



CIRTPA Public Participation Plan

2015 Update

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INTRODUCTION

The Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA) provides a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process for the central Iowa region, excluding the planning areas of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMAMPO) and the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO). As part of a successful 3-C transportation planning process, the CIRTPA solicits public review and comment on the work, projects, and products proposed and created by the CIRTPA.

The CIRTPA's Public Participation Plan (PPP) intends to promote this effort by defining a process that provides citizens, stakeholder groups, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process.

The CIRTPA developed this PPP in consultation with the public and other interested parties. Included in this PPP are the CIRTPA's policies and procedures for conducting public outreach, scheduling public meetings, and incorporating public input into the transportation planning process.

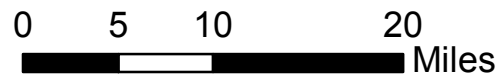
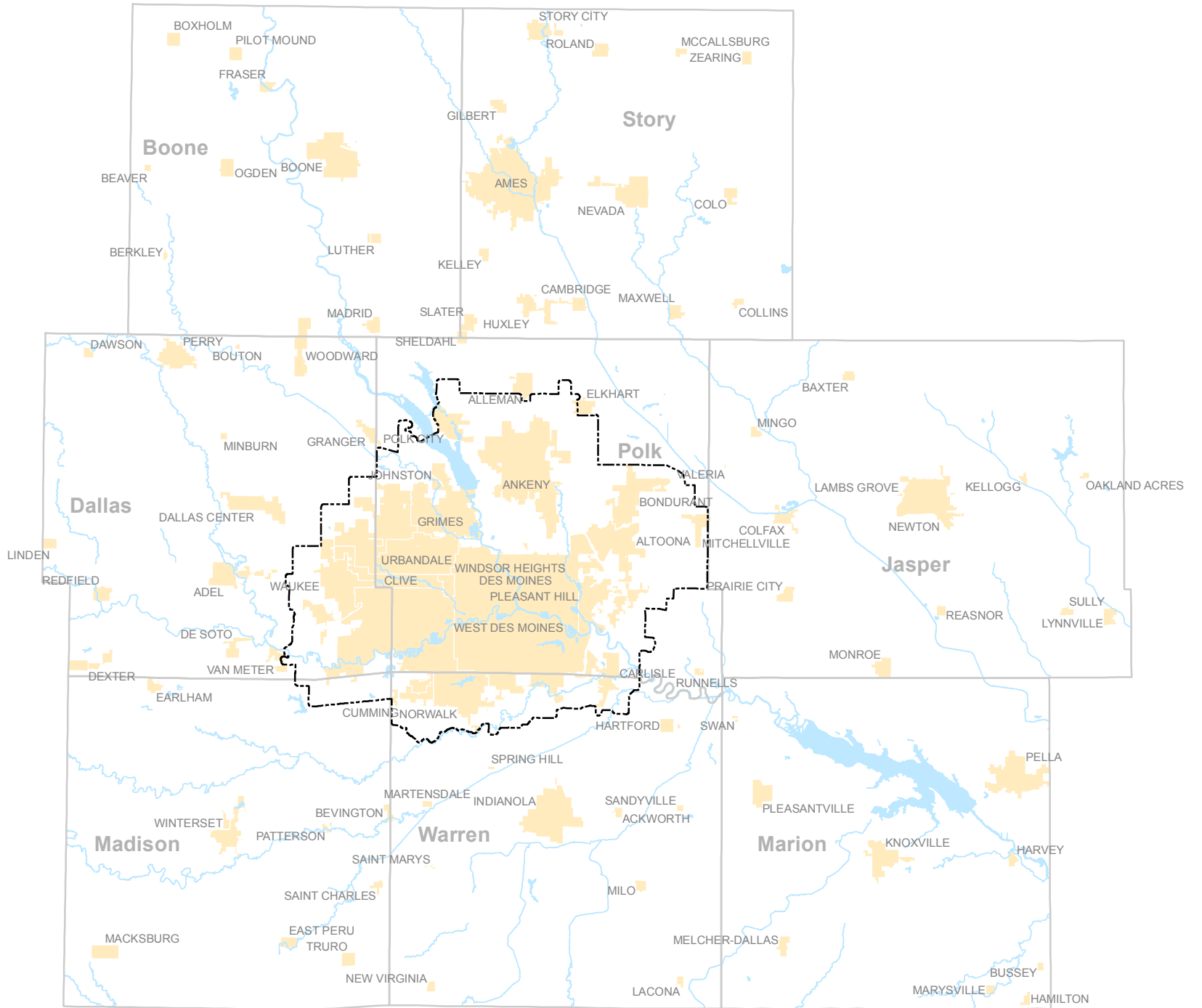
ABOUT CIRTPA

The Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA) was created in 1994 to carry out transportation planning for the central Iowa region, excluding the planning areas of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMAMPO) and the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO). The CIRTPA serves as the designated regional transportation planning agency for the Iowa Department of Transportation's (DOT) Region 11. The CIRTPA coordinates planning and programming efforts in the region and fosters new partnerships with state and local officials.

The CIRTPA's Regional Transportation Planning Area includes Boone, Jasper, and Marion Counties and portions of Dallas, Madison, Polk, Story, and Warren Counties not included as part of the DMAMPO or the AAMPO. Members of the CIRTPA include the eight counties noted above as well as ten cities: Adel, Boone, Indianola, Knoxville, Nevada, Newton, Pella, Perry, Story City, and Winterset. The location of the CIRTPA region within Iowa is shown on a map on the following page. The CIRTPA has an agreement with the DMAMPO for support services in carrying out its transportation planning responsibilities.

The CIRTPA cooperates with a number of agencies, including the Iowa DOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the DMAMPO, the AAMPO, Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART), the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Authority (HIRTA), and the CIRTPA's ten member communities and eight member counties in fulfilling its transportation planning responsibilities.

The CIRTPA Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) receives input and recommendations from its Technical Committee. In addition to the Technical Committee, the CIRTPA will establish and support other committees, as needed, on various transportation-related issues relevant to the CIRTPA's responsibilities. The CIRTPA also can request citizens to serve on these committees, as appropriate.



REGULATIONS and REQUIREMENTS

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and natural origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. As President John F. Kennedy said in 1963, “Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races [colors, and national origins] contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes, or results in racial [color or national origin] discrimination.” Per the US Department of Justice:

If a recipient of federal assistance is found to have discriminated and voluntary compliance cannot be achieved, the federal agency providing the assistance should either initiate fund termination proceedings or refer the matter to the Department of Justice for appropriate legal action. Aggrieved individuals may file administrative complaints with the federal agency that provides funds to a recipient, or the individuals may file suit for appropriate relief in federal court. Title VI itself prohibits intentional discrimination. However, most funding agencies have regulations implementing Title VI that prohibit recipient practices that have the effect of discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

To assist federal agencies that provide financial assistance, the wide variety of recipients that receive such assistance, and the actual and potential beneficiaries of programs receiving federal assistance, the US Department of Justice has published a Title VI Legal Manual. The Title VI Legal Manual sets out Title VI legal principles and standards. Additionally, the Department has published an Investigation Procedures Manual to give practical advice on how to investigate Title VI complaints. Also available on the Federal Coordination and Compliance Website are a host of other materials that may be helpful to those interested in ensuring effective enforcement of Title VI.

Executive Order #12898

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.”

In February 1994, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order #12898 – Executive Order on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. The order is intended to focus federal attention on the “environmental and human health conditions in minority communities and low-income communities with the goal of achieving environmental justice. That order is intended to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment, and to provide minority

communities and low-income communities with access to public information on, and an opportunity for public participation in, matters relating to human health or the environment.”

Open Meetings Law

The State of Iowa established the Open Meetings Law in 1999. It states that meetings should be open to the public; however, the Open Meetings Law does permit some closed meetings. The Open Meetings Law applies to the CIRTPA Policy Committee, the CIRTPA Transportation Technical Committee and such other subgroups as may be directed by the CIRTPA Policy Committee.

Where Open Meetings Law applies, the CIRTPA keeps minutes as public records that show the date, time, members present, and the actions taken during the meeting. Staff may keep additional records from the meetings that also are public records.

Public Records Law

The State of Iowa also established the Public Records Law in 1999. This legislation, with certain statutory exceptions, ensures that every person has a right to examine public records and to copy them.

Nondiscrimination Obligations

The CIRTPA is obligated to manage its programs and provide planning services to Central Iowa without regard to race, color, and national origin. The CIRTPA is further obligated to avoid discrimination based on handicap or disability.

Accommodations

The CIRTPA schedules public input meetings at convenient and accessible locations, and at times and facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As part of its environmental justice analysis, the CIRTPA has identified two degrees of disadvantage, or types of traditionally disadvantaged populations, as the analytic basis for ensuring compliance with Title VI. The two degrees of disadvantage include:

- Non-white population
- Persons in poverty

The CIRTPA created maps highlighting areas identified as disadvantaged through this process. The maps help the CIRTPA determine public input meeting locations. This process will also help the CIRTPA develop a methodology for assessing the positive and negative effects that transportation projects may have on areas sensitive to environmental justice.

With these concerns in mind, the CIRTPA is committed to providing its materials to all citizens within the CIRTPA planning area. The CIRTPA developed a Language Assistance Plan to ensure individuals with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to the transportation

planning process. For example, the CIRTPA encourages persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) to contact the CIRTPA for translation services of CIRTPA documents. Upon request, the CIRTPA works with local organizations to obtain translations of the desired documents within a reasonable period. The CIRTPA also ensures that a notice of the availability of translation services is included in relevant CIRTPA documents and written in the language of large LEP populations. More details on LEP accommodations can be found in the CIRTPA's Language Assistance Plan, available online at www.cirtpa.org/public-participation/.

Complaint Procedures

Persons wishing to file a formal discrimination complaint may do so by completing the Title VI Complaint Form available by contacting the CIRTPA. Complaint forms are also available on the CIRTPA website at www.cirtpa.org/title-vi-complaint-form/ in printable PDF and online form formats. Persons should send the form to the CIRTPA's designated Title VI Coordinator. Within 10 calendar days, the CIRTPA will forward this form and any additional information to the Iowa DOT Title VI Coordinator. The Iowa DOT will conduct an investigation into the complaint and make a recommendation to the FHWA, who will make the final determination. The Iowa DOT and the CIRTPA will inform the person filing the complaint of the final determination. For more information, please visit <http://www.iowadot.gov/civilrights/subrecipient.html>.

Record Keeping

The CIRTPA's civil rights specialist maintains a log of all complaints and the disposition of those complaints. The CIRTPA maintains files of each complaint for a period of no less than seven years. Annually, the CIRTPA staff provides a summary of discrimination complaints to the CIRTPA Policy Committee. At the time of this publication, the CIRTPA has yet to receive any discrimination complaints.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The CIRTPA implements a variety of techniques to reach the populations outlined at the beginning of this section. As work on documents such as the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) or the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) commences, staff has a general outline of public engagement strategies to be implemented. It is important to note, however, that these strategies are designed to be responsive to public feedback and may be modified to enhance the engagement.

Public Events

The CIRTPA Policy Committee and Transportation Technical Committee meet every other month. All of these meetings are open to the public, per the State of Iowa's Open Meetings Law.

The CIRTPA also hosts a number of roundtables and subcommittees that hold regular meetings. These roundtables and subcommittees are outlined on the previous page. All of the roundtable and subcommittee meetings are open to the public as well.

The CIRTPA schedules single purpose public input meetings for the LRTP, the TIP, and the PPP with the sole intent of disseminating information to the public and soliciting public comment on these important documents. Additionally, the CIRTPA holds public input meetings to solicit public review and comment on amendments to the LRTP, the TIP, and the PPP, and to gather feedback on the development of other planning products. When practical and feasible, the CIRTPA supplements public input meetings with other outreach techniques, such as publicly circulated surveys regarding current issues and concerns. The CIRTPA provides the results of any such surveys to the public.

Finally, the CIRTPA hosts special events on an as-needed basis. These include public open houses with learning opportunities and chances to interact with the CIRTPA's community partners; facilitated small group discussions; and focus groups with subject matter experts; speaker series events.

Publications

Press releases are issued as needed on the planning efforts, studies and other activities of the CIRTPA. Topics include reports on progress the region is making in meeting the performance measures of the long-range transportation plan, events related to planning activities, and public input opportunities. Media releases go to media outlets throughout the region, including those with LEP and minority audiences.

On occasion, the CIRTPA publishes other documents and informational brochures that provide summary information regarding important planning issues and activities.

To subscribe to the CIRTPA distribution list, contact CIRTPA staff at 515.334.0075.

Online Presence

Over the past few years, the CIRTPA has significantly bolstered its online presence. The CIRTPA website – accessible at www.cirtpa.org – provides an overview of upcoming meetings along with agendas, committee representatives, staff information, news, maps, plans, and publications produced by the CIRTPA. Relevant links are included on the website, too.

The CIRTPA makes every effort to provide adequate notice for public review and comment, particularly as these activities relate to proposed drafts of the LRTP, the TIP, and the PPP. The CIRTPA makes notifications and announcements of upcoming public input meetings for the LRTP, the TIP, and the PPP approximately four weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting through publications and online. Approximately one week in advance, the CIRTPA publishes legal notice of public meetings and public review and comment periods in the Des Moines Register. The CIRTPA also posts meeting agendas and minutes in accordance with the State of Iowa’s Open Meetings Law. The CIRTPA issues press releases of upcoming public input meetings to local media outlets and encourages them to advertise the dates, times, and locations of public meetings and public review and comment periods. These release go to a broad range of media outlets, including several with LEP and minority audiences.

From time to time, member governments request amendments to the LRTP and to the TIP. In conducting revisions to the approved TIP, the CIRTPA notifies the public of the CIRTPA’s intent to discuss and potentially vote on revisions at least one week prior to the meeting, when possible.

Availability of Information

In order to provide reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes, the CIRTPA posts all of its publications, meeting notices, and other related information online at www.cirtpa.org. The CIRTPA posts most publications in PDF format, which uses the free, downloadable Adobe Reader software. The CIRTPA will provide hard copies of any document upon request. Additionally, the CIRTPA staff is available to make presentations on relevant topics to local citizens, organizations, and other interested parties. The CIRTPA also employs the use of videos to relay information related to regionally significant planning initiatives. The CIRTPA also posts copies of all presentations to its CIRTPA Policy Committee on the website, as well as copies of presentations from guest speakers. To request a hard copy of a document or to schedule a presentation call 515.334.0075 or fax 515.334.0098.

Public Review and Comment

The CIRTPA provides a public review and comment period of 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the LRTP, the TIP, and the PPP. The CIRTPA hosts public meetings across Central Iowa region to discuss these documents with the public. In an effort to provide information to the public and to solicit public input, public input meetings take place during the development

of the LRTP, and during the review periods of the draft LRTP, draft TIP, and draft PPP. Additional public input meetings take place as needed.

The CIRTPA provides the public an opportunity to comment on proposed revisions to the approved TIP. The CIRTPA considers two types of revisions in the TIP development process. An amendment to the TIP involves major changes to an approved project or the addition of a new project. Amendments to the approved TIP require formal CIRTPA approval. Amendments are required under the following conditions:

- **Project cost:** Projects in which the recalculated project costs increase federal-aid by more than 30 percent or increase total federal-aid by more than \$2 million from the original amount.
- **Schedule changes:** Projects added or deleted from the TIP.
- **Funding sources:** Projects receiving additional federal funding sources to a project.
- **Fiscal constraint:** Changes that result in the TIP no longer being fiscally constrained (makes any of the four federal fiscal years not fiscally constrained).
- **Scope changes:** Changing the project termini, the amount of through traffic lanes, type of work from an overlay to reconstruction, or a change to include widening of the roadway.

Administrative modifications involve minor changes to existing projects in the approved TIP. Administrative modifications do not require formal CIRTPA approval and often are conducted administratively by the CIRTPA staff. Administrative modifications that involve moving Surface Transportation Program (STP) or Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds forward require CIRTPA approval to ensure that the CIRTPA's TIP remains fiscally constrained. Administrative modifications involve:

- **Project cost:** Projects in which the recalculated project costs do not increase federal-aid by more than 30 percent and do not increase total federal-aid by more than \$2 million from the original amount.
- **Schedule changes:** Changes in schedules to projects included in the first four years of the TIP.
- **Funding sources:** Changes to funding from one source to another.
- **Scope changes:** All changes to a project's scope require an amendment.

In conducting revisions to the approved TIP, the CIRTPA considers all amendments and modifications as optional votes. The public is invited to CIRTPA Policy Committee meetings to provide comments on these revisions prior to the CIRTPA vote. A person may speak at the CIRTPA Policy Committee meeting if he or she:

- Lives in or represents someone living in the CIRTPA planning area; and,
- Registers with complete contact information and the subject the comments will address prior to the start of the CIRTPA Policy Committee meeting.

Speakers are generally limited to three minutes; however, the chair may reduce speaking time to two minutes based on the number of individuals wishing to speak at a meeting. The chair also may amend this time limit if an individual is speaking on behalf of an organization or group of individuals. Speakers generally offer comments at the beginning of the meeting and must state the subject he or she will be addressing. The public comment portion of the meeting is the only time when comments by the public are permitted. It is not the intent of the board to engage in debate during this time. Any audio/visual or similar equipment to be used to support the comments must be approved by the CIRTPA chair at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. While the CIRTPA generally follows the procedure outlined above, the chair has the discretion to amend the comment portion of the meeting as appropriate.

Public notifications are made on the CIRTPA website regarding the CIRTPA's intent to discuss and vote on revisions at least one week prior to the meeting, when possible.

Visualization Techniques

The CIRTPA makes every reasonable effort to incorporate visualization techniques into its public outreach activities. The CIRTPA creates large legible maps for public meetings regarding the development of the LRTP and the TIP to help demonstrate the location and impact of possible transportation improvements and various network alternatives. Other useful visual aids used by the CIRTPA may include graphs representing various types of data and flow charts to depict the transportation planning process. The CIRTPA also works to provide an online interactive map demonstrating the location of various planning activities and transportation projects in Central Iowa.

Accommodations for Special Populations

The CIRTPA works to reach out to special populations traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems that may face challenges accessing employment and other services. These populations may include low-income and minority households, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited English proficiency. The CIRTPA schedules public input meetings at Americans with Disabilities Act compliant facilities, and at convenient and accessible locations and times.

The CIRTPA works with the Iowa DOT to provide translation services, which are publicized on the CIRTPA's website at www.cirtpa.org/translation-services/. To request translation services, people can call or email CIRTPA staff at 515-334-0075. The public is asked to provide the CIRTPA staff with as much notice as possible, so they can best provide for any special accommodations that may be necessary in order for them to participate in any public events. Additional information on the CIRTPA's nondiscrimination obligations and procedures for investigating and

tracking Title VI complaints can be found elsewhere in this document, or is available upon request by calling 515.334.0075 or by visiting www.cirtpa.org/title-vi/.

PLANNING DOCUMENT OR ACTIVITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES
Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public input meetings held during the development of the LRTP ● Draft + final LRTP available on CIRTPA website ● Legal notice published one week prior to public meeting ● Forty-five calendar day public comment and review period ● At least one public input meeting held for completed draft LRTP
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft + final TIP available on CIRTPA website ● Legal notice published one week prior to public meeting ● Forty-five calendar day public comment and review period ● At least one public meeting held for draft TIP
TIP Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed TIP revisions available on CIRTPA website ● Information regarding proposed TIP revision(s) made available through CIRTPA website at least one week prior to formal action, when possible ● Legal notice published one week prior to the public meeting ● Public comment for proposed TIP revisions can be made at the CIRTPA Policy Committee meeting prior to the CIRTPA’s formal action on the request
LRTP Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed LRTP amendments made available on CIRTPA website ● Legal notice published one week prior to the public meeting ● Forty-five calendar day public comment and review period ● At least one public input meeting held ● Public comment for proposed LRTP revisions can be made at the CIRTPA Policy Committee meeting prior to the CIRTPA’s formal action on the request
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft and final PPP available on CIRTPA website ● Legal notice published one week prior to public meeting ● Forty-five calendar day public comment and review period ● At least one public input meeting held
Additional Public Comment Period, as necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevant documents and plans available on CIRTPA website ● Legal notice published one week prior to public meeting ● At least a fifteen calendar day public comment and review period

MEETING SCHEDULE

Regularly scheduled meetings of the CIRTPA committees are as follows:

- The Policy Committee and the Technical Committee meet jointly on the third Thursday of every other month starting January at 9:30 am at the CIRTPA office – Burnham Conference Room;

The CIRTPA posts meeting times, agendas and minutes on its website at www.cirtpa.org.

All meetings of the Technical Committee, Policy Committee, and other subgroups of the CIRTPA are open to the public. Members of the public may request time on the agenda at the Technical Committee or the CIRTPA Policy Committee to comment on specific subjects of interest to the representatives. Additionally, the CIRTPA Chair may appoint new subcommittees and working groups to address specific transportation-related topics or areas of interest.

The CIRTPA hosts an annual public meeting for comment on the proposed TIP. The TIP is an annual document identifying transportation projects that CIRTPA member governments and agencies intend to implement using federal funds over the next four years. The CIRTPA holds other public input opportunities throughout the year, as necessary, allowing for comment on proposed revisions to the approved TIP.

Several public input meetings occur in conjunction with the update of the LRTP. The LRTP addresses transportation planning issues over at least a twenty-year period and undergoes updates every five years. Amendments to the approved LRTP also require a public input meeting. Because these meetings are infrequent, the CIRTPA schedules them on an as-needed basis.

PUBLIC INPUT

The CIRTPA accepts input and comments from the public through a variety of means. Members of the public may make comments by calling the CIRTPA at 515.334.0075. Written comments may be:

Presented at public meetings

Faxed to the CIRTPA at 515.334.0098

Submitted online at www.cirtpa.org/public-comment-form/

Mailed to the CIRTPA, 420 Watson Powell Jr., Way, Suite 200, Des Moines, Iowa 50309

The public may submit comments to their respective Technical Committee or Policy Committee representatives for transmittal to the respective full committees. Citizens can make comments on CIRTPA plans, reports, and programs at public input meetings. Additionally, members of the public or a representative of a group with expressed comments on a particular topic may request of the CIRTPA Chair an appointment to serve as a citizen representative on the appropriate subcommittee of the Technical Committee or the Policy Committee. Citizens or representatives of special interest groups may request time on a CIRTPA Technical Committee or Policy Committee agenda to offer input to the full committees as well. The CIRTPA staff shares all public comments and input with the Technical Committee and the Executive Committee in verbal and/or written form.

The CIRTPA accepts and considers public input and comments received during the public participation process. When the CIRTPA receives significant written or oral comments regarding the draft LRTP, the draft TIP, or the draft PPP through the public participation process, the CIRTPA includes a summary, analysis, and report on those comments in the final document. In those instances where a final LRTP, TIP, or PPP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment, the CIRTPA provides an additional opportunity for further public comment on the final version. Additional public comment periods are at least fifteen calendar days.

COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

The CIRTPA coordinates its public participation efforts with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation process, as necessary. The LRTP, the TIP, and PPP are developed with due consideration of other related planning activities in Central Iowa, and the CIRTPA consults and/or coordinates with other agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that may be impacted or affected by transportation. Additionally, the CIRTPA involves the appropriate federal land management agencies in the development of the LRTP and TIP, as necessary.

EVALUATION

The CIRTPA periodically reviews the PPP in order to monitor the effectiveness of the procedures outlined in this document. Following evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the PPP, the CIRTPA may revise these procedures to incorporate new and innovative ways to involve the public and ensure a full and open participation process. In particular, the CIRTPA documents information regarding public attendance at public input meetings, records the number of requests or complaints associated with special populations, and solicits feedback on the use of visual aids at public meetings. The CIRTPA reviews this information every year and evaluates the need to revise these procedures.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The CIRTPA understands that, without the public, the planning process is not nearly as strong as it could be. As such, the CIRTPA encourages residents to submit comments to the CIRTPA. This can be accomplished by contacting the CIRTPA by:

Mail: CIRTPA
420 Watson Powell, Jr., Way, Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Phone: 515.334.0075

Fax: 515.334.0098

Web: www.cirtpa.org