

NOTICE OF MEETING

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Executive Committee

—

11:30 a.m., December 13, 2023

Des Moines Area MPO Burnham Conference Room

—

TENTATIVE AGENDA

1. **Call To Order**
2. **VOTE: Approval of Agenda**
3. **VOTE: Approval of Meeting Minutes**..... Page 2
 - Approve the November 8, 2023, meeting minutes.
4. **CONSENT and VOTE: Approval of the Financial Statement** Page 7
5. **CONSENT and VOTE: Contracts and Expenses** Page 8
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT on MPO Actions** Page 9
7. **REPORT and VOTE: Executive Director Search Consultants Contract**Page 10
 - Consider approval of a contract with 2 The Top to manage the search and hiring process for a new MPO Executive Director. Consider approval.
8. **REPORT and VOTE: Search Committee Decision-Making Authorities** Page 11
 - Consider approval of the proposed decision-making authorities of the Search Committee in the hiring process of a new MPO Executive Director. Consider approval.
9. **REPORT and VOTE: Employee Remote Work Arrangement Update**.....Page 13
 - Discuss feedback from the Iowa Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding the board's direction to convert the Planning Manager to a contract employee and options for moving forward, including a possible Unified Work Program and budget amendment. Consider approval.
10. **REPORT AND OPTIONAL VOTE: Grimes Line Track Assessment**.....Page 15
 - Report and discussion regarding an early step in determining feasibility of a proposal for passenger rail service on the Grimes Line rail spur. Consider approval.
11. **ISSUE: Purple Heart Highway Update**Page 17
 - Update regarding the Process to redesignate Iowa Highway 5 / US Highway 65 Freeway Corridor to an Interstate.
12. **Director's Report**.....Page 18
 - Update by the Interim Executive Director on MPO activities.
13. **Other Non-Action Items of Interest to the Committee**
14. **Next Meeting Date – January 10, 2024, at 11:30 a.m.**
15. **Adjournment**

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

The MPO receives federal funding and may not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, or national origin, according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For more information or to obtain a Title VI Complaint form, visit www.dmampo.org/title-vi/ or call 515-334-0075.

December 2023
Item No. 3

ISSUE: Approval of Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Consider approval of the November 8, 2023, MPO Executive Committee meeting minutes.

BACKGROUND:

The minutes of the November 8, 2023, MPO Executive Committee meeting are included on the following pages.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the minutes of the November 8, 2023, MPO Executive Committee meeting.

STAFF CONTACT:

Tracey Deckard, tdeckard@dmampo.org
(515) 334-0075

MEETING MINUTES
Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
11:30 a.m., Wednesday, November 8, 2023
Des Moines Area MPO | Virtual Meeting

The MPO Executive Committee held a hybrid live/virtual meeting at 11:30 a.m. on November 8, 2023, at the Des Moines Area MPO office and via Zoom. MPO staff emailed agenda packets to the MPO Executive and members on November, 2023. **In addition to these published tentative minutes, there also may be additional meeting notes on file with the MPO staff that are public records and available upon request as provided by law. These tentative minutes reflect all action taken at the meeting.**

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:	PRESENT	ABSENT
Robert Andeweg, Chair City of Urbandale	X	
Stephanie Riva, Vice-Chair City of Norwalk	X	
Ted Weaver, Secretary/Treasurer City of Clive	X	
Dean O'Connor City of Altoona	X	
Mark Holm City of Ankeny	X	
Ruth Randleman City of Carlisle	X	
Frank Cownie City of Des Moines	X	
Joe Gatto City of Des Moines	X	
Len Murray City of Pleasant Hill	X	
Jeff Walters City of Polk City	X	
Tom Hockensmith Polk County	X	
Matthew McKinney City of West Des Moines		X
STAFF PRESENT:		
Dylan Mullenix Interim Executive Director	X	
Zach Young Planning Manager	X	
Andrew Collings Principal Planner	X	
Zhi Chen Senior Planner	X	
Carl Saxon Senior Planner	X	
Gunnar Olson Public Affairs Manager	X	
Tracey Deckard Office Manager	X	
Rhonda Miller Accountant	X	
Scott Brennan Legal Counsel	X	

OTHERS PRESENT:	INTEREST/REPRESENTING
Clifford Leonard	Public

1. **Call to Order**
MPO Chair Bob Andeweg called the November 8, 2023, meeting to order at 11:31 a.m. A quorum was present.
2. **Approval of Agenda**
MOTION: A motion was made by Gatto and seconded by O'Connor to approve the November 8, 2023, Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Committee meeting agenda.
MOTION CARRIED
3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
Recommend approval of the October 11, 2023, meeting minutes.
MOTION: A motion was made by Cownie and seconded by Gatto to approve the October 11, 2023, meeting minutes
MOTION CARRIED
4. **Approval of the August Financial Statement**
MPO Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair, Ted Weaver presented. Advised that the Finance Committee met and had reviewed the October Financial Statements. Recommend approval.
MOTION: A Motion was made by Holm and seconded by Gatto to approve the October Financial Statement.
MOTION CARRIED
5. **Contracts and Expenses**
Interim Executive Director presented. Recommend approval of the amended agreement with Iowa State University for the Data Bike Trail Pavement Management System project in the amount of \$25,000.
MOTION: A motion was made by O'Connor and seconded by Hockensmith to approve the amended agreement with Iowa State University for the Data Bike Trail Pavement Management System project in the amount of \$25,000.
MOTION CARRIED
6. **Calendar Year 2024 Meeting Dates**
Interim Executive Director presented. Recommend approval of the proposed meeting dates for Calendar Year 2024. Discussion was held regarding the March 13, 2024, meeting date due to potential spring break conflicts. Recommend moving the meeting to March 7, 2024
MOTION: A motion was made by Gatto seconded by Weaver to approve the Calendar Year Meeting dates and moving the March Executive Committee meeting to March 7, 2024, at 11:30 a.m.
MOTION CARRIED
7. **MPO Decision Tree**
Interim Director presented. Recommend approval of the proposed decision tree.
MOTION: A motion was made by Holm seconded by O'Connor to approve the MPO Decision Tree.
MOTION CARRIED

8. **MPO Representative Selection Process**
Interim Executive Director presented. Review of the process for MPO members to appoint representatives and for the MPO to select officers for 2024. Chair will appoint a committee.
Report and discussion only.
9. **Planning Boundary Update**
Planning Manager presented. Discussion regarding an update to the MPO's Planning Area Boundary.
Report and discussion only.
10. **Mobilizing Tomorrow Update**
Planning Manager presented. Update regarding the development of the region's long-range transportation plan.
Report and discussion only.
11. **FFY 2028 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program Schedule**
Report on the Federal Fiscal Year 2028 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program Schedule.
Report and discussion only.
12. **Executive Director Search Update**
MPO Chair presented. Update on the Executive Director Search Committee. The committee met and determined to post the position locally and not hire a firm. Timeline of posting and interviewing was discussed.
Report and discussion only.
13. **Director Report**
Interim Executive Director presented an update on MPO activities including the Strategic Planning in LRPT and discussed the current procedure for appointing Executive Committee members. Advised that the MPO had been asked to provide a Letter of Support for the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission. Also advised that the MPO audit will be completed and presented before the end of the year. Additional discussion was held regarding the decision of the CIRTPA to terminate the contract with the MPO and join MIPA, potentially beginning in April 2024. Further discussion regarding the Planning Manager's employment agreement for working remotely. Extensive discussion was held regarding the agreement not following the recent Employee Manual. Discussion regarding grandfathering the Planning Manager for his remote work and changing his employment to a contractor was discussed. The Interim Executive Director was advised to work with the Planning Manager to come up with a plan to present at the Policy meeting.
14. **Non-Action Items**
Board members, Stephanie Riva and Frank Cownie were recognized for their contribution to the MPO.
15. **Next Meeting Date**
December 13, 2023, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

16. **Adjournment**

Hearing no objection to the contrary, the Chair adjourned the Executive Committee meeting at 12:22 p.m.

December 2023
Item No. 4

ISSUE: Approval of Financial Statement

REPORT and VOTE: Consider approval of the November 2023 MPO Financial Statement.

BACKGROUND:

The November 2023 Financial Statement consists of documents available at the following links:

- [Statement of Financial Position](#)
- [Budget vs. Actuals](#)
- [Transaction List by Vendor](#)
- [Water Trails Account Balance Detail](#)
- [Water Trails DOT Grant Fund Balance](#)

Note that the Finance Subcommittee is also reviewing the financial statement.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval of the November Financial Statement.

STAFF CONTACT:

Rhonda Miller, rmiller@dmampo.org
(515) 334-0075

December 2023
Item No. 5

ISSUE: Contracts and Expenses

CONSENT and VOTE: Consider approval of the following expenses in accordance with the MPO's proposed policies and procedures regarding contracts and expenses.

BACKGROUND:

Below are expenses that exceed the limits set by the MPO's policy and procedures regarding expenditures.

VENDOR	PURPOSE	NOTES/INFORMATION	AMOUNT REQUESTED
Caliper Corporation	TransCAD software annual license support	Annual license included in MPO budget	\$10,800
Connectify HR	Professional Employment Organization (PEO) Service	Connectify HR would help manage all human resources-related services, including payroll, taxes, deferred compensation, HR technology, compliance and risk management, and employee benefits administration. Cumulative fee for all services with Connectify HR would be approximately \$10,500 less than what the MPO currently pays.	\$13,750

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval of the proposed payment to Caliper and service agreement with Connectify HR.

STAFF CONTACT:

Dylan Mullenix, dmullenix@dmampo.org
(515) 334-0075

December 2023
Item No. 6

ISSUE: Public Comment of MPO Actions

PUBLIC COMMENT: Opportunity for public comment on actions taken by the MPO Executive Committee.

BACKGROUND:

The MPO's *Public Participation Plan* provides an opportunity for the public to comment on items on the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

None. Public comment only.

STAFF CONTACTS:

Dylan Mullenix, dmullenix@dmampo.org
(515) 334-0075

December 2023
Item No. 7**ISSUE: Executive Director Search Consultants Contract**

REPORT and VOTE: Consider approval of a contract with *2 The Top* to manage the search and hiring process for a new MPO Executive Director.

BACKGROUND:

The Policy Committee in November voted to engage a search consultant to manage the process of hiring a new MPO Executive Director. The Search Committee has recommended *2 The Top*, in partnership with *Deibler & Company*.

The proposal from *2 The Top* and *Deibler & Company* was the highest scoring among the responses to a request for proposals. The Search Committee met on Nov. 29 with Cassandra Halls (*2 The Top*) and Diana Deibler (*Deibler & Company*) to review their proposal and discuss the process and timeline. Policy Committee members were invited to participate, and three Policy representatives attended.

Satisfied with the discussion, the Search Committee elected to immediately move ahead with the first steps of the search process, starting with a survey of MPO committee representatives.

The Executive Committee is now presented with a contract for the balance of the steps in the search process for its consideration. A Special Policy Committee meeting has been scheduled for 4 p.m. Thursday, December 14, 2023, primarily for the purpose of considering this contract.

[Click here for a copy of the proposed contract.](#)

A full update on the search process will be provided at the special December Policy Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Search Committee has recommended this firm and reviewed the proposed scope of services. The draft contract was received Dec. 8 and is being reviewed by legal counsel.

STAFF CONTACT:

Tracey Deckard, tdeckard@dmampo.org;
(515) 334-0075.

December 2023
Item No. 8

ISSUE: Search Committee Decision-Making Authorities

REPORT and VOTE: Consider approval of the proposed decision-making authorities of the Search Committee in the hiring process of a new MPO Executive Director.

BACKGROUND:

The Policy Committee will decide at the Special December meeting whether to proceed with a search process that is aggressive in timeline, as recommended by the Search Committee.

If approved, the Policy Committee may elect to authorize the Search Committee with certain decision-making authorities that will enable the process to be completed on the recommended timeline.

The search consultants advised the Search Committee that a search for an executive-level position can take 3-6 months. They further advised that a shorter process would be possible, but that it would require the Policy Committee to authorize the Search Committee with certain authorities to keep the process moving between the monthly Policy Committee meetings.

The table on the following page shows the key decision points in the recommended search process, as well as the MPO committee that would have authority to make those decisions, if granted by the Policy Committee.

This is presented to the Executive Committee for review and recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Search Committee recommends approval.

CONSULTANT CONTACT:

Cass Halls, c.halls@2ttop.com;
(515) 473-4980.

	Search Committee	Policy Committee
Approval of updated job description.	X	
Approval of posted salary range.	X	
Approval of job posting.	X	
Approval of interview process / questions.	X	
Selection of finalists for interviews.	X	
Recommendation of finalist.	X	
Approval of finalist and preliminary offer.		X
Contract negotiations within the authorized range of compensation as established in the MPO Policies and Procedures Manual.	X	
Acceptance of contract with finalist.		X

December 2023
Item No. 9

ISSUE: Employee Remote Work Arrangement Update

REPORT and VOTE: Report on feedback from the Iowa Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding the board's direction to convert the Planning Manager to a contract employee, as well as discuss options for moving forward, including a possible Unified Work Program and budget amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The MPO's Planning Manager has worked remotely full time since February 2022 after entering into an agreement with the former Executive Director allowing this work arrangement. The agreement originally permitted this work arrangement through the end of 2022, and it was later extended through 2023.

In November 2023, the MPO discussed options for the Planning Manager's ongoing involvement in MPO projects. The Policy Committee voted to approve moving forward with developing a consultant contract with the MPO's Planning Manager that would start January 1, 2024.

Following the MPO meeting, staff contacted the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) to determine whether a UPWP and budget amendment is necessary. The Iowa DOT, FHWA, and FTA indicated that it is necessary, as the UPWP must identify consultant services in both the description of UPWP work elements and budget. Furthermore, Federal approval is required if there is a transfer of substantive programmatic work to a third-party consultant. However, FHWA and FTA also expressed concerns with the proposed contract as it did not follow a procurement process that adheres to FHWA and FTA requirements.

To move toward a resolution, staff has outlined a few options for how the MPO could proceed:

Option 1 – Continue with the Policy Committee's original plan to retain the Planning Manager as a contractor at the end of December 2023, but do so only using local funds. Doing so would alleviate the need to adhere to requirements of the Iowa DOT, FHWA, and FTA, but would require using MPO reserve funds.

Option 2 – Keep the Planning Manager as a salaried employee by approving an extension of the current remote work agreement through the end of 2024. This would require an exemption to the remote work policy in the MPO's Employee Handbook.

Option 3 – Solicit bids for consultant services through a formal Request for Proposal process. This would require an amendment to the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and budget prior to the MPO selecting a contractor. [A draft UPWP amendment adding consultant services is available here](#) should this option be selected. As this solicitation takes place, the MPO could either retain the Planning Manager as a contractor paid with only local

funds, per Option 1, or keep as an employee with a temporary extension to the remote work agreement, per Option 2.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend moving forward with one of the outlined options.

STAFF CONTACT:

Dylan Mullenix, dmullenix@dmampo.org
(515) 334-0075

December 2023
Item No. 10**ISSUE: Grimes Line Passenger Rail**

REPORT: Discussion regarding a proposal for passenger rail services on the Grimes Line rail spur.

BACKGROUND:

An opportunity exists to explore the introduction of passenger rail service within the MPO planning area, specifically on what is referred to as the Grimes Line rail spur. This rail line runs from just west of downtown Des Moines northwest before terminating in Grimes. A map is included on the following page. The line is owned by the Norfolk Southern Railway, with Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) being the primary operator.

IAIS is owned by Railroad Development Corporation. Railroad Development Corporation also owns Pop-Up Metro, a passenger rail company that utilizes existing low-density freight lines. Pop-Up Metro is interested in introducing passenger rail on the Grimes Line. Pop-Up Metro's business model is to lease all the capital necessary for the operation for a trial period of 1-3 years, which would enable the community to understand the feasibility and ridership levels before making permanent investments. Any upgrades necessary to tracks and crossings would be included in the lease fee.

The MPO and the Iowa Department of Transportation have met with Pop-Up Metro several times over the last two years to discuss this concept. To move forward with obtaining an accurate estimate of operating costs, an assessment must be made on the existing track to determine necessary upgrades. Pop-Up Metro estimates this could be done for approximately \$25,000.

Staff utilized the recently adopted Decision Tree to assess what level, if any, role the MPO should play. Staff determined that the track assessment would warrant the MPO taking a Lead Role if desired by the Policy Committee.

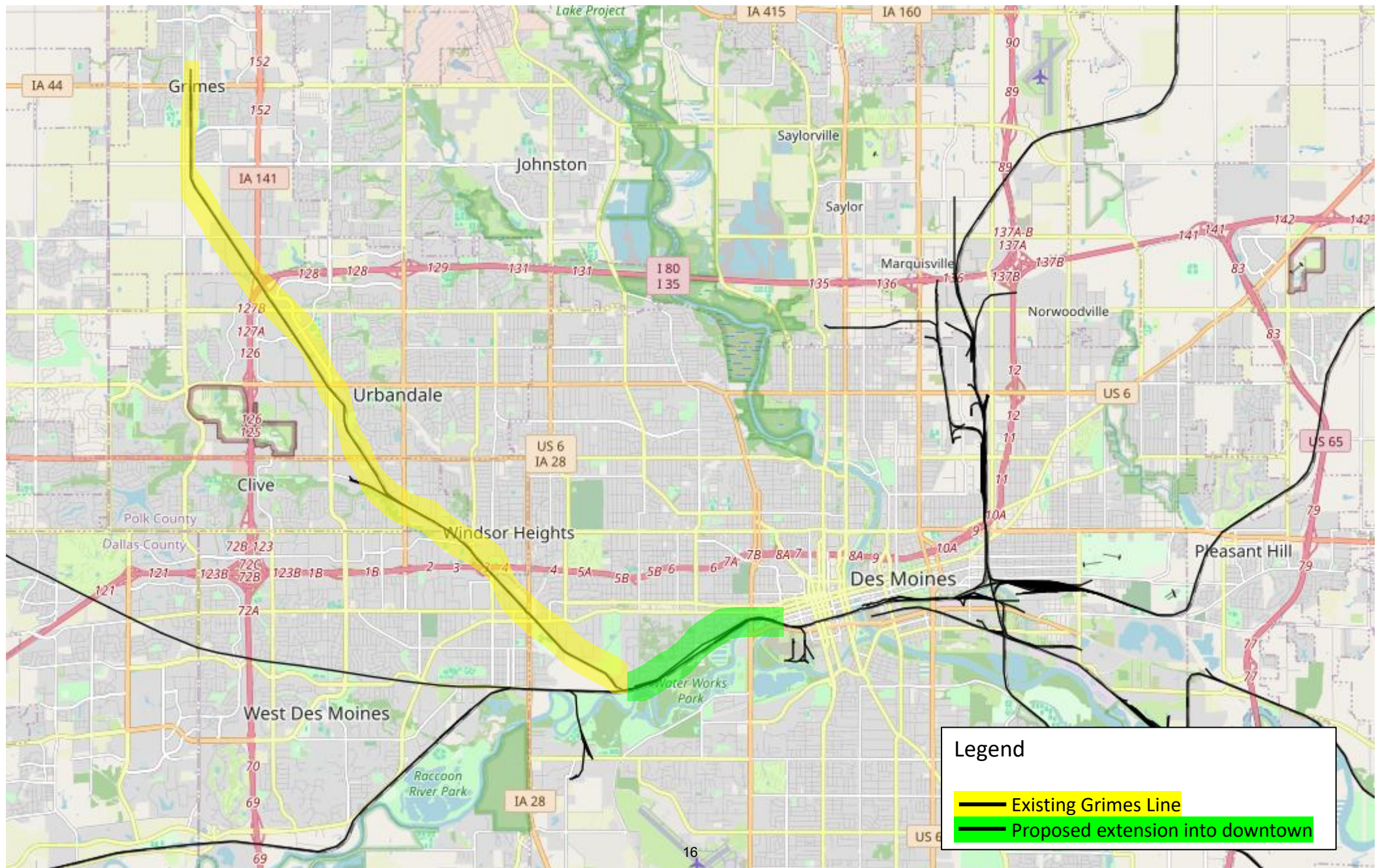
MPO staff would like feedback from the Executive Committee on the MPO's involvement moving forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

If so desired by the Executive Committee, staff recommends a vote to acknowledge a Lead Role for the MPO in the track assessment and to authorize staff to explore funding options.

STAFF CONTACT:

Dylan Mullenix, dmullenix@dmampo.org
(515) 334-0075



December 2023
Item No. 11

ISSUE: Purple Heart Highway

REPORT: Update regarding the process to redesignate Iowa Highway 5 / US Highway 65 Corridor to an Interstate.

BACKGROUND:

Staff are continuing to work with the Greater Des Moines Partnership and other stakeholders to promote the Highway 5/US Highway 65 interstate designation. Notably, staff has engaged ag stakeholders in a conversation about an alternatives analysis, the aim of which would be to find an alternate route for slow-moving ag vehicles to cross the river. Staff will provide a full update at the December meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None. Report and discussion only.

STAFF CONTACT:

Gunnar Olson, golson@dmampo.org;
(515) 334-0075.

December 2023
Item No. 12

ISSUE: Director Report

REPORT: Update by the Interim Executive Director on MPO activities.

BACKGROUND:

The Interim Executive Director will provide an update on MPO activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None. Report and discussion only.

STAFF CONTACTS:

Dylan Mullenix, dmullenix@dmampo.org
(515) 334-0075