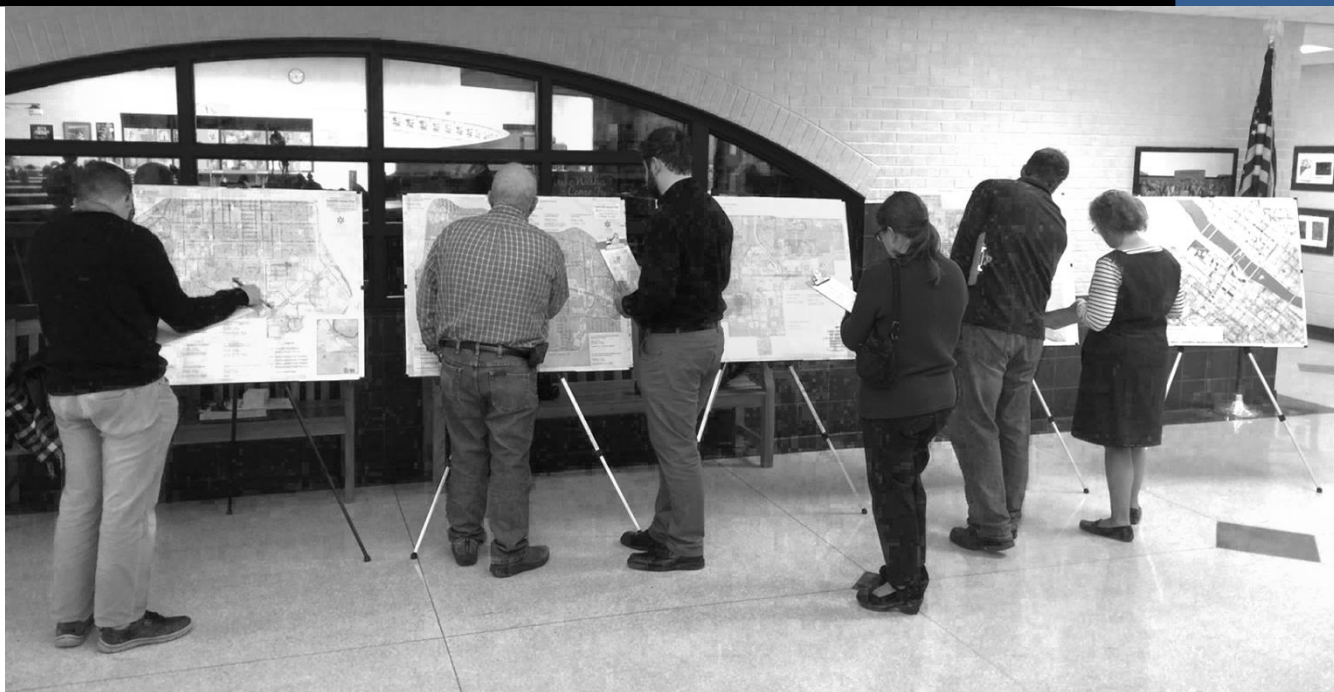


2017 Public Participation Plan



Iowa Northland Regional
Transportation Authority

Iowa Northland Regional
Transit Commission

Adopted September 21, 2017
Updated June 18, 2020



Prepared by the
Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

This page intentionally left blank

RESOLUTION OF THE
IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) desires to incorporate a public participation process that fosters public involvement throughout the transportation planning and decision-making process; and

WHEREAS, the RTA has prepared a draft version of the 2017 Public Participation Plan that complies with Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act regulations; and

WHEREAS, the draft Public Participation Plan has been available for public comment for 45 days and the comment period on the draft has now expired.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority Policy Board hereby approves the 2017 Public Participation Plan.

Passed and adopted this 21st day of September, 2017.



Gary Gissel, Chair

ATTEST:



Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Executive Director

RESOLUTION OF THE
IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission (RTC) desires to incorporate a public participation process that fosters public involvement throughout the planning and decision-making process; and

WHEREAS, the RTC has prepared a draft version of the 2017 Public Participation Plan that complies with Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act regulations; and

WHEREAS, the draft Public Participation Plan has been available for public comment for 45 days and the comment period on the draft has now expired.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission hereby approves the 2017 Public Participation Plan.

Passed and adopted this 21st day of Sept, 2017.



Frank Magsamen, Chair

ATTEST:



Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Executive Director

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction and Overview | 1 |
| Background | 1 |
| RTA & RTC Organization | 1 |
| Regulations and Requirements | 2 |
| FAST Act | 2 |
| Title VI, ADA, and Environmental Justice | 2 |
| Iowa Open Meetings Law | 2 |
| Iowa Public Records Law | 3 |
| Major Documents and Public Participation Techniques | 3 |
| Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) | 3 |
| Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) | 5 |
| Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) | 10 |
| Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) | 11 |
| Public Participation Plan (PPP) | 12 |
| Summary of RTA & RTC Document Development | 13 |
| RTA & RTC Regular Activities | 14 |
| Routine and Ongoing Activities | 14 |
| Major Actions | 14 |
| Addressing FAST Act | 15 |
| RTC Fare Increases and/or Major Reduction of Transit Service | 16 |
| RTC Consolidated Grant Application | 16 |
| How to Get Involved | 16 |
| Participants in the Planning Process | 17 |
| Appendix I: RTC Fare Increase and Service Reduction Policy and Procedures | 19 |
| Appendix II: Map of the RTA Planning Area | 20 |

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Background

The State of Iowa has developed a system of Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) to carry out transportation planning on a regional level. Iowa has 18 RPAs that cover the area outside of Iowa's nine Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) provides funding through Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sources to the RPAs to finance planning and to program for projects. In return, the RPAs conduct regional planning activities that mirror those required of MPOs. This includes completing several planning documents and conducting a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive transportation planning process.

The Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) was established in 1993 to conduct transportation planning and programming for Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties. The RTA was established under the umbrella of the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) which has served those same counties since 1973. INRCOG also serves as the umbrella organization for the Regional Transit Commission (RTC), and Black Hawk County Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Policy Board which is the MPO for the Waterloo and Cedar Falls metropolitan area. RTC provides transportation services to persons in the six-county region outside of the Waterloo and Cedar Falls metropolitan area where public transit is provided by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MET). INRCOG provides staffing and support for the RTA, RTC, and MPO. The map in Appendix II provides an overview of the RTA region.

This document is the Public Participation Plan for the RTA and RTC. This plan outlines the ways public involvement is incorporated into RTA and RTC activities. Public input is a vital component of any government endeavor. The goal of this plan is to identify ways to provide all citizens of the region an opportunity to voice their opinions and express their concerns regarding multimodal and intermodal transportation planning, programming, and initiatives. The RTA and RTC seek to actively involve the public in decision-making and increase public awareness of and interest in the services provided.

RTA & RTC Organization

The RTA has a Policy Board which maintains decision-making and programming authority, and Technical and Transportation Alternatives Set-aside Program Committees, which advise the Policy Board. The voting membership of the RTA includes a member of the Board of Supervisors, or another elected official designee, for each county. Voting membership also includes a mayor, council member, or other elected official designee from two cities in each county. City representation is determined by a convention of cities in that county or through selection by the County Board of Supervisors. To ensure representation of the region's small urban areas, one representative from Bremer County represents the City of Waverly, and one representative from Buchanan County represents the City of Independence. Non-voting, ex-officio members of the Policy Board include representatives from INRCOG, the Iowa DOT, FHWA, and FTA.

RTC has an Advisory Committee which consists of two county representatives from each of the counties within the region, appointed by the Chair of each respective County Board of Supervisors. The Chair of INRCOG appoints two representatives, who need not be members of the INRCOG Board, to serve on the RTC. In addition, the cities of Independence, New Hampton, and Waverly have one representative as ex-officio, voting members of the RTC selected through local Mayoral appointment.

REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to adhere to the principles of environmental justice as defined by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12898, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act pursuant to 23 CFR 450, and all other US DOT statutes and regulations. It is also the purpose of this plan to follow the legislation passed in Iowa that allows public involvement in the process by following the Open Meetings Law and Public Records Law.

FAST Act

On December 4, 2015, the President signed into legislation the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The FAST Act is the first long-term surface transportation authorization enacted in a decade that provides long-term funding certainty. The FAST Act builds off the streamlined, performance-based process for transportation programs that was outlined under prior federal legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). This legislation also places an emphasis on reaching out to citizens and interested parties, making planning documents widely accessible to the public, and employing visualization techniques to enhance and describe plans.

Title VI, ADA, and Environmental Justice

RTA and RTC plans are required to be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which ensures that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion. RTA and RTC plans also comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This civil rights law protects individuals from discrimination based on disabilities.

RTA and RTC plans must also observe Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. This requires that programs, policies, and activities that affect human health or the environment should identify and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations. Environmental Justice aims to ensure that no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group bears a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from governmental programs and policies. The order is also intended to provide minority and low-income communities access to public information and public participation.

Iowa Open Meetings Law

The Iowa Open Meetings Law is designed to facilitate easy public access to government decisions. It applies to government bodies, including boards, councils, commissions, and task forces created by the state or its political subdivisions. The law defines what constitutes a meeting and lists requirements for public notices, agendas, meeting procedures, and minutes, as well as regulations concerning closed meetings.

The RTA and RTC operate in accordance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend RTA and RTC meetings. Meeting notices and agendas are mailed to all media serving the region which request notification. Information about RTA and RTC meetings, including minutes and agendas, is also available at the INRCOG Center and at www.inrcog.org.

Iowa Public Records Law

The Iowa Public Records Law provides for openness from government agencies regarding public records. Except for certain confidential records, every person has the right to examine and copy public records. The RTA and RTC comply with the Iowa Public Records Law, and public documents are available for review at the INRCOG Center. Documents may be viewed during normal office hours or at another arranged time.

MAJOR DOCUMENTS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The RTA is responsible for completing the transportation planning documents outlined in this section and will actively seek input during development and implementation. Further, the RTA and RTC will seek input for all documents and processes concerning the FAST Act and its implementation within and beyond the region and service area. Several methods of seeking public opinion are outlined in this document. This list is not all-inclusive. Methods to inform the public and receive their opinions and concerns will be evaluated and added when necessary and warranted.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP guides transportation decisions for the next 20-30 years. The document is updated every five years and serves as a conduit for public input on a broad range of transportation issues. The LRTP examines the region's current transportation networks including highway, transit, air, rail, and non-motorized modes, and assesses their adequacy for the existing population and economy, and the future. The document considers freight, safety, and environmental issues, financial feasibility, and system operations and maintenance. The LRTP also contains a chapter that discusses public involvement efforts and public comments on the document.

The following actions will be undertaken to ensure that all sectors of the public are involved in LRTP development:

1. Draft LRTP
 - a. The draft document will be developed by INRCOG staff with further input from jurisdiction representatives and the Iowa DOT, and oversight by the Policy Board and Technical Committee.
 - b. Input will be sought from individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties.
 - c. Focus groups will be utilized to represent all pertinent modes of transportation and issues. Focus groups may include transit, highway and land use, bicycle and pedestrian, safety and security, and environmental resources. Focus groups will be charged with identifying issues and potential solutions and reviewing draft chapters.
 - d. The draft document will be made available at the INRCOG Center, on the INRCOG website, and upon request.
2. Notices and Public Meetings
 - a. A minimum of three (3) public input sessions will be held regarding the draft LRTP.
 - b. When a circumstance presents itself where such a meeting in person is impossible or impractical, the RTA may conduct a public input meeting by electronic means.
 - i. The RTA will provide public access to the discussion of the input meeting to the extent reasonably possible.

- ii. The public announcement of the meeting, at least one week before the public input meeting, shall include the time, the virtual/electronic place, subject matter of the meeting, and the name and phone number of the person available to respond to requests for information about the meeting.
 - iii. The place of the input meeting is the place from which the communication originates or where public access is provided to the discussion.
 - iv. The RTA shall make promptly available to the public, in a place easily accessible to the public, the transcript, electronic recording, or minutes of the discussion and will include a statement explaining why a public input meeting in person was impossible or impractical.
 - c. Should in person meetings be held, at least one (1) public input session will be held in an area identified as being a low-income or minority neighborhood.
 - d. All in person meetings will be held in accessible facilities.
 - e. Notices for public input sessions will be advertised through local media sources. Notices may be posted at governmental offices, public libraries, post offices, on transit buses, at the INRCOG Center, and on the INRCOG website and Facebook page. Notices may also be sent to organizations serving traditionally underserved populations.
 - f. Any person with sight, reading, or language barriers can contact the RTA (minimum 48 hours prior to a session) and arrangements will be made for accommodation.
- 3. Public Comment Period
 - a. Written and oral comments will be solicited during the public input sessions. The public will also have at least a 15-day comment period following the final public input session to submit comments via letter, email, phone, or in person.
 - b. A public hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting following the public input sessions to summarize public comments and responses. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.
- 4. Final LRTP
 - a. Following the public hearing, the RTA will adopt a final LRTP, including a summary of comments and responses.
 - b. The final LRTP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT, FHWA, and FTA.
 - c. The final LRTP will be available on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.
 - d. The public participation process associated with the LRTP will be evaluated and updated as needed.
- 5. Revisions
 - a. The LRTP may be revised between full document updates to reflect current project information.
 - b. Other amendments to the LRTP will be made as needed.
 - c. Amendments will require a public hearing to be held at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP identifies all transportation projects in the region that are anticipated to receive federal transportation funding within the next four fiscal years. The TIP is a short-range component that is complementary to the Long Range Transportation Plan. The TIP is updated annually with adoption by the RTA Policy Board in July of each year, and incorporated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) by the Iowa DOT.

The following actions will be undertaken annually to ensure full public participation:

1. Draft TIP
 - a. The draft TIP will be developed by the RTA Technical Committee with input from the Transportation Alternatives Set-aside Program (TAP) Committee. RTA meetings are open to the public.
 - b. The draft document will be available for public review on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.
2. Notices and Public Meetings
 - a. Following development of the draft TIP, at least two (2) public input sessions will be held.
 - b. When a circumstance presents itself where such a meeting in person is impossible or impractical, the RTA may conduct a public input meeting by electronic means.
 - i. The RTA will provide public access to the discussion of the input meeting to the extent reasonably possible.
 - ii. The public announcement of the meeting, at least one week before the public input meeting, shall include the time, the virtual/electronic place, subject matter of the meeting, and the name and phone number of the person available to respond to requests for information about the meeting.
 - iii. The place of the input meeting is the place from which the communication originates or where public access is provided to the discussion.
 - iv. The RTA shall make promptly available to the public, in a place easily accessible to the public, the transcript, electronic recording, or minutes of the discussion and will include a statement explaining why a public input meeting in person was impossible or impractical.
 - c. Should in-person meetings be held, at least one (1) public input session will be located in an area identified as being a low-income or minority neighborhood.
 - d. All in person meetings will be held in accessible facilities.
 - e. Information may be presented by INRCOG staff, the Iowa DOT, and member cities and counties.
 - f. The TIP content and public input sessions will be advertised through local media sources. Notices may be posted at governmental offices, public libraries, post offices, transit buses, at the INRCOG Center, and on the INRCOG website and Facebook page. Notices may also be sent to organizations serving traditionally underserved populations.
 - g. Any person with sight, reading, or language barriers may contact the RTA (minimum 48 hours prior to a session) and arrangements will be made for accommodation.
3. Public Comment Period
 - a. Written and oral comments will be solicited during public input sessions. At least a 15-day comment period will follow the last public input session, during which comments will be accepted via letter, email, phone, or in person.
 - b. A public hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting following the public input sessions to summarize public comments and responses. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.

4. Final TIP
 - a. Following the public hearing, the RTA will adopt the final TIP, including a summary of comments and responses.
 - b. The final TIP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT, the FHWA, and the FTA.
 - c. The final TIP will be available on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.
 - d. The public participation process associated with the TIP will be evaluated and updated as needed.
5. Revisions
 - a. The TIP is a dynamic document and may need to be revised in between annual updates. There are two types of revisions – administrative modifications and amendments.
 - i. Minor revisions may be made to the TIP as necessary throughout the year. These are considered *administrative modifications*, and may be made by INRCOG staff without public review and comment. INRCOG staff may discuss administrative modifications with the Policy Board and Technical Committee, but formal action will not be required.
 - ii. Major revisions may also be made to the TIP as necessary throughout the year. These are considered *amendments* and require public review and comment and Policy Board approval. A public hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting to consider and approve TIP amendments. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.
 - b. Any revision to the TIP that adds a new federal aid project or increases a project’s federal aid limit will require that a corresponding change be made to another programming entry to ensure the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) remains fiscally constrained. This requirement pertains to both administrative modifications and amendments.

The following table outlines the differences between administrative modifications and amendments:

| | Administrative Modification | Amendment |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Project Cost | Federal aid changed by less than 30 percent and total federal aid increases less than \$2,000,000. | Federal aid changed by more than 30 percent or total federal aid increases by more than \$2,000,000. |
| Schedule Changes | Changes in schedule for projects in the first four years of the TIP. | Adding or deleting a project from the first four years of the TIP. |
| Funding Sources | Changing amounts of existing funding sources. | Adding other federal funding sources to a project. |
| Scope Changes | Moving funding between existing stages of project scope, such as from design to construction. | Changing project termini, number of lanes, or significant changes in project type, such as changing an overlay to reconstruction. |

Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)

The TPWP outlines work elements for the transportation planning program for the coming year. The document serves to guide addressing current and projected transportation needs for the region from a planning perspective. The TPWP is updated annually with adoption by the RTA Policy Board in May.

The following actions will be undertaken annually to ensure full public participation:

1. Draft TPWP
 - a. The draft TPWP will be prepared by INRCOG staff with input from jurisdiction representatives and the Iowa DOT, and oversight by the RTA Policy Board and Technical Committee.
 - b. The draft document will be available for public review on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.
2. Public Comment Period
 - a. The public may comment on the draft TPWP during at least a 15-day comment period following completion of the TPWP draft and at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting where adoption of the TPWP will be considered. Comments will be accepted via letter, email, phone, or in person.
 - b. Notices and agendas of RTA meetings will be available through local media, at the INRCOG Center, and on the INRCOG website.
3. Final TPWP
 - a. The RTA Policy Board will consider a summary of comments and appropriate responses and adopt the final TPWP.
 - b. The final TPWP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT, the FHWA, and the FTA and made available on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.
4. Revisions
 - a. Revisions to the TPWP will be made as needed.
 - b. Amendments will require a public hearing to be held at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.

Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)

The purpose of the Passenger Transportation Plan is to provide a formalized setting for transportation coordination among passenger transportation providers. The aim is to bring providers and major human service agencies in the region together to better understand available transportation services and result in more effectiveness and coordination among providers. The goal is to ensure that the region's citizens, and particularly those dependent on transit, have access to effective and affordable transportation options.

The PTP is updated every five years. The PTP provides a background of the Iowa Northland Region and existing passenger transportation services, an evaluation of coordination issues in the area, prior transit-related efforts and public input received concerning needs and coordination issues, a five-year strategy of projects, and financial resources and available funding. Public transit system projects are included in both the TIP and PTP.

The following actions will be undertaken to ensure that all sectors of the public are involved in PTP development:

1. Draft PTP
 - a. The draft document will be prepared by INRCOG staff with input from the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC), which consists of human service agencies, passenger transportation providers, and users and advocates of transit services.
 - b. The draft will be available for public review on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG office, and upon request.
2. Public Comment Period
 - a. The TAC and public may comment on the draft PTP during at least a 15-day comment period following completion of the draft PTP and at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting where adoption of the PTP will be considered. Comments will be accepted via letter, email, phone, or in person.
 - b. Notices and agendas of RTA meetings will be available through local media, at the INRCOG Center, and on the INRCOG website.
3. Final PTP
 - a. The RTA Policy Board and RTC Advisory Committee will consider a summary of comments and appropriate responses and adopt a final PTP.
 - b. The final PTP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT and the FTA and made available on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.
4. Revisions
 - a. Revisions to the PTP will be made as necessary.
 - b. Amendments will require a public hearing to be held at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting. A notice of the public hearing will be published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the date of the hearing.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The PPP outlines processes for involving the public in document development and decision-making. It covers regulations concerning public involvement, major documents produced by the RTA and RTC, and ways the agencies will solicit public participation in transportation planning. The PPP is updated as needed.

The following actions will be undertaken to ensure that all sectors of the public are involved in PPP development:

1. Draft PPP
 - a. Input for the draft PPP will be sought from all interested parties. Input may be sought through regular RTA and RTC meetings, public meetings, surveys, focus groups, and any other effective means of communicating with the public. The draft document will be prepared by INRCOG staff with input from jurisdiction representatives and the Iowa DOT, and oversight by the RTA Policy Board and Technical Committee and RTC Advisory Committee.
2. Public Comment Period
 - a. The public may comment on the draft PPP during at least a 45-day comment period following completion of the draft PPP and at a regularly scheduled RTA and RTC meeting where adoption of the PPP will be considered. Comments will also be accepted via letter, email, phone, or in person.
 - b. Notices and agendas of RTA and RTC meetings will be available through local media, at the INRCOG Center, and on the INRCOG website.
3. Final PPP
 - a. The RTA Policy Board and RTC Advisory Committee will consider a summary of comments and appropriate responses and adopt the final PPP.
 - b. The final PPP will be submitted to the Iowa DOT, the FHWA, and the FTA and made available on the INRCOG website, at the INRCOG Center, and upon request.
4. Revisions
 - a. The PPP will be updated as needed.
 - b. Minor revisions will be made in consultation with the RTA Policy Board and RTC Advisory Committee.

Summary of RTA & RTC Document Development

| | Updated | Draft Development | Public Meetings/Draft Availability | Public Comment Period | Adoption | Availability |
|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Long Range Transportation Plan | Five years | Developed by INRCOG staff with input from interested parties and focus groups | Minimum of three public input sessions; draft available on INRCOG website, at INRCOG Center, and upon request | At least 15 days following final public input session | Public hearing during regularly scheduled RTA meeting | INRCOG Center, INRCOG website, upon request |
| Transportation Improvement Program | Annually | Developed by Technical Committee and TAP Committee with input from interested parties | Minimum of two public input sessions; draft available on INRCOG website, at INRCOG Center, and upon request | At least 15 days following final public input session | Public hearing during regularly scheduled RTA meeting | INRCOG Center, INRCOG website, upon request |
| Transportation Planning Work Program | Annually | Developed by INRCOG staff with input from interested parties | Draft available on INRCOG website, at INRCOG Center, and upon request | At least 15 days following draft completion | Adopted at a regularly scheduled RTA meeting | INRCOG Center, INRCOG website, upon request |
| Passenger Transportation Plan | Five years | Developed by INRCOG staff with input from Transit Advisory Committee and interested parties | Draft available on INRCOG website, at INRCOG Center, and upon request | At least 15 days following draft completion | Adopted at a regularly scheduled RTA and RTC meeting | INRCOG Center, INRCOG website, upon request |
| Public Participation Plan | As needed | Developed by INRCOG staff with input from interested parties | Draft available on INRCOG website, at INRCOG Center, and upon request | At least 45 days following draft completion | Adopted at a regularly scheduled RTA and RTC meeting | INRCOG Center, INRCOG website, upon request |

RTA & RTC REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Routine and Ongoing Activities

In addition to public participation efforts related to specific documents, there are several ongoing initiatives that form the basis for RTA and RTC activities and interaction with the public. These include the following:

- Monthly RTA meetings, open to the public; quarterly RTC meetings, open to the public
- Monthly transit providers coordination meetings between INRCOG, RTC, and MET
- Work sessions, focus groups, public input sessions, and public hearings (as applicable) during the development of major documents
- Publication of transportation and transit articles in the quarterly INRCOG newsletter which is distributed to local officials and citizens in the six-county area
- News releases distributed to all newspapers, radio, and television stations that originate, or have significant coverage of circulation, in the region
- Provision of information and interviews with area media as requested
- Presentations to city councils, county supervisors, planning and zoning commissions, and the INRCOG Board as needed
- Presentations to various organizations when requested
- Staff promotion of documents and materials through the INRCOG website and Facebook page

Major Actions

RTA and RTC documentation and provision of information will be accomplished through the distribution of documents, reports, information, and public presentations, including the following:

- Report distribution and public access availability may occur through: media distribution; access at the INRCOG Center, city halls, and county courthouses; and access at public library and post office locations in the region. Major reports will be available on the INRCOG website.
- RTA and RTC reports, documents, and information can be provided in other languages or formats upon request. INRCOG has a contract with CTS Language Link which provides telephone interpreting service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.
- To the maximum extent practicable, RTA and RTC reports and documents will use visualization techniques to describe the information being presented.
- Public presentations on major actions and projects will be made as required to city councils, board of supervisors, planning and zoning commissions, and the INRCOG Board.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to provide presentations to groups or organizations with a civic, modal, or geographical interest in the transportation plan, program, or transit service.
- Any person with sight, reading, or language barriers can contact the RTA or RTC (minimum 48 hours prior to a session) and arrangements will be made for accommodation.
- Upon request, RTC will include courtesy transportation to and from its public hearings.
- RTA and RTC public hearings will be held at locations accessible to persons with disabilities.

Addressing FAST Act

The RTA and RTC adhere to federal planning guidelines outlined in the federal transportation bill, Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The following table outlines ways each agency addresses FAST Act regulations during daily activities, meetings, and document development.

| FAST Act Requirement | Ways the RTA and RTC Address the Requirement |
|---|---|
| <p>Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes to all interested parties</p> | <p>Input is sought from all interested parties. Input may be sought through regular RTA and RTC meetings, public meetings, surveys, focus groups, and any other effective means of communicating with the public.</p> |
| <p>Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the LRTP and TIP</p> | <p>Notices for public hearings are published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the hearing. Major transportation documents, as well as information on current events and studies, are available at www.inrcog.org. Information is also available for review and copying at the INRCOG Center.</p> |
| <p>Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed LRTP and TIP</p> | <p>Public hearings are held for the LRTP, TIP, and RTC fare increases and/or major reduction of transit service, and, at a minimum, a notice of the public hearing is published no more than twenty days and no less than four days before the hearing. The LRTP and TIP also utilize public input sessions, with notices of times and locations published and posted. LRTP development utilizes several focus groups which include interested members of the public.</p> |
| <p>To the maximum extent practicable, ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times</p> | <p>Regular RTA and RTC meetings are held at the INRCOG Center in Waterloo which is accessible and located centrally in the region. The facility is located two blocks from MET Transit’s Central Transfer Station. Public input sessions are held at accessible locations and at different times of day to attract a broader audience.</p> |
| <p>To the maximum extent practicable, use visualization techniques to describe the proposed LRTP and supporting studies</p> | <p>Numerous graphs, charts, maps, and photographs are used in the LRTP and TIP to enhance understanding of the information being presented. INRCOG uses a Geographic Information System (GIS) for analysis and presentation of information.</p> |
| <p>To the maximum extent practicable, make public information available in electronically accessible format and means as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information</p> | <p>Meeting notices, agendas, and minutes, as well as major documents and information on current projects and studies, are available at www.inrcog.org.</p> |
| <p>Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the development of the LRTP and TIP</p> | <p>Comments received on either document are distributed to and discussed by the Policy Board prior to document adoption.</p> |
| <p>Include a process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services</p> <p>Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate</p> | <p>Notices of meetings and input sessions are sent to organizations serving these populations. Sight, reading, and language assistance will be provided at public input session and public hearings for individuals who request it at least 48 hours in advance.</p> <p>The PPP is reviewed regularly and updated as needed.</p> |

RTC Fare Increases and/or Major Reduction of Transit Service

When the RTC Advisory Committee has deemed necessary that a fare increase and/or a major reduction of transit service be considered for continued financial stability, the RTC shall follow the *Fare Increase and Service Reduction Policy and Procedures* (reference Appendix I).

RTC Consolidated Grant Application

RTC annually applies for federal and state operating assistance funds through a consolidated grant application. The application also requests federal funding for bus replacements and planning. The following actions will be undertaken to ensure that all sectors of the public are involved in the grant application process:

1. Grant Application
 - a. Input for the consolidated grant application will be sought from all interested parties. Input may be sought through regular RTC meetings, the INRCOG website, and Transit Advisory Committee meetings.
2. Public Comment Period
 - a. The public may comment on the grant application during at least a 30-day comment period prior to a regularly scheduled RTC Advisory Committee meeting where the application will be considered for approval. Comments will also be accepted via letter, email, phone, or in person.
 - b. Public hearing notices and agendas of RTC meetings will be available through local media, at the INRCOG Center, on the INRCOG website, and through the Iowa DOT Office of Public Transit.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The public is encouraged to discuss transportation and transit concerns at any time with local officials and Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments transportation planning and transit staff.

Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG)
229 East Park Ave
Waterloo, IA 50703
(319) 235-0311
www.inrcog.org

Meeting times and dates can be found on the website calendar. A downloadable version of the drafts and documents can be found on the website as well. Information can also be obtained by contacting or visiting INRCOG staff during normal business hours from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSIT PLANNING PROCESS

The following list represents, at a minimum, those committees and organizations involved in the transit planning process. Others interested in participating in the transit decision-making process shall be added as requested under the direction of the RTA Policy Board and RTC Advisory Committee. Note that committee membership is as of the date of this document.

- RTA Policy Board
- RTA Technical Committee
- RTA Transportation Alternatives Set-aside Program (TAP) Committee
- RTC Advisory Committee
- Transit Advisory Committee
- Media Contacts

RTA Policy Board

| | |
|--|--|
| Linda Laylin, Black Hawk County Supervisor | Dave Beenblossom, Mayor of Janesville |
| Duane Hildebrandt, Bremer County Supervisor | David Neil, Mayor of La Porte City |
| Gary Gissel, Buchanan County Supervisor (Chair) | Bobby Schwickerwath, Mayor of New Hampton |
| Greg Barnett, Butler County Supervisor | Perry Bernard, Mayor of Parkersburg |
| Steve Geerts, Chickasaw County Supervisor (Vice-Chair) | Larry Young, Mayor of Shell Rock |
| Mark Schildroth, Grundy County Supervisor | Adam Hoffman, Mayor of Waverly |
| Rod Diercks, Mayor of Denver | Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Executive Director (non-voting) |
| Mike Soppe, Mayor of Dike | Zac Bitting, Iowa DOT (non-voting) |
| Mike Harter, Mayor of Fairbank | Darla Hugaboom, FHWA-Iowa Division (non-voting) |
| Alan Kiewiet, Mayor of Grundy Center | Eva Steinman, FTA Region 7 (non-voting) |
| Bonita Davis, Mayor of Independence | |

RTA Technical Committee

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Ryan Brennan, Black Hawk County | Christine Murley, City of Janesville |
| Cathy Nicholas, Black Hawk County | Jane Whittlesey, City of La Porte City |
| Landon Moore, Bremer County | John Ott, City of Nashua |
| Brian Keierleber, Buchanan County | Chris Luhring, City of Parkersburg |
| John Riherd, Butler County | Mike Tellinghuisen, City of Shell Rock |
| Dusten Rolando, Chickasaw County | Mike Cherry, City of Waverly |
| Gary Mauer, Grundy County | Krista Billhorn, Iowa DOT, District 2 |
| Larry Farley, City of Denver | Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG |
| Keith Kuenstling, City of Dunkerton | Kyle Durant, INRCOG |
| Dan Bangasser, City of Grundy Center | Codie Leseman, INRCOG |
| Lisa Baych, City of Hazleton | Ben Kvigne, INRCOG/Regional Transit Commission |
| Al Roder, City of Independence | |

RTA Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Committee

| | |
|--|--|
| Ryan Brennan, Black Hawk County | Kristy Sawyer, City of Grundy Center |
| Cathy Nicholas, Black Hawk County | Jane Whittlesey, City of La Porte City |
| Landon Moore, Bremer County | Karen Clemens, City of New Hampton |
| Brian Keierleber, Buchanan County | Chris Luhring, City of Parkersburg |
| John Riherd, Butler County | Julie Wilkerson, City of Reinbeck |
| Dusten Rolando, Chickasaw County | Lisa Oberbroeckling, City of Sumner |
| Gary Mauer, Grundy County | Garret Riordan, Waverly Leisure Services |
| Mike Hendrickson, Black Hawk County Conservation | Jeff Kolb, Butler/Grundy County Development |
| Cherrie Northrup, Black Hawk County Conservation | Megan Baltes, New Hampton Economic Development |
| Andrew Hockenson, Bremer County Conservation | Candy Streed, Silos & Smokestacks |
| Dan Cohen, Buchanan County Conservation | Linda Laylin, Cedar Valley Growth Fund |
| Mike Miner, Butler County Conservation | Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG |
| Brian Moore, Chickasaw County Conservation | Kyle Durant, INRCOG |
| Kevin Williams, Grundy County Conservation | Codie Leseman, INRCOG |
| Glenda Miller, City of Allison | Jacki Schares, INRCOG |
| Brittany Fuller, City of Fairbank | |

RTC Advisory Committee

| | |
|--|--|
| Chris Schwartz, Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors | Bobby Schwickerath, Mayor of New Hampton |
| Dewey Hildebrandt, Bremer County Board of Supervisors | Adam Hoffman, Mayor of Waverly |
| Gary Gissel, Buchanan County Board of Supervisors | Kelly Angell, American Cancer Society |
| Greg Barnett, Butler County Board of Supervisors | Jeremy Johnson-Miller, Iowa Department of Transportation |
| Steve Geerts, Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors | David Sturch, MET Transit |
| Mark Schildroth, Grundy County Board of Supervisors | Janna Diehl, Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging |
| Bonita Davis, Mayor of Independence | Collette Ruth, North Star Community Services |

Transit Advisory Committee

| | |
|---|--|
| Kelly Angell, American Cancer Society | Will Frost, Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber |
| Lorie Glover, Black Hawk County Emergency Management | Susan Backes, House of Hope |
| Nafissa Cisse-Egbuonye, Black Hawk County Health Department | Jeremy Johnson-Miller, Iowa Department of Transportation |
| Lisa Sesterhenn, Black Hawk County Health Department | Krista Billhorn, Iowa Department of Transportation |
| Jan Heidemann, Bremer County CPC | Debra Hodges Harmon, Iowa Works |
| Liz Williams, Butler County Auditor | Kyle Clabby-Kane, Iowa Works |
| Jennifer Becker, Butler County Public Health | David Sturch, MET Transit |
| Sheila Baird, Cedar Valley United Way | Martin Wissenberg, My Riders Club |
| Sheila Kobliska, Chickasaw County CPC | Janna Diel, Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging |
| Julie Wilkerson, City of Reinbeck | Collette Ruth, North Star Community Services |
| Kerri White, Comprehensive Systems Inc. | Ben Kvigne, Regional Transit Commission |
| Mike Regan, Country View | Becky Schmitz, The Arc of Cedar Valley |
| Chris Sparks, Exceptional Persons Inc. | John Lord, The Larrabee Center |
| Velda Phillips, Friendship Village Retirement Community | Dean Shoars, University of Northern Iowa |
| Todd Rickert, Grundy County CPC | Amber Hunt, West Village Center |

Media Contacts

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Bremer County Independent | KBBG | Nashua Reporter |
| Butler County Tribune Journal | KCRG TV9 | Parkersburg Eclipse |
| Citizen Herald | KCVM | Reinbeck Courier |
| Cumulus Communications | KGAN-TV | Sumner Gazette |
| Denver Forum | KHAK | The New Hampton Tribune |
| Fredericksburg Review | KNWS | The Progress Review |
| Greene Recorder | KQMG Radio Station | Tripoli Leader |
| Grundy Register | KUNI-KHKE | Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier |
| Hudson Herald | KWLO-KFMW-KXEL-KOKZ | Waverly Democrat |
| Independence Newspapers | KWWL-TV | |

Appendix I: RTC Fare Increase and Service Reduction Policy and Procedures

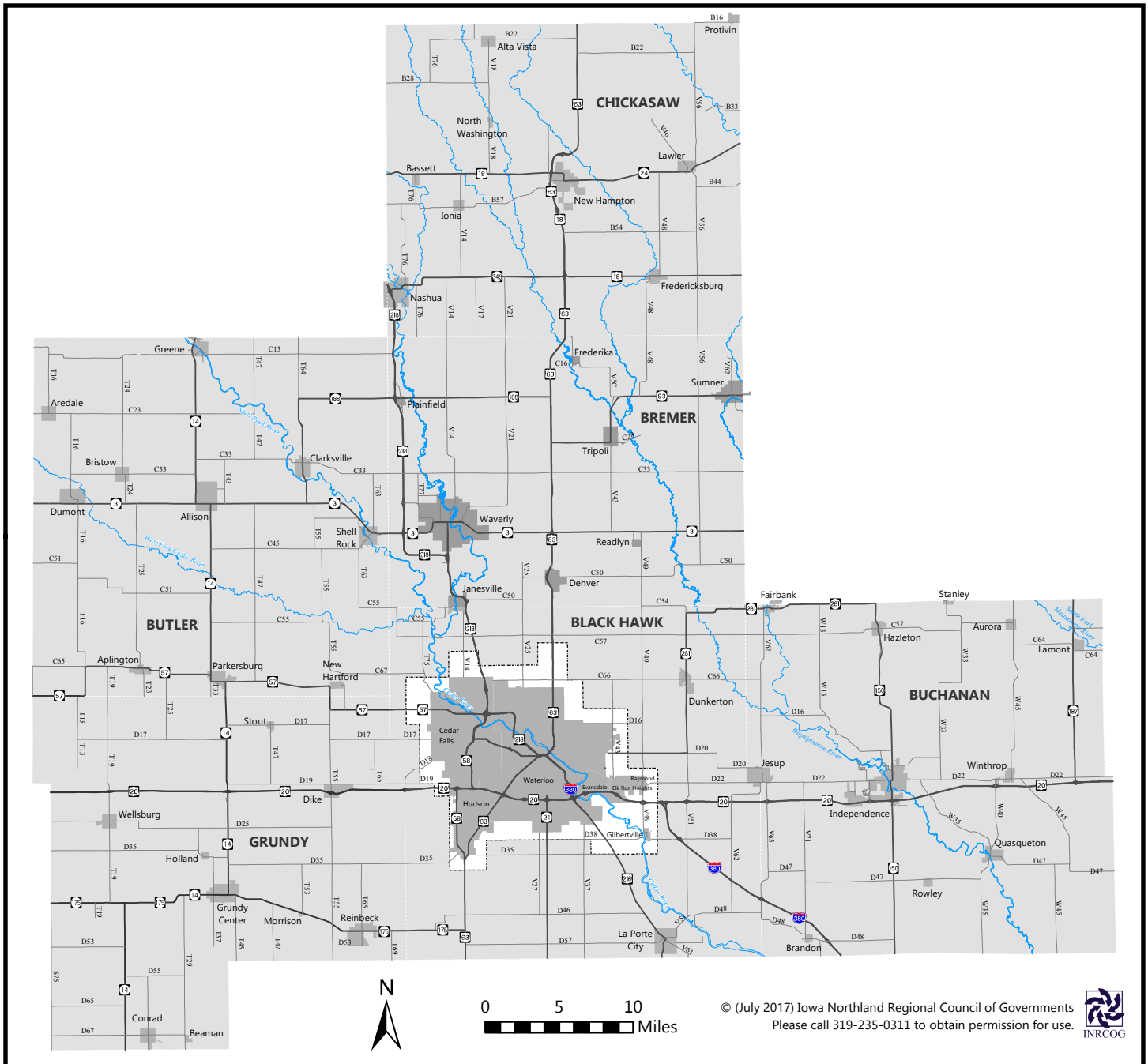
Adopted by the RTC Advisory Committee on September 26, 2002

The following policy shall guide the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission (RTC) when considering fare increases and major service reductions. A major service reduction shall be defined by RTC as the reduction of 50 percent or more of the total service hours previously provided within a community or on a specific route. RTC will not utilize this policy if contract rates are to be increased.





Process Overview

1. RTC staff shall prepare a proposal for increasing fares and/or making major service reductions. Discussions regarding the proposal may be held with the RTC Advisory Committee, INRCOG Executive Committee, and/or the INRCOG Board prior to releasing the proposal to the public.
2. A public hearing shall be conducted by RTC staff in a location affected by the fare increase and/or service reduction. The hearing shall:
 - a. Include a written notice published at least once in a newspaper having general circulation in the affected area. Notice shall be given per the requirements outlined in the Code of Iowa, which currently states that the notice is to be published not less than four, nor more than 20 days, prior to the public hearing. The notice shall include the proposed fare increase and/or service reduction in addition to the date, time, and place of the hearing. The notice will cite reasons for the fare increase and/or service reduction as well as the effective date of the proposed change(s). In addition, the notice will be provided to the Mayor of the affected community; Board of Supervisors Chair of the affected county; RTC Advisory Committee, RTC driver(s); and the Iowa Department of Transportation.
 - b. Be held at a location that is accessible to persons with disabilities. If requested prior, RTC will make every effort to reasonably accommodate persons with communication disabilities as well.
 - c. Include courtesy transportation to and from the public hearing.
 - d. Be documented through written minutes, notes, and/or transcripts of the hearing.
 - e. Be conducted by RTC staff and governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Revised when appropriate.
3. Information gathered in the form of minutes, notes, and/or transcripts during the public hearing shall be provided to the RTC Advisory Committee and the INRCOG Executive Committee and/or the INRCOG Board of Directors for review and consideration prior to a final decision being made.
4. In addition to information gathered at a public hearing, RTC will accept and consider written comments regarding fare increases and/or service reductions up to the time of the public hearing. All written comments will also be provided to the RTC Advisory Committee and the INRCOG Executive Committee and/or INRCOG Board of Directors for review and consideration.
5. A recommendation may be made by the RTC Advisory Committee to the INRCOG Executive Committee or the INRCOG Board of Directors, who will be charged with making the decision regarding fare increases and/or service reductions at one of their meetings, which are open to the public.
6. After a decision is made regarding a fare increase and/or service reduction, information will be provided to the public by RTC staff. This will be accomplished by RTC staff to the best of their ability using a press release; posting signage in the vehicle; notifying affected agencies; notifying the RTC driver(s); and notifying the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Appendix II



Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority Planning Area

-  Metropolitan Planning Organization Study Area
-  City Boundary
-  Highways
-  County Roads