

## MEETING MINUTES: RPA 1 Transportation Enhancement Committee Thursday, March 30, 2017, 8:30 a.m. – Decorah City Council Chambers

Board members in attendance: Sheryl Struthers, Harold Chapman, Craig Fencil, Elaine Govern, Jenna Pollock, Barb Schroeder, Jared Olson, James Janett, Joshua Johnson, and Michelle Barness.

1. Meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by Chair Schroeder.
2. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Janett, seconded by Struthers, all approved.
3. A motion to approve the 1-12-17 minutes was made by Govern, seconded by Janett, all approved.
4. The committee reviewed and discussed the following FY 17 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment:
  - Clayton County: INCREASE planning engineering costs for Motor Mill Trail Alternate Route from \$22,000 to \$43,700 in federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding aid. Remaining funding for the project will be incorporated in FY 2018. TAP-R-C022(086)—8T—22.
5. A motion was made by Chapman, seconded by Fencil, to recommend approval of the FY2017 TIP amendment to the Policy Board. All agreed.
6. County Updates:
  - Allamakee County:
    - Mississippi River Trail - Funding is in place and proposed connections are moving ahead.
    - Driftless Visitor Center – They are paving the parking area now and the center will be operating by the summer of 2017. Displays will be up in July before Ragbrai begins. Janett described some of the center’s exhibits and design features.
  - Clayton County:
    - Motor Mill Trail - Proposals from contractors are being accepted.
    - Mississippi River Parkway Commission will hold a meeting Sept. 19 – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 at the visitor center in Lansing, which will be showcased at the event. Visits will take place to Motor Mill, TRRC, the WMA project, etc. Pollock will provide more information on the event at a later date.
  - Howard County:
    - The audit of last year’s work has been completed. 2017 project letting is in April.
    - Chapman initiated a discussion of the new DOT requirement that Type 1 and 2 trails are to be paved over gravel road crossings, incorporating 20 ft. of paved area on the sides of the trail. The requirement is based on safety issues. Road and trail representatives are concerned about construction and maintenance issues for this new requirement. The Iowa DOT was unable to change the requirements based on their interpretation of the federal rules. There was concern that paving the trails at crossings would speed bikes up across roads, which could be a safety issue. Engineer Lee Bjerke was in attendance at the meeting and shared some information regarding the engineers point of view on the new requirement, and on the potential impact of the Federal Swap Bill on such requirements for local projects.

- Govern shared information on various trail improvements.
  - Fayette County: No report.
  - Winneshiek County:
    - Dry Run Trail – Negotiations are underway on the first half of the trail. A park has been purchased at the half-way point of the trail.
    - Freeport Trail – The trail is completed and will need to be added to trail maps. Schroeder discussed trail signage options.
    - Schroeder suggested that the Backbone Trail be advertised to Ragbrai visitors in some way.
  - Oelwein:
    - The city installed a 2 ½ acre pollinator planting site.
    - A trail committee is established.
7. There was a discussion regarding the region’s yearly trail count activities. The counties of Winneshiek, Fayette and Clayton currently do the trail count. Howard is considering initiating a trail count as well. The trail count occurs once per year, typically in July, on a weekday and a weekend day, from sunrise to sunset. A date will be set for the upcoming count and volunteers will be arranged. Winneshiek County is planning their trail count for Friday/Saturday July 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> this year. Pollock explained that trail count forms have been updated this year, with a column for water trail counts incorporated. Schroeder provided additional information on the trail counts, including how it is completed, how many trails are done, how many locations are done on the trails, etc. The conservation directors all agreed to follow-up with Planner Barness regarding trail count dates and to provide the count numbers once completed.
8. The committee discussed the distribution of TAP-Flex and the status of the TAP application process. Planner Barness indicated that the TAP and TAP-Flex targets hadn’t yet been provided by the DOT. Also, the TAP application hadn’t yet been provided to the region, so there were no TAP applications under consideration for the 2018-2021 TIP. Once the targets and application are received from the DOT, due to the constraints of the regions deadlines for submitting the TIP in July of 2017, TAP projects will be awarded combined 2021 and 2022 TAP funds for inclusion in the 2019-2022 TIP (submitted July 2018).
- The committee discussed what they would like the TAP-Flex distribution to be this year. Schroeder recommended a minimum of 20% to go to TAP projects. Pollock suggested the committee wait on making a recommendation until the proposed TAP projects are known once the application process begins, and there was general agreement amongst committee members to proceed this way.
9. Planner Barness reviewed the draft Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) to be forwarded to the DOT for review by April 1, 2017. There was a brief discussion regarding the planning activities laid out in the TPWP but no requests for changes or additions to the draft plan. She explained that a Backbone Trail Economic Impact and Routing Study was incorporated in the planning funds for the upcoming state fiscal year. There was a motion by Schroeder to recommend forwarding the draft TPWP to the DOT, seconded by Struthers, all in favor.
10. Floor items:
  - Janett invited the committee to attend a meeting in Allamakee County.
11. Committee members discussed the date of the next meeting, which was set for May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.
12. Schroeder made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Chapman. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.