



ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



Under Construction: Building an “Optimized MPO”

If last year was about stabilization, the theme of the coming year is optimization.

Much of the last fiscal year (starting July 1, 2023) was spent resetting the Des Moines Area MPO to its base function — transportation planning — following the departure of the former director.

Now, with the transition in leadership complete, the MPO Policy Committee will work closely with new Executive Director Dylan Mullenix to “optimize” the MPO, with the goal of maximizing its member jurisdictions’ return on investment.

An Optimized MPO will require a sustained focus by the MPO committees and staff on three key areas:



1. Aligned Board: Foundational to the MPO’s success is a board that is aligned on vision, mission and priorities. As an important early step in this direction, the MPO will be undergoing a governance assessment to ensure its member jurisdictions have confidence in the MPO’s decision-making process.

2. Strategic Direction: The MPO has the opportunity to be more impactful in its planning work by focusing a select few regional priorities, as opposed to spreading its attention too thin. More strategic use of MPO funding is one area that has been identified for potential improvement.

3. Reliable Staff: Another key to the success of the MPO is a reliable staff, which has experienced significant changes over the past year. To further stabilize the MPO staff, the MPO Policy Committee is working with a consultant to develop a Human Capital Plan.

Together, these three key areas of focus will begin to optimize the MPO and increase the value to its member jurisdictions.



MARK HOLM
Mayor of Ankeny, MPO Chair



DYLAN MULLENIX
Executive Director

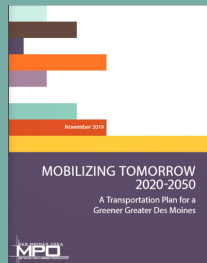
MPO PLANNING ACTIVITIES: Adding Value to the Region

The Greater Des Moines region is better positioned for a brighter future thanks to the long-range planning work of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. This work breaks down into five categories: Planning & Studies, Data & Analysis, Funding & Programming, Stakeholder Engagement, and Program Administration.



Planning & Studies

MOBILIZING TOMORROW



The update to the region's long-range transportation plan (LRTP) is well under way and on track to be complete before it is due in November 2024.

The LRTP is important because it is a prerequisite for local jurisdictions to qualify for federal funding. Maintaining an up-to-date LRTP is one of the core functions of the MPO.

The LRTP considers many planning factors, from population growth, demographic trends, industry, and more.

SAFETY ACTION PLAN



MPO member governments will gain access to additional federal funding opportunities following the completion of a regional Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.

The plan is in development now, thanks to a Safe Streets and Roads for All grant for \$800,000 that the MPO successfully secured from the U.S. DOT on behalf of the region.

The plan is anticipated to be complete by fall of 2024. In turn, member governments should be eligible for subsequent rounds of funding from the Safe Streets and Roads for All program for implementing projects for the 2025 round of funding.

Data & Analysis

NEW REGIONAL DATA SOURCE



A new benefit for MPO members is access to StreetLight Data, a transportation analytics platform.

The MPO's subscription to StreetLight includes data on personal vehicles and trucks, which will be useful to numerous planning efforts including the LRTP update and a Goods Movement Study.

These same data sets are available directly to MPO member jurisdictions to aid their own planning and engineering.

IOWA DATA BIKE



The MPO continues to be a pioneer in the collection and analysis of data on the pavement condition of trails.

The MPO broke new ground in 2017 with the introduction of the Iowa Data Bike, which uniquely combined new technologies to identify and map rough pavement and, separately, photograph the individual segments of trail. The Data Bike garnered attention internationally when it launched, and it continues to be copied by others across the country.

Now, the MPO is innovating on the analysis of data. This past year the MPO partnered with the Institute for Transportation at Iowa State University, which is developing AI software that looks at both the roughness data and the images of the pavement to produce a comprehensive trail condition index.

Funding & Programming

MPO GRANT AWARDS

This year the MPO awarded more than \$22 million in grants for 23 projects around the region.

The grants are available through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), STBG Set-Aside Program, and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). These are funded by the U.S. DOT and administered by the MPO.

One grant garnered significant attention for the effect it had on public transit. A \$3.6 million CRP grant allowed DART to avert near-term service cuts and use the reprieve to plan for a sustainable future.



Meantime, the MPO's Transportation Technical Committee has started developing a process for awarding CRP grants going forward.

WATER TRAILS BUILD GRANT



The confluence of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers will soon open for safe passage following the successful mitigation of the deadly low-head dam.

The project was made possible by the \$25 million BUILD grant that was secured by MPO, which continues to administer the grant on behalf of broader effort being led by ICON Water Trails. Visit iconwatertrails.com for more information.

Stakeholder Engagement

INTERSTATE DESIGNATION



MPO policymakers and staff this year continued work on implementing the Iowa DOT's action plan for designating the Highway 5/Highway 65 corridor as an interstate.

Dubbed "Future 435," the effort has been gradually picking up momentum over the past few years. This year, a bill providing an exemption to the minimum speed requirement -- one of the Iowa DOT's four action steps -- found ample support in the Legislature. Ultimately, the bill fell short of passage due to budget limitations, as the bill included funding for an alternatives analysis to explore alternative routes for farmers that currently rely on that corridor.

The bill is anticipated to be reintroduced next session. The intervening months will be used for ongoing efforts to build support.

Meantime, the MPO has been keeping Iowa's congressional delegation up to date on progress, as the next step in the Iowa DOT's action plan is a federal maximum weight exemption. The MPO is targeting the next surface transportation authorization bill to include this language.

NEW LOGO AND WEBSITE

This year saw the MPO adopt a new logo to go with a new and improved website (dmampo.org).

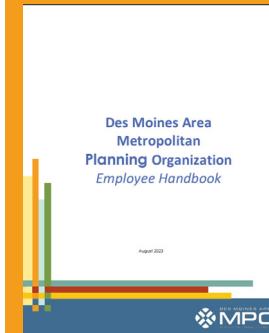


Features of the new website include an all-in-one agendas page that can be sorted by committee, as well as an integrated agenda-distribution system that lets interested parties sign themselves up to receive MPO agendas.

Program Administration

TIDYING UP INTERNALLY

MPO policymakers and staff have worked diligently over the past year to ensure the MPO's internal affairs are in good working order.

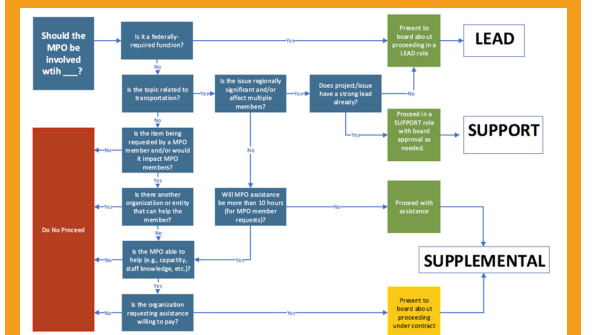


MPO Chair Bob Andeweg, now Past Chair, appointed a special Handbook Committee to update the organization's Policy and Procedures Manual, as well as the Employee Handbook.

Among other things, the manual updated the MPO's financial procedures. As a result, the MPO's auditor anticipates a cleaner audit in coming years.

Separately, staff worked with the Policy Committee to develop a "Decision Matrix." The Decision Matrix is an agreed-upon guide for deciding when and to what degree the MPO gets involved with planning projects.

The Decision Matrix was aimed at aligning the Policy Committee on what should, and should not, be focuses of the MPO. It also serves as a tool for staff to navigate the myriad requests the MPO receives.

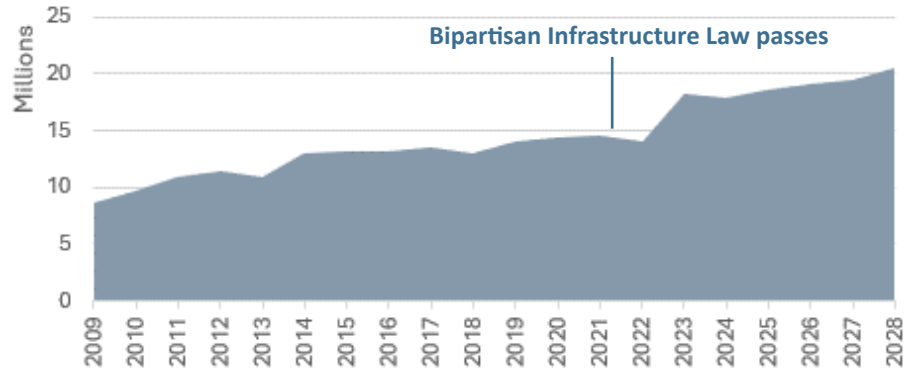


Funding totals for MPO have been on the rise

Increasing amounts of federal transportation dollars are being allocated through the MPO as illustrated in the chart to the right.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law increased funding to the existing MPO programs, the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and the STBG Set-Aside, and introduced a third MPO program, the Carbon Reduction Program.

MPO staff are always available to assist member jurisdictions in accessing federal transportation funding, whether that's advising on grant applications, providing technical support, or writing letters of support.



MPO Members' Return on Investment

| MPO MEMBER | GRANT AWARDS* (FFY2024-2028) | MPO ASSESSMENTS (FY2021-FY2025) | BENEFIT RATIO (DOLLARS RECEIVED PER DOLLAR PAID) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Altoona | \$4,331,200 | \$90,416 | 47.90 |
| Ankeny | \$8,261,500 | \$310,393 | 26.62 |
| Bondurant | \$1,500,000 | \$34,391 | 43.62 |
| Carlisle | \$0 | \$19,079 | 0.00 |
| Clive | \$3,170,000 | \$82,114 | 38.61 |
| Dallas County | \$0 | \$10,137 | 0.00 |
| DART | \$9,032,000 | | |
| Des Moines | \$37,936,000 | \$959,862 | 39.52 |
| Grimes | \$1,400,000 | \$68,825 | 20.34 |
| Johnston | \$3,600,000 | \$106,251 | 33.88 |
| Mitchellville | \$0 | \$10,902 | 0.00 |
| Norwalk | \$100,000 | \$58,282 | 1.72 |
| Pleasant Hill | \$1,500,000 | \$47,244 | 31.75 |
| Polk City | \$893,000 | \$24,526 | 36.41 |
| Polk County | \$9,050,000 | \$108,545 | 83.38 |
| Urbandale | \$2,900,000 | \$204,505 | 14.18 |
| Warren County | \$400,000 | \$18,371 | 21.77 |
| Waukee | \$1,482,800 | \$115,096 | 12.88 |
| West Des Moines | \$8,501,500 | \$310,476 | 27.38 |
| Windsor Heights | \$2,950,000 | \$22,789 | 129.45 |

* U.S. Department of Transportation funding programs that are allocated by the Des Moines Area MPO include the Surface-Transportation Block Grant Program, the Transportation Alternatives Program, and the Carbon Reduction Program.

Contact Information

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