

# Passenger Transportation Plans

## Guidance on Document Development

March 2026

## Purpose

The Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) process for Iowa's 9 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and 18 Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) is designed to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation planning programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems. Public transportation systems in Iowa include the 35 public transit systems PLUS a wide array of human service and private transportation providers.

The goals are:

1. Improve transportation services to Iowans
2. Increase passenger transportation coordination
3. Create awareness of unmet needs
4. Develop new working partnerships
5. Assist decision-makers, advocates, and consumers in understanding the range of transportation options available
6. Develop justification for future passenger transportation investments
7. Save dollars and eliminate overlapping of services

PTPs are an Iowa creation, providing needs-based justification for passenger transportation projects and as well as incorporating federal requirements for coordinated planning.

## Approach to the Passenger Transportation Plan

The PTP must be developed to serve as a mobility management tool to help meet the specific passenger transportation needs that the local constituency desires.

1. Development of the PTP must include an honest effort to jointly involve human service agencies/organizations, private transportation providers, and transit systems in the passenger transportation planning process and consider all passenger transportation needs and services.
2. The PTP must be updated (at a minimum) every five years; and should be one of several inputs to the Transit Chapter of your area's long-range transportation plan.
3. The Policy Board must approve the PTP, as well as any amendments.

## Transportation Advisory Group (TAG)

1. A TAG must be established that includes and invites representatives of public transit systems, human service agencies/organizations/providers, private transportation providers, etc. covering the entire planning area.
2. Each MPO/RPA is required to have at least two TAG meetings every state fiscal year. Documentation of all TAG meetings must be included in the PTP.
3. The TAG must be consulted in the development and review of the PTP.
4. In the years between submitting a full PTP, minutes of all TAG meetings must be submitted annually to the Office of Systems Planning by July 31st.

## Format of the Passenger Transportation Plan

A PTP should be divided into 5 sections:

### Section One: Introduction and Process Discussion

Briefly, discuss the process that was undertaken to complete the PTP. Include documentation from advisory group meetings and related public input, including a summary of input received and a listing of all participants.

### Section Two:

#### Passenger Transportation Inventory

Include a discussion of the existing passenger transportation operations (human service providers, private providers, school districts, and public transit systems) within the planning area. This discussion should cover the following items for each provider:

1. Provider of each passenger transportation service
2. What types of services are available (fixed route, demand-response, subscription, intercity bus, client transportation, ridesharing programs, etc.)
3. Who is eligible for service
4. Hours and days of service
5. Type, number, and ADA status of vehicles in each fleet, if applicable

This information needs to be gathered from all providers of public and human service transportation, using the most effective means of communicating with these agencies.

#### Area Profile

1. Discuss the demographic (socio/economic) characteristics within your area, and specifically how these characteristics directly impact your passenger transportation needs assessment.
2. Include an analysis of the region's limited English proficient (LEP) population, i.e. concentrated areas where LEP persons live, work, attend school, etc. Identify the LEP population's needs to ensure meaningful access to passenger transportation programs and activities. Examples of needs include printing of schedules and brochures in languages other than English, providing an interpreter at public hearings or public input meetings, or hiring a bi-lingual dispatcher to assist with ride scheduling.
3. Describe the layout of the study area including activity centers such as employers, banks, health care facilities, groceries, etc. and population's access to services and how this impacts transportation needs.

## Section Three: Coordination Issues

Discuss coordination issues within your planning area. This discussion should consider:

1. General assessment of service, management, fleet, and facility needs.
2. Status of previously recommended priorities and strategies.
3. Any other recent developments affecting coordination issues.
4. Public input received concerning needs and/or coordination issues.

## Section Four: Priorities and Strategies

Describe proposed passenger transportation investment strategies for the next five years, as identified by the TAG. The purpose of this section is to focus on identifying meaningful priorities and strategies that could meet identified needs and could eventually lead to projects.

### **If your area receives Section 5310 formula grants (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities):**

- In addition to identifying priorities and strategies, ***all 5310-funded projects must be specifically included in the PTP.*** Projects that are included should specify the federal fiscal year and estimated amount of funding for which the project is programmed. Please include projects for all five fiscal years that the plan covers and which issue/strategy these projects will help address.

### **If your area does not receive Section 5310 formula grants (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities):**

- This section of the PTP does ***not*** need to include specific projects, although agencies are encouraged to include this information if available.

## Section Five: Funding

This section should include a brief overview of funding opportunities and expectations. The Iowa DOT will provide state and federal financial projections for formula funds annually as they are provided by Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Please include:

1. What sources are available? The possible availability of non-DOT funding sources should be discussed. Examples of non-DOT funding may include Easter Seals, HUD funds, United Way, Medicaid, Homeland Security, Older Americans Act, and Head-start.
2. What funding is reasonably achievable within the life of the plan?
3. What funding sources will be sought out to meet strategies?

## Amendments to the PTP

For areas receiving Section 5310 formula grants, any change in the proposed 5310-funded projects will require an amendment to the PTP. The amendment should be reviewed with the TAG and follow the public input process outlined in the agency's Public Participation Plan.

## Additional Documents

- PTP Update Schedule
- PTP Best Practices(Contact Systems Planning Bureau)

## Contact Persons

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## Proposed PTP Development Schedule

| Date       | Task  |
|------------|---|
| February 1 | Rough Draft PTP submitted electronically to Spencer Thompson and Transit Agency(s) within the planning area   |
| March 1    | Iowa DOT (all comments coordinated through the Systems Planning Bureau) comments will be sent to MPOs, RPAs, and Transit Agencies                   |
| May 1      | Final PTP (approved by MPO or RPA Policy Board) submitted electronically to Spencer Thompson and Transit Agency(s) within the planning area.        |
| May 1      | Amendments to the PTP (for changes to 5310 projects) submitted electronically to Spencer Thompson and Transit Agency(s) within the planning area.   |
| June 1     | Upon consultation with the Public Transit Bureau, Systems Planning Bureau will notify each MPO, RPA, and Transit Agency if their PTP is acceptable. |
| July 31    | In years when a PTP is not due, submit all TAG meeting minutes electronically to Spencer Thompson and Transit Agency(s) within the planning area.   |

## PTP Update Schedule

| Planning Agency | Next PTP Due (CY) |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| RPA 1           | 2028              |
| RPA 2*          | 2029              |
| RPA 3           | 2030              |
| RPA 4/SIMPCO*   | 2029              |
| RPA 5           | 2030              |
| RPA 6           | 2029              |
| RPA 7/INRCOG*   | 2030              |
| RPA 8/DMATS*    | 2030              |
| RPA 9/BI-STATE* | 2028              |
| RPA 10*         | 2026              |
| RPA 11*/DMAMPO* | 2028              |
| RPA 12          | 2026              |
| RPA 13 and 18   | 2028              |
| RPA 14          | 2030              |
| RPA 15          | 2028              |
| RPA 16          | 2026              |
| RPA 17          | 2026              |
| Ames MPO*       | 2029              |
| MPOJC*          | 2026              |
| Corridor MPO*   | 2029              |
| MAPA MPO*       | 2028              |

\*Receives Section 5310 Funding