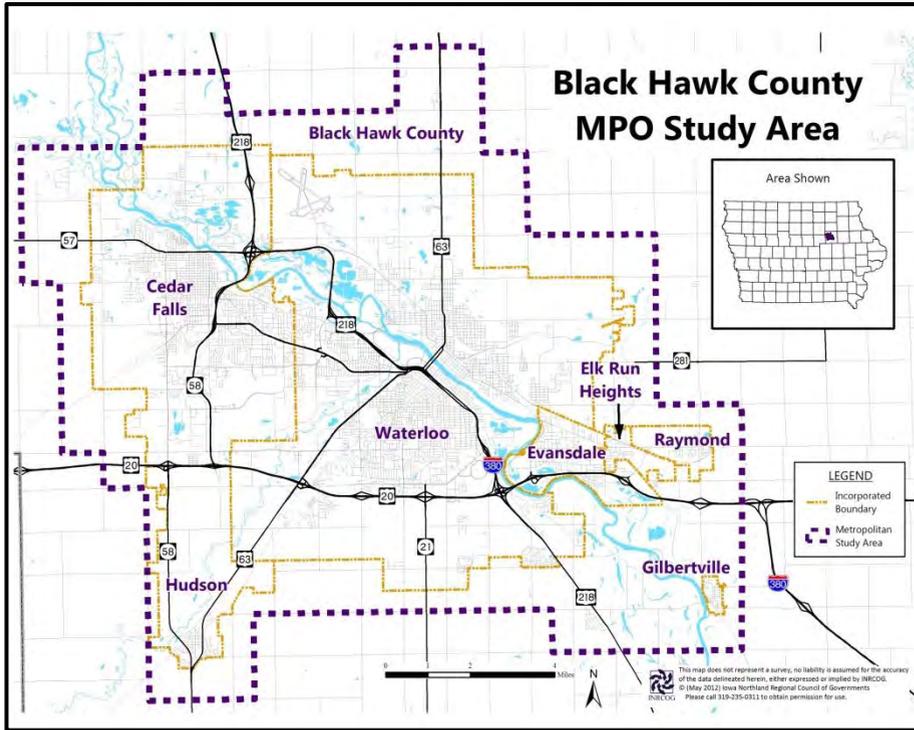


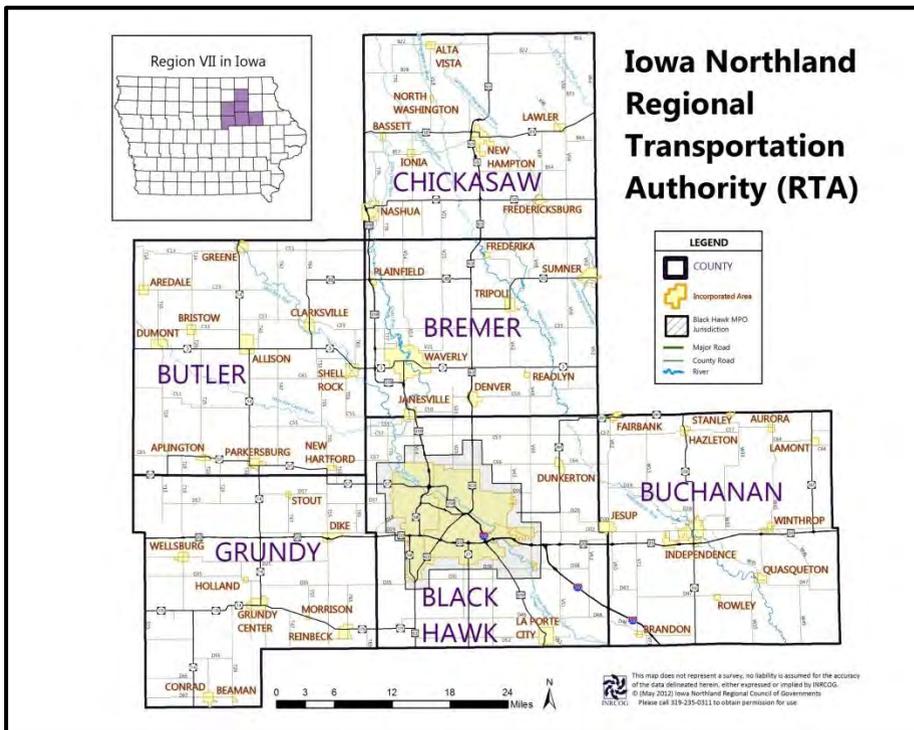
Background and Information



**Black Hawk
County
Metropolitan
Area
Transportation
Policy Board
(MPO)**

&

**Iowa
Northland
Regional
Transportation
Authority
(RTA)**



Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
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Background

Federal law requires the formation of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) for urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000. The role of an MPO is to oversee transportation planning and policy to ensure that existing and future expenditures on transportation projects are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. The MPO brings together cities and counties in an urban area to ensure that planning reflects the region's shared vision of the future. The Black Hawk County MPO represents the urbanized area of Black Hawk County, Iowa (see map on front). This includes the cities of Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Elk Run Heights, Evansdale, Gilbertville, Hudson, and Raymond, and a portion of the unincorporated area of Black Hawk County.

While federal law does not mandate specific transportation planning funding or requirements for nonmetropolitan areas, the State of Iowa has developed a system of Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) to carry out this planning on a regional level. Iowa has 18 RPAs that cover all the area outside of Iowa's nine MPOs (see map, below). The Iowa 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.

RPA 7 is the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). This includes Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy Counties and the cities within those counties, with the exception of the area covered by the Black Hawk County MPO (see map on front).

The Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) provides staffing and support for both the MPO and RTA. INRCOG is a regional planning agency that also assists local governments with comprehensive, economic development, land use, and housing planning. INRCOG also operates the Regional Transit System, which provides transit service in the RTA.



Structure

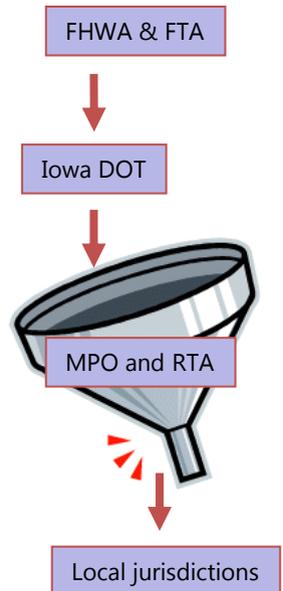
While INRCOG provides staff and technical support, the decision making and programming authority of the MPO and RTA rests within their two branches, the Policy Board and Technical Committee. The MPO and RTA Policy Boards consist of local elected officials and are the governing bodies of each entity. The Boards have the power to make policy decisions and conduct transportation studies and plans. The Boards are responsible for the adoption of the five planning documents outlined on the back. The Technical Committees consist of city and county planners, engineers, and interested parties. The Technical Committees have extensive knowledge of the area's transportation system and advise the Policy Boards, but do not vote on policy issues.

Meetings

The MPO and RTA generally meet monthly, and meetings are open to the public. The MPO meets the second Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m., and the RTA meets the third Wednesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. Meetings are held at the INRCOG Center, 229 E. Park Ave., Waterloo.

Funding and Programming

One way to think of the MPO and RTA is like a funnel. In essence, the MPO and RTA serve as liaisons for federal funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) that goes to local entities, including cities, counties, and public transit systems.



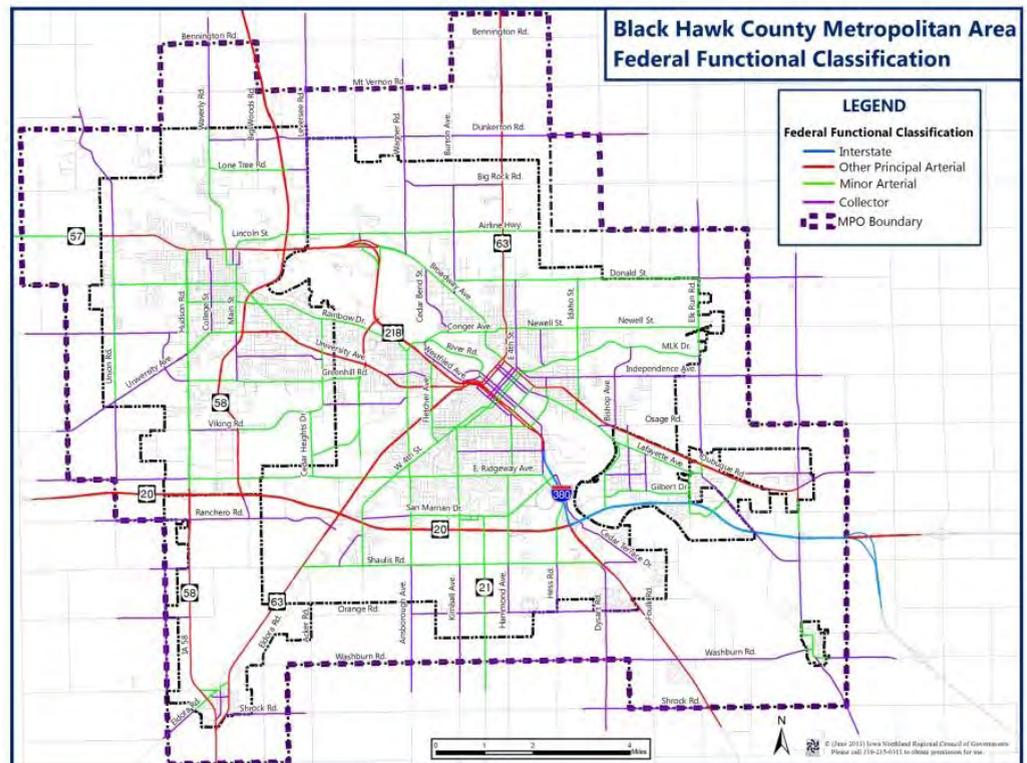
The MPO and RTA “funnel” several federal funding sources, and have the ability to program two specific sources. **Currently, the MPO receives approximately \$3,271,000 and the RTA receives approximately \$2,413,000 per year from the following programs to use for local projects:**

Surface Transportation Program (STP) Funds – primarily used for major new construction or reconstruction on federally functionally classified roads (see map below for example). Currently, the MPO receives approximately \$2,971,000 and the RTA receives approximately \$2,178,000 in STP funds per year to program for projects.

Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Funds – used for projects such as trails, other bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and historic transportation-related projects. Currently, the MPO receives approximately \$170,000 and the RTA receives approximately \$133,000 in TAP funds per year to program for projects.

The MPO and RTA also each receive a pool of flexible funding that can be used for either STP or TAP projects. Currently, the MPO receives \$130,000 and the RTA receives \$102,000 per year in this flexible funding to program for projects. The MPO and RTA also program several other funding sources that are allocated at the state level or through discretionary grant programs. Most federal funding sources are an 80/20 split, meaning federal funds can be used for up to 80% of the project cost, and the local entity must provide at least 20% of the project cost.

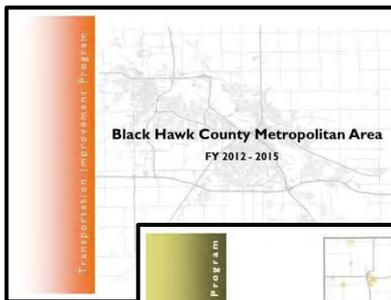
The MPO and RTA are primarily concerned with planning on the regional level, which means focusing on roads that are more heavily traveled. STP funds are used on roads that are federally functionally classified. A certain percentage of roads are classified in each city and county; the map to the right shows roads that are federally functionally classified in the metropolitan area. Local roads (such as residential streets) are the responsibility of the jurisdiction they are in.



Other Responsibilities

In addition to transportation planning and programming, the MPO and RTA are also involved in a number of activities through their Policy Boards and Technical Committees and through INRCOG staff. The Boards work with the Iowa DOT Commission to ensure continued support for the area. Staff members often represent the MPO and RTA in transportation studies, such as the U.S. 218 Corridor Study and the University Avenue Corridor Study. Staff members also interact regularly with Iowa DOT, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration staff. Additionally, INRCOG staff members frequently write grant applications for various transportation-related projects in the region.

The MPO and RTA are also responsible for the creation and updating of the five major documents shown below. Documents can be viewed at www.inrcog.org/pub.htm.

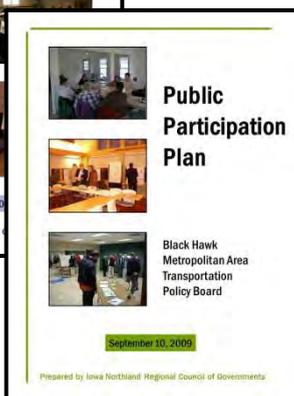
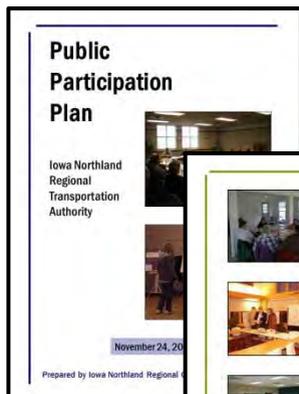


The **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** is the largest and most extensive document the MPO and RTA produce. This Plan has a minimum 20 year horizon and covers all pertinent modes of transportation as well as their relationships with development and land use. The LRTP focuses on a broad range of issues, including improving the area's economic vitality, safety, security, accessibility, and connectivity. The LRTP is updated every five years.



The **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** is a four year document that outlines programmed projects, costs, federal aid, and priorities. The TIP details the Surface Transportation & Transportation Alternatives Programs, as well as other federal aid funding programs. The TIP is updated annually.

The **Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)** outlines work elements for the transportation planning program for the coming year. Within each of the work elements, specific tasks are identified by the objective, previous work performed, a description of the task, and the desired outcome/measurement tools. The TPWP is updated annually.



The **Public Participation Plan (PPP)** is a guide outlining public involvement in the transportation planning process. The PPP is designed to inform the public of the roles and responsibilities of the MPO and RTA and outline the ways public involvement is sought in the creation and updates of transportation planning documents. The PPP is updated as needed.

The **Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)** documents the coordination of local transit providers, policy makers, units of government, human service organizations, and the general public. This document is meant to provide a better understanding of the passenger transportation services provided in past years and currently, as well as to serve as a guidance mechanism for future decisions. This document is developed jointly for the MPO and RTA. The PTP is updated fully every five years, with annual status updates.

