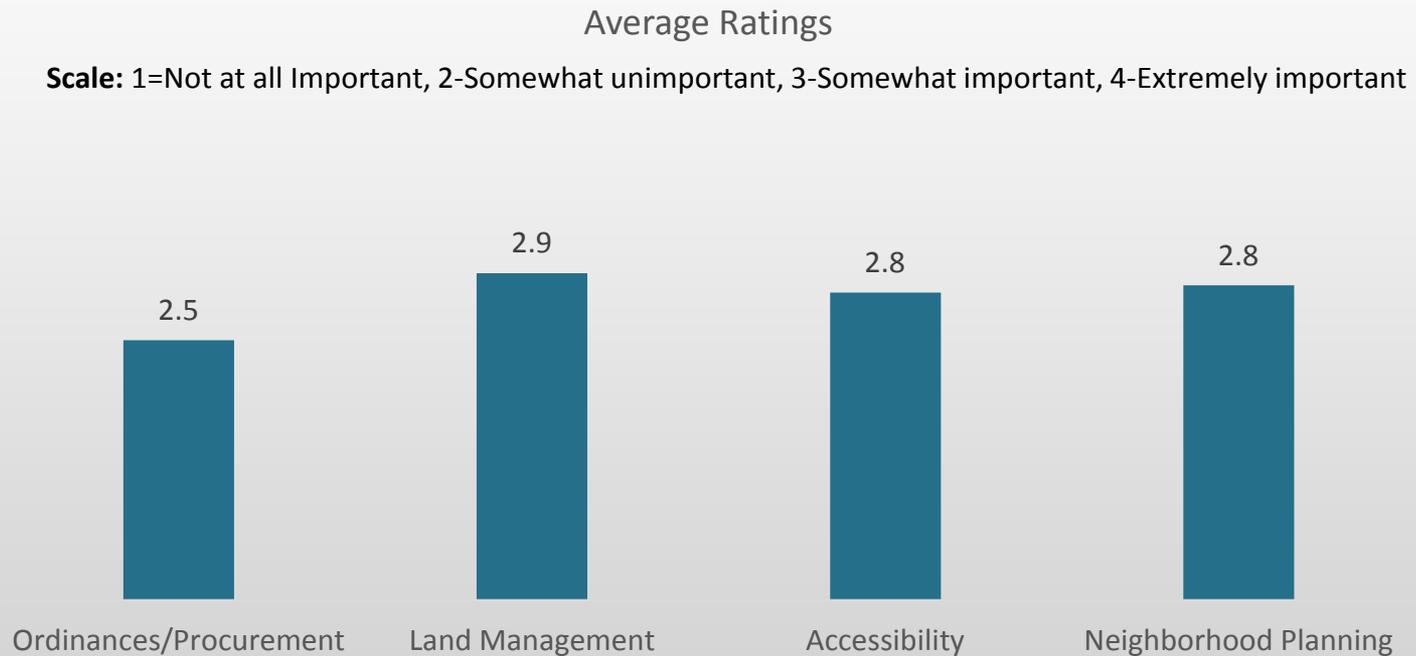
- Analyses of importance ratings reveal four distinct factors that describe jurisdictions' priorities for improving/expanding options. These are ordinances and procurement activities, land management activities, accessibility activities and neighborhood planning activities. (see tables below).

Ordinances and Procurement
Assistance with ordinance development
Procurement services
Site planning
Consultant selection and management
Administrating contracts
Assistance with annual budget development
Population and employment forecasting
Accessibility
Transit planning
Transportation planning
Corridor planning
Watershed planning
ADA compliance planning
Safe routes to school planning

Land Management
Emergency preparedness and planning
Public participation support
Urban renewal planning
Zoning code enforcement
Zoning code updates
Grant writing and management
Comprehensive planning
GIS services
Neighborhood Planning
Programs to support business incentivization
Housing programs
Neighborhood planning

## Average Importance of Improvement and/or Expansion Areas

- Ordinances/procurement activities are the least prioritized area for improvement/expansion.



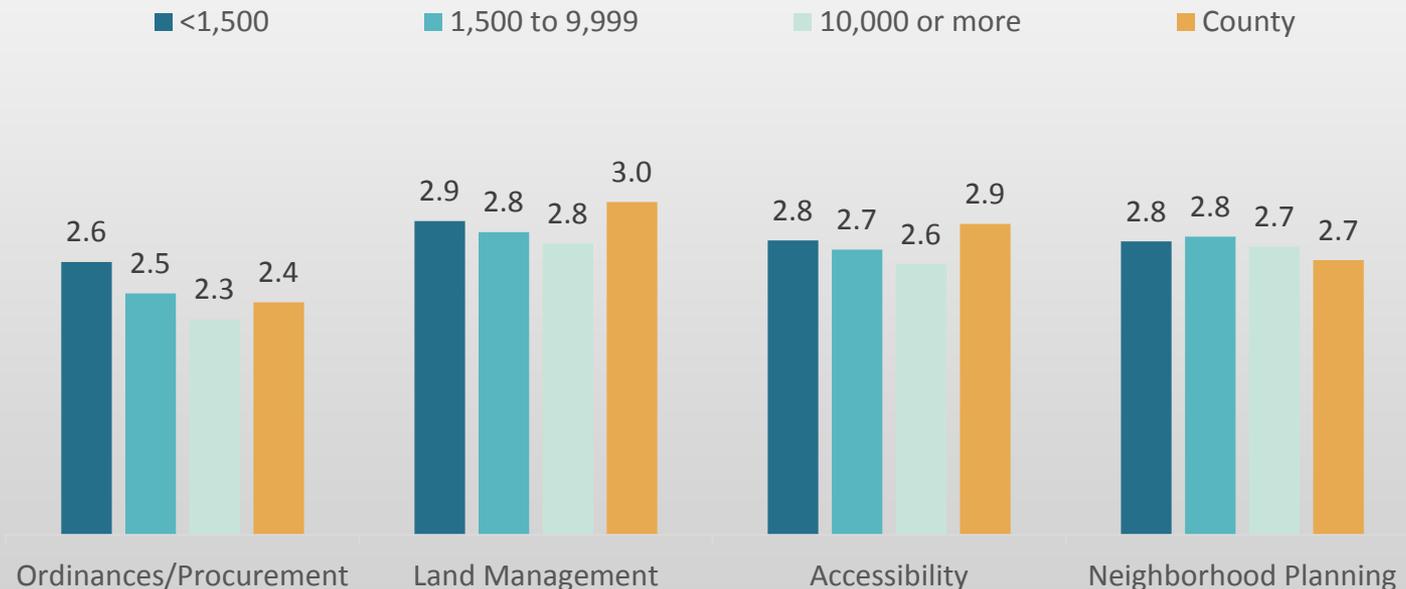
Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options?  
(min n=139)

## Average Importance of Improvement and/or Expansion Areas by City Size

- There are few differences in how cities of different sizes prioritize areas to improve/expand. Land management is a top priority, regardless of size. In contrast ordinances and procurement activities have the lowest priority, regardless of size.

### Average Ratings

Scale: 1=Not at all Important, 2-Somewhat unimportant, 3-Somewhat important, 4-Extremely important



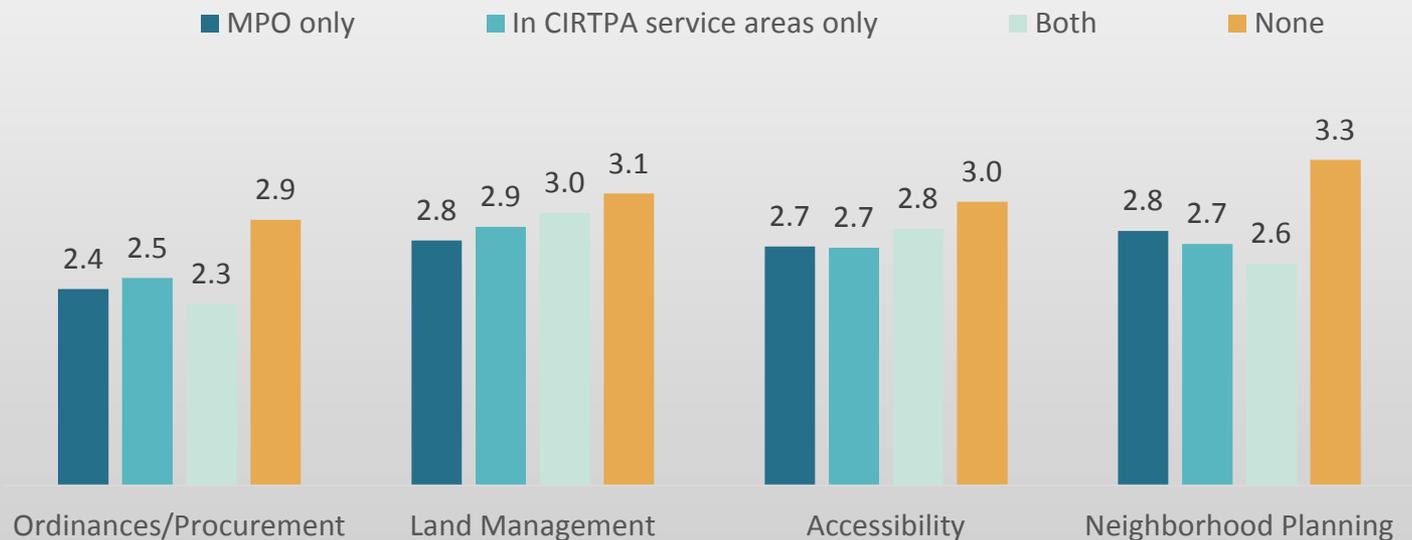
Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options? (min. n: <1,500=29, 1,500-9,999=41, 10,000+=31, county=21) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.

# Average Importance of Improvement and/or Expansion Areas Membership Status

- There are no notable difference between MPO members and in CIRTPA service areas in terms of areas they prioritize for improvement/expansion.

## Average Ratings

Scale: 1=Not at all Important, 2-Somewhat unimportant, 3-Somewhat important, 4-Extremely important



Source: Q2. For each of these activities, rate the importance to your community of having better or expanded options? (min. n: MPO member=33, CIRTPA-72, both=17, non-member=14) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.



# Collaboration on Common Issues

## MPO Strategic Planning Survey



## List of Common Issues Queried About

- Participants in this study were asked, “How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach?” In total, the survey queried respondents about 22 different pre-determined issues shown below (random order). Respondents rated importance on a 4-point scale: 1-not at all important, 2-somewhat unimportant, 3-somewhat important, 4-extremely important. They were also given the option to specify other issues.

1. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance
2. Air quality
3. Animal control
4. Comprehensive planning
5. Public health coordination
6. Housing planning and coordination
7. Model ordinance and policy development
8. Paved trails coordination (planning, maintenance, funding, marketing support, etc.)
9. Legislative advocacy
10. Public safety and emergency planning and management
11. Public transit coordination for central Iowa (vanpools, rideshare, paratransit, route planning, etc.)
12. Smart city preparation
13. Watershed planning and coordination
14. Zoning code coordination
15. Floodplain protection
16. Wetland mitigation banking
17. Streambank protection and restoration
18. Storm water management
19. Water trails coordination (planning, maintenance, funding, marketing support, etc.)
20. Coordination of utility construction and maintenance
21. Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination
22. Regional growth management

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues

- Most respondents express collaboration is important for most all activities, but especially for *public safety and emergency planning, legislative advocacy and regional growth management* (54%, 47% and 46%, respectively rate “extremely important”).

All Respondents		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Public safety and emergency planning /mgmt.	35%	54%	89%	Public transit coordination for central Iowa	41%	33%	74%
Legislative advocacy	40%	47%	87%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	53%	20%	74%
Paved trails coordination	55%	32%	87%	Water trails coordination	47%	27%	74%
Regional growth management	40%	46%	87%	Streambank protection and restoration	49%	22%	71%
Watershed planning and coordination	46%	37%	83%	ADA compliance	49%	22%	71%
Public health coordination	42%	39%	80%	Model ordinance and policy development	50%	21%	71%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	41%	39%	80%	Wetland mitigation banking	44%	25%	69%
Floodplain protection	46%	33%	79%	Housing planning and coordination	40%	27%	67%
Comprehensive planning	47%	31%	79%	Smart city preparation	49%	18%	67%
Air quality	38%	40%	78%	Zoning code coordination	49%	18%	67%
Storm water management	40%	36%	76%	Animal control	48%	13%	61%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach?  
(min n=125, max=139)

## Importance of Collaborating on Other Issues (Verbatim Comments)

- **[Somewhat unimportant]** Bike trail fees
- **[Somewhat important]** Water
- **[Somewhat important]** High speed internet
- **[Extremely important]** Water source/quality
- **[Extremely important]** Land Use incorporated into transportation planning
- **[Extremely important]** I have been serving on the School Board for the past two years and I strongly believe that we as a Collaborative Group look at redistricting the County, School District, Boundaries to more align with their Cities.
- **[Extremely important]** Funding
- **[Extremely important]** Economic development-fiscal impact analysis

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues Among Cities with Populations of Less than 1,500

- Most small cities (<1,500) express collaboration is important for all activities, and “extremely important” for *public safety and emergency planning* (60%) and *regional growth management* (54%).

City Populations <1,500		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Air quality	54%	39%	93%	Housing planning and coordination	41%	37%	78%
Public safety and emergency planning and management	30%	60%	90%	Water trails coordination	44%	33%	78%
Paved trails coordination	59%	31%	90%	Smart city preparation	52%	26%	78%
Regional growth management	36%	54%	89%	Streambank protection and restoration	65%	12%	77%
Stormwater management	46%	43%	89%	Floodplain protection	46%	29%	75%
Comprehensive planning	59%	28%	86%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	59%	15%	74%
Legislative advocacy	40%	43%	83%	Model ordinance and policy development	40%	33%	73%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	43%	39%	82%	ADA compliance	46%	25%	71%
Public health coordination	45%	34%	79%	Public transit coordination for central Iowa	38%	31%	69%
Watershed planning and coordination	32%	46%	79%	Animal control	55%	14%	69%
Zoning code coordination	54%	25%	79%	Wetland mitigation banking	50%	12%	62%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach? (min n=26, max=30) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues Among Cities with Populations Between 1,500 and 10,000

- Most cities with populations between 1,500 and 10,000 express collaboration is important for all activities and “extremely important” for and *legislative advocacy* (50%), *regional growth management* (50%) and *public safety and emergency planning* (45%) than other activities.

City Populations 1,500 to 10,000		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Legislative advocacy	43%	50%	93%	Wetland mitigation banking	55%	18%	74%
Paved trails coordination	56%	33%	90%	Public health coordination	38%	35%	73%
Regional growth management	39%	50%	89%	Public transit coordination for central Iowa	55%	18%	73%
Watershed planning and coordination	58%	32%	89%	Streambank protection and restoration	56%	15%	72%
Public safety and emergency planning and management	43%	45%	88%	ADA compliance	50%	20%	70%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	46%	41%	87%	Smart city preparation	53%	17%	69%
Floodplain protection	58%	28%	85%	Model ordinance and policy development	48%	20%	68%
Water trails coordination	66%	16%	82%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	51%	15%	67%
Comprehensive planning	56%	23%	79%	Zoning code coordination	48%	18%	65%
Air quality	38%	38%	75%	Animal control	50%	13%	63%
Stormwater management	51%	23%	74%	Housing planning and coordination	43%	15%	58%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach?  
(min n=36, max=40)

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues Among Cities with Populations of 10,000 or More

- Most cities with populations of 10,000 or more express collaboration is important for most all activities, and “extremely important” for *public safety and emergency planning* (55%), *legislative advocacy* (53%) and *air quality* (48%).

City Populations 10,00 or more		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Public health coordination	52%	39%	90%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	52%	23%	74%
Public safety and emergency planning and management	32%	55%	87%	Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	29%	42%	71%
Regional growth management	41%	44%	84%	Wetland mitigation banking	35%	35%	71%
Air quality	35%	48%	84%	ADA compliance	58%	13%	71%
Paved trails coordination	48%	35%	84%	Streambank protection and restoration	39%	29%	68%
Legislative advocacy	28%	53%	81%	Comprehensive planning	35%	29%	65%
Floodplain protection	45%	35%	81%	Housing planning and coordination	45%	19%	65%
Watershed planning and coordination	45%	32%	77%	Zoning code coordination	52%	13%	65%
Model ordinance and policy development	65%	13%	77%	Animal control	56%	6%	63%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	44%	31%	75%	Water trails coordination	32%	29%	61%
Stormwater management	35%	39%	74%	Smart city preparation	45%	14%	59%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach? (min n=29, max=32) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues Among County Level Jurisdictions

- Most county level jurisdictions express collaboration is important for most activities and “extremely important” for *public safety and emergency planning* (50%), *public transit coordination for central Iowa* (52%) and *floodplain protection* (46%).

County Level Jurisdictions	Importance				Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Public safety and emergency planning and management	42%	50%	92%	Wetland mitigation banking	30%	43%	74%
Legislative advocacy	61%	30%	91%	Public health coordination	35%	39%	74%
Watershed planning and coordination	46%	42%	88%	Water trails coordination	43%	30%	74%
Paved trails coordination	54%	33%	88%	Housing planning and coordination	38%	33%	71%
Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	57%	26%	83%	Stormwater management	26%	43%	70%
Regional growth management	45%	36%	82%	ADA compliance	45%	23%	68%
Floodplain protection	33%	46%	79%	Streambank protection and restoration	26%	39%	65%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	38%	42%	79%	Zoning code coordination	45%	18%	64%
Comprehensive planning	38%	42%	79%	Smart city preparation	43%	19%	62%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	26%	52%	78%	Air quality	22%	35%	57%
Model ordinance and policy development	54%	21%	75%	Animal control	39%	17%	57%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach? (min n=21, max=24) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues Among All MPO Members

- Most MPO members express collaboration is important for most all activities, and “extremely important” for *public safety and emergency planning and management* (54%), *legislative advocacy* (55%) and *regional growth management* (46%).

MPO Members	Importance				Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Legislative advocacy	46%	50%	96%	Stormwater management	38%	37%	75%
Public safety and emergency planning and management	38%	54%	92%	Wetland mitigation banking	42%	33%	75%
Paved trails coordination	60%	33%	92%	Model ordinance and policy development	58%	17%	75%
Watershed planning and coordination	58%	33%	90%	Air quality	29%	41%	71%
Regional growth management	40%	46%	87%	Comprehensive planning	39%	29%	69%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	46%	40%	87%	Smart city preparation	53%	15%	68%
Floodplain protection	46%	37%	83%	Streambank protection and restoration	37%	31%	67%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	50%	33%	83%	Housing planning and coordination	42%	22%	64%
Public health coordination	45%	37%	82%	ADA compliance	54%	10%	64%
Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	62%	17%	79%	Animal control	58%	6%	63%
Water trails coordination	63%	16%	78%	Zoning code coordination	51%	10%	61%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach?  
(min n=47, max=52)

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues Among Exclusive MPO Members

- Most MPO members express collaboration is important for most all activities, and “extremely important” for *legislative advocacy* (56%), *public safety and emergency planning and management* (55%) and *regional growth management* (53%).

Exclusive MPO Members		Importance			Importance		
Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important	Activities	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Legislative advocacy	41%	56%	97%	Wetland mitigation banking	52%	30%	82%
Public safety and emergency planning and management	42%	55%	97%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	67%	15%	82%
Paved trails coordination	61%	33%	94%	Model ordinance and policy development	58%	21%	79%
Regional growth management	35%	53%	88%	Streambank protection and restoration	45%	30%	76%
Public health coordination	45%	42%	88%	Water trails coordination	61%	15%	76%
Watershed planning and coordination	52%	36%	88%	Animal control	68%	6%	74%
Floodplain protection	55%	33%	88%	Smart city preparation	60%	13%	73%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	56%	29%	85%	Comprehensive planning	47%	25%	72%
Air quality	39%	45%	85%	Housing planning and coordination	42%	21%	64%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	48%	36%	85%	Zoning code coordination	58%	6%	64%
Stormwater management	48%	33%	82%	ADA compliance	52%	9%	61%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach?  
(min n=30, max=34)

## Importance of Collaborating or Inter-Jurisdictional Approach on Common Issues Among Exclusive In CIRTPA Service Areas

- In CIRTPA service area members express collaboration is important for most all activities, and “extremely important” *public safety and emergency planning and management* (51%) and *regional growth management* (47%).

Exclusive In CIRTPA Service Areas	Importance			Activities	Importance		
	Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important		Somewhat Important	Extremely important	Overall Important
Regional growth management	40%	47%	87%	ADA compliance	48%	27%	75%
Public safety and emergency planning and management	36%	51%	86%	Streambank protection and restoration	57%	16%	73%
Paved trails coordination	51%	34%	85%	Zoning code coordination	49%	24%	73%
Comprehensive planning	54%	29%	83%	Model ordinance and policy development	47%	25%	71%
Air quality	44%	39%	83%	Water trails coordination	37%	34%	71%
Legislative advocacy	38%	42%	81%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	49%	21%	69%
Floodplain protection	48%	31%	79%	Housing planning and coordination	42%	26%	68%
Watershed planning and coordination	38%	41%	78%	Public transit coordination for central Iowa	38%	29%	67%
Stormwater management	43%	35%	78%	Wetland mitigation banking	45%	21%	67%
Public health coordination	40%	36%	76%	Smart city preparation	45%	21%	67%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	34%	41%	76%	Animal control	46%	17%	63%

Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach?  
(min n=66, max=73)

## Priority Areas for Collaborating on Common Issues

- Analyses of importance ratings reveal four distinct factors that describe participants' priorities, shown in the table below.

<b>Policy development</b>
Zoning code coordination
Model ordinance and policy development
Coordination of utility construction and maintenance
Comprehensive planning
Housing planning and coordination
Smart city preparation
ADA compliance
<b>Conservation Planning</b>
Wetland mitigation banking
Streambank protection and restoration
Storm water management
Floodplain protection
Watershed planning and coordination
Animal control

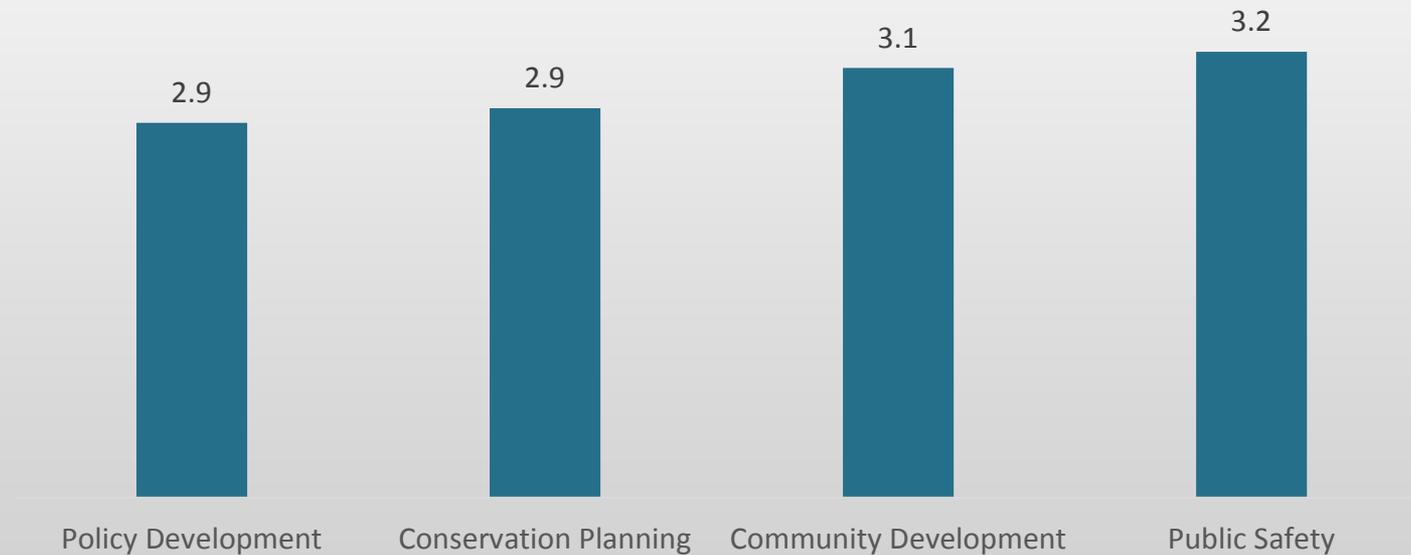
<b>Community Development</b>
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination
Paved trails coordination
Regional growth management
Legislative advocacy
Water trails coordination
Public transit coordination for central Iowa
<b>Public Safety</b>
Public health coordination
Air quality
Public safety and emergency planning and management

## Priority Areas for Collaborating on Common Issues by Population Size

- The most important area for collaboration is public safety.

### Average Ratings

**Scale:** 1=Not at all Important, 2-Somewhat unimportant, 3-Somewhat important, 4-Extremely important



*Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach? (min. n: 139).*

## Priority Areas for Collaborating on Common Issues by City Population Size

- The most important areas for collaboration are public safety and community development, regardless of city population size.



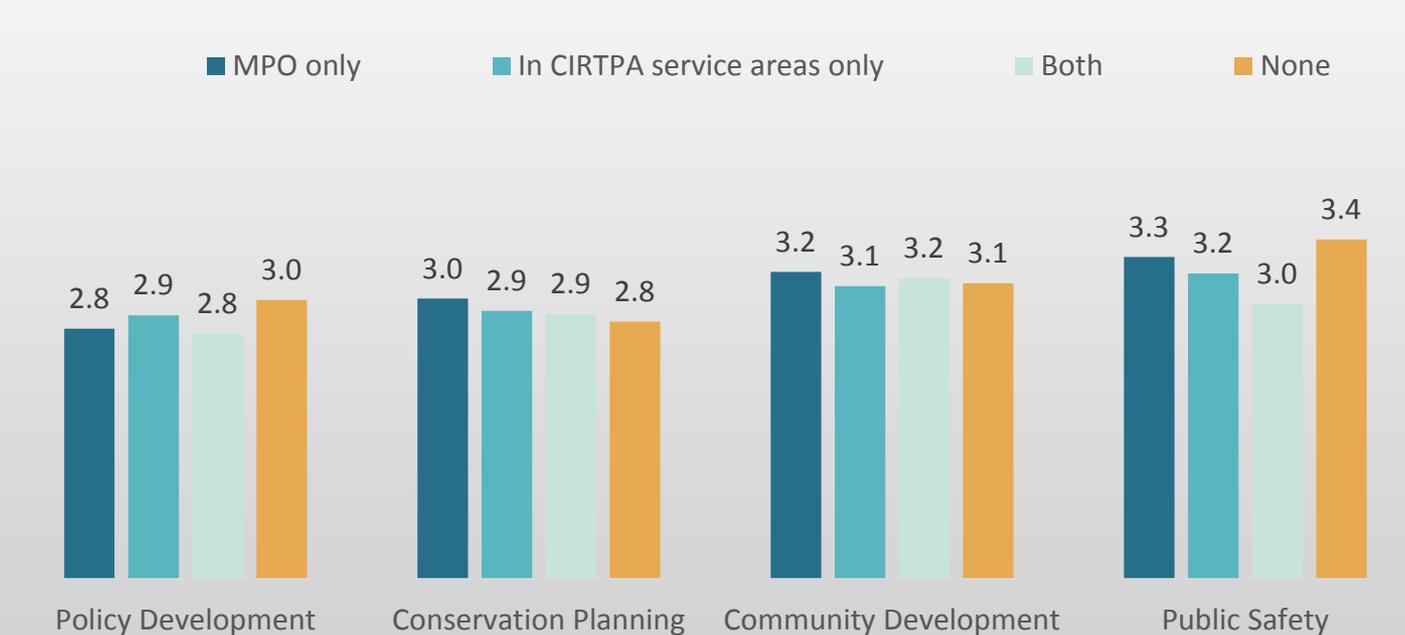
Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach? (min. n: <1,500=30, 1,500-9,999=40, 10,000+=31, county=24) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.

## Priority Areas for Collaborating on Common Issues by Organization Membership Status

- There is no difference in priorities between MPO members and in CIRTPA service areas for areas in which to collaborate.

### Average Ratings

**Scale:** 1=Not at all Important, 2-Somewhat unimportant, 3-Somewhat important, 4-Extremely important



Source: Q5. How important is it that the following issues be approached through a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approach? (min. n: MPO member=33, CIRTPA=73, both=19, non-member=14) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.



# MPO's Role in Coordinating Activities

## MPO Strategic Planning Survey

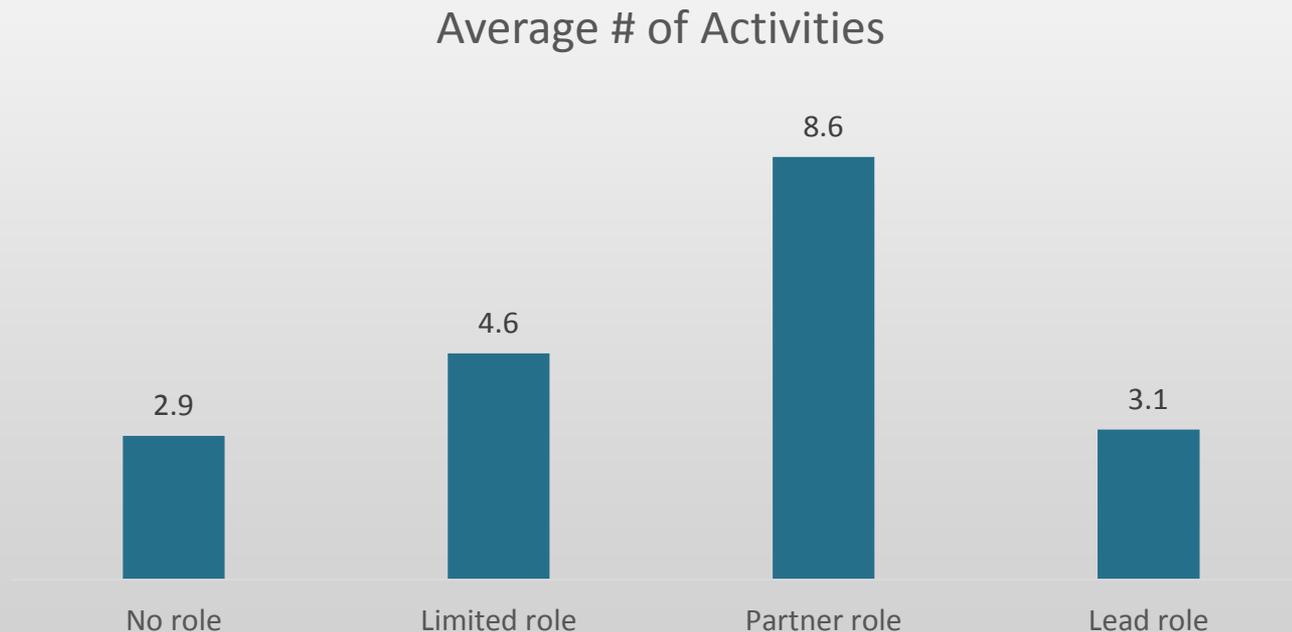


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## Number of Activities in Which MPO Should Take A Role

- Respondents express MPO should have at least some role in most activities. Respondents on average report MPO should have a partner role in 8.6 activities, compared to 4.6 activities with a limited role, and 3.1 activities for a lead role.



Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(n=141)

## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities

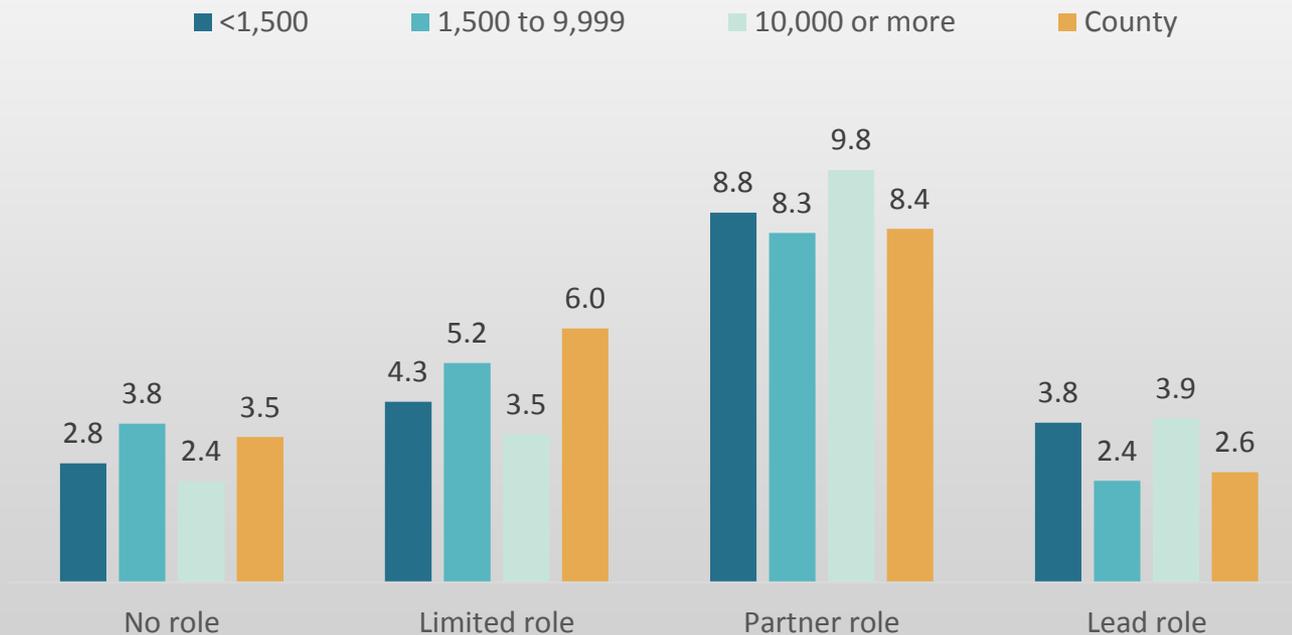
- More respondents, regardless of activity (excluding animal control), believe MPO should have a partner role in coordinating activities than other roles. Few respondents believe MPO should not be at all involved in convening and coordinating activities (excluding animal control).

% of All Respondents	MPO Role				Activities	MPO Role			
	Lead	Partner	Limited	None		Lead	Partner	Limited	None
Legislative advocacy	31%	42%	20%	7%	Comprehensive planning	14%	55%	22%	10%
Paved trails coordination	30%	45%	21%	4%	Streambank protection and restoration	13%	43%	23%	21%
Regional growth management	30%	46%	17%	7%	Smart city preparation	13%	55%	22%	10%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	27%	54%	12%	6%	Public health coordination	12%	42%	25%	21%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	27%	44%	23%	6%	Housing planning and coordination	11%	47%	24%	18%
Water trails coordination	26%	43%	19%	11%	Storm water management	9%	52%	23%	16%
Watershed planning and coordination	15%	51%	23%	11%	Public safety and emergency planning and management	9%	46%	30%	16%
Air quality	15%	45%	22%	18%	Zoning code coordination	6%	35%	37%	23%
Floodplain protection	15%	42%	25%	19%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	6%	44%	32%	19%
Model ordinance and policy development	15%	45%	27%	13%	ADA compliance	4%	46%	33%	18%
Wetland mitigation banking	14%	44%	23%	19%	Animal control	4%	24%	32%	40%

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 112, max n = 125)

## Number of Activities in Which MPO Should Take Indicated Roles by City Population Size

- Regardless of size, for most efforts, cities prefer MPO to be a partner in convening and coordinating efforts.



Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
 (n: <1,500=30, 1,500-9,999=41, 10,000+=32, county=24) Use caution in interpreting due to low bases.

## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities Among Cities with Populations of Less Than 1,500

- Smaller cities (< 1,500) are willing to concede the lead role to MPO mostly for convening and coordinating *water trails coordination* (46%), *public transit coordination for central Iowa* (44%) and *regional growth management* (44%).

% of Cities <1,500 pop.	MPO Role				Activities	MPO Role			
	Lead	Partner	Limited	None		Lead	Partner	Limited	None
Water trails coordination	46%	27%	12%	15%	Air quality	15%	54%	27%	4%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	44%	30%	7%	19%	Stormwater management	12%	54%	15%	19%
Regional growth management	44%	40%	8%	8%	Floodplain protection	11%	44%	30%	15%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	38%	42%	8%	12%	Zoning code coordination	11%	37%	33%	19%
Legislative advocacy	32%	50%	11%	7%	Comprehensive planning	11%	50%	32%	7%
Paved trails coordination	32%	43%	14%	11%	Streambank protection and restoration	8%	54%	21%	17%
Model ordinance and policy development	21%	41%	28%	10%	Wetland mitigation banking	8%	48%	28%	16%
Smart city preparation	20%	44%	24%	12%	Public health coordination	7%	57%	21%	14%
Watershed planning and coordination	19%	59%	15%	7%	ADA compliance	4%	48%	36%	12%
Housing planning and coordination	19%	44%	19%	19%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	4%	54%	21%	21%
Public safety and emergency planning and management	17%	41%	31%	10%	Animal control	4%	21%	36%	39%

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 24, max n = 29) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.

## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities Among Cities with Populations Between 1,500 and 10,000

- Most cities with populations of 1,500 to 10,000 express that MPO should take a partner role in convening and coordinating activities, especially *smart city preparation* (65%), *regional bike/pedestrian coordination* (57%), *public transit coordination* (54%), *regional growth management* (51%), *comprehensive planning* (50%) and *stormwater management* (50%).

% of Cities 1,500-10,000 pop.	MPO Role				Activities	MPO Role			
	Lead	Partner	Limited	None		Lead	Partner	Limited	None
Paved trails coordination	27%	46%	27%	0%	Stormwater management	11%	50%	19%	19%
Legislative advocacy	27%	35%	35%	3%	Watershed planning and coordination	11%	49%	27%	14%
Water trails coordination	22%	44%	19%	14%	Smart city preparation	9%	65%	15%	12%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	22%	57%	14%	8%	Comprehensive planning	8%	51%	24%	16%
Regional growth management	22%	51%	14%	14%	Housing planning and coordination	5%	43%	30%	22%
Floodplain protection	16%	41%	22%	22%	Model ordinance and policy development	5%	41%	32%	22%
Wetland mitigation banking	16%	41%	19%	24%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	3%	42%	42%	14%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	14%	54%	24%	8%	ADA compliance	3%	36%	36%	25%
Streambank protection and restoration	14%	41%	22%	24%	Zoning code coordination	3%	31%	39%	28%
Public health coordination	14%	32%	27%	27%	Animal control	3%	6%	36%	56%
Air quality	14%	32%	24%	30%	Public safety and emergency planning and management	3%	43%	38%	16%

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 34, max n = 37)

## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities Among Cities with Populations of 10,000 or More

- Cities with populations of 10,000 or more express that MPO should take a partner role in convening and coordinating many of their activities. *Paved trails coordination* (41%) and *legislative activities* (41%) are the two activities, compared to others tested, where more cities express MPO should take a lead role

% of Cities 10,000 or more pop.	MPO Role				Activities	MPO Role			
	Lead	Partner	Limited	None		Lead	Partner	Limited	None
Paved trails coordination	41%	45%	14%	0%	Housing planning and coordination	19%	48%	22%	11%
Legislative advocacy	41%	38%	10%	10%	Streambank protection and restoration	18%	50%	11%	21%
Regional growth management	34%	52%	10%	3%	Comprehensive planning	17%	66%	14%	3%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	31%	59%	7%	3%	Public health coordination	14%	41%	24%	21%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	28%	52%	21%	0%	Smart city preparation	12%	60%	16%	12%
Water trails coordination	28%	48%	21%	3%	Public safety and emergency planning and management	7%	57%	18%	18%
Watershed planning and coordination	24%	52%	14%	10%	Zoning code coordination	7%	39%	36%	18%
Wetland mitigation banking	21%	46%	14%	18%	Stormwater management	7%	62%	17%	14%
Floodplain protection	21%	43%	14%	21%	ADA compliance	7%	59%	24%	10%
Air quality	21%	55%	10%	14%	Animal control	7%	34%	24%	34%
Model ordinance and policy development	19%	52%	22%	7%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	3%	45%	34%	17%

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 25, max n = 29)

## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities Among County Level Jurisdictions

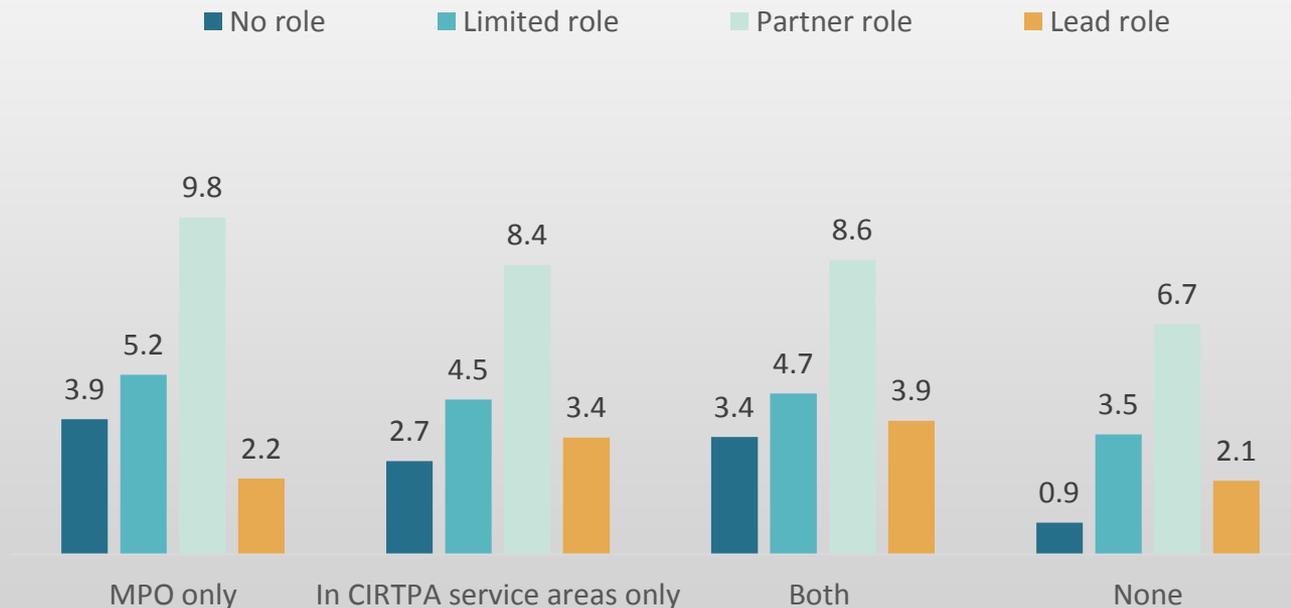
- Most county level jurisdictions express that MPO should take a partner role in convening and coordinating *comprehensive planning* (59%), *regional bicycle/pedestrian coordination* (57%), *smart city preparation* (53%), *legislative advocacy* (50%) and *model ordinance and policy* (50%).

% of County Level Jurisdictions		MPO Role						MPO Role			
Activities	Lead	Partner	Limited	None	Activities	Lead	Partner	Limited	None		
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	36%	27%	36%	0%	Streambank protection and restoration	13%	26%	39%	22%		
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	22%	57%	22%	0%	Public health coordination	10%	43%	19%	29%		
Paved trails coordination	22%	43%	30%	4%	Model ordinance and policy development	9%	50%	27%	14%		
Legislative advocacy	18%	50%	23%	9%	Floodplain protection	9%	41%	32%	18%		
Water trails coordination	17%	48%	22%	13%	Public safety and emergency planning and management	9%	39%	26%	26%		
Regional growth management	17%	39%	39%	4%	Stormwater management	9%	35%	43%	13%		
Air quality	17%	39%	17%	26%	Smart city preparation	5%	53%	42%	0%		
Comprehensive planning	14%	59%	18%	9%	Housing planning and coordination	5%	43%	24%	29%		
Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	14%	27%	32%	27%	Zoning code coordination	5%	27%	41%	27%		
Watershed planning and coordination	13%	39%	35%	13%	ADA compliance	4%	48%	22%	26%		
Wetland mitigation banking	13%	39%	30%	17%	Animal control	0%	32%	32%	36%		

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 19, max n = 23) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.

## Number of Activities in Which MPO Should Take Indicated Roles by Organization Membership

- Regardless of organization membership, respondents express MPO should have a partnership role for more activities than not. In CIRTPA service areas only members report MPO should play a more active role (i.e., limited, partner or lead) in more activities on average than MPO only members.



Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
 (n: MPO member=34, CIRTPA=74, both=19, non-member=14) Use caution in interpreting due to small bases.

## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities

### Among All MPO Members (Including Members of Both MPO and In CIRTPA Service Areas)

- At least half of MPO members express that MPO should take a partner role in convening and coordinating *regional bike/pedestrian coordination (67%), smart city preparation (60%), comprehensive planning (55%), regional growth management (54%), public transit coordination for central Iowa (51%), paved trails coordination (50%) and ADA compliance (50%)*.

All MPO Members	MPO Role				Activities	MPO Role			
	Lead	Partner	Limited	None		Lead	Partner	Limited	None
Legislative advocacy	27%	43%	24%	6%	Air quality	12%	45%	16%	27%
Paved trails coordination	27%	50%	21%	2%	Wetland mitigation banking	12%	41%	24%	24%
Regional growth management	23%	54%	17%	6%	Watershed planning and coordination	12%	48%	25%	15%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	21%	67%	10%	2%	Model ordinance and policy development	10%	41%	35%	14%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	20%	51%	25%	4%	Public safety and emergency planning and management	10%	36%	30%	24%
Water trails coordination	17%	46%	25%	12%	Smart city preparation	9%	60%	24%	7%
Public health coordination	14%	38%	14%	34%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	6%	48%	28%	18%
Comprehensive planning	14%	55%	24%	8%	Stormwater management	6%	49%	27%	18%
Streambank protection and restoration	14%	33%	25%	27%	Zoning code coordination	4%	27%	39%	31%
Housing planning and coordination	13%	40%	23%	23%	ADA compliance	4%	50%	26%	20%
Floodplain protection	12%	40%	22%	26%	Animal control	2%	20%	29%	49%

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 45, max n = 52)

## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities Among Exclusive MPO Members

Exclusive MPO Members	MPO Role					MPO Role			
Activities	Lead	Partner	Limited	None	Activities	Lead	Partner	Limited	None
Legislative advocacy	24%	42%	24%	9%	Floodplain protection	9%	39%	21%	30%
Paved trails coordination	21%	55%	24%	0%	Streambank protection and restoration	9%	36%	24%	30%
Regional growth management	21%	55%	15%	9%	Air quality	6%	52%	18%	24%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	18%	67%	12%	3%	Model ordinance and policy development	6%	42%	36%	15%
Water trails coordination	15%	42%	27%	15%	Wetland mitigation banking	6%	42%	24%	27%
Public health coordination	15%	39%	9%	36%	Public safety and emergency planning and management	6%	39%	33%	21%
Housing planning and coordination	13%	44%	25%	19%	Stormwater management	3%	56%	19%	22%
Smart city preparation	10%	60%	23%	7%	ADA compliance	3%	50%	31%	16%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	9%	61%	24%	6%	Zoning code coordination	3%	22%	44%	31%
Comprehensive planning	9%	58%	30%	3%	Animal control	3%	16%	31%	50%
Watershed planning and coordination	9%	45%	24%	21%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	0%	59%	25%	16%

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 30, max n = 33) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.

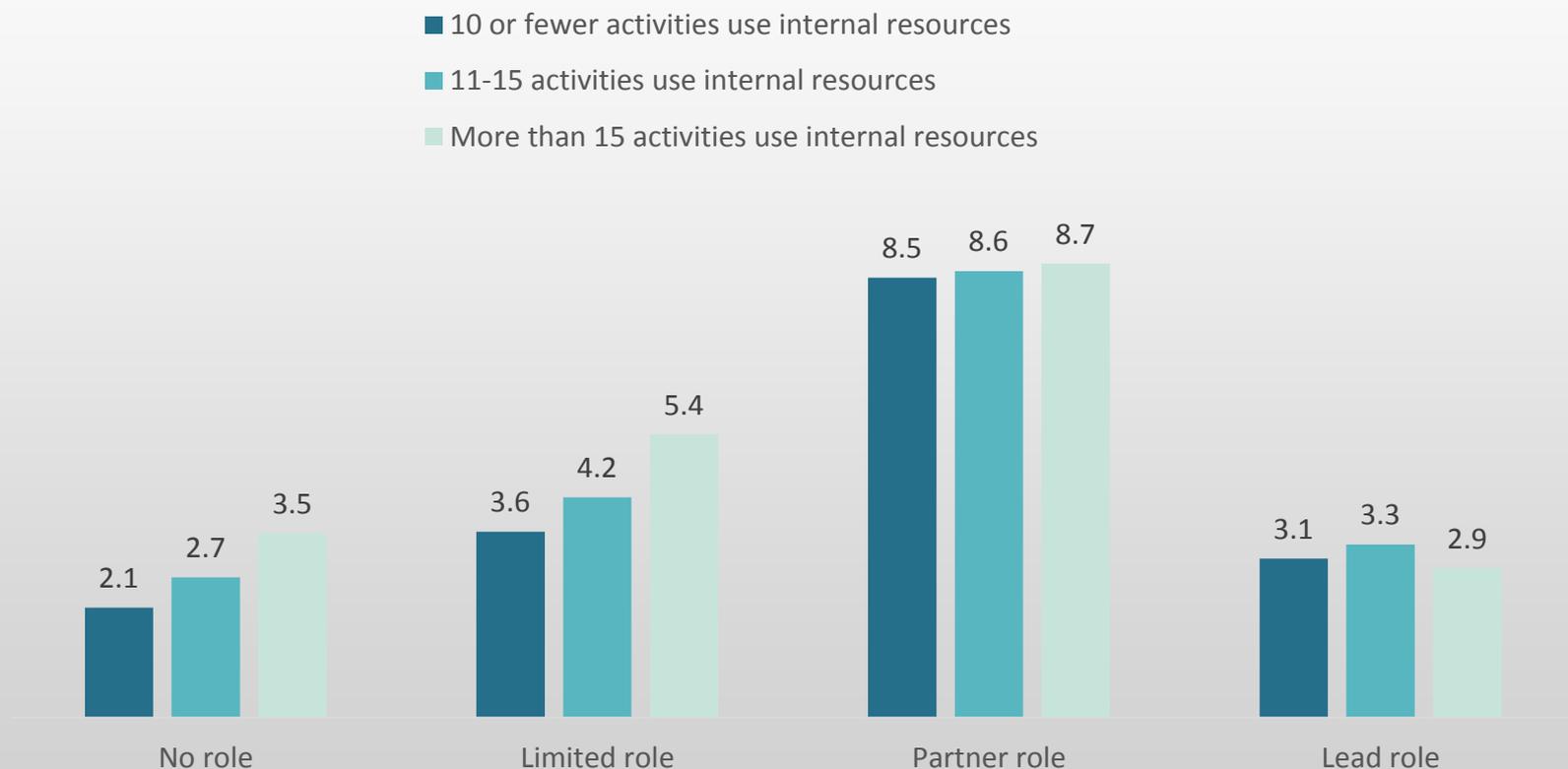
## MPO's Role in Convening/Coordinating Activities Among Exclusive In CIRTPA Service Areas Members

Exclusive In CIRTPA Service Areas	MPO Role					MPO Role			
Activities	Lead	Partner	Limited	None	Activities	Lead	Partner	Limited	None
Water trails coordination	37%	39%	13%	11%	Smart city preparation	14%	53%	21%	12%
Public transit coordination for central Iowa	36%	36%	19%	9%	Streambank protection and restoration	13%	51%	20%	16%
Regional growth management	34%	40%	16%	10%	Stormwater management	13%	52%	19%	16%
Paved trails coordination	34%	40%	22%	5%	Comprehensive planning	11%	57%	22%	11%
Regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination	33%	43%	14%	10%	Housing planning and coordination	11%	48%	25%	17%
Legislative advocacy	32%	42%	18%	8%	Public health coordination	9%	46%	31%	14%
Watershed planning and coordination	20%	52%	20%	8%	Zoning code coordination	8%	39%	36%	17%
Air quality	20%	44%	23%	13%	Public safety and emergency planning and management	7%	52%	28%	12%
Wetland mitigation banking	18%	45%	21%	16%	ADA compliance	5%	44%	33%	17%
Floodplain protection	17%	44%	25%	14%	Coordination of utility construction and maintenance	5%	38%	37%	20%
Model ordinance and policy development	15%	48%	23%	14%	Animal control	5%	23%	35%	38%

Source: Q6. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(min n = 58, max n = 67) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.

## Number of Activities in Which MPO Should Take Indicated Roles by Number of Activities Accomplished Using Internal Resources

- Jurisdictions that use internal resources for more activities see a more diminished role for MPO in coordinating and convening activities than jurisdictions that use internal resources for fewer activities.



Source: Q3. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(n: <10=activities=35, 10-15 activities=43, > 15 activities=63)



# Paying for Services

## MPO Strategic Planning Survey



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## List of Payment Options Queried About

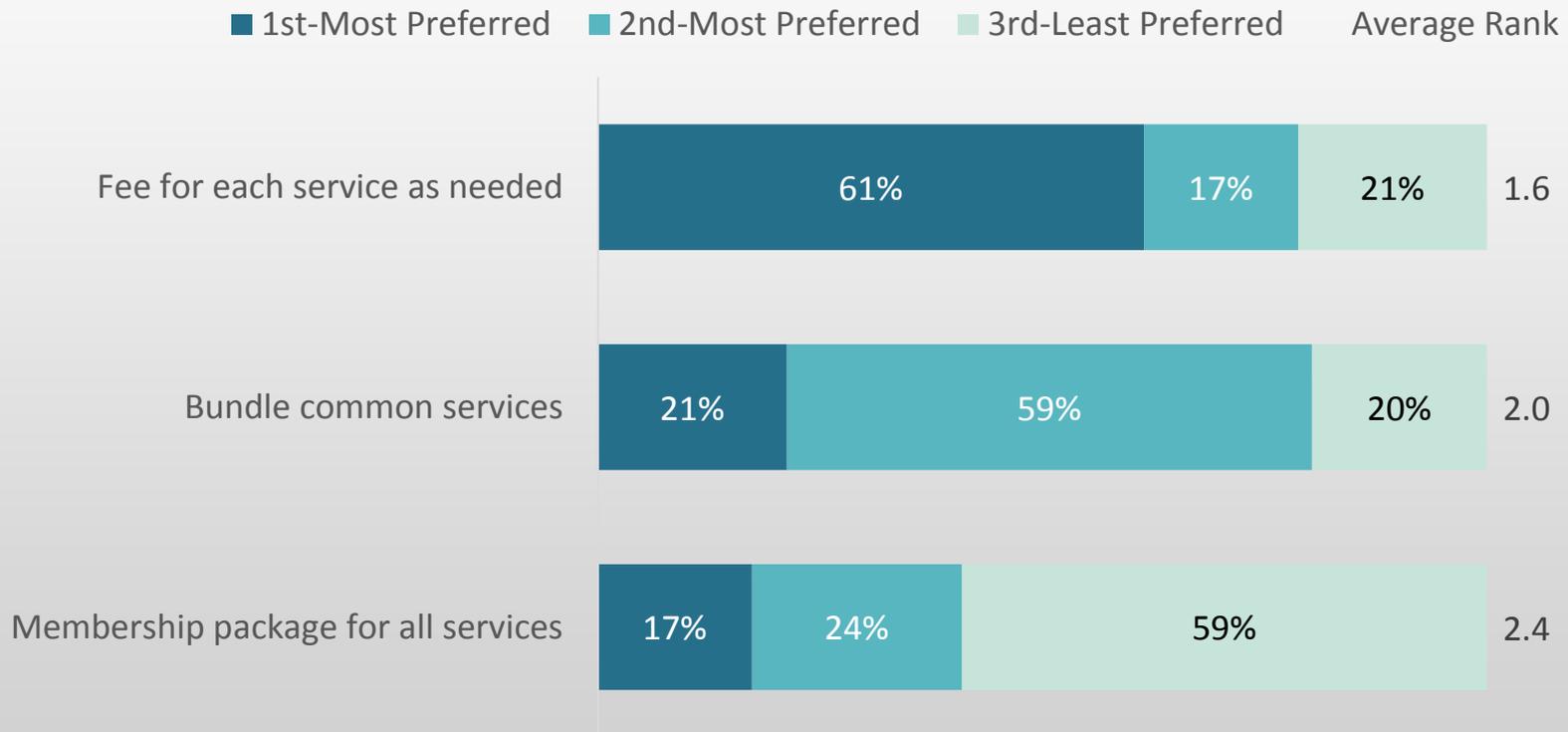
- Participants in this study were asked, *“If services such as these were offered in the future, the communities would have to determine the preferred way of paying for them. Based on the needs of your community, please rank each of the three options with 1 the most preferred option and 3 the least preferred”* In total, the survey queried respondents about three different pre-determined payment options shown below (random order). They were also given the option to specify other preferred payment options.

Predetermined Payment Options
Membership package for all services
Bundle common services
Fee for each service as needed

Other Preferred Payment Options (Verbatim)
<i>Quarterly.</i>
<i>Pay if use it.</i>
<i>Membership fee for basic services. Options and fees for individualized services...This may be bundling.</i>
<i>If it's for the greater good it should be free (government service).</i>
<i>Bundle of selected services.</i>

## Preferred Way of Paying for Services (Excludes School Districts)

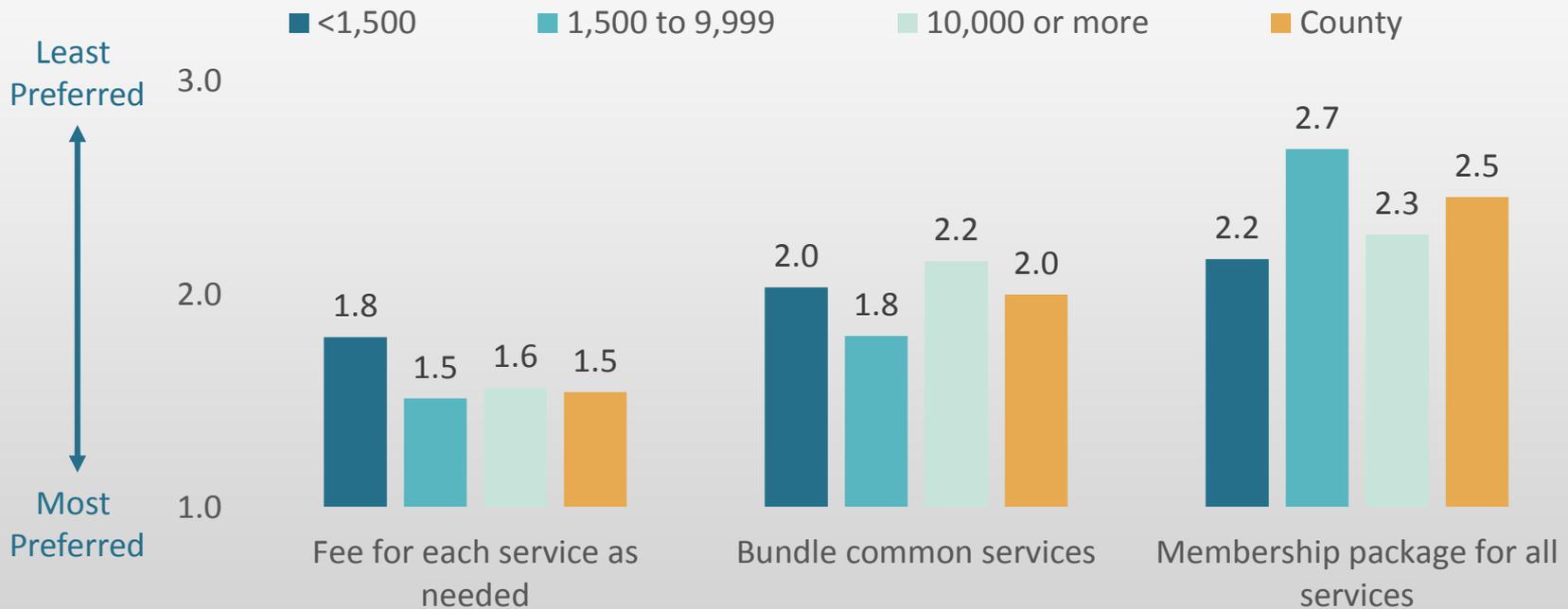
- Most community representatives report “fee for each service as needed” is the most preferred way of paying for services (61%). The least preferred method is “membership package for all services”.



*Source: Q3. If services such as these were offered in the future, the communities would have to determine the preferred way of paying for them. Based on the needs of your community, please rank each of the three options with 1 the most preferred option and 3 the least preferred. (n=127)*

## Average Rank of Preferred Way of Paying for Services (Smaller Bars Better) by City Population Size

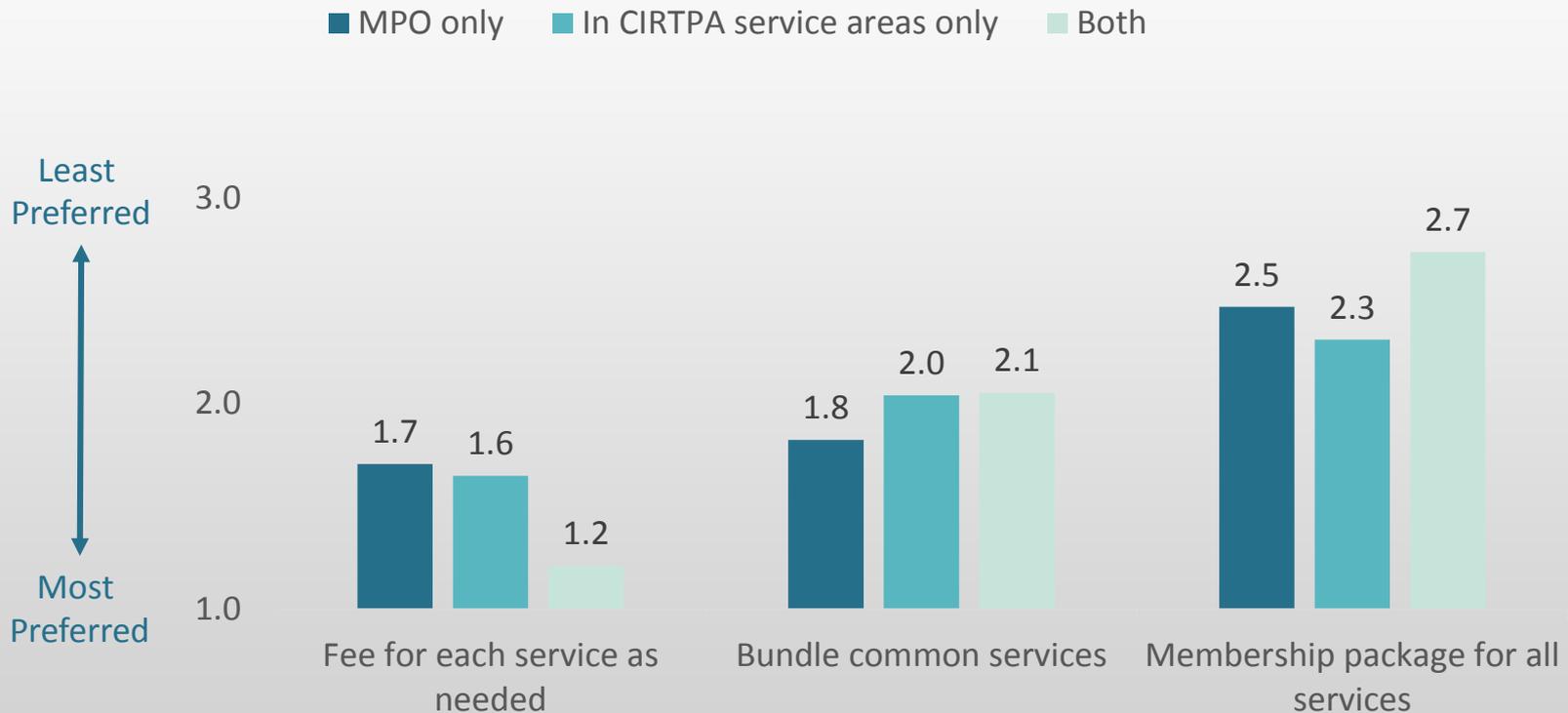
- Regardless of city population size, respondents report they prefer paying a fee for each service as needed as their first choice, bundle common services as their second choice and membership package for all services as their last choice.



Source: Q3. If services such as these were offered in the future, the communities would have to determine the preferred way of paying for them. Based on the needs of your community, please rank each of the three options with 1 the most preferred option and 3 the least preferred. (n: <1,500=30, 1,500-9,999=41, 10,000+=32, county=24) Use caution in interpreting due to low bases.

## Average Rank of Preferred Way of Paying for Services (Smaller Bars Better) by Organization Membership

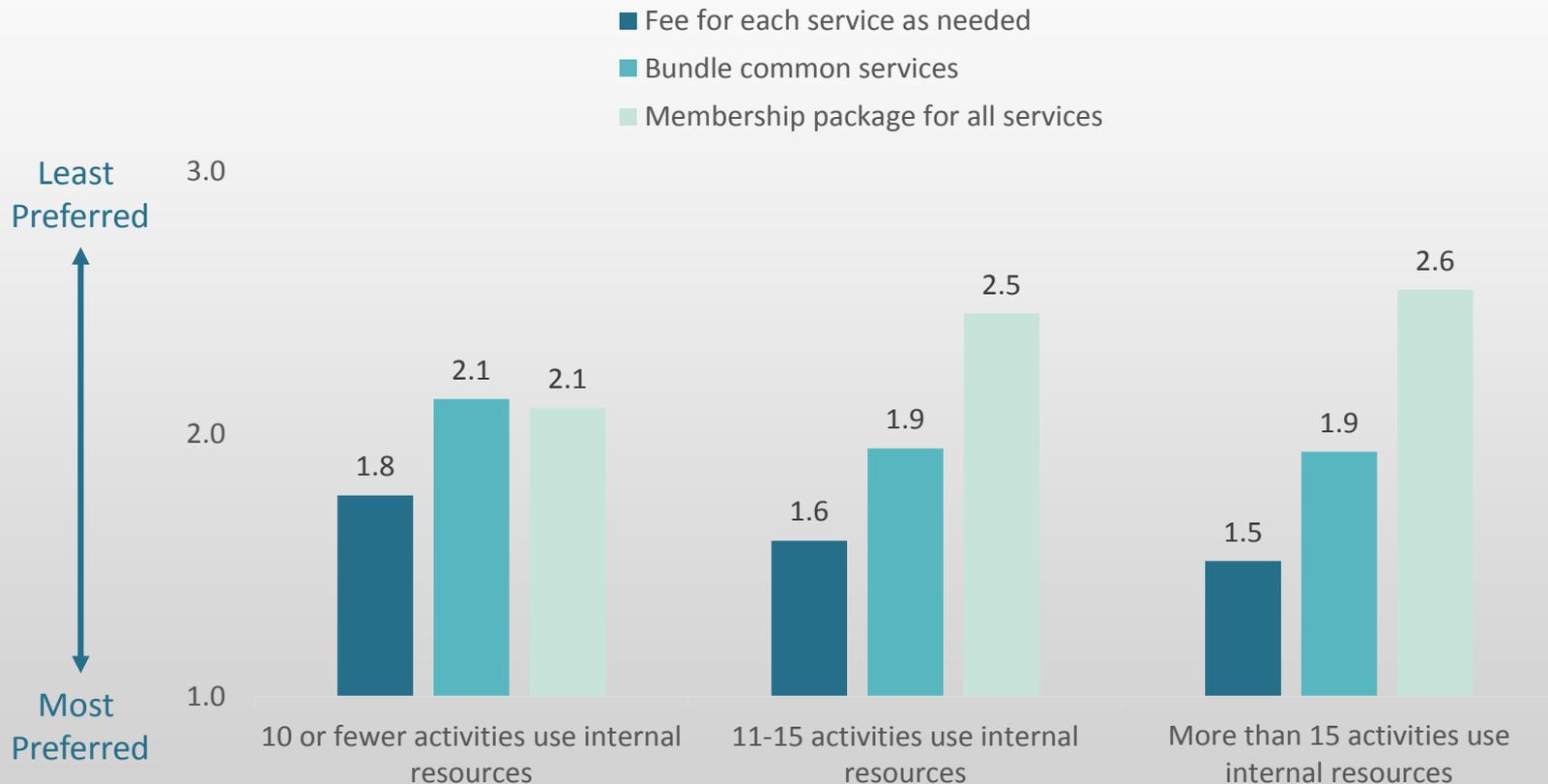
- Members of each organization report they prefer to pay via a fee for each service as needed as their first choice, bundle common services as their second choice and membership package for all services as their last choice.



Source: Q3. If services such as these were offered in the future, the communities would have to determine the preferred way of paying for them. Based on the needs of your community, please rank each of the three options with 1 the most preferred option and 3 the least preferred. (n: MPO member=34, CIRTPA-74, both=19) Use caution interpreting due to low bases.

## Preferred Method of Paying for Services (Smaller Bars Better) by Number of Activities Accomplished Using Internal Resources

- Jurisdictions that use internal resources for more activities are more likely to prefer fee for each service as needed.



Source: Q3. To what degree should the MPO play a convener or coordinator role in each of the following efforts?  
(n: <10=activities=30, 10-15 activities=37, > 15 activities=60)



# Summary of Findings/ Conclusions

## MPO Strategic Planning Survey



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# Summary of Findings

## Resources Used to Accomplish Activities

- Most activities are accomplished using internal resources (17/24 activities tested), this is especially true in larger cities (10,000 or more). The second most used resource is contract services. Professional associations are the least used resource and are most likely to be used by smaller cities.
- Transit planning is the service least likely to use internal capacities and garnered the most “not applicable” responses. Other services with more “not applicable responses include: housing programs, transportation planning, business incentive programs and corridor planning.
- Multiple resources are more likely to be used to achieve activities related to watershed planning, emergency preparedness, corridor planning, transportation planning and comprehensive planning than other activities.
- MPO members are slightly more likely to use internal resources and contract services than in CIRTPA service areas.

## Important Activities to Improve/Expand

- Respondents consistently mention three activities that are important to improve/expand: comprehensive planning, programs to support incentivizing businesses and public participation support.
- Another activity respondents deem important to improve/expand is emergency preparedness and planning.

# Summary of Findings

## Collaboration

- Most respondents express that collaboration is important for all activities.
- Most jurisdictions, including MPO members, report it is *extremely important* to collaborate on or use an inter-jurisdictional approach to *public safety and emergency planning and management*.
- One activity mentioned as being *extremely important* for collaboration by MPO members is *legislative advocacy*.

## MPO's Role

- Most jurisdictions prefer MPO to have a partnership role in coordinating and convening most all activities.
- The desire for MPO's involvement in coordinating/convening activities decreases as the number of activities accomplished via internal resources increases.
- In CIRTPA members report MPO should play a more active role in activities on average than MPO members.
- Animal control is the only activity in which the highest percent of jurisdictions report MPO should have no role.

# Summary of Findings

## Preferred Method for paying for services

- Jurisdictions report they prefer paying a fee for each service as needed as their first choice, especially jurisdictions that have more internal capacity. Bundling common services is their second choice and membership package for all services as their last choice. This applies to all cities and jurisdictions regardless of size, organization membership or governmental level.

## Conclusions/Actionable Results

- Foster collaboration or an inter-jurisdictional approach on activities, especially public safety, emergency preparedness, regional growth and legislative advocacy.
- Partner with communities to achieve community activities and priorities, especially paved trails coordination, legislative advocacy, regional growth management, regional bicycle / pedestrian coordination, public transit coordination for central Iowa.
- Target resources to improve/expand options for comprehensive planning, programs to support incentivizing businesses, public participation support and emergency preparedness and planning.
- Use a fee per service costing method for desired services.



# Appendix

## MPO Strategic Planning Survey



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## Methodological Notes

- Results for some subgroups will yield a larger margin of error due to small sample sizes. Use the table below to determine the margin of error. Interpretation: For a base sample of 75 people, and a rating of 6%, the margin of error is 5.4%. So, the upper limit is 11.3% and the lower limit is 0.7%

Sample Size (n)																
Rating (%)	10	40	75	100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	500	600	700	800	900
0.10%	2.0%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
0.50%	4.4%	2.2%	1.6%	1.4%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
1.00%	6.2%	3.1%	2.3%	2.0%	1.6%	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
2.00%	8.7%	4.3%	3.2%	2.7%	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
3.00%	10.6%	5.3%	3.9%	3.3%	2.7%	2.4%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%
4.00%	12.2%	6.1%	4.4%	3.8%	3.1%	2.7%	2.4%	2.2%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%
5.00%	13.5%	6.8%	4.9%	4.3%	3.5%	3.0%	2.7%	2.5%	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%
6.00%	14.7%	7.4%	5.4%	4.7%	3.8%	3.3%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%
7.00%	15.8%	7.9%	5.8%	5.0%	4.1%	3.5%	3.2%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%
8.00%	16.8%	8.4%	6.1%	5.3%	4.3%	3.8%	3.4%	3.1%	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%
9.00%	17.7%	8.9%	6.5%	5.6%	4.6%	4.0%	3.6%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%	2.6%	2.5%	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%
10.00%	18.6%	9.3%	6.8%	5.9%	4.8%	4.2%	3.7%	3.4%	3.1%	2.9%	2.8%	2.6%	2.4%	2.2%	2.1%	2.0%
15.00%	22.1%	11.1%	8.1%	7.0%	5.7%	5.0%	4.4%	4.0%	3.7%	3.5%	3.3%	3.1%	2.3%	2.7%	2.5%	2.3%
20.00%	24.8%	12.4%	9.1%	7.8%	6.4%	5.5%	5.0%	4.5%	4.2%	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%	2.6%
25.00%	26.8%	13.4%	9.8%	8.5%	6.9%	6.0%	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.8%	3.5%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%
30.00%	28.4%	14.2%	10.4%	9.0%	7.3%	6.4%	5.7%	5.2%	4.8%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%	3.4%	3.2%	3.0%
35.00%	29.6%	14.8%	10.8%	9.4%	7.6%	6.6%	5.9%	5.4%	5.0%	4.7%	4.4%	4.2%	3.8%	3.6%	3.3%	3.1%
40.00%	30.4%	15.2%	11.1%	9.6%	7.8%	6.8%	6.1%	5.5%	5.1%	4.8%	4.5%	4.3%	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%
45.00%	30.8%	15.4%	11.3%	9.8%	6.9%	6.9%	6.2%	5.6%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.4%	4.0%	3.7%	3.5%	3.3%
50.00%	31.0%	15.5%	11.3%	9.8%	8.0%	6.9%	6.2%	5.7%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.4%	4.0%	3.7%	3.5%	3.3%

# Survey



## Online Survey Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to complete this survey for the Strategic Planning Committee of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Below are a couple of help hints for completing this survey:

1. Please try to complete the survey in one session.
2. Do not use the "back" button in your browser.
3. If an error message appears, please check to make sure you answered all questions in the provided spaces.

The survey will take about 10-12 minutes to complete. Please click "Next" below to begin the survey.



## Economic Development and Chambers of Commerce Small Group

SPPG Conference Room  
June 21, 2017 – 1:30 pm

### Attendees:

Deb Bengtson, *Adel Partners Chamber of Commerce*

Curtis Brown, *City of Urbandale*

Brian Buethe, *Grimes Chamber and Economic Development*

Rand Fisher, *Iowa Area Development Group*

Alex Lynch, *Epic Tomorrow, serves Altoona, Pleasant Hill, Bondurant, and Mitchellville*

### Staff

Brad Knott

Gracie Brandsgard

### Discussion

*What are some of the issues you're facing in terms of growing your communities?*

- We have worked with the MPO in the past on trails. The whole metro area has a good trail system. One area needs about an additional five-mile trail to connect them all.  
For the southeast connector connecting Des Moines and Pleasant Hill, it's nice to have an entity like the MPO who knows both. We've met with MPO staff who are planners. Knowing exactly what they do and what services they provide would be really helpful.
- Workforce attraction requires designing a metro area that is attractive to a wide range of people. Quality of life amenities that create what people want will keep this area competitive. I'm talking about access to trails, land and water, parks, and entertainment venues.
- Communities are doing well in terms of economic development. We hear from businesses that workforce is the constraint, we need more people. We need more people in Iowa and the metro. I have a long-term concern: a lot of rural Iowans end up in the city, what happens to rural Iowa? We're already seeing schools consolidating, etc.
- What we hear is businesses are ready and willing to grow but access to capital, and the ability to attract qualified candidates are the biggest barriers. Applicants don't have the skillsets they're looking for. We need to be able to attract a new workforce but also put

programs in place to train the workforce we have here already. We will always have something else that we need to train workers on with technology advancing the way it is.

- Engaging our youth to keep them here. Just like rural Iowa, kids are going off to college and ending up in the metro areas like Des Moines, and then they are also going to metro areas outside of Iowa. We're behind in our infrastructure growth in our community, we feel like we're always behind and playing catch up. We have to remain competitive on our tax rates in order to keep our businesses competitive. I used to work in more rural areas, and we were struggling to get the economic development we're trying to keep here. Last year Grimes built more houses than Waterloo has built in the last decade.
- The greatest issue for economic development is workforce. Housing is also a large issue for many communities. Infrastructure is in a general way. When I think of the metro area, I see congestion and flow as a looming issue and it's already here, though it's not like what greater metro areas are experiencing. But people here are not used to that so we have a pretty low threshold for objection.
- Good quality education. Des Moines Public Schools and the metro area are facing tensions for growth. Rural areas are looking at how to re-use school buildings whereas Waukee can't build schools fast enough.
- Diversity management is important, being intentional about our changing demographics and making sure the city works for everyone.
- Residential growth has been explosive, but commercial growth has not taken off. Many landowners are not realistic about the value of their land.

*Which of these issues necessitate regional solutions?*

- The solutions to the workforce development are regional in thinking about trails. I'm trying to segregate things that the MPO is involved in and things that they are not. The regional arts and entertainment effort is Bravo. It relies on localities putting their best foot forward. It's not at all different from regular transportation infrastructure. States put in the major arteries, but the localities are in charge of connecting in to that. There's a local and a regional part of it.
- State departments are looking for partners right now and want to look at campaigns to attract more workforce, and being more aggressive in that. We're going to have to be in the workforce attraction business.
- Workforce attraction is at least a regional issue. I don't think that Grimes is going to be successful in attracting the workforce, but Urbandale is not. We have to get the buy-in from individuals on the idea of the Midwest, of the state of Iowa, Central Iowa – not to buy them in to a specific city.
- One specific thing is affordable housing. We have people in the middle class that can't buy a home, can't buy their first home. How do we attract people who work in service jobs that we rely on in communities if they can't afford housing? I think those conversations are happening, but we need to do more.
- Transportation, specifically public transportation. We have trouble servicing our core, and we're definitely not providing enough service in the suburbs. Adel has nothing, Urbandale just got some, and Grimes has very little. That's a really important part of quality of life. In order to attract new workforce, the quality of life here has to be better than, not just the same as, where they are coming from.
- Middle skill jobs are about training people up. A lot of people are talking about it and working on it individually. They're trying to build partnerships between cities and schools,

finding synergy. It would be nice if we had something to coalesce around to see what works. There's a lot of people talking about it, but to actually have people sit down and work on it is another thing.

- The type of workforce we're trying to attract varies widely based on what industry you're working in. Some of our future workforce is going to have to come from non-white Midwesterners. We need to be prepared for that, showing that we're a welcoming community. If we're serious about bringing more workforce in, then we need to really think about immigration issues and policies to make sure we're truly welcoming.
- We're working right now on doing a regional study on housing for Mitchellville, Altoona, and Bondurant rather than having each city do their own study. We're still working through that.
- The planning is very much regional, but the implementation takes a more local approach. There has to be a willingness of local entities to welcome in other types of housing into their communities.
- I'm struck at the cost of a residential lot; it's creeping up to an unreal rate for a basic housing lot.
- Regional housing planning can have an impact on correcting market failure; incentivizing developers and cities to build specific types of housing and in specific locations where they otherwise wouldn't. Cities are always going to be doing their own zoning.
- The MPO plays a role in where a lot of these investments are made. The MPO has a huge role in having a say in those conversations.
- From a metro planning standpoint, the burning issue is water and what you're going to do with your water resources. How are you going to manage your tap water systems? Can the MPO play a central role in bringing those voices together? It's clearly a regional problem.
- A lot of these are regional issues, but they're in specific spots. There's a great place for some of the more inclusive Tomorrow Plan and Capital Crossroads that bring all of the groups together. A lot of the funding streams come from the same places, it's local governments that pony up the money for these regional entities.
- MPO probably has the biggest footprint in reaching out into the communities and getting people involved. That's a huge benefit to being able to bring groups together. They have so many roundtable groups that already exist that they convene regularly, it seems like a natural fit.
- Isn't the MPO in its purest form a COG?
- There's so many different models of COGs. The one I worked for, MPO was a part of it, grant management was a part of it, going after federal dollars, housing was a part of it. Some will host their regional transit stuff there too. I wouldn't say it's better or worse here. One of the cool things I saw at the COG I worked for, they'd bring in a variety of high level elected officials from all over the six-county area and would convene them regularly and cover a variety of topics. We talked about marketing, emergency/disaster planning, and so on. Our region has a problem of people just not being at the table when they should be. Everyone shows up to the MPO meeting because the MPO doles out money. And hopefully the MPO exists to make sure local governments are spending their money wisely.
- The welcoming community idea. The Greater Des Moines Partnership has that and does a very good job in managing that and working with that. Between the United Way and the Community Foundation, no one is going to be expendable given the unemployment

rate. We need to be making sure everyone matriculates through our public school system and can find safety and prosperity here.

- There's a plethora of nonprofits in the metro area who are doing good work, and working on their niche issue.
- The MPO should be helping fund and plan trails. A lot of smaller cities don't have the staff or the capacity to do technical assistance, so they either don't see the importance of trails or don't have the capacity to do trails. Trails can help smaller communities get in front of the future growth. The metro is going to keep expanding, it's important that smaller communities be proactive.
- MPO can be involved in public education. I've attended presentations hosted by the MPOs. They can make sure communities are educated on the best and latest research and best practices on land use planning, transportation planning, and others. MPO can make recommendations to cities; I appreciate it when the MPO takes a regional approach to issues and shows where we should be looking and where we could see issues in the future. Providing informational and education opportunities would be really helpful.
- Throwing out opportunities as a region, showing where we're seeing trends. What are other places doing? MPO can help point those out to us.
- Often times we think of COGs or MPO as being an intergovernmental agency. But it's really important how the MPO engages non-governmental stakeholders and the public. MPO can do more with this, I would be interested if the MPO would join other regional entities. For example, MPO could be a part of Bravo.
- We should be wary of the MPO spreading itself too thin and not being good at anything.

*What advice or parting words would you give the MPO?*

- I see the MPO as a necessary organization and a powerful organization. The first MPO meeting I went to I thought everyone would be arguing about who got the funding, but it seemed like everyone got along and worked together. The MPO should focus on telling their story, that's the biggest thing.
- The MPO works best when it focuses on moving people and things around. Their involvement in funding and helping to prioritize regional investments is great; the freight roundtable is a good example. Where there is a functioning regional entity that's doing a good job, the MPO should let them keep doing it. But otherwise, if there's a need and it makes sense, then go for it.
- Thanks for having a roundtable like this. It's important to reach out and hear from different people and stakeholders. Continue to have these conversations.
- Thank you for your inclusiveness. All of Iowa depends on, to some degree, the success of the greater metro. The connectivity of the metro is a concern.



## Housing Small Group

### Polk County Housing Trust Fund

June 14, 2017 – 10:00 AM

### Present

Eric Burmeister, *Polk County Housing Trust Fund*

Lisa Crabbs, *City of Des Moines*

Russ Fraizer, *Anawim Housing*

Christine Gordon, *City of West Des Moines*

Chris Johansen, *City of Des Moines*

Mark Philips, *Polk County Continuum of Care Board*

Stephanie Preusch, *NFC*

Bethany Wilcoxon, *Capital Crossroads*

### Staff

Brad Knott

Arlinda McKeen

Robyn Mills

### Discussion

#### Key Housing Issues

- Workforce housing is challenging, but connectivity and transportation are vital. The community is missing middle housing and variety in the levels of housing it offers. There are numerous housing opportunities for those with income restrictions and high end housing, but few opportunities for middle housing.
- Housing challenges and solutions are regional. Connectivity and location can only be addressed from a regional standpoint. Regional planning cannot be avoided as our community grows.
- Historically, commute times to get anywhere in the metro was no longer than 20 minutes. That is not true anymore as commuters choose to live outside of the metro. Sub-areas of the metro need to be reviewed to see if the right choices in housing exist. For example, as job centers develop in northwestern Urbandale and Grimes, the demographic of the workforce needs to match the housing choices available. If the two are not matched correctly, there will be negative consequences for the region as a

whole. Housing review must have a regional approach. The MPO is a convener that can address housing issues on a regional level.

**How do you manage when there are different jurisdictions and competition between and among cities? How do you look ahead to 2050 or to the future? What does the workforce look like, jobs look like and how do you get people to act now to prepare?**

- It is more difficult to do long-range-planning, because housing and economic development is market-driven. It takes 30-40 years to plan for long-term city planning and hard to plan for market-driven economic development. However, jurisdictions actually decide how the land is zoned, and it is hard for jurisdictions to set aside land for future development.
- When urban growth is reviewed, including an analysis of transportation structures in the area, there is enough planning through 2050. However, the community needs to use the resources that they have within the area and not continue to build out from the metro.
- Development of a land bank was discussed as a way to have some control over development. It would provide a central group to acquire neighborhood properties and centralize the decision-making. Plans for a land bank began and then were stalled. The Des Moines Partnership is supportive of a land bank, and the Neighborhood Development Corporation is interested in running it.
- The city is reviewing its revitalization plan. The plan was updated in 2005 and the city is ready to hire a consultant to update it again. Many are waiting for recommendations from the updated plan. People are generally supportive of a nonprofit entity (land bank) to centralize and fulfill their missions. However, the problems surrounding housing will take millions of dollars. Prioritizing projects may be difficult and a pilot project is being considered to set up the land bank for success. The land bank process will be very expensive. Properties would need to be maintained, rebuilt, and insured. The land bank would hold title. This would allow for more efficient use of infrastructure, using existing infrastructure funds. The fact that a land bank is being considered is a positive step, as they have been successful across the country and would allow Des Moines to capitalize on the resources available.
- Land banks have been discussed in the region for 7-1/2 years. It makes sense to do this, and all the title work can be done in-house. Most of the legal issues could be handled by a paralegal with real estate experience. A land bank could help strike a balance between creating housing that is affordable or housing that is market rate. Transportation plays a huge role in affordable housing.
- There is a need to look at the social equity side of housing. There is a change in mood regarding affordable housing. There are still crumbling neighborhoods and no cohesive solution to correct the problem. These neighborhoods need additional neighborhood involvement in beautification to make areas feel safe, including sidewalks, trees, etc.

- Land banks move up and down the spectrum of what's affordable. Everyone needs to be at the table. A coordinated response is needed on homelessness and housing needs, engaging all to work with those that are homeless or low-income.
- Housing growth needs will be a big problem in future years. No community in the region is producing the number of housing units that will be needed at any level. No one will be meeting the growth curve and then growth will need to be matched with demographics. The region must get out ahead of the curve to continue growth and inventory available housing ahead of demand.
- The region needs to forecast what type of housing is needed. The city of Des Moines and public schools should take advantage of the influx of young couples moving out of downtown. When they want to buy a house with a yard...how do we ensure that they buy a house in Des Moines and not the suburbs? We need options for families in Des Moines.
- Neighbors are important, but the "not in my backyard" concept has turned ugly. Neighbors do not want rental housing, homeless, certain races, marginalized people, or the mentally ill. People are very vocal at public meetings, scaring developers, and public officials are backing down.
- Some elected leaders will engage in the issue. But some are aggressive in keeping people out. Policymakers are part of the challenge. They can be too beholden to constituents who have attitudes against certain populations.
- Having housing choice and variety contributes to the success of the neighborhood and community. Market housing correctly: it keeps the economic engine moving forward. There is a need for a diverse workforce, and that workforce needs affordable housing. Do not try to change neighbors' minds. Instead, we need to influence leaders to see what is best for the entire community.
- Many neighborhoods include a bulk of old people who are not adequately resourced and often cannot repair their homes. What do communities do to assist them? Communities run into zoning issues when dealing with senior housing. This is the most acceptable population to have in the neighborhoods. Iowa has a higher proportion of elderly with various housing needs. It is important to offer housing alternatives to those who are moving into a community. They need something they can afford.
- Des Moines housing stock is aging, and that is not being addressed. Cost of repairs is not going to go down. Review zoning to identify how to allow accessory dwelling units (mother-in-law apartments, tiny houses). Suburban lots are much bigger and able to handle accessory dwelling units to supplement housing stock. Rules need to be established around accessory dwelling units.

**What should MPO take from these issues and what should they do? What is the role of MPO in these issues?**

- The MPO is more responsible for cohesive messaging as they deal with housing issues. It can provide cover for political figures, so that the right types of housing can be built in the right area and NIMBY does not creep in. The MPO can serve the region we live and not just the cities. It can provide leadership on a regional level. Housing is everyone's problem and everyone's opportunity. Begin to talk about housing as an opportunity, not a burden. MPO leadership can develop a larger strategy for good regional housing development. The Polk County Housing Trust Fund has been driving the effort for the past five years. Only Polk County gets support from the MPO, and that support is valuable. The region cannot afford to lose MPO support by just focusing on roads.
- Advocacy for good housing policy needs to come from a regional group, going beyond Polk and Dallas counties. Going forward, we need to be mindful of the housing choices available outside of Des Moines. Lower housing costs have relegated families to living outside Des Moines. MPO can help promote the message beyond Des Moines. "Our people – our community – our program." Communities need to bond together and choose to do something together.
- If not MPO, who will carry this message? If not for the federal government, there would be no regional entity -- and no political will. If federal dollars cease to seek regional input, then planning would go away.
- What if federal dollars go away? If the reason goes away, will the entity continue to exist? Would the Board continue the programs?

#### **Issues:**

- Some neighborhoods have more of a sense of neighborhood than others. What role does MPO have in this? Is it enough for the MPO to keep infrastructure updated? Focus on corridors in between cities and allow cities to be responsible for their jurisdictions. The MPO can provide guidance to cities.
- MPO has been creating model policies for a variety of issues, including animal ordinances, sidewalk policies, and accessory dwelling. This gives cities a base to develop their policies.

#### **Advice to MPO**

- MPO should look at regional issues concerning housing and be the backbone of planning.
- Look into the future and think as a region. What we can do to coordinate and attract people, and what are the resources we need to be successful?
- How does the MPO come with a voice? How does it come out with weight to influence stakeholders?

- The MPO could be a fair housing advocate for diversity, economic, age, race, and more by helping all communities see the economic value of having a diverse population.
- MPO can bring together best practices, such as land bank, accessory unit dwelling, and homeless shelters. How do you bring best practices to smaller communities so they can meet their goals?
- Regionalism is essential to success. It is embedded in everything MPO does and that helps to eliminate redundancy.
- Housing policy will be better if is regional.
- MPO will not be afraid to do what's right, because it is not influenced by politics. That gives a stronger voice by superseding community politics.



**Public Health Small Group**  
**Polk County Public Health Department**  
**June 14, 2017 – 2:00 PM**

## Present

Jodene DeVault, *Warren County Health Services*  
Rick Kozin, *Polk County Public Health Department*  
Mary Lawyer, *Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield*  
Becky Pryor, *Jasper County Health Department*  
Kent Sovern, *AARP*  
Sarah Taylor Watts, *Iowa Department of Public Health*  
Kelly Vellinga, *Dallas County Public Health Nursing Service*  
Jennifer Walters, *Dallas County Public Health Nursing Services*

### **SPPG Staff**

Brad Knott  
Arlinda McKeen  
Robyn Mills

## Discussion

### **Overview**

The MPO is a federally mandated organization designated to receive DOT funding. Part of the MPO's responsibility is planning and distribution of the federal transportation dollars. Connecting the MPO to Public Health would be to think of issues such as community health, activities, safe ways to get places, aging in place, kids at play, and preparedness.

### **Key issues**

Looking 20-40 years into the future, please identify and discuss what you see as key issues related to public health.

- The group emphasized the importance of infrastructure and planning for future growth – making sure that we have safe roads and crossings to schools. Example: Waukee's population is expected to reach 40,000 by 2020, and the community is behind in the infrastructure planning. Waukee is 10 years ahead of Adel, where infrastructure is even further behind. The need for safe roads and crossings is important for growing communities.

- Obesity is also a public health problem. Sixty-nine percent of Iowans are overweight. Iowa Department of Public Health has worked with the MPO on plans to make it easier to walk and bike and keep people healthier. INRCOG in Waterloo is a good example of how to use transportation dollars for walking and biking infrastructure. There is a greater demand for walking and biking options. If you make it accessible, people will use it.
- There is also a need for connected communities. Trail development is a priority, but inside the communities connectivity is not always a priority.
- Social connectedness is also vital to health. Isolation has a detrimental impact on health. Older adults would prefer to age in place, but are often isolated as a result.
- A question arose about whether public health should be included in duties of the MPO. This group thinks yes, but not sure that MPO feels the same. Safe routes to school aren't thought of as related to public health. Plan DSM, the city of Des Moines' Comprehensive Plan, is a form-based plan, not use-based, and does not specifically focus on public health issues. A group of volunteers, Age Friendly Des Moines, worked very closely with Plan DSM, but the outcomes are not strong enough. We need to make sure that public health is written into city plans.
- Eight out of 10 people want to stay in their homes as long as possible. MPO could assist with plans to allow older Iowans to age in place. MPO has tried to put in health-related work, but they could do more with Downtown DM design standards by making them understandable.
- Old ways of thinking about city planning need to be discarded. Replace auto-centric planning with people-centric. MPO needs to advocate for public health to counter the traditional engineer perspective. The city of West Des Moines has different vision than Des Moines and Carlisle. Much of it is competitive between communities. Community-centric, people-centric planning needs to replace thinking of engineers.
- Aging in place is difficult in some communities because of a lack of home health services, family support, home maintenance, transportation to get healthy food, and whether meals on wheels are delivered. We see multiple-generations living in one household on one salary, often with grandparents raising grandkids.
- Dallas County does not have adequate transportation for the elderly. Shuttles require two-day advance scheduling. MPO could work together with communities to establish a deviated bus route, multiple stops to get errands done.
- Thriving in place is better than aging in place. MPO has a role in ensuring that communities are thriving, not just surviving.
- There are statewide priorities for health. The state's new strategic plan has three goals, including tackling Iowa's obesity problems. Of Iowa's 99 counties, 89 cite obesity as a health priority. IDPH would like to have a greater role in addressing this issue. Healthiest State Initiative has addressed obesity-reduction goals.

### **What is the MPO's role in public health?**

- The MPO should have an active role in public health by providing expertise for complete streets and other transportation projects.

- The MPO should advocate for safe streets and influence policy makers on its importance.
- The MPO should promote projects that increase levels of activity in the community, including roundabouts, sidewalks, and bike and pedestrian trails.
- The Bike and Pedestrian roundtable and Environmental roundtable should expand their scope to include safe walkways to schools.
- When planning for new streets, communities should be cognizant of the broader issues related to walkability and safety.
- MPO and Regional Planning have regular meetings and public health is beginning to join them. Plan DSM does not have a separate document relating to public health. However, it is woven throughout the document.
- The MPO could use corporate partners, like Hy-Vee, as a point to reach out to the community for input. Hy-Vee bulletin boards are a central place to disseminate information. Why not engage the private sector with multiple locations to assist with the public need?
- The Health Impact Assessments could be used as a tool for development projects.
- Use Nashville as a model to revise scoring to impact health.
- What is the goal for transportation: cars or people? The MPO should adopt a mentality of moving people, not just motor vehicles.
- Subsidize UBER or LYFT in areas without adequate transportation.
- There are a lot of direct and indirect connections between the MPO and emergency management. MPO should not have a direct role, just a seat at the table. They may have a potential role in mitigation, but not response.
- Direct Health Services – Age Friendly did a mapping exercise to pinpoint services and were able to identify neighborhoods that were isolated, lacked transportation options, lacked health services, and were food deserts.
- MPO has access to decision-makers on a regional basis that transcends county and city boundaries and could be used as a way to test ideas before action.
- The MPO could have a role in food access. It is a part of how communities are planned, because access to food is important.

#### **Final thoughts: Advice to MPO or community role?**

- Do not put public health in a silo, but consider it during all the decision-making processes.
- Look to bring diversity of ideas together when planning to bring a new vision focused on healthy living.
- MPO is in a unique position to bring people together to allow communities to be Thriving Communities. All elements, including public health, contribute to Thriving Communities.
- Is there a public sector entity that looks at green space connectivity on a regional level? Develop a regional vision for how Des Moines and Raccoon rivers work together in connectivity. This could contribute to environmental and physical health improvements.



**Small Cities Small Group**  
**SPPG Conference Room**  
**July 20, 2017 – 9:00 AM**

## Present

Ben Champ, Pleasant Hill City Planner  
Sara Kurovski, Pleasant Hill Mayor  
Luke Nelson, Norwalk City Manager - Norwalk  
Ruth Randleman, Carlisle Mayor  
Stephanie Riva, Norwalk City Council Member  
Steve Van Oort, Polk County Supervisor  
Diana Willet, Windsor Heights City Council Member

## Staff

Brad Knott  
Robyn Mills

## Discussion

### **What should the MPO be doing for small cities? What are the challenges for smaller cities?**

Carlisle has been a beneficiary of services from the MPO and they are concerned that the services will shrink in the future. The perception of what the MPO does is viewed positively with smaller communities. Planning services provided to members should not be tied to the discussion of whether or not to pursue a regional COG. Smaller communities pay a membership fee to the MPO for various services and expertise. If the services are reduced, why pay the membership fee?

Windsor Heights has limited staff who are job sharing several jobs, and they have limited ability to increase funds. It is an older city with no planning, horrible streets, and no solid infrastructure. MPO has been helpful with planning and providing valuable information to them when undertaking projects, such as sidewalks. Being a contiguous community, it's important to know what other cities are doing. The MPO provides regional knowledge of the activities surrounding their community. Windsor Heights is currently working on a complete streets project. They are working with AARP, and an MPO representative is assisting. The MPO provides oversight of local and national trends. They strongly support the Tomorrow Plan, but they need help with knowing what's going on regionally.

Pleasant Hill has a local planning team. However, the possible contraction of services from the MPO is worrisome. A COG may not be necessary, but MPO assistance is still needed. Several issues were identified. MPO brings regional approach to distribution of transportation dollars and should look at

including housing, economic development, and an understanding of what neighboring communities are doing, so that they are growing economic development collectively. Staff-to-staff contact between communities is common.

A COG may not be necessary, but there is a need for an organization to house the wealth of information that the MPO provides. There was a significant investment in the Tomorrow Plan, but who will implement its recommendations? Small city planners work with the MPO, who has the expertise that can be utilized by the cities. Watersheds are important and should be housed at the MPO, because they effect the region as a whole. Membership fees buy a portion of the bigger projects, but there needs to be an overall convener, facilitator and/or planner. The MPO should fill that role, as the smaller cities cannot afford separate consultation. Additionally, cities contract for assistance with sidewalk ordinances, walkability, and complete streets consultation.

Smaller cities need help with planning and assistance with identifying infrastructure needs. Cities need to know what neighboring cities are planning, so construction can be seamless between communities. The MPO can provide those tools. They also assist with providing model ordinances and best practices in engineering and planning.

The MPO has worked with Norwalk, assisting with communication with the DOT. Highway 28 runs through the middle of Norwalk, and, because it is a state highway, it is difficult to make changes as it relates to the road. DOT must be consulted when setting speed limits, placing traffic lights or other improvements to make it safer for residents. The district DOT office is in Fairfield and they don't have a good understanding of the problems and traffic patterns that Highway 28 imposes on Norwalk. The MPO assists Norwalk with their discussions with the DOT. Norwalk was identified as a transportation node, which required them to hire a consultant and they requested MPO funding to assist with plan. Other types of assistance from MPO could include walkability studies, assistance with public meetings regarding transportation plans, train locals on how to put together a street maintenance plan, assistance with GIS mapping, and other planning activities.

Pleasant Hill, Bondurant, Mitchellville, and Ankeny all benefit from assistance with planning for the MPO. However, sometimes the MPO overreaches into areas that already have organizations dedicated to planning. An example is watersheds. Four Mile Creek watershed is managed by Polk County Soil and Water, and MPO does not need to be involved. The MPO should stay focused on transportation and planning.

The Central Iowa Trail system is a model trail system because of the MPO. Cities benefit from MPO convening people with regard to watersheds. MPO has not been implementing plans.

It is okay for the MPO to act as a convener on issues, but management and continued involvement with projects is not needed. The MPO staff must make decisions on where to spend their time, because of limited resources. As staff gets pulled different directions on a variety of projects, there is a worry that they will not be helping communities on other projects that are a priority. They do not want to double staff to assist with additional projects, because that would increase membership fees.

It was noted that those communities who contract with the MPO for projects of \$5,000 or greater, must be approved by the Executive Committee of the MPO. Some thought it was \$2,500 or greater.

### **Who could do the services if the MPO was not there?**

The water authority and Polk County Soil and Water could take over a portion, but many communities would have to hire outside consultants. They would consult with other cities and local staff would have to convene. Cities would contract with a planner, who would then probably consult with the MPO.

MPO contracting is efficient, especially for the smaller projects. Their strengths are to convene and facilitate, as they have all regional contacts and knowledge. Often, the MPO is consulted at the beginning of a project to provide expertise, then the cities hire a planner to develop plan and complete the project. The MPO comes in handy for facilitation. MPO also has knowledge on national projects and trends. It is a great value for the membership fees.

### **Any advice for the MPO?**

- Review the governance structure as part of the strategic plan.
- Worried that Des Moines is losing its edge and sees a value to have a conduit for conversations within the MPO. There is a concern about narrowing the scope of activities. The rest of the state hates Des Moines, but we are the leader, and we must keep strong together.
- When scoring transportation projects, consideration should be made as to how much money the community has gotten in past years.
- Don't try to be too many things to too many communities.
- Need to look at the big picture and weigh all the options for the MPO.
- Members pay for services. MPO needs to do a better job of outlining what member services are available for their membership fee.
- MPO just needs to determine what their role is to the best of their ability. There will be so many changes in the next few years...who is going to be the manager of all this change? Where do communities go for really thoughtful planning assistance?
- MPO should keep some facilitation and convening. The Executive Director should be managing staff. Communities will pay for contracting for the services and facilitation.
- MPO got rave reviews from the Federal Highway Commission (FHC) because they were including planning for bike and water trails. The FHC expects this from the MPO as a regional entity.

Federal highway dollars can be used only on regional projects, such as collectors and arterials. It is a political decision on what project will be funded. Carlisle has gotten money, Norwalk has not gotten any federal dollars. If Norwalk was in CIRTPA, instead of MPO, they would receive \$260,000 a year. If cities don't get services through the MPO, why pay the membership fees? What do you get for your \$12,000 membership fees?



## State and Federal Agencies Small Group

### SPPG Conference Room

### June 20, 2017 – 8:30 AM

### Present

Donna Burkett, *Iowa Workforce Development*

Steve Eggleston, *Department of Housing and Urban Development*

Jeff Geerts, *Iowa Economic Development Authority*

Randy Kunert, *Iowa Department of Public Safety*

Linda Miller, *Iowa Department on Aging*

Jamie Norton, *Iowa Workforce Development, Des Moines*

Allison Sidwell, *Iowa Workforce Development, Des Moines*

Lee Wagner, SRF, *Department of Natural Resources*

### SPPG Staff

Arlinda McKeen

Gracie Brandsgard

### Discussion

*What are some of the key issues you are facing in your work and in supporting state and federal priorities?*

- HUD is a funding mechanism, we provide EDA with a lot of funding, we awarded MPO a \$2.2 million planning grant for the Tomorrow Plan and Housing Tomorrow. Those plans included housing, watershed, trails and bike paths, corridors, and gives specific actions that should take place. Now the grant has been fulfilled because the plan has been done. We have a lot of planning done in the region, and all of those plans are similar in that they are a lot of pieces of paper with a lot of actions in there. Someone needs to embrace all of those actions. There should be an entity that can embrace all of those actions and be a leader. The MPO spent \$2.2 million on the planning grant and they have a lot of knowledge because of it, so they might be a natural leader.
- There are specific items within Tomorrow Plan like the recommendation that partnerships be the way to accomplish these things. MPO could be the facilitator of

those groups. They may not be the exact people to do the actions but they could be the convener and bring the experts together.

- To build on that, one of the biggest things I see lacking is public education and outreach and community support. We run into issues where the city goes ahead on a project but they don't make a strong effort to do outreach to the community during the planning process to get input. And during construction there could be backlash against the project by the community and that's a waste of money. And once the projects are done if the community doesn't buy into it then those projects aren't going to be used. DNR makes wastewater loans. One city did work to identify areas for a storm water management plan, and they did the design process in-house. We got to the point where we had almost the final design plan and had a public meeting to show it and they received a lot of negative feedback. The city ended up not moving forward with the project, and ended up losing money on this because they had hired a consultant and still had to pay them. If they'd had a more engaging process they may not have run into this issue and could have had a project in place at the end.
- From an employer perspective, people don't know what they don't know. With so many plans, grants, and funding out there we get a little ahead of ourselves assuming that everyone knows about these opportunities. For example, registered apprenticeship. There are misconceptions about state grants for this; there are a lot of layers and a lot of confusion. With any planning, there should always be a strong push to do outreach and to be constantly thinking about how to simplify processes and opportunities.
- We're doing minority outreach around workforce issues. What we found is that public transportation for individuals working at night is very limited after 5 pm. That provides an additional barrier to employment particularly for low-income workers.
- Iowa Workforce Development does listening sessions and employer surveys, and surveys those who are unemployed. We do research on what occupations are growing in the region and what are the wages those occupations are paying. With a low unemployment rate, it's difficult to find jobs for the unemployed and it's difficult for businesses to expand. By 2025, over 60% of jobs in Iowa will require some type of post-secondary education. We can't assume we know what employers and employees want, or what unemployed individuals want – we have to ask them.
- When we think about what the MPO does and what they could do, the opportunity for jobs and transportation planning have to go hand in hand. If you have pockets of employment, like Jordan Creek, you have a lot of opportunities for low-income jobs, but the transportation to get there is severely lacking. There needs to be more coordination, there needs to be a connection there. And MPO can't ignore that; that also gives them an opportunity be involved in that conversation and lead that.
- The MPO has been mostly focused on transportation but there's no one coordinating the land use side of it. They need to coincide. It's gotten better over the last few years. MPO is just a gatherer of every community's transportation wish list; MPO compiles them, and sends it off to DOT. The Tomorrow Plan was good, could have had more civic engagement, but it was reinforced that it was just guidance and suggestions. Because

nothing is required, it limits the ability of the Tomorrow Plan to be the transformative plan it could be.

- We still don't act like a region when it comes to larger issues like transportation and land use. We talk like we are a region but at the end of the day we are 17 different cities, all with different transportation wish lists, capital improvement plans, comprehensive plans, etc.
- The MPO has so many different groups meeting – technical, policy, executive, steering, and all of the roundtables. Decisions have already been made by the time the policy committee meets so how do you really become a part of the decision-making process?
- Every community who was a part of the Tomorrow Plan was asked to embrace the Tomorrow Plan, but Ankeny refused to do it. They didn't want to be a part of the region at all. If the MPO is not going to change its governance, then there has to be something in the strategic plan that requires more outreach. Just because someone is the mayor doesn't mean they have the pulse of the community. They may have the pulse of the influential members, but not of the community as a whole.
- We have an aging population in the state of Iowa, much of it is in rural Iowa. Transportation, then, is huge. There's a small workforce retraining program for those 55 and older. They are always missed in the workforce, many of them would like to go back to work, and some need to go back to work. There just is a lack of interest on the part of employers to hire anyone over the age of 55.
- People that are aging want to age in their homes, they don't want to go to a nursing home or a skilled nursing home. With new Medicaid, the federal dollars are all in a managed care system. Before that, our focus was how to spend people's dollars down so they could get into Medicaid. Once we went to managed care, every dual eligible person has a nurse manager. The people who don't have any help are those at 138-300% of FPL; those are the ones at risk of slipping. Our department's focus is on helping those people preserve their assets and make sure they have access to services.
- This reiterates the community aspect. How did past generations age? Neighbors helping neighbors allows people to age in their homes. I don't see that in communities anymore. I don't know what the solution, is but if we can build that sense of community – and that goes for the plans as well.
- We're very good at telling people what they should be doing, we're not very good at asking and listening.
- With the Ankeny example, if you think about the political nuances at the beginning, you can have more success down the road.
- In some rural communities, the youngest person in the community is over the age of 70. We should be thinking outside the box for strategies. Congregate meals in the Department on Aging have gone down by 46% since 2000.
- The demographics are changing – the jobs are in the city, and younger people are moving out. That creates another barrier because access to services in rural areas in

diminishing. Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) can be, and should be, helpful and involved in any regional planning processes.

- The MPO could be more helpful to the smaller communities who have a lot of assets and opportunities, but they either don't have the staff (grant writer, planner, etc) or the knowledge of the best practices to put it in place. All of the larger communities have that capacity. There isn't a COG in the central region, and the MPO has been filling in some of those roles, but someone needs to be providing those services to the outlying communities.
- We see the MPO as something that is completely underutilized when it comes to transportation. And I don't know if that's the MPO's fault. I don't know if everyone is committed to the regional concept. We saw the MPO as being the conduit to help everyone with the transportation issue. And DOT saw it that way too. But not everyone has bought into it. Is it our inability to say we need help? We cannot get law enforcement to attend MPO meetings. Maybe everyone wants to go out and do their own thing. MPO could help with community outreach and education. State Patrol used MPO to get out the traffic plan for the big meeting of governors last year because we saw them as a great outreach organization. There are so many opportunities for collaboration. There's an unwillingness to reach out.
- In the more rural areas, they view COGs as being experts and look to them for guidance. And people here don't view the MPO in the same way. Which is a shame because they have really talented staff who are very forward-thinking. I'm thinking that the Policy Committee doesn't listen to MPO staff or to others in the community, facts don't sway them. A recent vote by the Policy Committee to not transfer funding away from road construction, even though MPO staff had research saying that we have enough roads to meet our needs for the next 20 years and there were a number of speakers from the community advocating for a transfer. But the Policy Committee didn't listen at all, they didn't care, and they voted to keep the funding in road construction. You can lead the horse to water, but you can't make them drink. With community engagement, if they don't think it's important, they're not going to do anything.
- We are a one car, one person state. The MPO could be a better voice.
- The number of driver's licenses is up, the number of registered vehicles and the number of miles traveled is also up.
- When you're voluntary and everyone knows you're voluntary, then people know that what you're saying is just suggestions. Everyone will always choose to do the minimum.
- Is their mission to create a plan? Then they're doing an awesome job. If their mission is to create a plan that's going to have some teeth on it, then they need to do more outreach into the community and engage them, and provide more assistance to smaller communities. The suburbs are growing so fast and putting a huge focus on development, they're not looking at how that development will affect all these other areas, other communities, and other issues like waste water.

- Having someone who can think big picture and be forward thinking, and prevent developments from causing issues in the future. Thinking about I-235, it's eight lanes downtown and then lowers to six lanes and that causes issues at rush hour. Who made that decision? They weren't thinking regionally or about future development and needs. If someone like the MPO had been involved, we may have avoided that issue.
- The Tomorrow Plan is a fantastic plan that integrates a lot of different concepts, but if community leaders aren't interested in engaging and buying in, then it becomes critical that there's community outreach to members to engage them. We are siloes, we need to ask the people who are utilizing the services or who will be affected. We can't make assumptions about them. If the community leaders won't participate, then the community members should be able to. It's not just about growth and the people who are moving in, it's also about the people who are already there and making the community work.
- In an ideal world, every city and county body would have the four goals of the Tomorrow Plan up on their wall and any time a proposal comes to them they have to think about whether or not the proposal supports one of the four goals.
- As an example, Johnston schools wanted to save money on busing by limiting bus routes; if you're within a mile of the school now you have to walk to school, otherwise you pay for busing. But they did a study and found so many areas that were categorized as unsafe for walking within that one mile radius. And many of those areas even touched the schools. One was right in front of the middle school. So the school district isn't saving as much money as they thought because they have to bus everyone who would have to walk through an area deemed unsafe for walking. And it's because they didn't think about this during the planning process; they weren't being holistic.
- But when that decision was first made, when that planning was first done, it was cheaper to do it the way Johnston did it. The one that's more expensive upfront pays off in the end, but it was more expensive in the beginning, so it was unappealing for the city council to vote on it.

*What advice would you give to the MPO?*

- It would be great if the MPO recognized the quality of the plans they produced, don't feel so siloed in their subcommittees. Think about partners they could use to advocate for the plan and get buy-in from others.
- Keep in mind that you can't separate land use planning from transportation planning.
- Inclusiveness. Think about those being served.
- Keep in mind that the local AAA can be utilized as a resource for the aging population.
- Get the engagement with stakeholders and build a sense of community.
- MPO needs to more clearly define the mission of the organization. I see them as a jack of all trades and a master of none. Go further and define even what transportation is. Once that determination is made, then they need to know all of the stakeholders and get public health and aging involved, etc. They are too fragmented now.

- They need to decide are they just creating a plan or is part of their job to get the plan adopted and acted upon by cities and counties. And then if so, then what do they need to do at the local and regional levels to assist. It's great to create plans, but if it doesn't get adopted then nothing happens. If the people want it, then that's what they want.
- I can tell you a handful of things the MPO in Ames is working on, I can't tell you what the MPO here is doing.
- Planning with implementation is beautiful. There are too many committees.



## Paved Trails & Water Trails Small Group

### SPPG Conference Room

### June 21, 2017 – 10:00 AM

### Present

Linda Appelgate, *Parks: Trails and Greenways Committee & Iowa Rivers Revival*

Andrea Boulton, *Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation*

Jeff Cook, *Friends of Chichaqua Valley Trail*

Nate Hoogeveen, *DNR Water Trails*

Hannah Inman, *Capital Crossroads, Water Works Park Foundation*

Loren Lown, *Polk County Conservation*

Duane Magneson, *Saylorville Lake*

Matt McQuillen, *Assistant City Manager of Clive*

Mindy Moore, *Snyder & Associates*

Ruth Randleman, *Mayor of Carlisle*

Rick Tollakson, *Hubbell Realty*

### **SPPG Staff:**

Brad Knott

Arlinda McKeen

Robyn Mills

### *What are the issues or problems associated with paved trails?*

Maintenance and management of trails is regional by nature and used by all. The problem is that the current management of trails is hodgepodge in nature and often involves agreements between cities, counties, the state, conservation boards, and private entities. Some have 28E agreements between cities and counties. However, will be fewer 28E agreements because of the lack of staff to cover trail maintenance. As contracts expire, counties need to find employees to maintain the trails. Polk County has most experience with maintenance and dealing with problems such as invasive species. A central agency to assist with trail maintenance across city and county lines is greatly needed as current maintenance is uneven or nonexistent in some cities and counties.

- The city of Clive has continuously maintained their trails system, which is located in the middle of a regional trails system. Clive's master plan for trails originally planned walking

trails, not necessarily bike trails. The city is in the process of expanding its trails system to accommodate heavy bike traffic.

- All communities maintain their own trail system. Polk County only maintains those trails located in the unincorporated areas. Equipment such as a trail sweeper, router, joint sealer, trail brush, and snow removal are tools used by Polk County to maintain the trails.
- Maintenance is a huge problem, especially for smaller counties who report the costliness of connectivity. Small counties recognize the economic opportunities when trails are interconnected, but it is often cost prohibitive to build new trails.
- As communities grow, they are incorporating trails into their city plans and those trails spill into other communities. Who is going to maintain the connected trails? Bridge failures and culvert repair are expensive to maintain.
- Trail users enjoy a regional trail system and do not care what community they are in when enjoying the experience of using the trail system. However, it is often confusing to know who to call when there is a problem with the trails.

The group was in favor of developing a Regional Trails Authority as a centralized repository for information, maintenance, and planning. The Regional Trails Authority would need to have a funding source that may require legislative approval. The Authority could apply for state and federal grants to build additional trails, but grants could not be used for maintenance. The problem lies in trail maintenance and how to decide which trails are local and which are regional. Could the authority help to decide which are regional, semi-regional, and local, with a maintenance structure planned for each?

Discussion continued, and some in the group reported that there already is a logic system for the trail system. Trails are rated levels 1, 2 and 3, with levels 1 and 2 designated as regional. Level 1 and 2 have a number to call for problems related to the trails. Who knows about the number and how it is distributed to the community at large?

These issues have been discussed for 10 years and many in the group stressed the need for a regional planning system, not only for bike trails, but also for water trails. A regional system would help relieve the burden for small towns, who have to use costly contract services for trail maintenance. The MPO needs to be a partner in the regional planning system. It is shortsighted for cities and counties to act as silos. Instead, a regional system would benefit the whole region.

- A regional system would allow for a centralized funding source, information sharing, and scalability of different efforts. What may work in Polk County, may not make sense for the smaller communities. This idea will fall off the table if MPO shrinks services.

*What are the issues or problems associated with water trails?*

- Maintenance of water trails is very costly. Access points tend to fill in, and maintenance is time-consuming. As with paved trails, jurisdictional issues arise. If a log goes down across Walnut Creek, Middle River, or Beaver Creek, who takes care of the removal, especially in urban areas? Bank erosion is also a problem, and it can be costly to shore

up banks to prevent erosion. Some waterways are privately owned and some have Army Corps involvement. Communities do most of the maintenance. The city of Clive's stream bank stabilization is completed with 20 miles of improvements. Walnut Creek Watershed is 55 acres, but only a small portion is in Clive, so maintenance needs to be shared with other communities. Stabilized streambanks allows greater recreational opportunities.

When reviewing the Des Moines River's potential for water trail development, the group indicated the dangers of the low-head dams. Signage is vital for the safety of users and there is currently no funds to post signs clarifying dangers to users. There are currently over 170 low head dams on Iowa waterways. Many communities are interested in removing the dams, but there are no funding sources available.

Des Moines' removal of the low head dam downtown is a very costly project and should be regionalized. A regional body should be addressing the issues surrounding clean water, also.

There are currently 60 possible water projects in the works and the group wondered who and how will they be maintained, if not regionally?

- Water and bike trails should be managed in a similar way, through a regional system. Minnesota and Wisconsin have state trails systems with a dedicated funding source. If MPO is not involved, who provides regional expertise? Watershed Authorities could assist with planning, but they have no money or regulatory authority.
- About 400 acres a year is converted from farmland to developed land in my community, and there is ongoing need for stream bank stabilization from additional flooding. This is a perpetual problem that needs a long-term Master Plan and ordinances to address the issue. Waukee and others learn from Clive what not to do.
- If we can come to agreement as a region, these are issues we want to deal with, and if not MPO, then who does take the lead.

*The MPO works in the arena of transportation in a broader sense through planning, convening, providing data, and more. What should the MPO be doing, specifically, as part of the solutions to some of these issues you have identified? How should the MPO be involved?*

The MPO has performance measures for the transportation projects. The group thought that performance measures could be incorporated into plans for water and trails. Small cities could contract with the MPO for long term planning and assistance with maintenance contracts.

- An example is the Great River Greenways in St. Louis, which created a funding mechanism using sales tax to oversee Regional Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse contracts with cities, counties and other entities for trail maintenance. Central Iowa could form a Regional Trails Authority using funding from the hotel/motel tax. The Regional Authority could be structured similar to DART, partnering with the MPO.
- MPO members spent \$2 million on the development of the Tomorrow Plan, yet no entity is in charge of implementation. There is no GIS capacity or a central repository for housing all of the information. MPO could make arrangements with a city that has the

capacity to do the work. It could be a public private partnership between government and private sector.

- Although there are calls for a Regional Trails Plan, some cities may be hesitant to give up control of the trails in their communities, because maintenance may deteriorate as they prioritize maintenance for the entire region.
- Development of a Regional Authority would allow for efficiencies and development of a brand to make it a part of all the communities. Would it be easier to fundraise through private/nonprofits if there was a regional authority? Businesses and donors tend to give money to projects, not maintenance. The Authority needs a dedicated funding stream.
- The Authority could act as a central repository with a phone number to call when problems arise with trails. The MPO gets many calls asking if specific trails are open. A new trails app is helping with the confusion, but there is no way of knowing that a trail is closed unless a community contacts the app. The Authority could also produce interactive mapping statewide. The MPO has a much better track record on linear corridors as part of transportation systems. Having a central database for problems, planning and projects makes sense. Cities all have on-going projects and a central location would be helpful to keep public informed.
- A similar program could be used for water trails so consumers would have a place to go when planning a trip on Iowa's waterways or to see if a particular waterway is safe to navigate on.
- A central repository would also provide some consistency with law enforcement on trails. Having a centralized number to call to report crimes, vandalism, etc. would provide consistency across jurisdictions. Public safety could be a clear part of the mission of the Trails Authority.

*What is the vision for the region...Capital Crossroads, Tomorrow Plan? What are the top five regional priorities?*

- DART is an example of trying to get things moving as sort of a mini-MPO to solve the problem.
- One governance model is the development of a regional COG, as the business community does not know what the MPO does. The MPO controls federal transportation money, so all entities come to the table to review distribution.

The group agreed that the plan to build water trails is moving forward, but there is an urgency to focus on how they will be maintained. The group believes that the public is willing to pay higher taxes for trails as shown by 63 percent voting for a 3/8 cent sales tax increase in the Iowa Water and Land Legacy.



Watershed Small Group  
SPPG Conference Room  
June 20, 2017 – 1:00 PM

## Present

Susan Judkins, *Clive City Council*

Doug Ollendike, *Clive Community Development*

Ruth Randleman, *Mayor of Carlisle*

Ann Robinson, *Environmental Council*

## SPPG Staff

Gracie Brandsgard

Arlinda McKeen

## Discussion

*What are some of the key issues you are facing in your work on watershed management?*

- Our city is only within one watershed, but we're also at the bottom of the hill. We only comprise 8.5% of the land in the watershed but about 92% of the water flows through our area. We have worsening flooding issues, and we're trying to figure out how to use our existing land. We have a finite amount of land now, we're almost completely land-locked. So how do we mature as a city without using new land? We're being very conscious of how we're using land now. We are trying to work with others in the watershed, and those up further in the watershed. We are defining a way to help policymakers, developers, and city staff be more aware of the importance of maintaining the watershed with development and how to mitigate the impacts downstream. We have established a Walnut Creek Watershed Management Authority. We are more concerned about the quantity of water rather than the quality of water, because everyone is concerned about flooding. I believe that if we can manage the water quantity, the water quality will come with it.
- We're not going to stop development, but what happens if we continue on this path? How bad is it going to get downstream? And how do we make sure it doesn't get worse for those downstream? It jeopardizes development downstream, Clive, Windsor Heights, West Des Moines to some extent. The flooding here is mostly flash flooding.

- Development is a big deal. About 400 acres each year are being converted from farmland to suburbs in the Walnut Creek watershed alone.
- Carlisle got a grant to do a watershed project, it extended beyond our jurisdiction to be a more regional project. We farm out a lot of services because we don't have the capacity at the city. We need an entity that can provide some of this unification, can help educate all of the jurisdictions. Smaller communities are very dependent on ancillary services. We need someone who's regionally knowledgeable, help us focus, help us with education, and to take the lead on this regional planning to help us get it started. The whole process doesn't need to stay with the MPO, but we need help just getting started.
- Smaller communities don't feel like we see the benefit of our membership fees if MPO just sticks with transportation. I'd like help with grant writing, and general input on our work because of their regional expertise. These services are so valuable for smaller communities. We're happy to pay for them, we contract out a lot of services, but we don't have the budget to contract out all of our services to private planning firms. We don't have a COG here in Central Iowa, and I don't think I'll win that battle, but if we had additional services provided by the MPO that would be so helpful to smaller communities.
- I have been involved in watersheds for almost twenty years. We've seen a lot of progress being made. There's difficulty finding funding to support this kind of work and to help policymakers see the value in it. They are being threatened at the state level, people are territorial, and it's a new way of doing things.
- The level of measurement or the culture of measurement in the Tomorrow Plan and Capital Crossroads, and the idea that funding wouldn't be distributed evenly where, instead, it's distributed based on need or how effectively you can use the funds and then measuring that impact, is unnerving for some to think about it in this way.
- Polk County is very supportive. Dallas County is the only entity that did not sign on to join the Walnut Creek WMA, though the Dallas County Soil and Water did join it. They are a part of the Northern Raccoon Watershed WMA. The North Raccoon Watershed will have a coordinator. Currently we have one coordinator for four smaller watersheds. The MPO has the political knowhow to work with multiple jurisdictions. We would like to do more outreach to farmers on using best practices. In Northeast and Northwest Iowa, they are doing outreach to farmers to change some of their practices, with good benefits.
- The major problem with creating WMAs is there's no way to raise dollars to have one staff member so we're relying on the staff of each jurisdiction to put it all together. And who's going to be the fiscal agent or put a plan into action?
- I have done work statewide on watershed management. From the very beginning, we partnered with the Iowa Soybean Association to do the work, they've been the ones to do outreach to farmers. It's important to have some influential political leaders behind the work who can help push it forward.
- The MPO seems like a powerful entity to support a model of watershed management. Their staff has been allowed to dabble in the watershed realm and help communities form WMAs and get plans underway.

- I think the planners like to do that kind of work, bridging outside of just transportation. We spent \$2.2 million on the Tomorrow Plan. Well, now the staff has the knowledge base and experience so why wouldn't they be leading the work to implement the plan? We're just shooting ourselves in the foot and wasting the \$2.2 million we received and spent. And not every community has the staff to do the action steps so we rely on the MPO to help us.
- The MPO is the perfect organization to do this. They have the knowledge and expertise, they have all of our comprehensive plans and have done regional planning before. Everyone (local governments) is onboard to do the planning, but they don't want to be required to do anything that gets put in the plan. They're with us until we try to get them to do something else.
- We leave money on the table by not having a COG, especially with housing.
- This question came up 15 years ago about the mission of the MPO and if it should take on more COG services, and the concern then by some was that the staff would get distracted if the MPO took on too many other issues or projects.
- Water and roads intersect quite a bit. One way the MPO could be helpful, is providing more encouragement to DOT to think about the impact of water when they're doing their planning. There were issues with the beltway and Highway 5 after the flooding of 2008. The DOT admitted they messed up, but that they weren't paying attention to it because their focus is on transportation, not taking into consideration water, runoff, etc. and what the impacts would be. That's why we need the MPO.
- Look at who is putting up resistance to the expansion of MPOs services – it's those from Des Moines and Polk County because they don't need the services.
- MPO could become a real leader in connecting the dots between transportation and watershed management and water quality.
- I liked where they were going for a while and connecting things back to quality of life. What's going to keep people here and bring jobs here? If you can bring that focus to the forefront, that connects every issue. For instance, high water quality brings in green spaces which brings in people and jobs.
- The fear by some is that this is mission creep for the MPO, but who's going to be the oversight and that planner with the knowledge base?
- We should talk about the Greater Des Moines Partnership's role in this because they do convene some policymakers. They see the GDMP as doing more economic development and the MPO as a potential role for other issues.
- There may be a lot less federal funding for a lot of things in the future, so local entities are going to have to see that they have a stake in the money and the work. This seems like a good time to be reevaluating the work and the priorities the MPO is working on. It would be smart to diversify its funding sources in order to not be so dependent on the federal transportation dollars. And could MPO bring in additional dollars for watershed management? It could bring in additional dollars for housing if they brought in a COG.
- Carlisle temporarily joined a COG in order to get access to dollars that were COG-specific for eligibility, and then left it once we had the money secured. We have to do

goofy things because there isn't a COG or a central convener. The MPO could be a convener of regional partners for grant opportunities, could direct people and entities into groups to apply for grants.

*What parting thoughts do you have for the MPO on a primary issue the MPO should consider in their strategic planning?*

- Having a staff person who truly functions as a watershed coordinator. Be someone who can meet with the DOT and communities.
- In thinking that the MPO will remain transportation-centric, keeping watershed management in mind when doing transportation.
- Protect the additional services as a general planning service provided by the MPO. Going back to transportation only, our region will not be well-planned because we'll only be planning through one lens.
- I echo the watershed coordinator position. Step up and be a leader and become a model for connecting the dots between these issues. This can exponentially increase Des Moines' quality of life.
- We're too fixated on building roads in Des Moines. We've got to get over this car-centric life we lead. There's this idea that the public transportation system is meant to be a last resort, for individuals who absolutely have to take it. We need to get over that.
- This fixation on building roads, it's a Ponzi scheme.



Watershed Small Group  
Second Session  
SPPG Conference Room  
July 19, 2017 – 9:00 AM

## Present

Jonathan Gano, City of Des Moines Public Works  
John Swanson, Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Bob Rice, Polk County Public Works  
Vern Willey, Altoona City Council

## Staff

Brad Knott  
Arlinda McKeen

## Discussion

Watershed is defined as all the land that drains into a body of water. In this area we also look at the small streams including Four Mile Creek and Walnut Creek. To impact what happens with them causing flooding and other water concerns, we have to look upstream, work across boundaries, and include agricultural areas. The Watershed Management Authority (WMA) is a group formed through 28E agreements, meets quarterly, and develops plans to address relevant issues. Communities with water problems may not have the ability to effectively address issues individually, and the WMA provides that joint effort.

The WMA is an “authority without authority”. The structure does not allow for revenue-generating or define who will manage the WMA. No dues are specified to be collected; the agreement only states that cities, counties, and Soil and Water Conservation districts can be members. They are allowed to hire a group or individual to help coordinate the work. The coordinator functions as staff, but WMAs actually have no staff.

Four Mile was the first WMA. Nineteen governments are signed up, including Des Moines, Ankeny, rural Polk County, Elkhart, and Slater. Members have very diverse opinions. There was a meeting held in Des Moines downstream in lower Four Mile. Each complains about the people upstream in the watershed. There is a trust issue – the more rural areas don’t want MPO running the WMA because

they are dominated by Des Moines; they see that would make it political and would only advocate for metro Des Moines. Trust issues are all over the watershed.

To make progress, “a lot of selling has to be done.” One strategy was to figure out how to help upstream first to build trust. The WMA spent some money on structures upstream to demonstrate their commitment. Progress in building trust is incremental.

WMA a creates forum for cooperation across the watershed and finances activities outside a particular jurisdiction. The WMA organization can receive funds and work outside a single jurisdiction. Funding comes from IDALS, DNR, NRCS, and the Iowa Ag and Water Alliance.

Everything ties to the watershed plan and they look at end of year for the progress. The work requires both working in the “system” and being on the ground with farmers.

One staff person represents all central Iowa, funded through IDALS, and works to get coordination with all the cities. A second staff is working only with farmers. John is the formal coordinator, funded only as coordinator.

WMAs are not constrained financially by jurisdictional boundaries. If there’s a grant that is physically within a specific jurisdiction, that community will be the fiscal agent for that grant.

In the populated areas that have a high rate of growth, the interest is in how closely can you build to the creek. The WMA tries to keep politics out of it in order to get people on board. The Farm Bureau is not pleased with the MPO because they want Hwy 65 bypass designated as interstate. The Farm Bureau opposes that move because it would prohibit combines and other farm machinery off the road and create a hardship for farmers needing to move equipment from one field to another.

Smaller cities tend to think West Des Moines, Des Moines, and other larger cities just want to take all the money. That is not how it works in watersheds. Little towns see they don’t stand a chance to get any funding, and some don’t score well in applications.

There is a common recommendation from WMAs statewide to make some changes to standards for builders and how close they are allowed to build near streams. The current standard is the “100 year flood” range. The WMAs recommended a policy update so builders may have to manage the water upstream and also slow down the water leaving the city. Developers would not be able to build as close to the stream as currently allowed. The policy needs to be uniform across the watershed and all the cities. This is where MPO was contracted to help with this process. Though in its infancy, it is going well so far and aligns with the Code Consortium. The Code Consortium will draft the model ordinance; MPO will work with the district to educate officials, organize tours, etc. so all parties know what is happening. The goal is to get city staff and elected officials educated on the issue.

There was a problem getting a stream buffer policy passed within one community. It is hard to educate and get commitment from some to take land out of the mix. There are three general components illustrating the challenges and differing perspectives.

1. Agricultural land – Recognize what is happening upstream that will remain there, and what will flow off the land. Now there is use buffer strips and terraces. Slowing erosion easiest the sell. Then a next step is they can build a structure: wetlands, pond, terraces, waterway, buffer strips, silt basin. Money is available for these types of projects.
2. Development land – Develop so things don't get worse. Need to know that developing won't make it worse.
3. Developed land – How do you best manage that water? What needs to be done, e.g., remove houses, to mitigate flooding. Water quality goes hand in hand with flooding.

Urban project are very expensive. Ag projects do not cost not as much and funds are easily available. State and federal funds for urban areas harder to get. Goal is to cultivate atmosphere to get these safeguards built.

Trust and past practice gets people on board. Getting projects completed on the ground shows success.

There is a complementary role of MPO with Soil and Water Conservation Districts: how to improve the ordinances. There is a mechanism – Code Consortium – to convene and write ordinances. That does nothing to convince a jurisdiction to implement the code. Code Consortium is focused and defined with the deliverable – the model ordinance.

MPO's job is ensure project success. It is a longer term effort to adopt and apply the model ordinance. MPO's role is to have all the elected officials at the table to promote adoption of ordinances. MPO knows how to be successful in this work.

Council of WMAs in the metro meets at the MPO that includes member of the Executive Committee of each WMA. The Council's purpose is to facilitate awareness of what others are doing. The MPO is convening them.

Iowa Water Center runs the State WMA Association that is staffed by an ISU grant. This group looks at statewide legislative priorities.

MPO involved at more of a policy level. Now MPO uses transportation planning to subsidize water planning. MPO work is topic-focused. They convene meetings to meet specific goals. The system they have is working great and we need their expertise with elected officials, policy, and promotion beyond WMA's core contacts. MPO knows the right people to share information.

As noted before, if the work to bring all relevant parties on board was not done at the local level and was, instead, all done by bringing people into Des Moines or the MPO Office, some jurisdictions would not participate because of fear the large cities would dominate and the issues become political.

There is a tradition of coordination and cooperation through the MPO; it becomes a nexus for other topics and activities, but needs to be well-suited for the topic. Tomorrow Plan is a good precedent as it thinks beyond narrow vision to enhance cooperation and coordination across the region.

The MPO's role is longer and larger than the Partnership role in getting the ordinance written. MPO can marshal forces to make it happen/implement. The could do the same principle with WMAs.

There have been different thoughts about where this should go because it leans toward a COG. There are some negatives and political negatives about that. Participants were asked if there is anyone better to do it; there were no suggestions.

The WMAs don't want to take on the convening of the education and promotion of the WMA policy work. The MPO is already convened and functioning. It would be duplication for WMA to have to do it. They can have a presentation at an MPO meeting and it gets the word out and informs people.

The Iowa Storm Water Education Partnership (ISWEP) has two staff statewide. They should be involved to provide technical information as appropriate.

Advice for the MPO:

- It's working now in the way WMAs work with MPO. Good division of roles that play to strength.
- Continue relationship with WMAs and continue to gain trust with those outside their direct scope.
- It's working well between district and MPO. Solidified complementary roles. Narrowed scope of what they can do. Capital Crossroads was a bit rocky at the outset, but is working well.

## MPO History

(summarized from MPO 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary presentation)

### Introduction

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 introduced transportation planning requirements for all urbanized areas over 50,000 in population. In 1965, the Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission formed in response to a need for an area-wide transportation organization. In 1973, the commission was restructured as the Central Iowa Regional Association of Local Governments (CIRALG). In 1983, CIRALG was dissolved and nine local governments formed a new intergovernmental agreement to serve as the official Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for transportation planning in the Des Moines metropolitan area. Originally called the Des Moines Area Transportation Planning Committee, this organization eventually changed its name to the Des Moines Area MPO, expanded its membership from 9 to 23 local governments, and became the organization we know today. The following is a look back at how the organization, and the greater Des Moines region, have evolved over the last 30 years.

### The 1980's

A letter from Governor Branstad was issued to the Des Moines Area Transportation Planning Committee on June 22, 1983 noting that the committee will be designated as the new MPO for the metro area effective July 1, 1983.

Charter members of the MPO included:

- Altoona
- Clive
- Des Moines
- Johnston
- Pleasant Hill
- Polk County
- Urbandale
- West Des Moines
- Windsor Heights

The Des Moines Area Transportation Planning Committee was an office within the City of Des Moines. The committee contracted with the Metropolitan Transit Authority for transit planning needs and with the City of Des Moines' Planning and Zoning Department staff for all other planning tasks. Board meetings were held in the Argonne Armory building. David L. Johnson served as the committee's first chairperson.

In November 1984, the DMATPC approved the Year 2000 Street and Highway Plan, the first long-range plan since 1974. Projects of note included the MLK Jr. Parkway/SE Connector, the IA 5/US 65 bypass, Mills Civic Parkway Interchange, and the 86<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange, all of which have been completed.

### The 1990's

The early 1990s brought many changes to the organization. In 1991, Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). This bill enhanced transportation planning requirements and increased the role and responsibilities of MPOs. ISTEA also established the Surface Transportation Program, which gave MPOs an annual allocation of funds to implement projects. Also in 1991, Tom Kane replaced Rudy Wagner as the Des Moines Area Transportation Planning Committee's Executive Director.

In 1992, Norwalk and Warren County became members of the committee.

In 1993, the Des Moines Area Transportation Planning Commission restructured as the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, hiring its own staff. The MPO offices remained in the Argonne Armory building within the City of Des Moines.

Also in 1993, the MPO expanded its membership to Ankeny, Carlisle, Dallas County, Grimes, and Waukee.

In October 1994, the MPO approved the Horizon Year 2020 Transportation Development Report, the first long-range plan since 1984 and the first multi-modal plan in the region's history.

In October 1999, the MPO approved the Horizon Year 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan, beginning a trend of developing a long-range plan every five years in accordance with federal regulations.

In 1999, the MPO added Bondurant, Cumming, and Polk City as associate, non-voting members.

### The 2000's

The MPO studied the feasibility of commuter rail, which would be the first of many modal studies and plans to be developed throughout the decade.

In 2001, the MPO offices moved out of the Argonne Armory building to Merle Hay Centre in Urbandale.

In 2001, the MPO reduced the population threshold for full membership, allowing Bondurant and Polk City to become full members.

The MPO expanded once again in 2007, adding Mitchellville as its 20<sup>th</sup> member. Indianola followed as a non-voting, associate member in 2009.

The 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan was completed in 2004. This was followed by the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan in 2009.

### The 2010's (present day)

MPO member government expansion continued in 2010, with the addition of DART as a voting member and Madison County as an associate, non-voting member.

At the end of 2010, Tom Kane retired from the MPO. Todd Ashby was hired as the new Executive Director

Also in 2010, the MPO was awarded a \$2 million grant from the Interagency Partnership on Sustainable Communities, which was comprised of US Department of Transportation, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the US Environmental Protection Agency. These funds would be used to create The Tomorrow Plan, adopted by the MPO in November 2013.

In 2011, the MPO offices moved once again to its current location in downtown Des Moines.

The MPO adopted its current long-range transportation plan, Mobilizing Tomorrow, in November 2014.

## Des Moines Area MPO Operational Structure

Source: FY2017 Unified Planning Work Program

### Planning Area

The Des Moines Area MPO is responsible for these transportation planning activities within a geographic area identified as the Metropolitan Planning Area (planning area). Figure 1 displays the Des Moines Area MPO's MPA. The Des Moines Area MPO approved its current planning area on January 17, 2013. The planning area includes portions of Dallas, Madison, Polk, and Warren Counties, and includes, at a minimum, the anticipated urbanized area for *Mobilizing Tomorrow's* Horizon Year (HY) 2050.

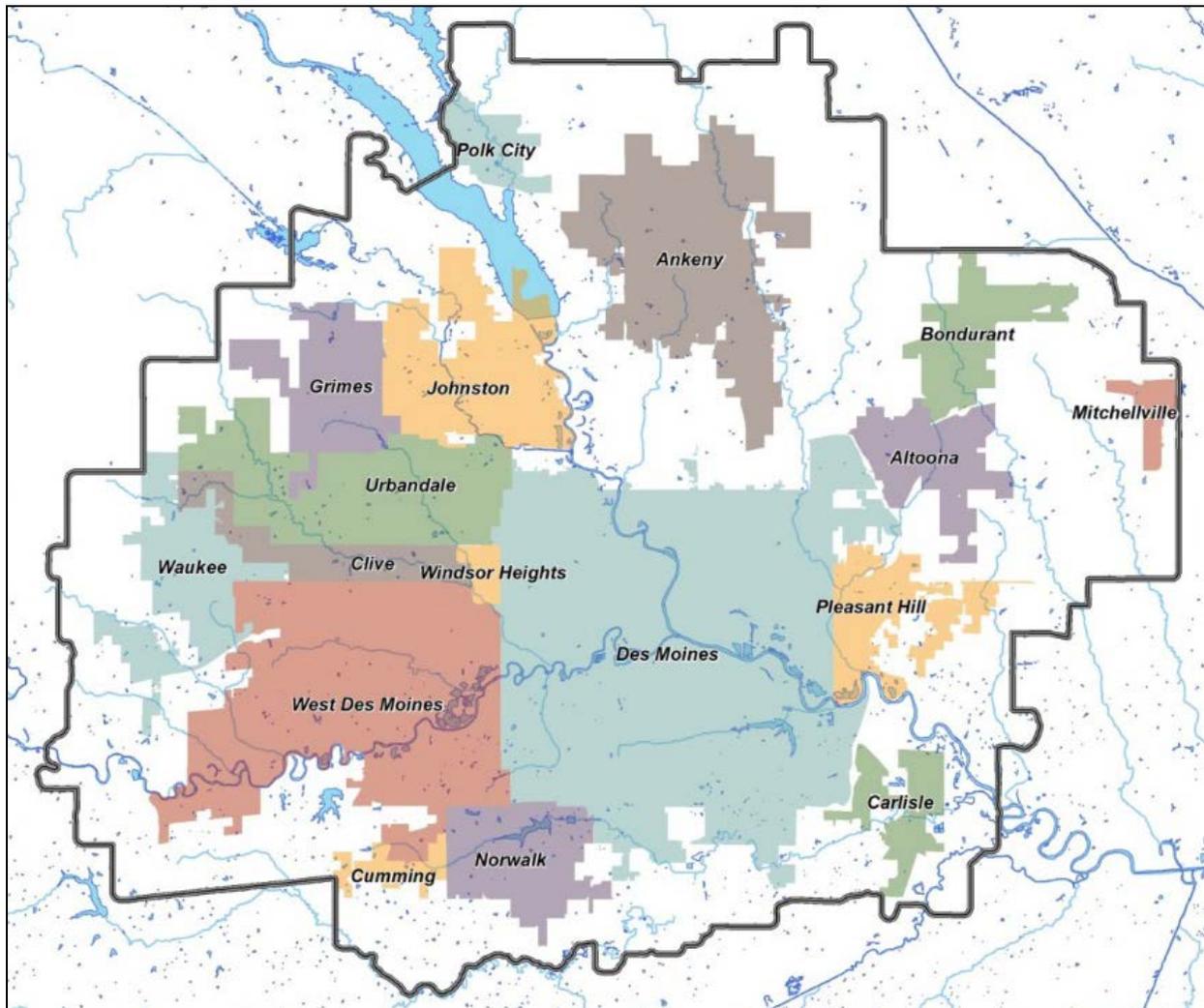


Figure 1: Des Moines Area MPO's Planning Area

## *Membership*

Per the Des Moines Area MPO's 28E agreement, voting membership is open to any county or city government located, wholly or partially, in the designated planning area containing a minimum population of 1,500 persons that adopts the Des Moines Area MPO's 28E Agreement. Currently, Des Moines Area MPO membership includes the following cities and counties:

- City of Altoona
- City of Ankeny
- City of Bondurant
- City of Carlisle
- City of Clive
- City of Des Moines
- City of Grimes
- City of Johnston
- City of Mitchellville
- City of Norwalk
- City of Pleasant Hill
- City of Polk City
- City of Urbandale
- City of Waukee
- City of West Des Moines
- City of Windsor Heights
- Dallas County
- Polk County
- Warren County
- Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)

Two entities within the planning area, the City of Cumming and Madison County, fall below the minimum population threshold for full membership and are associate members. Associate membership allows a non-voting representative to participate actively in the transportation planning process, and is available to all governments within the planning area that do not meet the minimum population threshold for full membership. Additionally, governments outside the planning area, but within the eight county region of central Iowa, are able to petition for associate membership. Associate members are not eligible for federal funding awarded through the Des Moines Area MPO. The City of Indianola and the City of Van Meter are outside the Des Moines Area MPO's planning area and are associate members of the MPO.

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), the Des Moines International Airport (DSM), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) serve as advisory, non-voting, representatives to the Des Moines Area MPO.

## *Representation and Voting*

Population determines representation on the TTC and the Policy Committee. Each member government within the planning area over a minimum population receives at least one representative. DART also receives one voting representative. The Des Moines Area MPO allows larger member governments to have additional representatives based on predetermined population thresholds, as determined by the U.S. Census, as identified in the Des Moines Area MPO's 28E agreement:

- One representative for populations of at least 1500.
- Additional representative at 10,000 in population.
- Additional representatives for each addition 25,000 above the initial 10,000 population.

## Decision-Making Structure

Three designated committees form the structure of the Des Moines Area MPO: the Transportation Technical Committee (or Technical Committee), the Executive Committee, and the Policy Committee. The Des Moines Area MPO member governments' and agencies' boards and councils appoint their respective representatives to the Technical Committee and to the Policy Committee. See Appendix A for list of committee representatives.

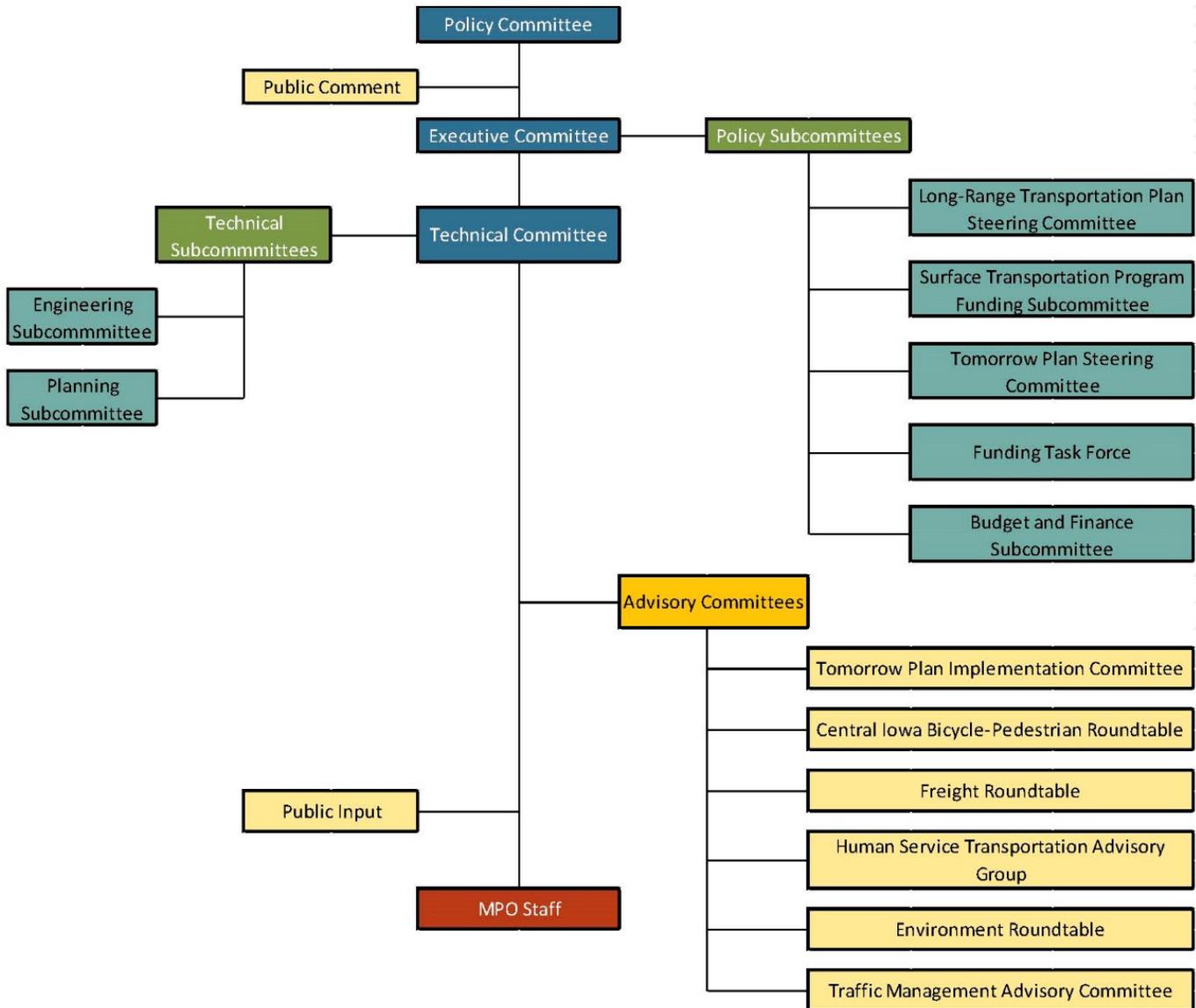


Figure 2: Des Moines Area MPO Committee and Structural Organization Chart

The Des Moines Area MPO Technical Committee is comprised primarily of representatives of member governments' and participating agencies' technical staffs, including planners, engineers, and city administrators. The Des Moines Area MPO Policy Committee is comprised primarily of county supervisors, mayors, city council members, and city managers. The Des Moines Area MPO Policy Committee annually elects officers and at-large representatives to form seven-member Executive Committee from among Policy Committee representatives.

The Des Moines Area MPO Technical Committee offers technical guidance and recommendations to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee then offers recommendations to the Policy Committee, based on the Technical Committee's recommendations, before the Des Moines Area MPO Policy Committee takes formal actions on transportation issues. Des Moines Area MPO Technical Committee representation differs from the Policy Committee in that DSM and HIRTA are voting members on the Technical Committee.

Additionally, the Des Moines Area MPO establishes and supports, as needed, other subcommittees, roundtables, working groups, and advisory committees on various transportation-related issues relevant to the Des Moines Area MPO's responsibilities. The Des Moines Area MPO requests stakeholder organizations and citizens to serve on these committees, as appropriate. As part of an adopted public participation process, the Des Moines Area MPO strongly encourages input and communication from citizens. The Des Moines Area MPO staff supports the various committees.

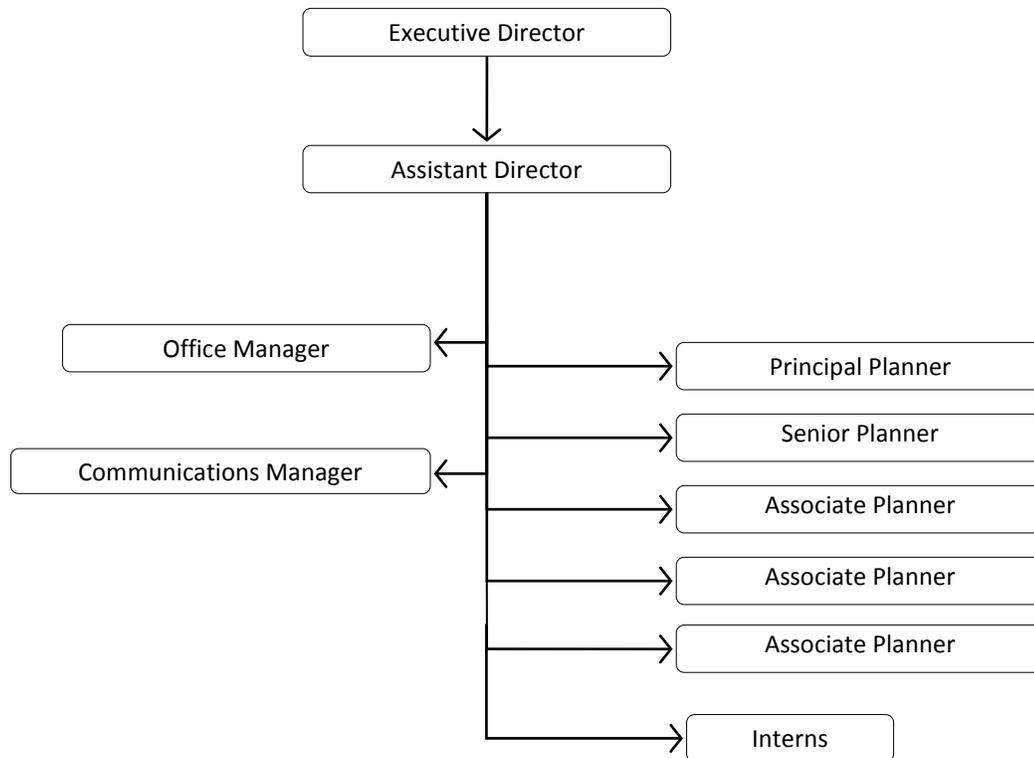


Figure 3: Des Moines Area MPO Staff Organization Chart

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 18 - 20, 2017, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Des Moines urbanized area. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements.

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Des Moines Area MPO) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Des Moines metropolitan area and works with the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) as well as the metropolitan public transit operator, Des Moines Area Regional Transit (DART) to implement the federally required planning process.

The scope of the federal certification review of the Des Moines metropolitan planning process was comprehensive, covering the transportation planning process for the entire area and all the agencies involved. The federal review team's work consisted of reviewing the products of the planning process, reviewing the ongoing oversight activities conducted by the FHWA and the FTA, and an on-site review conducted April 18 - 20, 2017 at the Des Moines MPO offices.

### 1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

The previous Certification Review findings and their disposition are summarized as follows.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Corrective Actions/ Recommendations</b>	<b>Disposition</b>
The Des Moines Area MPO does not have an approved Congestion Management Process (CMP) that meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.320	Corrective Action	The Des Moines Area MPO needs to adopt a CMP that adheres to the eight step CMP approach. Action Plan: A compliant CMP shall be approved by January 1, 2014.	The MPO's CMP was adopted on August 15, 2013 and updated in January 21, 2017.
Organizational Framework	Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO the Iowa DOT, and local public agencies continue to increase cooperation and coordination, the clear delineation of roles in the areas of project planning and development, sharing of data, and assuring there is a common long-range vision for the region.	Cooperation with regards to planning services, data sharing, and regional planning continues to evolve.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO consider making the next MTP more user-friendly and readable for the general public. A summary document, poster, or other such handout could be used to convey the highlights of the plan.	Staff took several steps to make the LRTP more user-friendly.
Public Involvement	Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO's Public Participation Plan be updated to reflect the new address of MPO Office and any changes to the public involvement process that have taken place since the current Public Participation Plan was adopted in 2010.	The Public Participation Plan has been updated twice since the last certification review.
Title VI, Environmental Justice, Limited English Proficiency	Recommendation	•It is recommended that the MPO collect data to assist in determining that the public involvement process is non-discriminatory, and that a nondiscrimination policy statement and Title VI information is made available.	MPO updated its Public Participation Plan in 2015 to reference new activities related to its Title VI procedures, Environmental Justice, Language Assistance Plan, and complaint procedures.
	Recommendation	•It is recommended that the MPO ensure that their public participation process includes methods for outreach to and services offered to the LEP population and a method to document services and evaluate.	
	Recommendation	•It is recommended that the MPO document a complaint disposition process for Title VI/Nondiscrimination complaints. It is also recommended that the Title VI Coordinator contact information, along with their complaint procedures, be made readily available to the public.	
Travel Forecasting	Recommendation	•It is recommended that the Des Moines Area MPO retain the ability to perform modeling work.	The MPO has staff capable of running the MPO travel demand model, has incorporated transit into its model, and has addressed

	Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is recommended to further analyze the level of transit analysis required by the MPO, and then either build that functionality into the model or find a surrogate methodology to fill that need.</li> </ul>	other technical recommendations made at the 2013 review.
	Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional technical recommendations are included in the Travel Forecasting section of this document.</li> </ul>	
Congestion Management and Operations	Recommendation	It is recommended that the MPO establishes a maintenance plan for their ITS architecture.	The current regional ITS architecture was completed in 2009 and covers the timeframe up to 2019

## 1.2 Summary of Current Findings

The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Des Moines urbanized area meets Federal planning requirements.

As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IA DOT), Des Moines Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMAMPO) and Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART). There are also recommendations in this report that warrant close attention and follow-up, as well as areas that DMAMPO is performing very well in that are to be commended.

Review Area	Action	Corrective Actions/ Recommendations/ Commendations	Resolution Due Date
MPO Structure and Agreements 23 U.S.C. 134(d) 23 CFR 450.314(a)	Commendation	1. MPO Staff - The Review Team noticeably highlights the DMAMPO staff as being highly professional, skilled, and demonstrating a high technical ability in developing and preparing transportation planning documents.	N/A
	Recommendation	1. Coordination – The Review Team recommends that Des Moines MPO and Iowa DOT improve their cooperation and coordination and develop an action plan to address the following specific coordination and cooperation deficiencies: a. Coordination on Project Design and Standards; b. Coordination and Transparency for Iowa DOT Sponsored Projects.	N/A

	Recommendation	2. MOU – The Review Team recommends that the Des Moines MPO and DART update their Planning Memorandum of Understanding to address Federal performance based planning as described by Iowa DOT guidance.	N/A
	Recommendation	3. Financial Planning - The MPO, DART and the Iowa DOT, in keeping with a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing transportation planning process, should work together to develop the financial projections for the MTP and TIP in order to demonstrate fiscal constraint for all projects.	N/A
Unified Planning Work Program 23 CFR 450.308	Commendation	1. Funds Carryover - The Review Team commends the Des Moines MPO for having very low FHWA-FTA Planning Balance Carryover. The MPO uses allocated planning funds in a timely manner that prevents funds from lapsing.	N/A
Metropolitan Transportation Plan 23 U.S.C. 134(c),(h)&(i) 23 CFR 450.324	Commendation	1. Performance Measures - The Federal Review team commends the MPO for proactively developing performance measures in Mobilizing Tomorrow and subsequent performance reports to better evaluate and communicate the performance of the transportation network in the region.	N/A
Transit Planning 49 U.S.C. 5303 23 U.S.C. 134 23 CFR 450.314	Commendation	1. MPO Support of Transit - The MPO is assisting DART in the process of updating the DART Forward 2035 Plan.	N/A
Transportation Improvement Program 23 U.S.C. 134(c)(h)& (j) 23 CFR 450.326	Recommendation	1. Project Delivery - The Review Team recommends that the MPO staff continue to work closely with Iowa DOT, project sponsors, and other partners in the process to continue to ensure the timely delivery of projects from the planning stage through to construction.	N/A
Public Participation 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(6) 23 CFR 450.316 & 450.326(b)	Commendation	1. Visualization Techniques - The Federal Team commends the MPO for its use of visualization techniques and reader-friendly graphics and maps in its planning products such as its MTP, performance reports and MPO website.	N/A
	Commendation	2. Public Participation - The Federal Review Team was impressed with the level of enthusiasm and innovative techniques the MPO is employing in its day-to-day implementation of its planning responsibilities.	N/A

Civil Rights Title VI Civil Rights Act, 23 U.S.C. 324, Age Discrimination Act, Sec. 504 Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act	Recommendation	1. Training - The Review Team recommends that the Des Moines MPO document its overall Civil Rights Training including Title VI, Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency.	N/A
	Recommendation	2. Outreach - The Review Team recommends that the MPO sustain its current practices, but extend its outreach efforts based on a more inclusive data profile and contact list, to include groups and organizations serving all persons considered under the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program.	N/A
Freight 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 CFR 450.306	Commendation	1. Freight Planning - The Federal Review Team commends the DMAMPO on its continued emphasis and integration of freight into the planning process.	N/A
Nonmotorized Planning/Livability 23 U.S.C. 134(h) 23 U.S.C. 217(g) 23 CFR 450.306 23 CFR 450.3224f)(2)	Commendation	1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning - The DMAMPO is commended for their enthusiastic approach to the Complete Street's Model Policy and the Mini-Grant Program with the Wellmark Foundation.	N/A
	Commendation	2. Livability and Public Health Initiatives – The Review Team commends DMAMPO for livability and public health initiatives such as The Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Master Plan, watershed management planning, and incorporating health into the transportation planning process.	N/A
Integration of Land Use and Transportation 23 U.S.C. 134(g)(3) 23 U.S.C. 134 (h)(1)(E) 23 CFR 450.306(a)(5)	Commendation	1. Scenario Planning - The Review Team commends the MPO on the land-use scenarios created as part of the Tomorrow Plan as well as the speaker series that was established as a result of the plan.	N/A
Travel Demand Forecasting 23 CFR 450.324(f)(1)	Recommendation	1. TDM Documentation - DMAMPO should update current documentation files with additional information that demonstrates sufficient validation of model up-stream model components and to develop a process to support the review of contracted deliverables.	N/A
	Recommendation	2. TDM Agreement - The Review Team recommends that the MPO and Iowa DOT should develop a cooperative agreement to specify roles, responsibilities, and reasonable timelines for the development of updates to the Transportation Demand Model (TDM).	N/A

Details of the certification findings for each of the above items are contained in this report.

# Survey Report

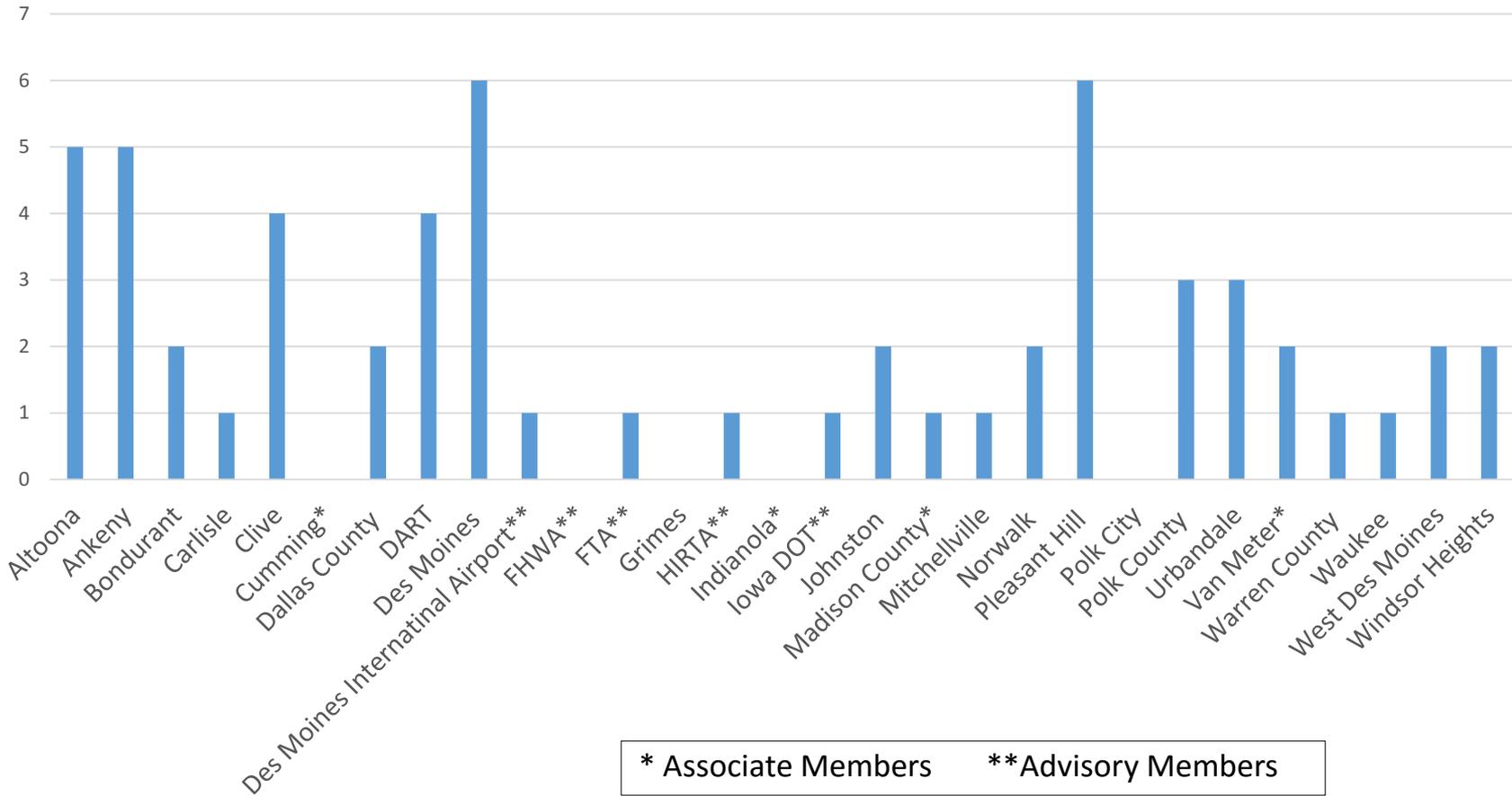
Responses from MPO Performance Survey



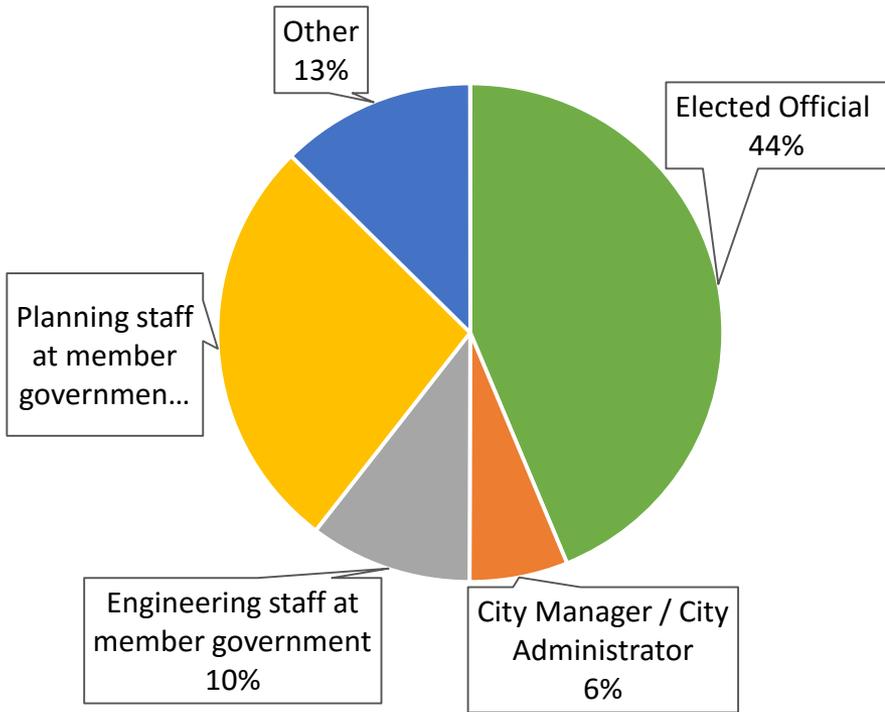
# Representation of Respondents

- Sent to 220 people
  - All voting, affiliate and advisory member governments
  - All elected officials
  - Staff including chief executives, engineers, planners
- Completed by 60 people (27 percent)
  - 18/20 voting members participated (90 percent)
  - 2/4 associate members participated (50 percent)
  - 4/5 advisory members participated (80 percent)

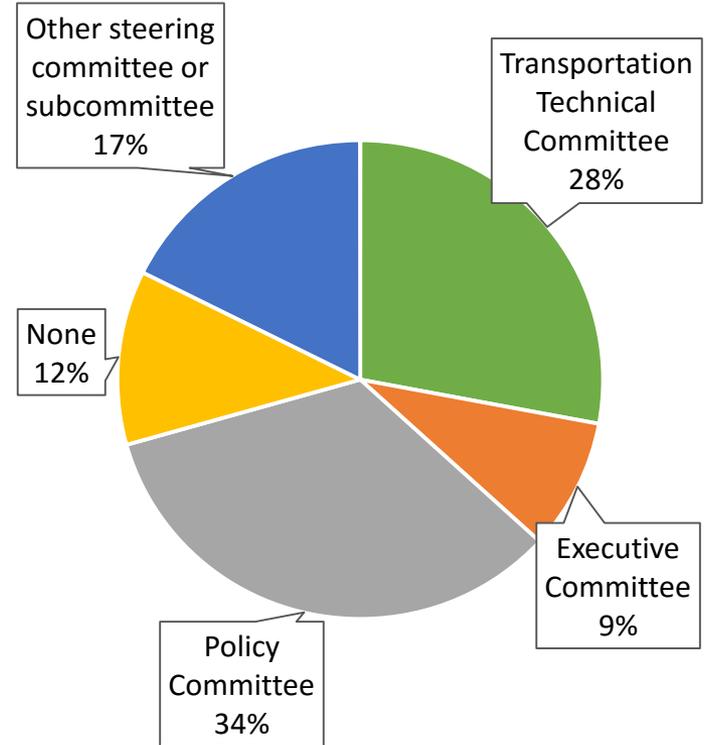
# Representation of Respondents



# Representation of Respondents

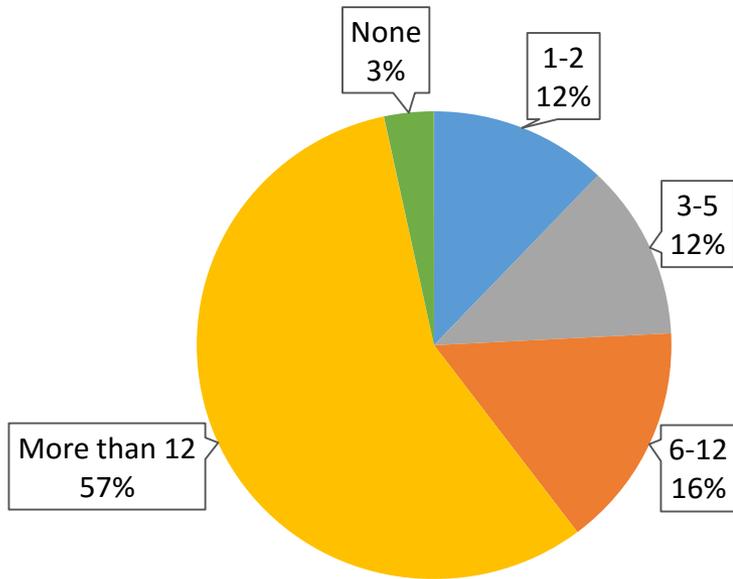


*Elected/Staff*

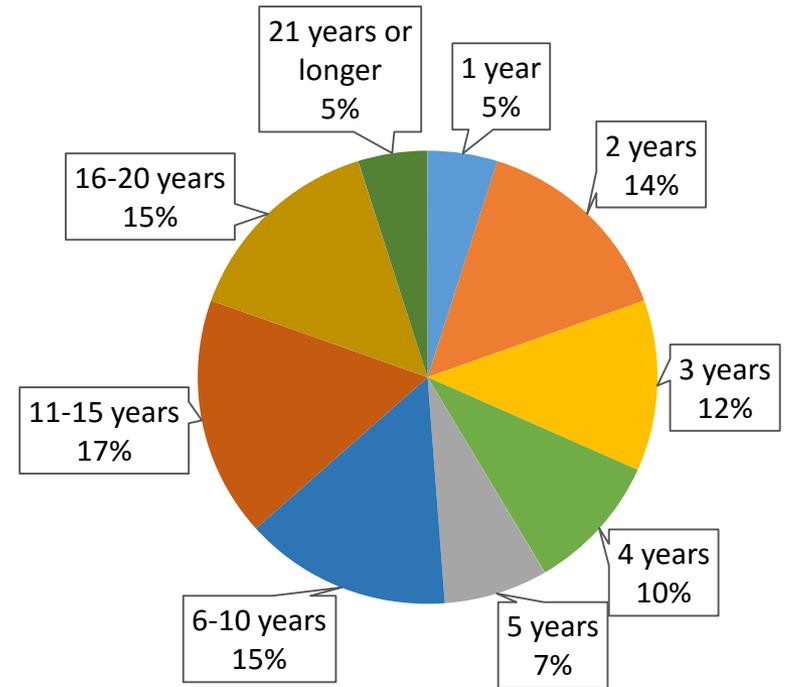


*Committee*

## Exposure to MPO

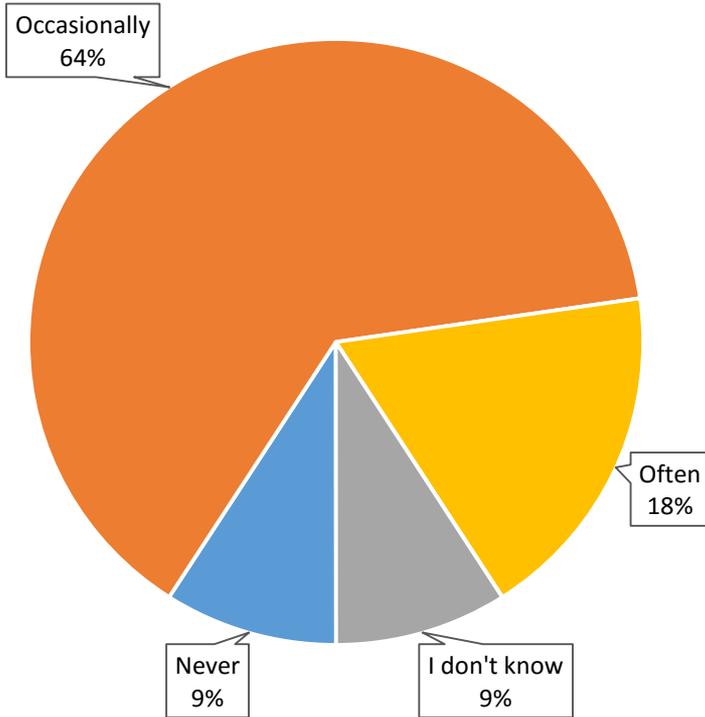


*Number of communications with MPO staff in past year*

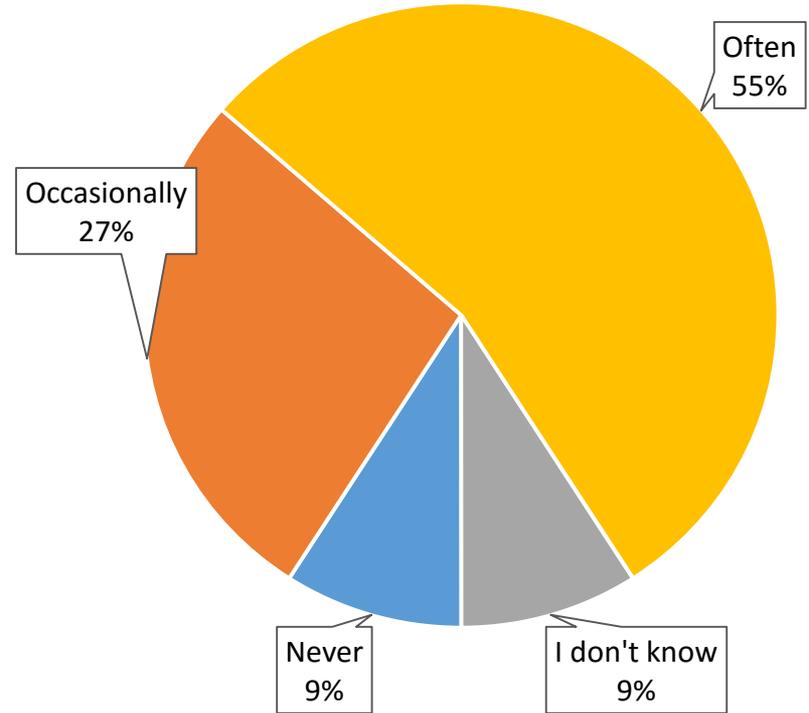


*Years associated with MPO*

*How often does your organization utilize MPO staff to support your organization's planning projects?*

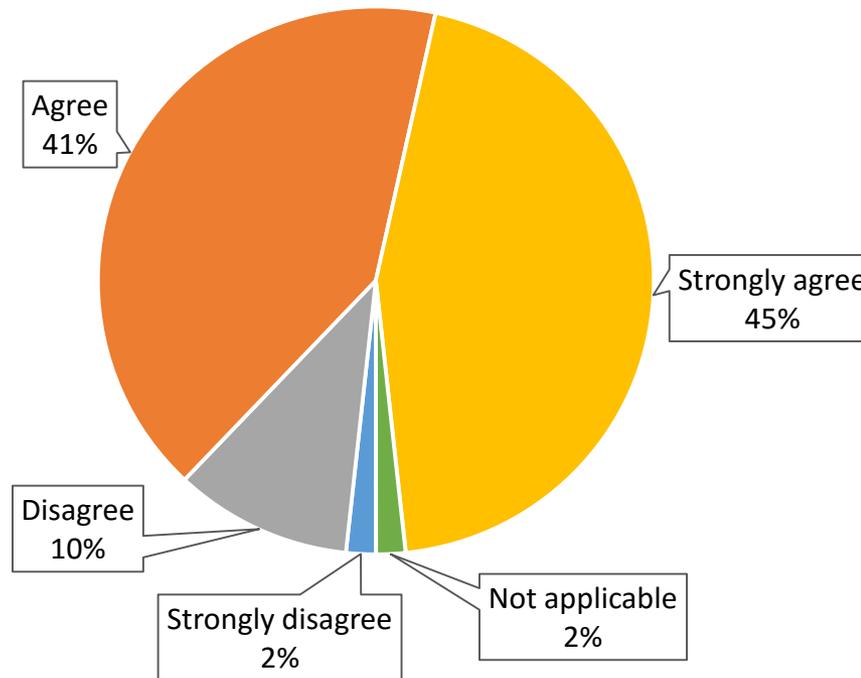


**LARGE COMMUNITIES**  
*(Members with more than 1 vote on MPO)*

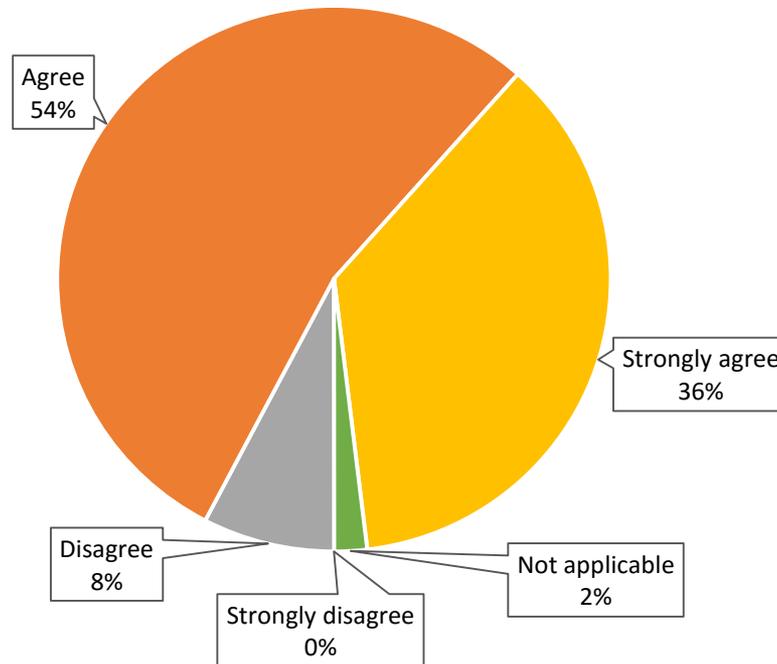


**SMALL COMMUNITIES**  
*(Members with 1 vote or no votes on MPO)*

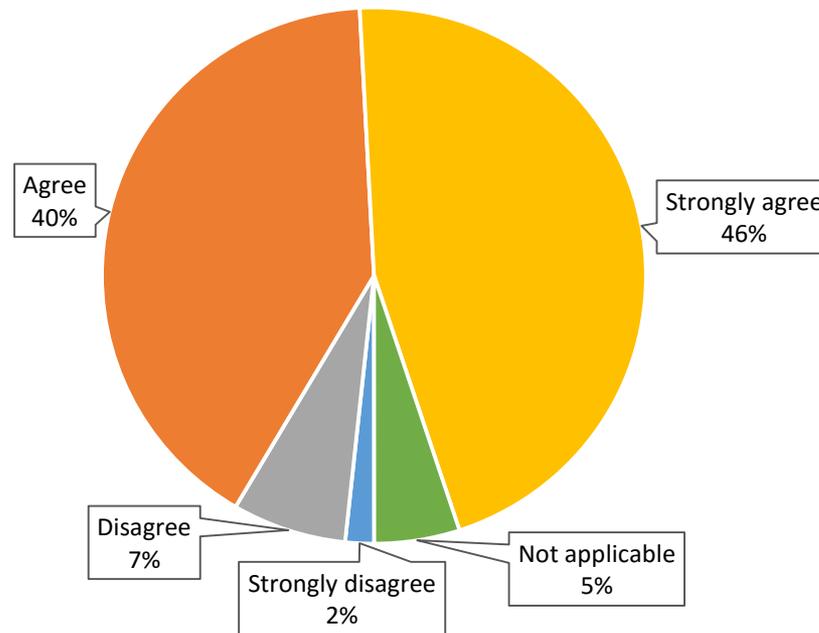
*Based on my involvement with the MPO, I feel ... PART OF SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT TO THE GREATER DES MOINES REGION*



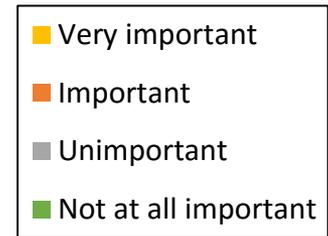
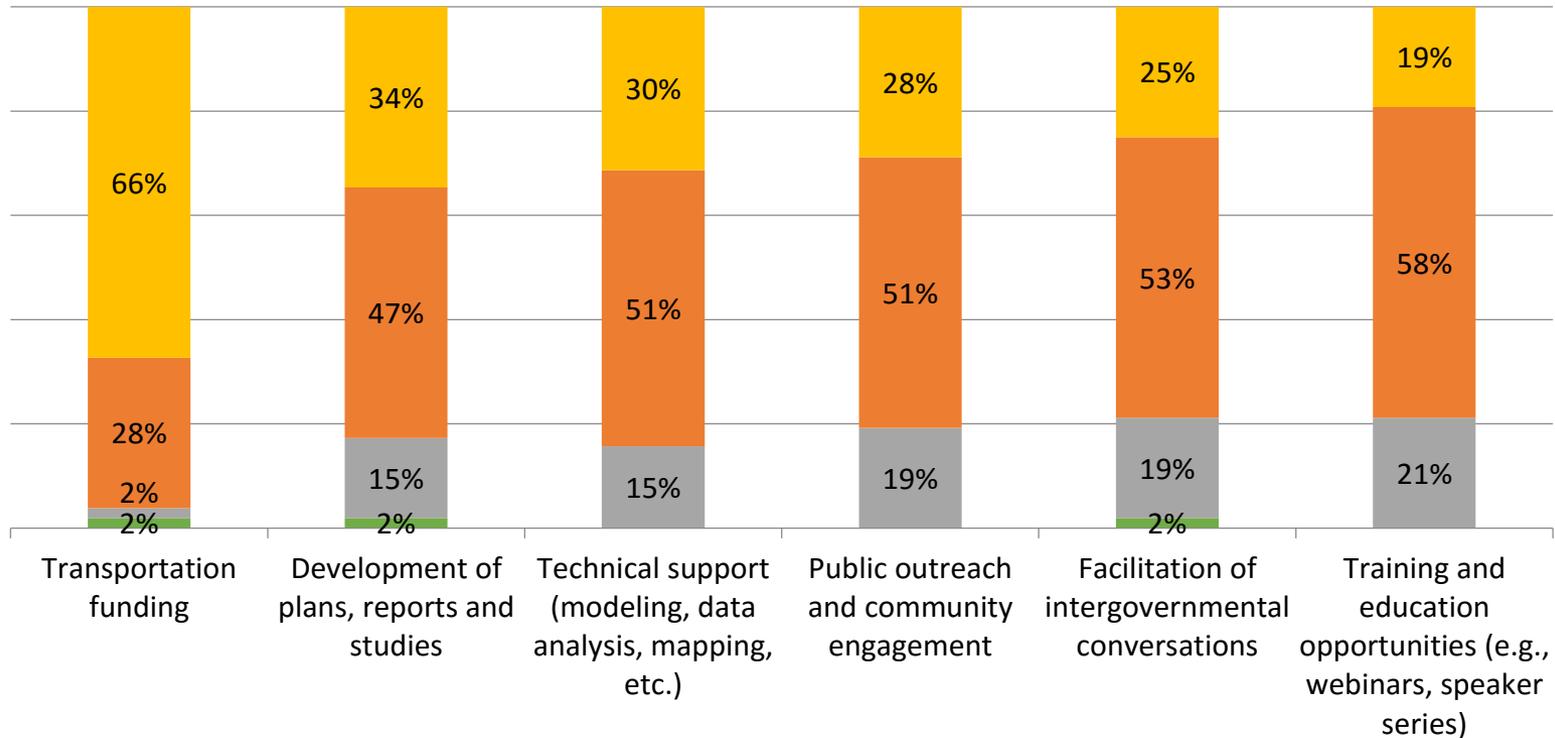
*Based on my involvement with the MPO, I feel ... INFORMED*



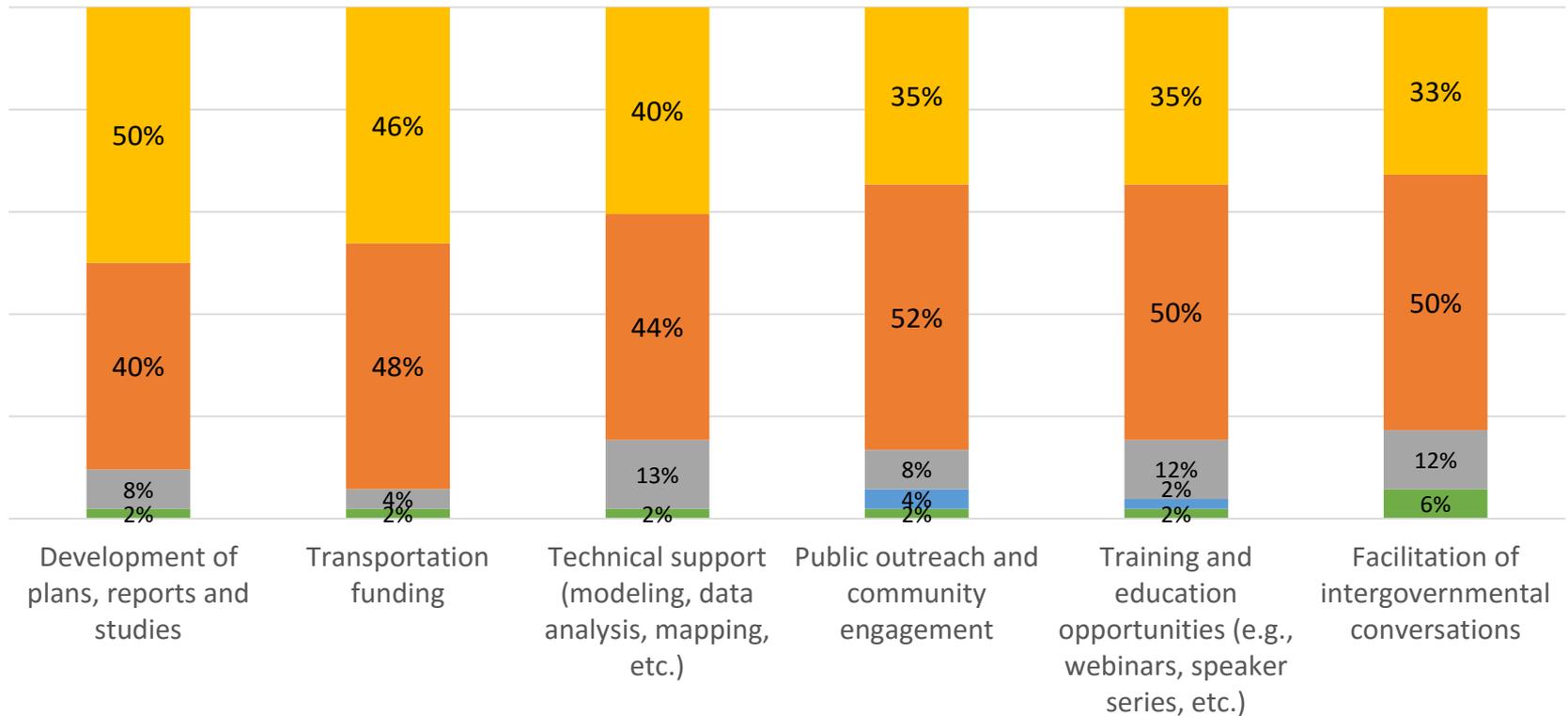
*Based on my involvement with the MPO, I feel ... PROUD MY ORGANIZATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MPO*



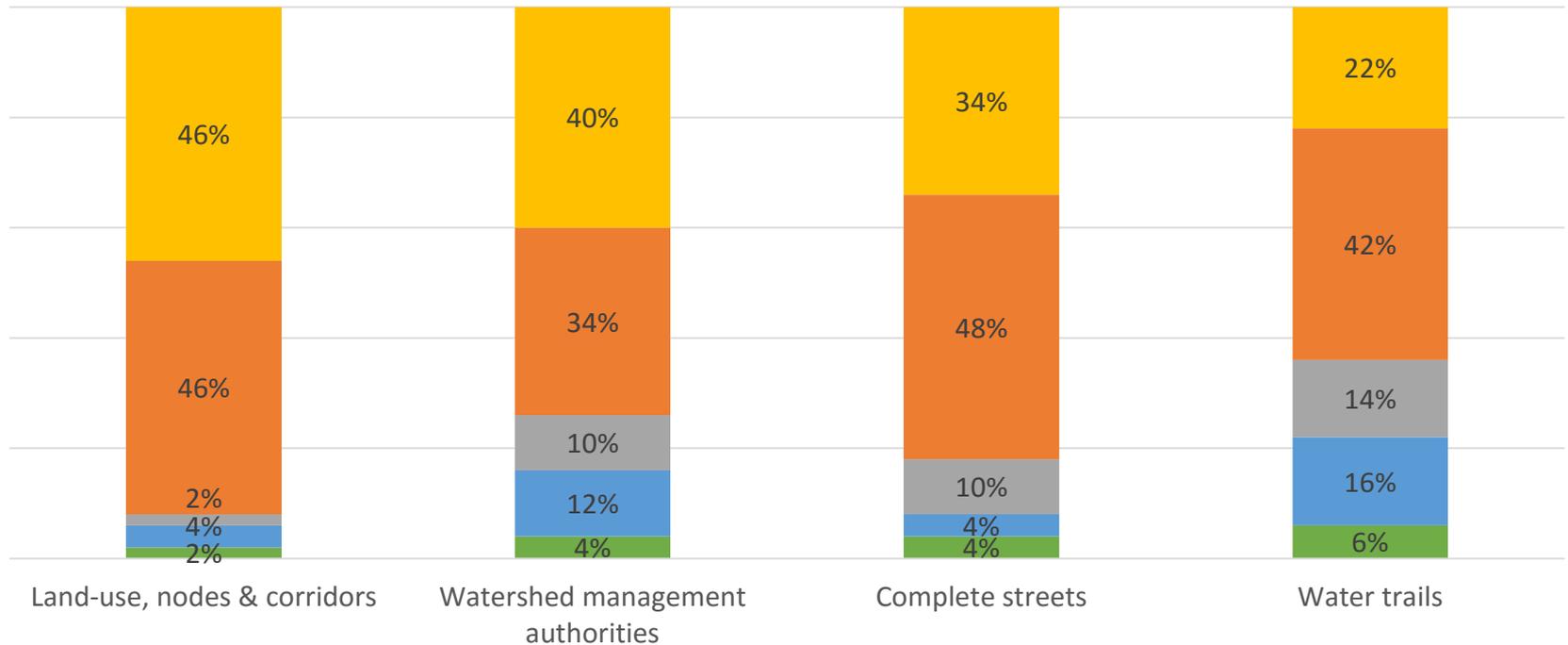
*Please rank the IMPORTANCE of the MPO's core areas of work to your community or organization. Listed in order of priority based on weighted responses.*



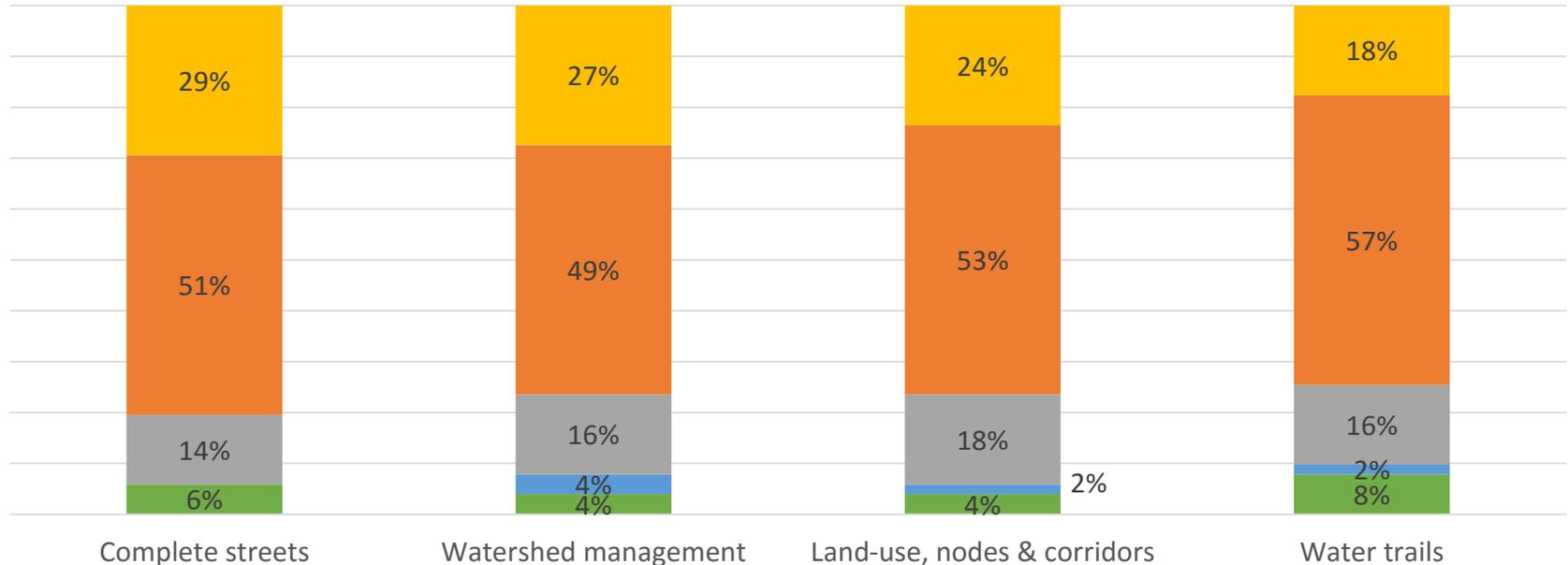
*Please rate the MPO staff's EFFECTIVENESS at serving its member governments through the following core areas.*



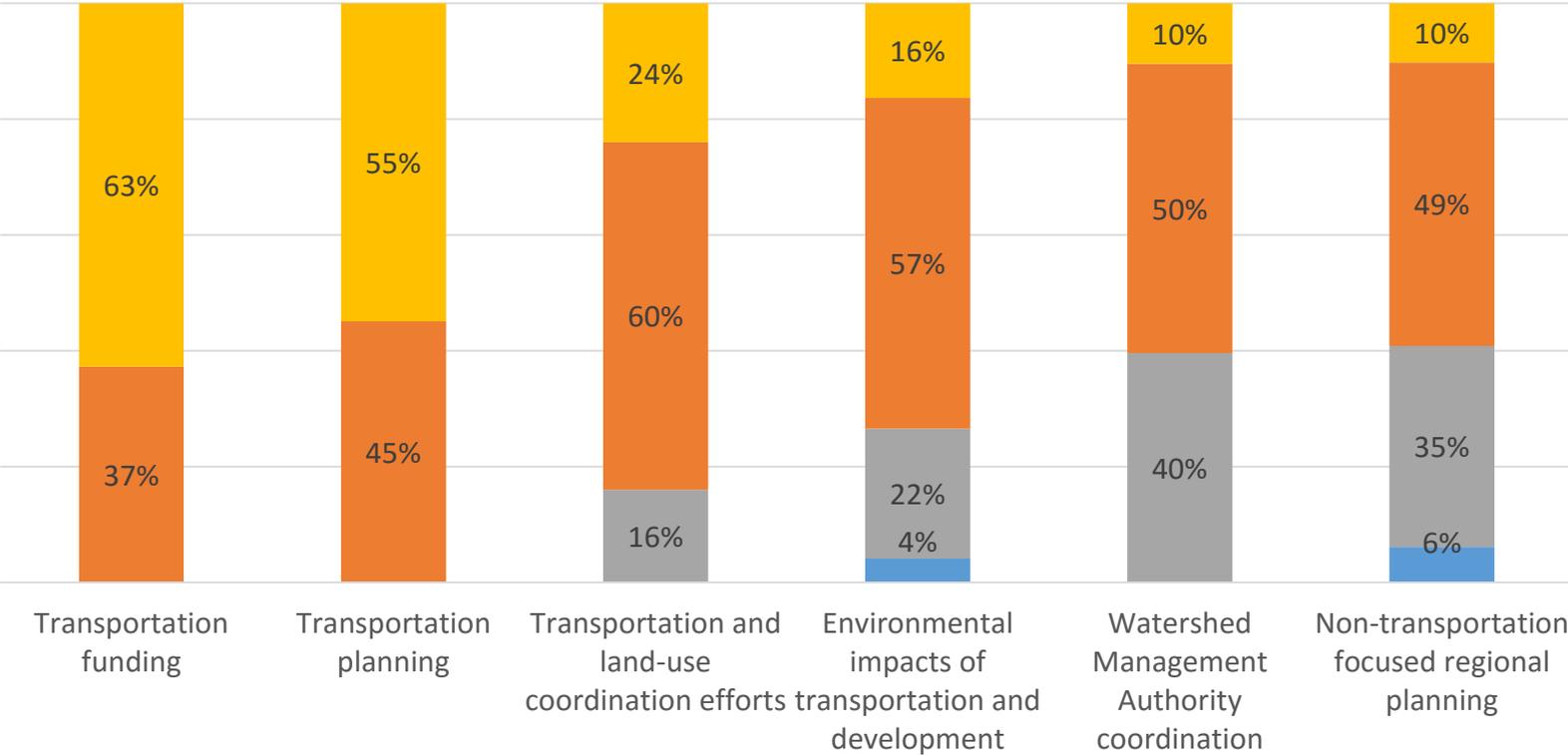
*Please rank the IMPORTANCE of these services to your organization.*



*Please rate the MPO's EFFECTIVENESS for the following.*

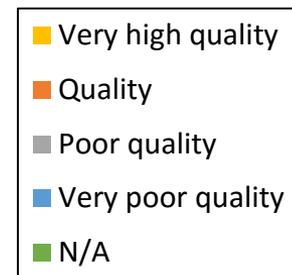
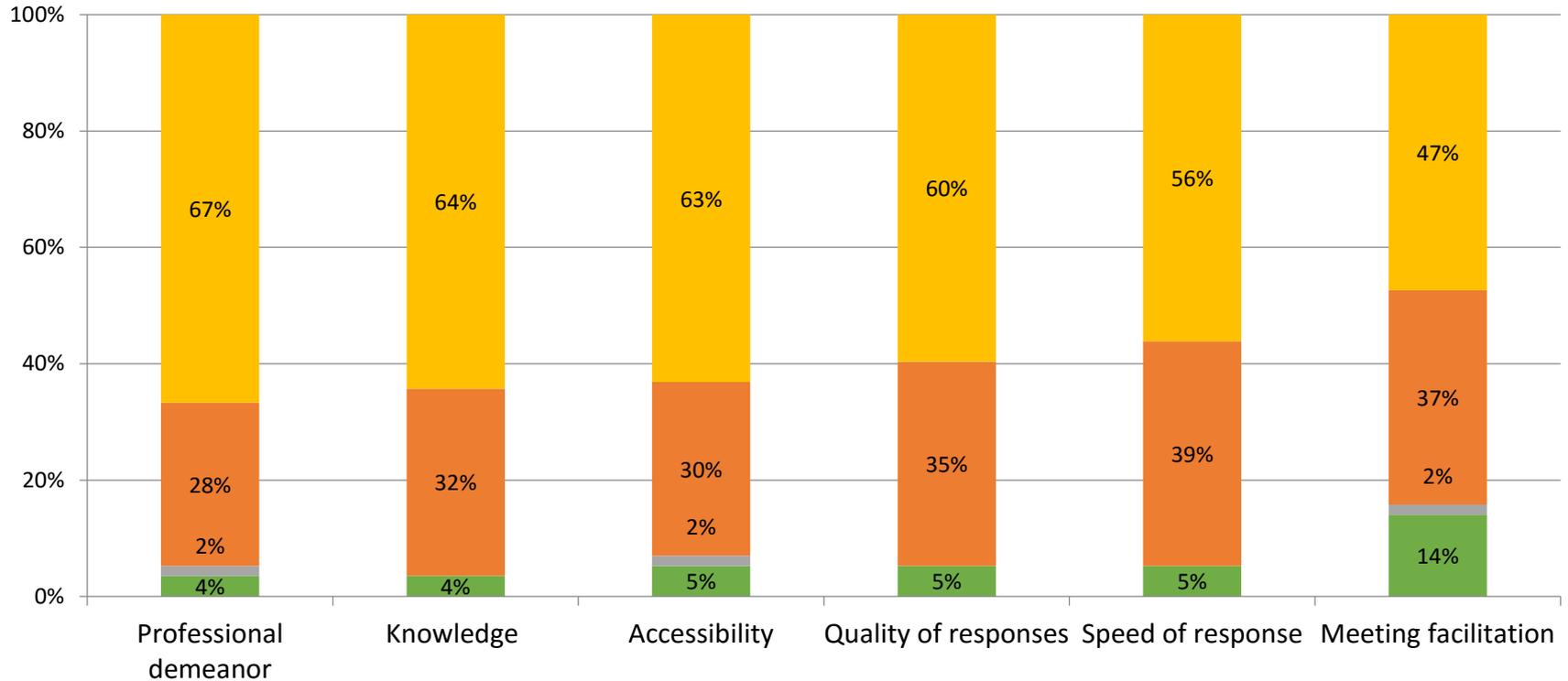


*As a regional convener of governments, the MPO is currently facilitating these regional efforts. Please indicate your thoughts on whether the MPO is the best suited organization to play this role for the region.*

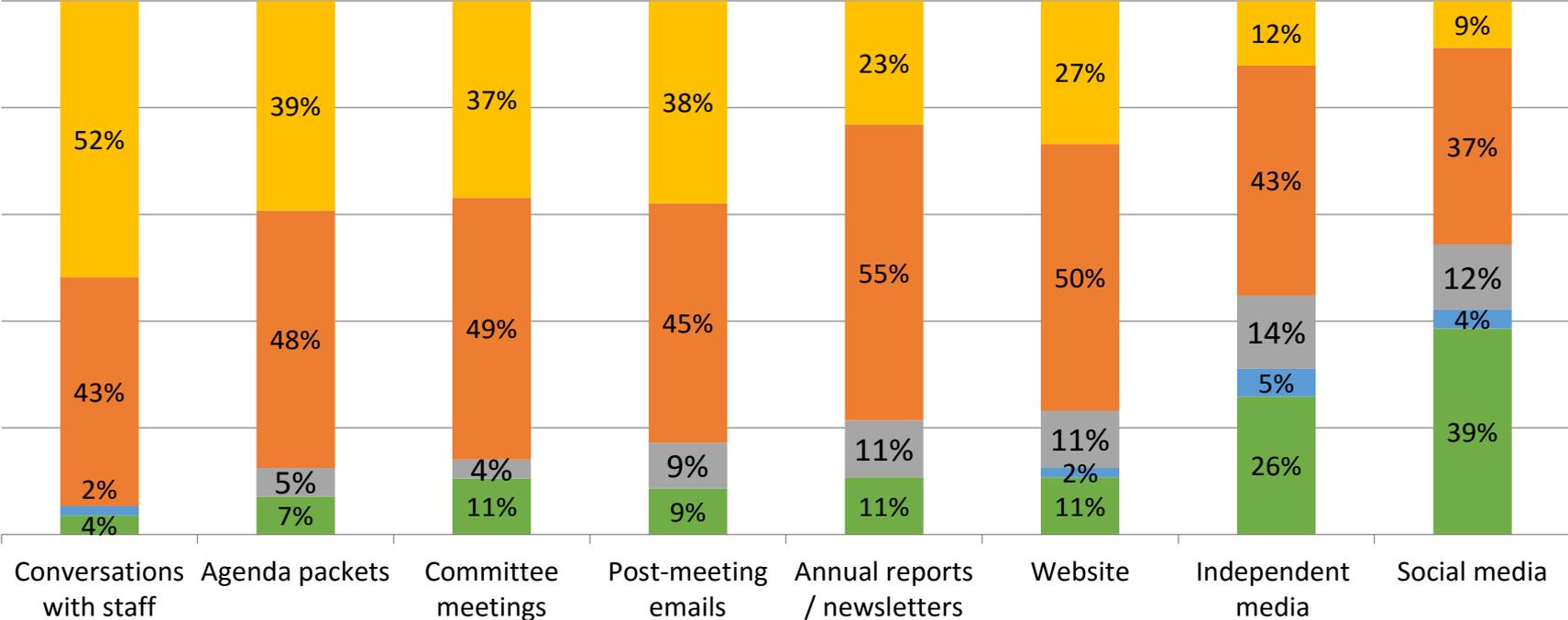


- The MPO is the only available organization to facilitate this effort
- The MPO is the best but not only organization to facilitate this effort
- There are other organizations better suited to facilitate this effort
- This effort is not worth doing at all, regardless of which organization facilitates it

# *Rate the quality of service you received from the MPO staff.*

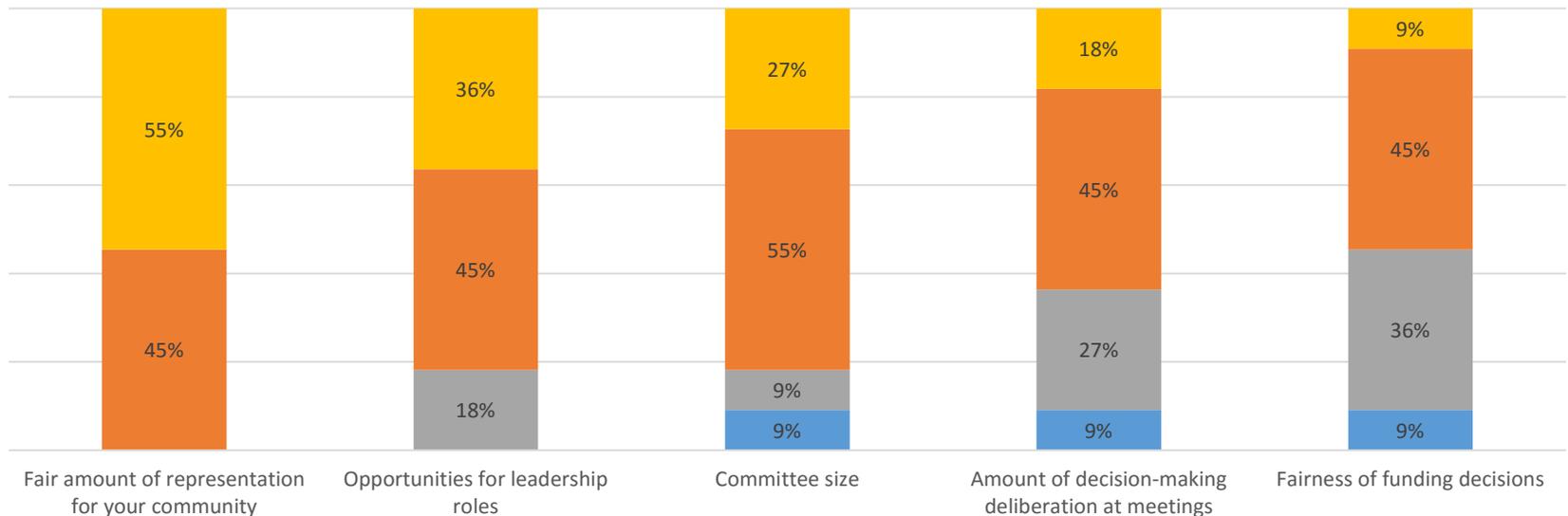


*The MPO uses a variety of communications. Please rate the following sources of information.*



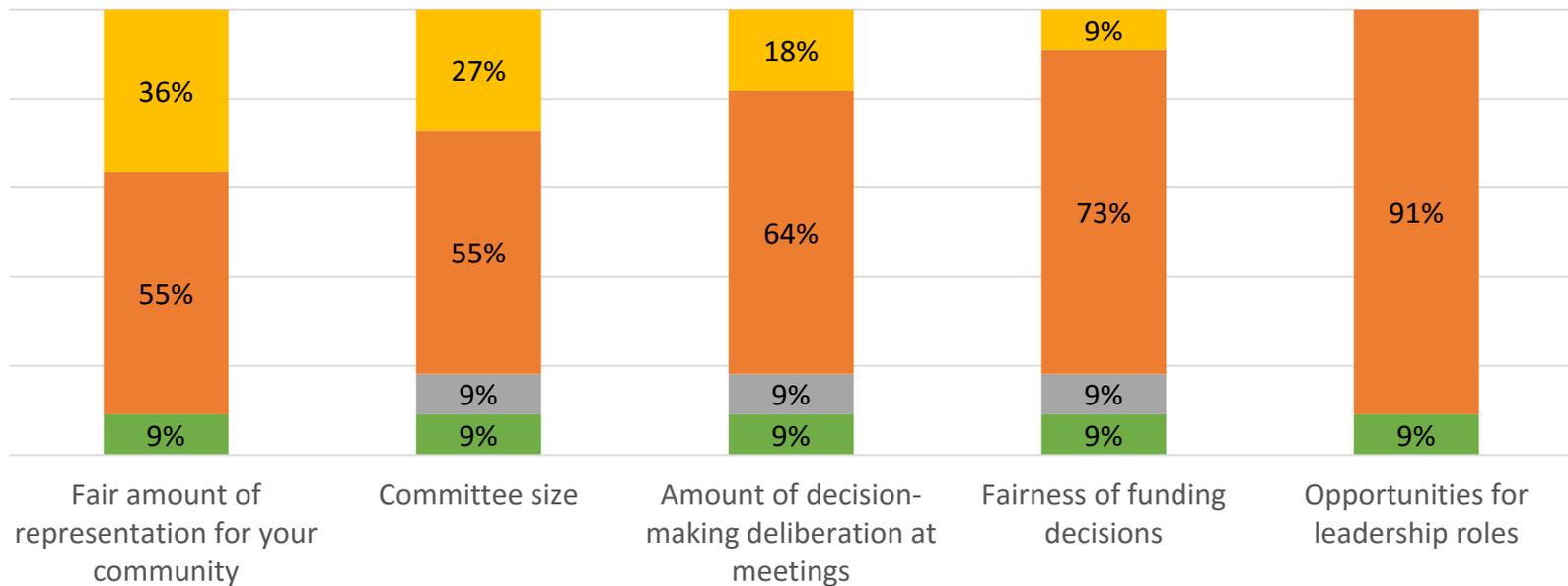
*The MPO committees (Policy, Executive, and Technical) are set up to give communities a certain amount of representation based on population to balance decision-making across the region. Please rate the effectiveness of the MPO governance structure.*

LARGE COMMUNITIES  
(MEMBERS WITH MORE THAN 1 VOTE)

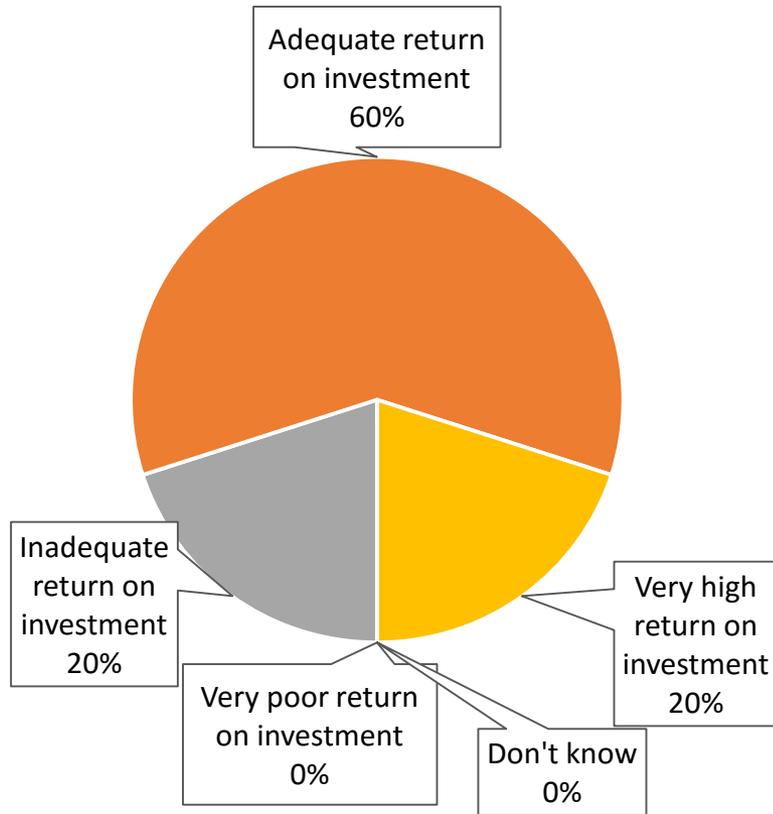


*The MPO committees (Policy, Executive, and Technical) are set up to give communities a certain amount of representation based on population to balance decision-making across the region. Please rate the effectiveness of the MPO governance structure.*

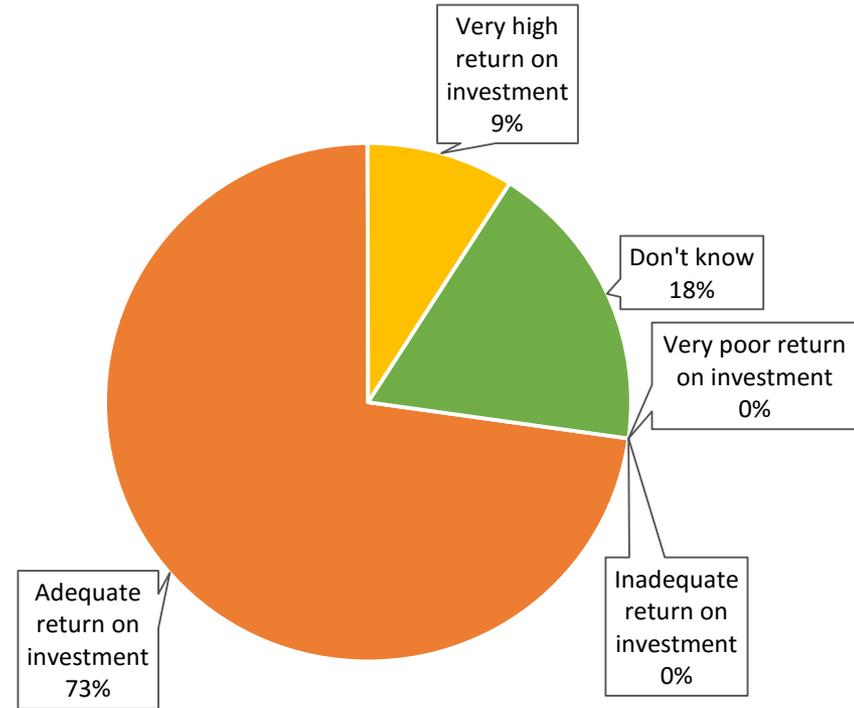
SMALL COMMUNITIES  
MEMBERS WITH 1 VOTE OR NO VOTES



*Please rate your community's return on investment:*  
**TRANSPORTATION FUNDING (STP and TAP)**



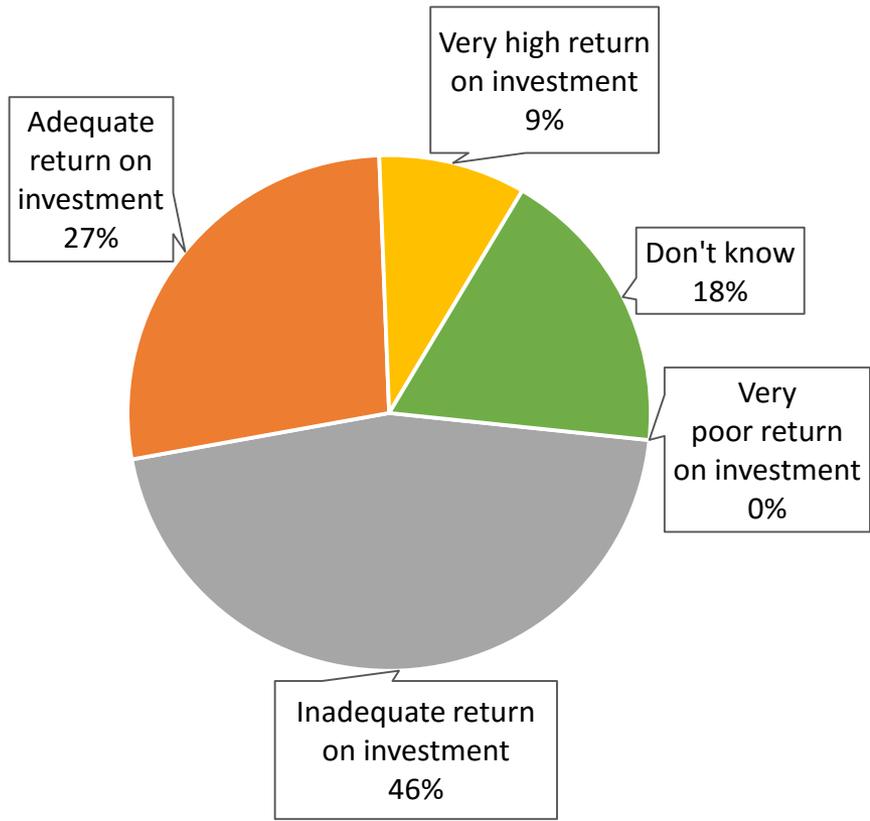
**LARGE COMMUNITIES**  
*(Members with more than 1 vote on MPO)*



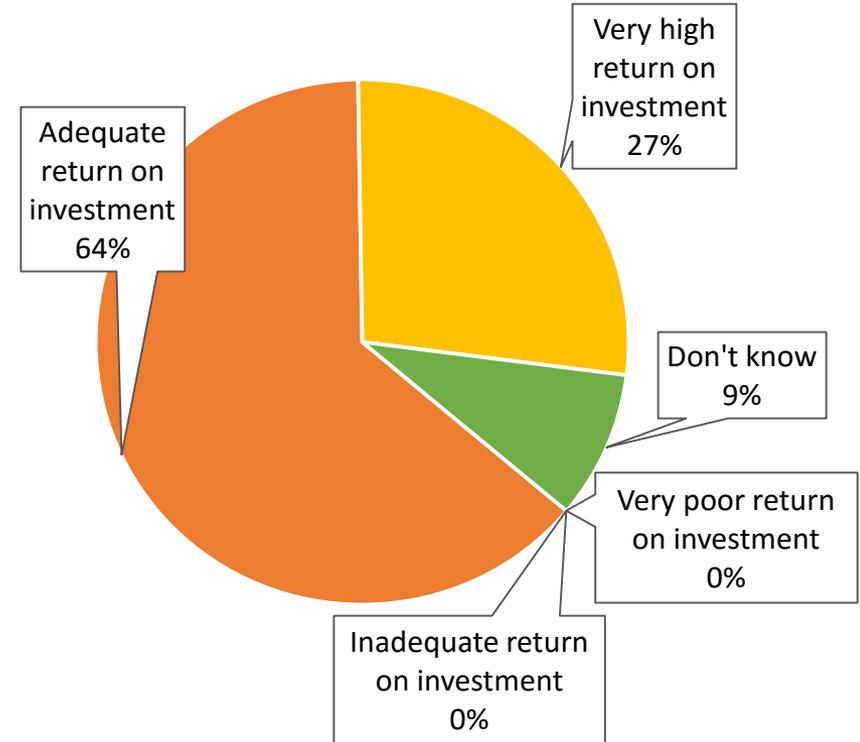
**SMALL COMMUNITIES**  
*(Members with 1 vote or no votes on MPO)*

*Please rate your community's return on investment.*

## PLANNING SERVICES

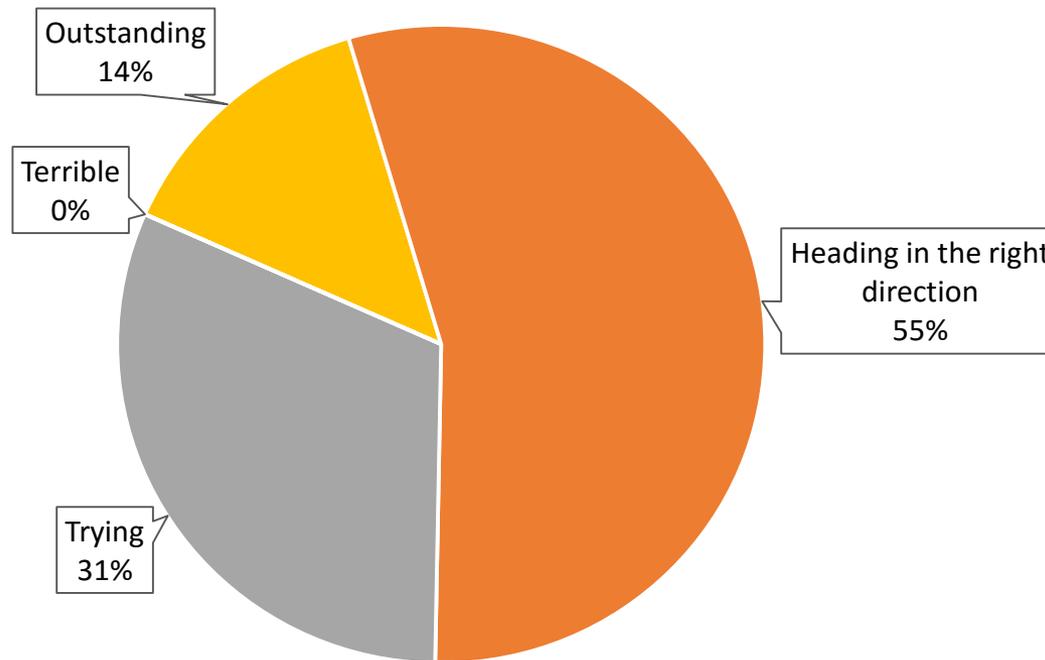


**LARGE COMMUNITIES**  
*(Members with more than 1 vote on MPO)*

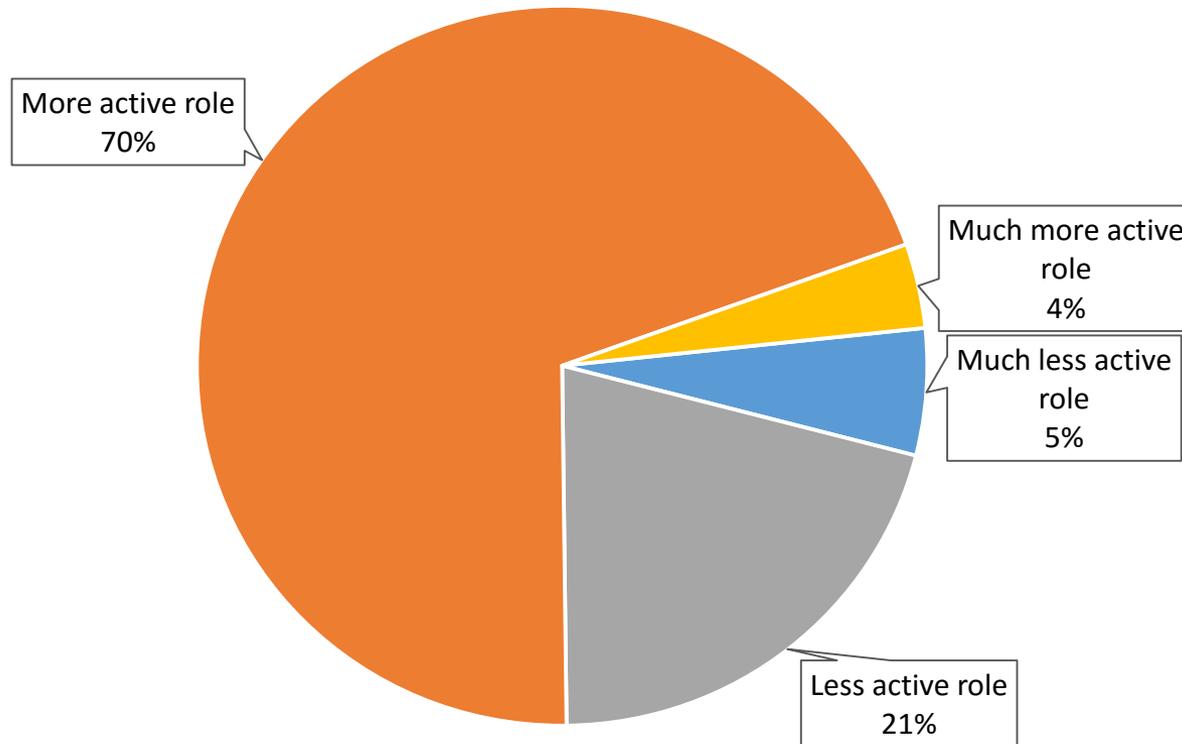


**SMALL COMMUNITIES**  
*(Members with 1 vote or no votes on MPO)*

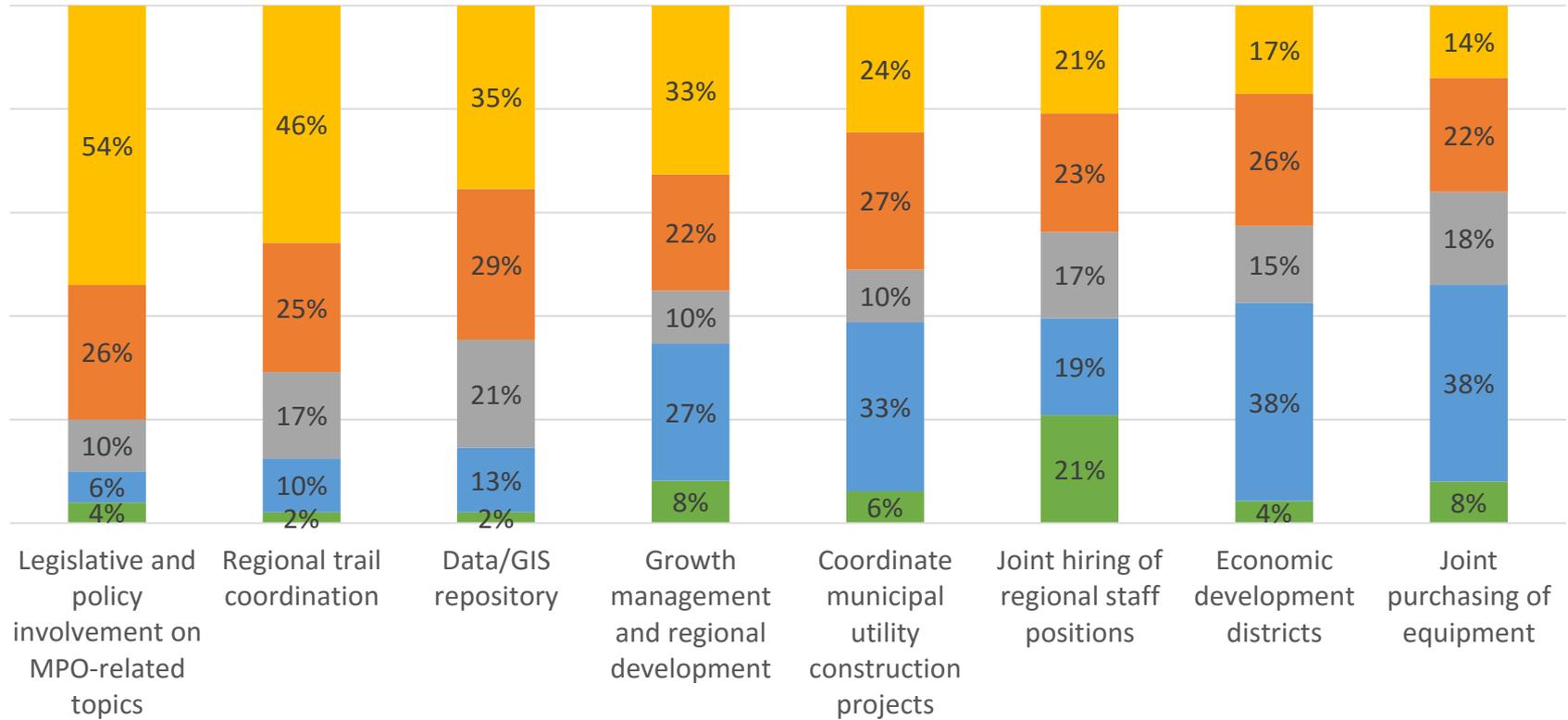
*The Tomorrow Plan sets a goal of increasing regional cooperation and efficiency. How would you rate Greater Des Moines' governments' ability to cooperate and work together effectively?*



*Should the MPO committees (Policy, Executive and Technical) direct staff to play a more or less active role in implementing components of Mobilizing Tomorrow and The Tomorrow Plan to help ensure the region's goals are met?*



*The MPO is positioned to facilitate other regional efforts to meet regional goals. Please indicate your thoughts on whether the effort would be worth pursuing and whether the MPO should act as the facilitator of them.*



- This effort is worth pursuing and the MPO is the most ideally suited organization
- This effort is worth pursuing and the MPO, while not ideally suited, is the only option available
- This effort is worth pursuing by the MPO only if new revenue streams are identified
- This effort is worth pursuing by another organization
- This effort is not worth doing at all

*Should the MPO staff be more or less vocal in advocating for action that helps the Greater Des Moines region meet the plans and goals established by the MPO Policy, Executive and Technical Committees?*

