

DES MOINES AREA

MPO

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2022

(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)



YEARS OF
MPO PLANNING
PAY OFF FOR REGION:

TRANSLOAD FACILITY IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Feature Story: Pages 6-7

**INSIDE: Preparing
for change**

Under new transportation bill,
federal funding is more regional and
focused on climate resiliency.

Feature Story: Pages 8-9

Serving the region as ‘investor, financial planner’

Dear MPO Members:

We like to think of the MPO as a kind of investor and financial planner whose focus is on bettering the future of Greater Des Moines.

It’s easy to picture the MPO as a direct investor, having allocated \$72 million in federal transportation funding over the past five years (see pages 4-5).

The MPO also seeks funding for projects that advance regional initiatives, notably two Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants; that includes \$11.2 for the now-operational transload facility (see pages 6-7), as well as \$25 million for water trails (see page 11). These investments all improve the region’s future.

Perhaps less obvious, though every bit as important, is the role the MPO plays in planning to leverage future funding opportunities. The MPO’s work this past year highlights this role particularly well.

Staff had already begun to collect and analyze environmental data before the passage of the new transportation bill, the Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA). Thanks to the proactive steps already taken, the region will be ahead of the curve in preparing to apply for the new federal grant programs aimed at climate resiliency. (See feature on pages 8-9.)

As ever, the MPO is here to serve its member communities, so please be in touch so we can continue bettering the region together.

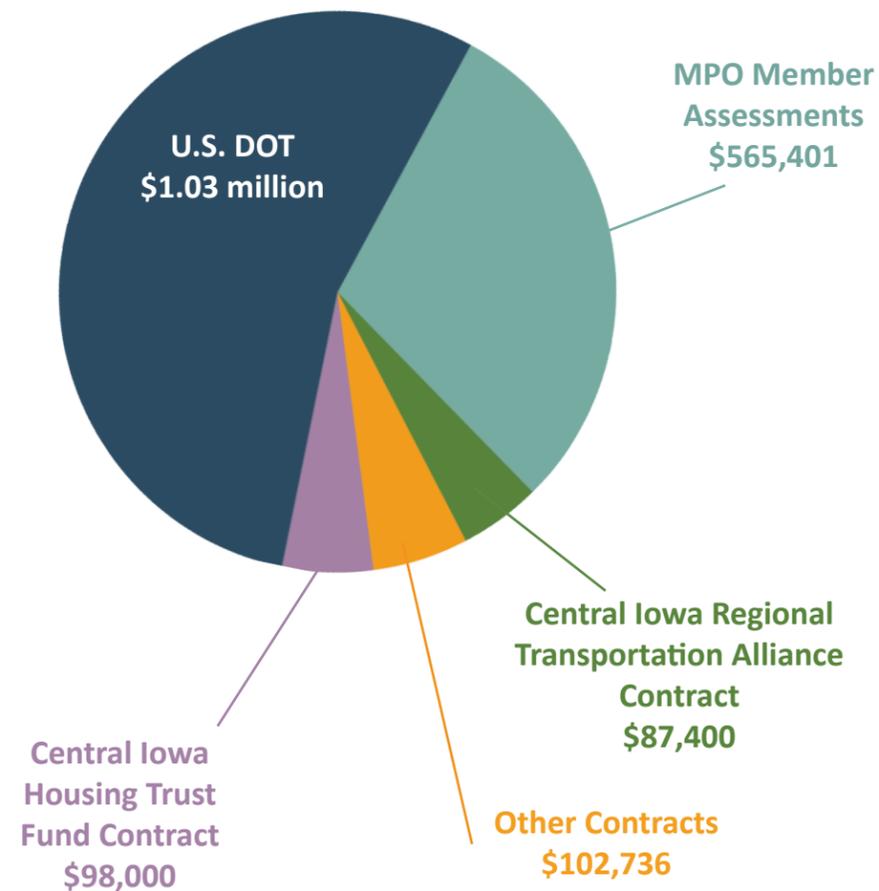
Sincerely,




BOB ANDEWEG
Mayor of Urbandale, MPO Chair

R. TODD ASHBY
MPO CEO / Executive Director

MPO BUDGET FY2022 Revenue: \$1.89 million



Contract revenue helps hold member dues steady

MPO membership rates have been held steady at \$1 per capita since FY2012.

This is due in part to the revenue that staff has generated through contracts, offsetting the need for additional membership dues. It is also due to a change made by the Policy Committee in FY2018 to annually adjust members’ population numbers based on Census estimates.

For the FY2023 budget, federal planning dollars will be 24% higher than the fiscal year that just ended. This is due to increases in the new transportation bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

MPO GRANT FUNDING

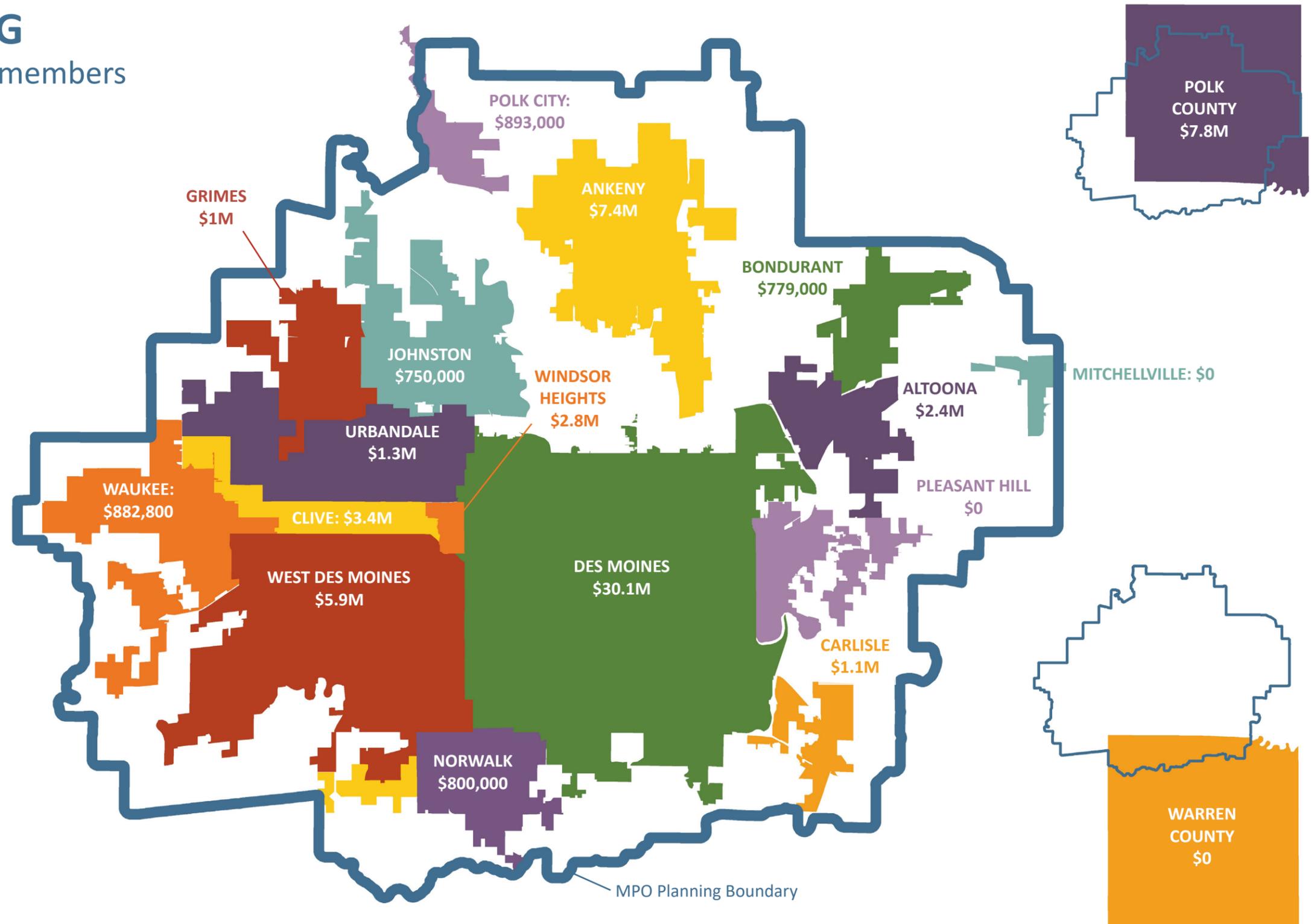
Five-year total grants to MPO members
(Federal Fiscal Years 2022-2026)

TOTAL AWARDS: \$74.3M

The Des Moines Area MPO has increasingly focused its funding on getting the most use out of existing infrastructure. Notably, the MPO is giving out more grants for major street reconstruction projects while investing in multimodal transportation options. This tightened focus on optimizing the existing transportation network is a major theme of the region's newly adopted long-range transportation plan, Mobilizing Tomorrow.



DES MOINES AREA REGIONAL
TRANSIT AUTHORITY
\$7.1M



Transloading Facility opens, to the benefit of the region

At long last the Des Moines Transloading Facility is open and conducting business.

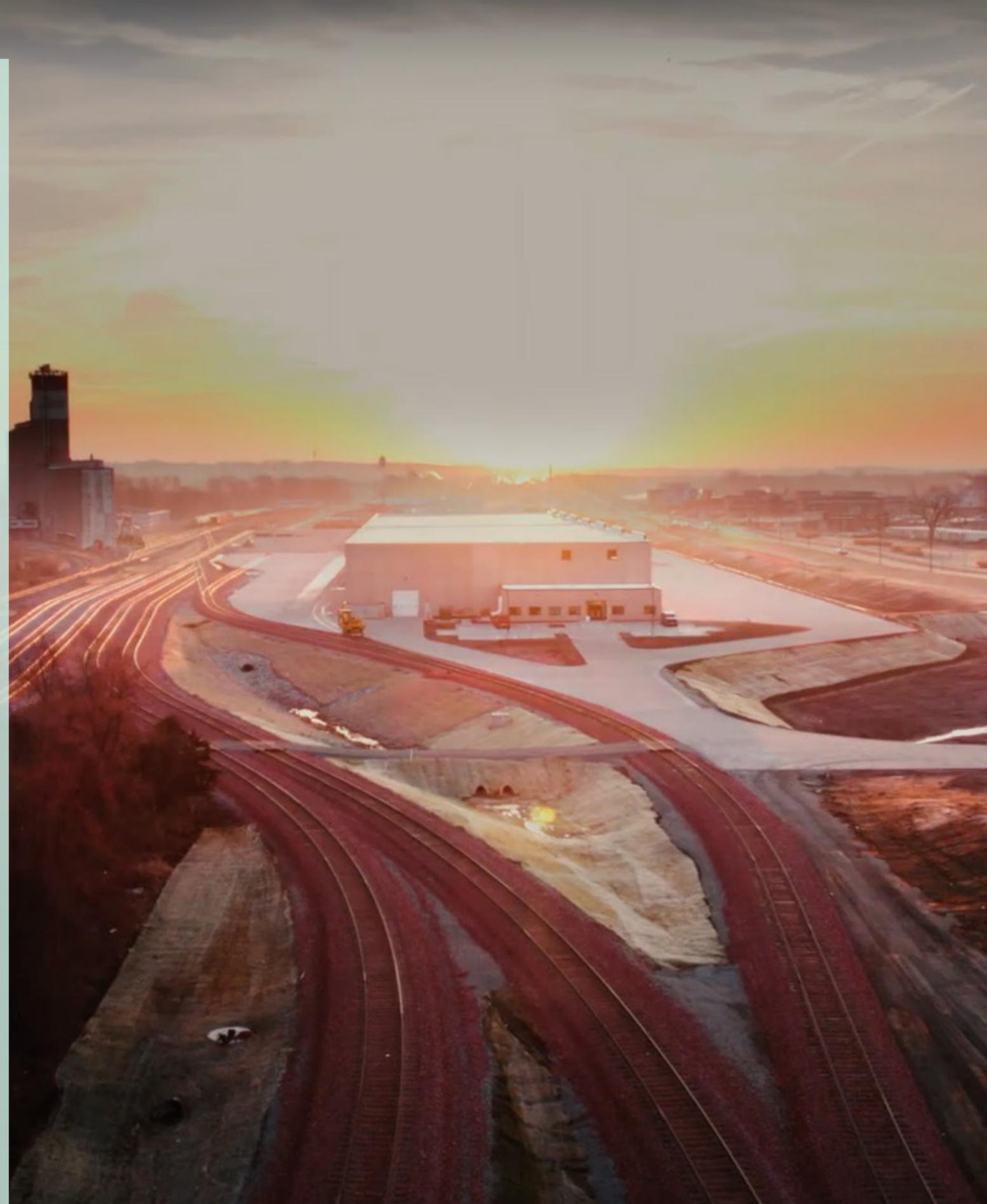
The transload facility is a big deal for the regional economy. Greater Des Moines can now claim to have one of the very few transloading facilities in the nation with direct railroad connectivity to three national (Class 1) and one regional (Class 2) rail carriers — connecting the state's trucking routes to rail networks spanning coast to coast. In effect, the facility positions the region for highly competitive pricing on goods-movement in and out of the state.

The project demonstrates the value in the long-term regional planning that happens at the Des Moines Area MPO, which has been working to establish this facility for nearly a decade. The MPO also secured and administered an \$11.2 million BUILD Grant and a \$1.7 million interest-free loan from IDOT to make it happen. Notably, the BUILD Grant was successfully closed out during this past fiscal year.

The project also showcases the value of public-private partnerships — the MPO providing the planning, funding and grant-administration; the City of Des Moines selling the land at 200 SE 15th Street; and Des Moines Industrial, involving local businessmen Paul Cownie and Gabe Claypool, coming to the table with additional resources and business expertise to own and operate the facility.

The facility includes a 115,000 square feet warehouse which has been 100% leased by Ziegler Caterpillar. Additional tenants are in the works.

“We anticipate having 4-6 dedicated laydown yard tenants in the next 45 days utilizing rail on a go-forward basis,” Cownie said in mid-June. “We are very close contractually with some names you will recognize. We also continue to have strong interest from various military groups. We anticipate the second half of the year to be very busy with existing lumber/rebar customers, our laydown yard tenants and other clients who have expressed interest in our facility.”



The MPO partnered with Des Moines Industrial, which oversaw the construction of the facility and will be its operator.



The primary warehouse is 115,000 square feet and has been 100% leased by Ziegler Caterpillar.



The facility offers an axle-based truck scale, certified by the Iowa DOT, for load types that are transacted by weight.



The facility is equipped to move rail cars along the 15,500 feet of track on the 40-acre site, including through a 350,000 square foot outside storage area.

CHANGING TIMES

New federal transportation bill

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) — enacted by Congress and signed by the President in November 2021 — is significant in many ways.

For the MPO, one of the most significant changes we see for our members is to the channels through which members access federal transportation funding.

Only 5% of the IIJA funding programs are directly available to jurisdictions. Instead, the majority of IIJA funding programs be allocated through state DOTs and regional MPOs.

The **INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT
and JOBS ACT**

FUNDING PRIORITIES

U.S. DOT funding focuses: some new, some familiar

The IIJA funding programs put new emphasis on some familiar – and some new — focus areas. These include:

- Safety
- Complete streets
- Maintaining existing infrastructure
- Climate resiliency
- Reduction of vehicle miles traveled
- Electric-vehicle (EV) readiness

MPO has prepared region

MPO committee members will be familiar with the MPO’s previous work on several of these focus areas:

- The long-term transportation plan, Mobilizing Tomorrow, focuses on maintaining existing infrastructure.
- The MPO developed a model complete streets policy on which several jurisdictions have modeled their own policies.

FUTURE READY

MPO positioned to adapt to new programs

The MPO is well positioned to adapt to the new IIJA funding programs focusing on climate resiliency. Highlights include:

- Staff has developed a “toolbox” of resources for adapting to climate change (available at dmampo.org/climate-toolbox).
- MPO joined Local Governments for Sustainability, which gives MPO members access to the organization’s many services for local governments adapting to climate change.
- Staff has already begun the process of completing a region-wide inventory of carbon emissions, data that will become increasingly important in seeking federal funding.
- Staff is also participating in stakeholder groups with the Iowa DOT to define funding programs on climate resiliency funding and electric-vehicle (EV) funding program.



HIGHLIGHTS

The Des Moines Area MPO undertakes numerous plans and initiatives that better the Greater Des Moines region. Some are widely recognized, while others stay more behind the scenes. Here are updates on four of them that were a central focus of staff this past fiscal year and will be relevant for years to come.

MID-IOWA
MIPA
PLANNING ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, MIPA, FORMED TO ASSIST SEVEN-COUNTY MID-IOWA REGION

Staff at the MPO successfully created a new Economic Development District for jurisdictions in Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Marion, Polk, Story and Warren counties.

Named the Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance for Community Development (MIPA), the new entity will provide planning services to its member jurisdictions, most notably grant-seeking, grant-writing, and grant administration. To date, 55 jurisdictions with a collective 92% of the region's population have joined MIPA as members.

MIPA is a separate entity governed by a separate board, yet it remains close to the MPO. You might call them "sister organizations." MIPA will directly employ its own senior planner, but it will contract with the MPO for administrative services and share office space.



MIPA hired its first senior planner, Caleb Knutson, in April. For more information on MIPA, reach out to him by email at cknutson@mid-iowaplanning.org.



InterCONNECT

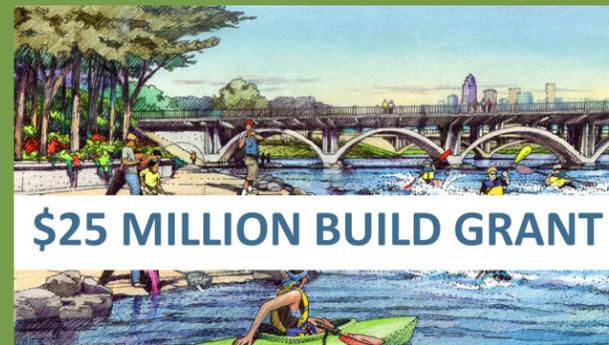
UPDATE BEGUN FOR TO REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Staff kicked off the development of the InterCONNECT, a plan for the region's active transportation including walking, pedaling, rolling, scooting, and riding public transit. The plan will differ from the previous CONNECT Plan in a few ways:

- More focused on regional initiatives, less so on initiatives for communities.
- Seeks to make active transportation a choice that complements the street network, rather than existing separately from it.
- Positions active transportation as a safe alternative in a way that leverages new federal funding programs.

Planning is well under way. A steering committee of mobility experts has been formed. The public has been engaged in the process through survey work. A vision statement and goal areas have been established. And the data needed for analysis has been collected. InterCONNECT is anticipated to be complete in the FY2023 fiscal year.

For more information, contact Aspen Pflanz at apflanz@dmampo.org.



\$25 MILLION BUILD GRANT

WATER TRAILS MOVED AHEAD WITH REVISED SCOPE OF BUILD GRANT

The activation of the region's rivers and creeks continued this past year as MPO staff forged ahead with the implementation of a \$25 million BUILD grant to modify and make safe the deadly low-head Scott Avenue dam at the center of the system.

Like many construction projects, the initial bids came back higher than estimated. The MPO successfully requested the U.S. Secretary of Transportation's Office to revise the scope of the grant agreement, allowing the region to retain the full \$25 million while narrowing the scope of the project to be covered by the BUILD grant. All project elements will be completed, just on different timeframes.

The revised scope will continue with the modification of the Scott Avenue dam, creating whitewater elements, shore treatments, and improved fish passage; additionally, it will cover improvements at the Harriot Street.

For more information, contact Zach Young at zyoung@dmampo.org.



PUSH CONTINUED FOR INTERSTATE DESIGNATION OF 'PURPLE HEART HIGHWAY'

MPO staff has continued to be involved in the effort to get interstate designation for the 'Purple Heart Highway,' which is the southern loop of the metro consisting of Iowa 5 and U.S. 65. An interstate designation would support economic development along the corridor and add clarity to the sometimes confusing signage.

Importantly, the MPO recognizes the need to maintain the corridor for all existing users, namely the ag community. Thusly, a state exemption is needed for the corridor for slow-moving vehicles, and a federal exemption is needed for the corridor for weight limits.

After an extended stakeholder outreach effort, IDOT is recommending going forward with the interstate designation effort and is developing an action plan for its implementation.

The MPO will help lead implementation. For more information, contact Gunnar Olson at golson@dmampo.org.



MPO Policy Committee Voting Members

** MPO Executive Committee Members*

CHAIR: BOB ANDEWEG*

Mayor of Urbandale

VICE CHAIR: STEPHANIE RIVA*

Norwalk City Council Member

SECRETARY/TREASURER: TED WEAVER*

Clive City Council Member

CONNIE BOESEN

Des Moines City Council Member

ELIZABETH BURNS-THOMPSON*

Altoona City Council Member

COURTNEY CLARKE

Mayor of Waukee

FRANK COWNIE*

Mayor of Des Moines

AARON DeKOCK

Warren County Supervisor

TAMMI DILLAVOU

Mitchellville City Administrator

DOUG ELROD

Mayor of Bondurant

JIM EVANS

Johnston City Council Member

JOE GATTO*

Des Moines City Council Member

TOM HADDEN

West Des Moines City Manager

MARK HANSON

Dallas County Supervisor

TOM HOCKENSMITH*

Polk County Supervisor

DAVID JONES

Ankeny City Manager

MIKE JONES

Mayor of Windsor Heights

LEN MURRAY

Pleasant Hill City Council Member

MARK HOLM*

Mayor of Ankeny

JOSH MANDELBAUM

Des Moines City Council Member

SCOTT MIKKELSEN

Grimes Mayor

ELIZABETH PRESUTTI

DART CEO

RUTH RANDLEMAN*

Carlisle City Council Member

RUSS TRIMBLE*

Mayor of West Des Moines

CARL VOSS

Des Moines City Council Member

JEFF WALTERS*

Polk City City Council Member

Staff

TODD ASHBY, AICP

CEO and Executive Director

DYLAN MULLENIX, AICP

Assistant Director

ZACH YOUNG, AICP,

MRTPI, CNU-A
Planning Manager

TRACEY DECKARD

Office Manager

GUNNAR OLSON

Communications and
Strategy Manager

ANDREW COLLINGS, AICP

Principal Planner

ZHI CHEN

Senior Planner

ALLISON van PELT

Senior Planner

ASPEN PFLANZ

Associate Planner

ENYA CID

Intern

ANDRE LAFONTANT

Intern

BEN WOEBER

Intern

LUCAS YOUNG

Intern

Contact Information

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization | 420 Watson Powell | Suite 200 |
Des Moines, Iowa 50309 | 515.334.0075 | dmampo.org | info@dmampo.org