

IOWA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2021
1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Meeting notes

Attendees:

- Deb Arp, Iowa DOT, Systems Planning Bureau
- Krista Billhorn, Iowa DOT, District 2
- Joe Cory, West Des Moines, Public Works
- Michael Delp, Iowa DOT, Location and Environment Bureau
- Scott Flagg, Iowa DOT, Systems Planning Bureau
- Cara Hamann, University of Iowa
- Daniel Harness, Iowa DOT, Design Bureau
- Lisa Hein, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- Zach James, SEIPC, Burlington
- Tammie Krausman, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Ashley Hochberger, Iowa DOT, Traffic and Safety Bureau
- Oreste Lechnowsky, Iowa DOT, District 4
- Codie Leseman, INRCOG, Waterloo/Cedar Falls
- Craig Markley, Iowa DOT, Systems Planning Bureau
- Milly Ortiz, Iowa DOT, Systems Planning Bureau
- Garrett Pedersen, Iowa DOT, Systems Planning Bureau
- John Peterson, AARP
- Sam Shea, Iowa DOT, District 6
- Sarah Taylor-Watts, Iowa Department of Public Health
- Hector Torres-Cacho, Iowa DOT, District 5
- Sarah Walz, MPOJC
- Vern Willey, Altoona City Councilman
- Mark Wyatt, Iowa Bicycle Coalition

Meeting Logistics and Welcome

Mark Wyatt discussed the agenda and the meeting logistics.

Iowa DOT Organizational Restructuring

Craig Markley presented on the Iowa DOT's recent organizational restructuring, the newly created Transportation Development Division, as well as other changes within the organization.

He mentioned those changes are not as a result of problems with the previous structure. Changes align with the new Business Plan, which is looking to strategically position the Iowa DOT to address challenges with workforce development, employee safety, outdated systems and processes, and limited budgets.

There will be no layoffs or downsizing in this restructuring. Systems Planning Bureau would remain the same at this time and the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator position would stay within the bureau.

https://iowadot.gov/pdf_files/dot_organ_chart.pdf

COVID-19 Relief Recreational Trails Program

Scott Flagg presented information related to the COVID-19 relief recreational trail funding program, its guidelines, and application.

Eligible activities are:

- Construction of new trails,
- Maintenance, resurfacing and restoration of existing recreational trails,
- Development and rehab of trailside facilities and trail linkages, and
- Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for rec trails and corridors.

Scoring emphasis:

- The degree to which the project provides development of trail linkages including ties to other trails. (40 Points)
- How the project aligns with the Iowa Bicycle and Pedestrian Long Range Plan and any applicable adopted regional, county, or municipal trail plan. (20 Points)
- The current status of the project toward the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance and project readiness for development. (20 points)
- The degree to which the project will use program grant funds to leverage other public or private investments. (10 points)
- The degree of commitment to continue operation and maintenance of the project after the project is complete (e.g. trail maintenance fund, endowment, etc.) (10 Points)

Additional application information:

- All applications must be emailed to scott.flagg@iowadot.us before 5:00 pm CST on May 17, 2021. No hardcopies.
- Application materials are available on the program website at: https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/-Federal-and-State-Recreational-Trails
- Review the Guidance document before starting the application Funding decisions are anticipated by August 15th.

Questions/responses:

- Q. How much total COVID Relief funding did Iowa DOT receive? How will the remainder funds be distributed?
- A. Scott mentioned that the Iowa DOT might be the only DOT to allocate COVID-19 relief funds to trails.

Trails	\$5.0M
Highways	
DOT	\$55.5M
County	
Secondary Road Fund	\$28.6M
Farm-to-Mark Fund	\$9.4M
City	\$23.4M
COVID Relief funding Total	\$121.9M

- Q. Will any of the other COVID funds be used for on-street bike-ped facilities?
- A. Local jurisdictions would be able to use COVID Relief funding for bicycle and pedestrian on-road accommodations if they choose to do so. As for projects within the Iowa DOT jurisdiction, unless a project is excepted as per Complete Streets Policy, they would be tested through the policy and could theoretically have accommodations added or enhanced.
- Q. Can you clarify what types of items would be eligible for trailside facilities. We had a community that wanted to include cost for lighting, benches, and water fountains. Would all of these be eligible and what other types of items would be eligible?
- A. Those would be eligible items as part of an eligible project. For example, if the community is constructing a trail or trailhead/parking for a trail, these are all eligible elements they can include in the project.
- Q. In terms of NEPA, what are you looking for from the communities for prep work to win the funding?
- A. There may be a simple project that will clear quickly, but if a more complicated project or site, it may be that they have already worked with OSA or have completed a Phase I survey. Otherwise, we want to see a plan or some other explanation for how the project would be able to clear NEPA according to the required schedule.

Iowa Legislature Update

Mark Wyatt updated the Committee on bicycle related bills introduced into the Iowa Legislature, 89th Legislative Session.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Implementation Updates

Complete Streets Policy, 2020 Fiscal Impact

Milly Ortiz shared that the Iowa DOT conducted a fiscal impact according to the CSP section 4.2.

CSP 4.2 The Iowa DOT shall review the fiscal impact of this policy upon the completion of one full programming and project letting cycle following the effective date identified in section 4.1, and biennially thereafter.

While it represents only a single-year sample, the analysis revealed a very limited financial impact of implementing the CSP in CY2020. Overall, we were very pleased with the number of projects that fell under the purview of the policy and had

acceptable accommodations included from the outset (e.g., wide enough effective shoulder width).

Bicycle Compatibility Rating (BCR) update

Milly Ortiz shared that the Iowa DOT would be updating the BCR this Fall, assuming staff resources are available. The current BCR was developed in 2017 as part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

- BCR or other Bicycle Level of Service models are used to estimate a typical bicyclist's perception of comfort or stress on a section of a roadway.
- The BCR was designed to be sensitive to the conditions of low and moderate volume rural roadways.
- The BCR uses factors including average daily traffic volume, roadway width, percent solid yellow center line (sight distance), and percent truck traffic.
- Based on this combination of factors, roadway segments are rated "good," "moderate," or "poor."

United States Bicycle Route System (USBR)

- U.S. Bicycle Routes direct bicyclists to a preferred route through a city, county, or state - creating opportunities for people everywhere to bicycle for travel, transportation, and recreation.
- Designation of a U.S. Bicycle Route means that the state department of transportation and all jurisdictions along the route have given their support.
- Lewis and Clark Trail Signage has recently been installed.
- The Iowa DOT is looking to designate the Lewis and Clark Trails as a USBR.

Breakout Session

Committee members were divided into groups to discuss Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan's Implementation Actions and future meeting structure, topics, etc.

How to implement Plan's actions under your jurisdiction?

Projects funded through STBG tend to include new side paths/paved trails currently. MPOJC (Iowa City) has a scoring system that encourages complete streets improvements. Black Hawk County MPO (Waterloo) has been unable to implement a scoring system due to concerns that county roads and roads without transit would be disadvantaged.

Encouragement programs and events

Iowa DOT does a nice job with social media and public campaigns. They should consider educating people on how to pass bicyclists even before it becomes a law and bring awareness to it as if it was law. Also, where bicyclists should ride.

What resources would the Iowa DOT offer to support events and programs?
Funding? Printing? Social media?

Operating gaps

It's not clear if/how the DOT identifies trail gaps. Can this be made clearer? There is one example of a very narrow walkway on a bridge in Iowa City. Some recently

completed DOT projects in the Black Hawk County MPO (US-63, IA-57) did not include side paths or bike accommodations throughout.

Complete Streets Policies

- Some cities have adopted CSP, but they are not strong/implementable enough.
- More one on one communication with MPOs/RPAs, locals, non-profits about CSPs.
- Gather information of CSP in Iowa.
- Provide information on how to adopt CSP with MPOs/RPAs, cities, counties, and non-profit organization.
- How to include Blue Zones project in CSPs?

MPO/RPA quarterly meetings

- Share B/P Advisory Committee's agenda and recommendations.
- Communicate Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan's implementation process and progress.
 - Provide implementation examples/steps.
 - Explain MPO/RPA expectations on Plan's implementation.

Other

- How to change auto-centric culture.
- Small communities funding challenges obtaining local match.

Roundtable Announcements/Updates

West Des Moines Mayor's Ride, May 15th at 9:30 A.M. Pancake breakfast 7:00 A.M.-9:00 A.M.

<https://www.bikeiowa.com/Event/14311/wdm-mayors-bike-ride-pancake-breakfast>