

COMMENTS RECEIVED REGARDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE DMAMPO'S *HORIZON YEAR 2035 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN*

OVERALL STATEMENTS

1. Regional intercity bus system connecting the metropolitan area to communities outside the area (such as Ames, Indianola, or Newton)
2. Regional Economic Growth Strategy that includes freight movement
3. Examine the potential for a light rail system
4. Be proactive in determining regional growth and the development of the transportation system
5. Consider public/private partnerships in the transportation system
6. Feasibility of restoring abandoned rail lines
7. Transform the current transportation system, a shift from a single car based system
8. Better serve the unincorporated areas in the metropolitan area
9. Incorporate rail into the transportation system – a regional rail network – Amtrak
10. Involve the public in different ways and at more venues
11. Fewer cars and more mass transit
12. Create compact development that promotes transit and alternative transportation use
13. Incorporate facilities and infrastructure that allow for a shift from gasoline based cars
14. Incorporate bike lanes onto major roads
15. Incorporate land use strategies that promote transit development
16. Promote sustainable development
17. Be proactive in providing transportation alternatives
18. Increase promotion of transit and alternative transportation
19. Reestablish old bus routes
20. Provide new expanded bus routes
21. Provide longer hours of service for bus routes
22. Maintain existing bus service to ensure that routes are retained
23. Consider impacts of transportation projects on the character of surrounding neighborhoods
24. Increase population and employment density
25. Complete streets ordinances adopted by all member governments
26. Conduct all transportation planning activities in the public eye
27. Create a multi-modal hub at the Des Moines International Airport
28. Determine if there is a need for the NW corridor in the long-range plan
29. Address the problems with the lack of competition for taxi services
30. Alternative ways to commute from Ames to Des Moines
31. Protect quality of life
32. Promote the need for alternative types of transportation due to the energy crisis

PERSONAL MOBILITY

Pedestrian

1. **Goal:** Integrate for the complete, safe, accessible, well-planned, year-round, and comfortable movement of pedestrians throughout the metropolitan planning area.

Objective:

- a) Improve the accessibility to and around pedestrian facilities for all persons, including those with disabilities or special needs, so they can travel safely and independently;
- b) Develop and interconnect a system of pedestrian facilities providing complete, comfortable, accessible, and safe routes within and between neighborhoods, activity nodes, and jurisdictions in all directions; and,
- c) Encourage walking for transportation as well as recreational purposes.

COMMENTS

1. Provide complete mobility on sidewalks by incorporating better winter maintenance of sidewalks
2. Use new techniques and materials in the construction of new pedestrian facilities
3. Every street has sidewalks that results in complete sidewalk connectivity
4. Encourage pedestrian friendly development
5. Provide connectivity between modes of transportation
6. Integrate modes of transportation in a more efficient manner
7. Provide a sidewalk along Fleur Drive
8. Include support facilities along sidewalks (benches/drinking fountains/restrooms)
9. Ensure that all pedestrian marking are clearly identified
10. Promote the use of sidewalks and trails as an alternative mode of transportation

PERSONAL MOBILITY

Bicycle

2. **Goal:** Integrate for the complete, safe, accessible, well-planned, year-round, and comfortable movement of bicyclists throughout the metropolitan planning area.

Objective:

- a) Develop and interconnect a system of bicycle facilities providing complete, comfortable, accessible, and safe routes within and between neighborhoods, activity nodes, and jurisdictions in all directions;
- b) Provide on-street bicycle facilities on all arterial and collector roadways, where feasible;
- c) Remove significant bicycling gaps, hazards, and barriers; and,
- d) Encourage bicycle travel for transportation as well as recreational purposes.

COMMENTS

1. Offer bicycle rental near bus routes
2. Include support facilities on trails (restrooms/drinking fountains)
3. Beltways can act as barriers to bicycle/pedestrian movement
4. Parking facilities that offer secure bike storage
5. Provide secure bike storage at bus stops
6. Encourage compact development that would support bicycle and pedestrian movement

PERSONAL MOBILITY

Transit

3. **Goal:** Ensure the availability to move around the area by providing reliable, convenient, and safe public transportation service.

Objective:

- a) Increase public transit's service areas, service frequencies, and hours of operation;
- b) Develop rapid transit services;
- c) Bring passenger rail service to central Iowa;
- d) Develop a downtown tram system;
- e) Identify additional park-and-ride locations with transit services;
- f) Increase transit access to jobs, education, and other community resources
- g) Expand reverse commute opportunities for low-income workers;
- h) Maintain an equitable fare structure;
- i) Improve the accessibility to and around transit facilities for all persons, including those with disabilities or special needs, so they can travel safely and independently;
- j) Increase coordination among transportation providers;
- k) Increase public awareness about transportation options available;
- l) Integrate the transit system with other modes of transportation to provide a multimodal transportation system;
- m) Identify opportunities for intercity bus travel; and,
- n) Development of cross-town routes/suburb-to-suburb routes.

COMMENTS

1. Investigate light rail potential
2. Promote development that limits sprawl and the need for reverse commuting
3. Do not provide federal funds for reverse commuting that draws people out of the city
4. Promote transit as a viable alternative to owning a car in the Des Moines area
5. Offer all day bus passes
6. Provide bike lockers near bus stops
7. Investigate if it is feasible to using existing rail lines for transit purposes
8. Encourage bus routes that do not go through downtown Des Moines – provide transfer hubs
9. Include shelters at bus stops

PERSONAL MOBILITY

Street and Highway

4. **Goal:** Improve and preserve a safe, adequate, and efficient street and roadway system that meets the combined needs of all users for travel within and through the metropolitan planning area.

Objective:

- a) Address the mobility and safety needs of all users (motorists, transit users, bicyclists, pedestrians, including the elderly and children) and acknowledge the regional environment when planning, designing, and constructing roadway transportation improvements;
- b) Integrate year-round bicycle and pedestrian facilities within and through all roadways, coinciding with all street and bridge construction and street and bridge reconstruction projects, where feasible and appropriate, in accordance with the *Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach, A U.S. Department of Transportation Policy Statement Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure*;
- c) Utilize Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to reduce single occupant vehicles (SOV);
- d) Promote Traffic Operational Improvements to reduce congestion over capital intensive strategies;
- e) Maintain an acceptable level of service on metropolitan roadways;
- f) Utilize Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology to reduce congestion;
- g) Modify scoring criteria for Surface Transportation Program projects that include accommodations for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, have a significant amount of multi-modal value, and support compact, pedestrian-, transit-, and bicycle-oriented development to receive extra points; and,
- h) Integrate alternative transportation systems with street and highway systems; intermodal connectivity.

COMMENTS

1. Promote telecommuting to limit users on the roadways, perhaps using free Wi-Fi throughout the city
2. Promote the adoption of 4-day work weeks to limit users on the roadways
3. Adopt a fix it first policy
4. Prevent congestion ahead of time
5. Ensure that funding policies include multi-modal and compact development consideration
6. Provide pedestrian accommodations along all roadways
7. Congestion management applied to single automobiles before attempting other strategies
8. Analyze maintenance and repair costs
9. Don't expand roadways
10. Provide high occupancy vehicle lanes
11. Provide connectivity within neighborhoods to activity nodes
12. Incorporate Safer Street Designs

FREIGHT MOBILITY

5. **Goal:** Promote efficient and reliable goods movement within and through the region.

Objective:

- a) Development of a virtual port and ultimately a physical intermodal facility in the Des Moines area;
- b) Expand air cargo operations at the Des Moines International Airport;
- c) Increase international air cargo flights at the Des Moines International Airport;
- d) Prioritize projects to resolve freight inadequacies identified in existing and future goods movement studies;
- e) Increase the utilization of Foreign Trade Zones;
- f) Identify needs for commercial vehicle parking;
- g) Increase opportunities for international freight movements;
- h) Increase rail usage and intermodal shipments; and,
- i) Development of a north-south rail corridor sufficient for freight movements.

COMMENTS

1. Increase the usage of rail for freight movement
2. Expand freight and economic mobility
3. Promote the movement of local goods internally in an environmentally friendly way

SAFETY AND SECURITY

6. **Goal:** Promote a safe and secure transportation system.

Objective:

- a) Reduce transportation related accidents through a comprehensive 6'E approach that includes engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, equity, and evaluation measures; and,
- b) Identify and address problematic at-grade railroad crossings.
- c) Assist transit providers in offering their patrons safe and secure transit facilities and vehicles;
- d) Promote safe and efficient movement of freight and goods along the region's transportation network to include air transportation, over the road transportation, and rail transportation;
- e) Provide ongoing support for adequate lighting, signing, monitoring of the transportation network, and providing timely responses to transportation related emergencies;
- f) Promote the development of safe and secure bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of a balanced transportation system;
- g) Support the construction and/or restoration of sidewalks, greenways, and other pedestrian facilities;
- h) Support projects designed to reduce bicycle, vehicular, and pedestrian accidents;
- i) Identify and support projects that reduce and/or mitigate the severity of crashes;
- j) Provide for projects designed to reduce fatal accidents; and,
- k) Improve safety that involves education and maintenance of roadways.

COMMENTS

1. Incorporate new technology to increase awareness of accidents on the transportation system and to make motorists aware of emergency vehicles
2. Identify and address problematic at-grade railroad crossings/viaducts
3. Incorporate Dark Skies Initiatives
4. Promote more activities on transportation facilities

SYSTEM INTEGRITY AND PRESERVATION (PHYSICAL SYSTEM)

7. **Goal:** Maintain the metropolitan area's transportation systems in a state of good repair.

Objective:

- a) Preserve and rebuild existing the transportation system to advance safety, expand accessibility, and reduce maintenance costs;
- b) Provide basic bicycle system facilities (i.e., parking, detector loops, signage, lane markings, etc.) and improve accessibility to transit stops;
- c) Improve sidewalks and street crossings through crosswalk design, signal timing, traffic control devices, pedestrian refuge islands, and the use of accessible facilities;
- d) Reduce the number of deficient bridges;
- e) Maintain pavement sufficiency on principle arterials;
- f) Identify and address needed railroad track improvements;
- g) Improve runway sufficiency for air cargo and passenger flights;
- h) Do not exceed Federal guidelines in scheduling bus replacement projects; and,
- i) Identify and construct needed transit facilities (e.g., storage facilities, intermodal centers, and bus stop shelters).

COMMENTS

1. Develop stable sources of funding for transit projects
2. Assess fees to developers and construction companies that damage the physical system when locating to jobs
3. Incorporate new concrete technology as it becomes available
4. Assess fees to assist in maintenance costs

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LAND USE

8. **Goal:** Promote development patterns that support an efficient, quality, multimodal transportation system

Objective:

- a) Identify transit centers/transit-oriented developments/park-and-ride locations in each quadrant of the metropolitan area;
- b) Work with local governments to identify and adjust local development codes to require accommodations transit, pedestrian, and freight transportation;
- c) Encourage compact, mixed-use development, including policies to create transit-oriented development and pedestrian-oriented developments, to reduce the number of trips by car;
- d) Provide more direct and convenient bicycle, pedestrian, and transit routes within and between residential and commercial land uses, employment centers, and other common origins and destinations;
- e) Identify and preserve freight corridors to ensure efficient freight movement;
- f) Identify and address logistics requirements of existing and sought after industries; and,
- g) Identify and address transportation improvements needed to attract new businesses.

COMMENTS

1. Determine if urbanization will continue
2. Create jobs based on the transformation of the current transportation system to a different system
3. View transit as a job generator
4. Sustain the infrastructure currently in place
5. Reduce vehicle miles traveled

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND SOCIAL EQUITY

9. **Goal:** In accordance with Federal planning requirements of SAFETEA-LU; protect, preserve, and enhance the social, cultural, historic, and natural environments of the Des Moines metropolitan area in the transportation planning and project implementation process.

Objective:

- a) Identify potential environmental impacts early in the planning process so that mechanisms for avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating those impacts could be developed well ahead of project implementation;
- b) Develop transportation infrastructure and services that avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse impacts to preserve environmental resources (e.g., air quality, water resources, natural habitats, public lands, recreational areas, cultural/historic resources, sensitive habitats and endangered species, and other environmentally sensitive areas);
- c) Support measures to reduce energy consumption and fossil fuel use and promote the use of alternative fuels;
- d) Incorporate federal Environmental Justice principles in all planning activities to ensure maximum representation for minority, elderly, and low-income populations;
- e) Identify transportation needs of low-income persons, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities;
- f) Increase access to passenger transportation services for persons with low-incomes, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities; and,
- g) Actively solicit input from community groups, businesses, underserved populations, etc. through the DMAMPO's Stakeholders Working Group.

COMMENTS

1. Identify cultural and historical concerns
2. View farmland as an environmental resource
3. Devote less land to the personal automobile
4. Promote good design that limits environmental impacts
5. Ensure good air quality
6. Provide environmental educational efforts
7. Achieve a net carbon/methane reduction
8. Minimize impacts on low-income individuals
9. Turn unused parking lots into parks

EMAILED STATEMENTS

Dear Mr. Kane,

I enjoyed meeting you Thursday evening. I'm not sure what to make of the comments by the audience, since they covered such a wide range of subjects, with some of them short-term, others long term.

I retired from the physics department at Iowa State and from the Ames Lab a few years ago, but still go there about three days per week for research. (I drive there from West Des Moines. I justify this by reminding myself that from 1959 till 1999 I lived in Ames almost exactly one mile from work, and commuted by foot and bike many times.) I have lived in Pavia (Italy), Rome, and Hamburg for periods of up to a year. This was long ago, but I have revisited all these places repeatedly, including in the past three years. European cities remain my view of what American cities should look like (compact, neighborhood and "downtown" shopping, public transportation, etc.), but I realize it is not possible in my lifetime, nor those of my adult children, to undo what developers have done to the geometry of our cities.

My suggestions follow. I suspect that having had a professional staff for a few years, DMAMPO may find nothing new here.

Pedestrians. I am not sure what to say here. I think each street needs a sidewalk on at least one side. In addition to serving pedestrians, they also serve as playgrounds for children. Benches for resting and public toilets? I don't think so. A public toilet out in a residential district is a magnet for vandals, and a possible shelter for sex offenders. France and Italy have nearly eliminated *pissoirs*. Our principal needs are sidewalks and safe places for crossing streets on foot. The infrastructure for pedestrians seems not so bad to me. All we really need is less distance between a home and where we want to go, and the will to walk, if the weather is not too bad.

Traffic. Ignoring the economic issue, I think many of the intersections with 4-way stop signs should get traffic lights. I know these are expensive, but maybe the new LED types are cheaper. They use less power, and perhaps have less maintenance. In the future, organic LEDs will be cheaper yet. The point is that every car must stop at least once at a 4-way-stop intersection, and some may have to stop several times if there is a line of cars. In a simple model, only half the cars need to stop at a traffic light, assuming it is red or green each half of the time. And those that stop need to stop only once. Starting from a stop wastes a lot of fuel. However, if we knew that fuel efficiency of most cars to be on the road in the future, not just a few, will increase dramatically, this becomes less of an issue. On the other hand, if fuel prices keep rising, the cost of traffic signals will not seem so high.

Has anyone every tried to come up with a different kind of traffic signal that might be cheaper but still work as well and as reliably?

There are experiments on avoiding left-hand turns, replacing them by three consecutive right turns (UPS or FedEx in Philadelphia is one.) That does not seem helpful for the region of one-way streets downtown, nor feasible for some parts of Des Moines where the grid of streets is incomplete, but there may be places where it would be useful. (Someone at the meeting suggested continuing more of these "grid streets" through to completion, but with houses on many of the undone sections, that does not seem easy.)

Transit. Park-and-ride is a worthy goal, both for buses and light rail. Do busses go to and from the airport? If so, can one put luggage on them? Does our airport have enough business ever to justify light rail going there?

Freight. A problem not to be solved just in Iowa is all the transcontinental truck traffic. All that stuff should travel by train. Trucks should not haul stuff over such long distances. Unfortunately, our freight-train capacity may be near saturation. Trucks could handle moving things from train depots in four to six

locations in Iowa. If rail freight to Des Moines, as opposed to passing through or near Des Moines, were to become more important a freight-handling facility would need to be build at the edge of Des Moines. Federal, state, and perhaps local policy seems to be to tax the rails as commercial property, but build roads and tax users. Rails are private, Roads are public.

Bikes. When many bikes are ridden to a single destination, security for the parked bikes becomes more important. When large numbers of bikes are parked in one place, it attracts outside professional bike thieves, especially after dark. (This happened at Iowa State a decade or so ago.) Just a bikes and cars often have to share, e.g., at intersections if separate bike trails are available, so do bikes and pedestrians need to learn to share.

Sincerely,

David W. Lynch

Mr. Parris,

I am a long-time observer of the MPO and can no longer attend the public meetings so would like to comment by e-mail instead.

As transportation plans for the future are laid, it is my belief that policies must be developed and adhered to that discourage sprawl. I am realistic enough to know that politicians and developers will continue to want a larger tax base and to buy farmland far in advance of actual construction

In the long run sprawl necessitates extending all infrastructure (sanitary and storm sewers, water.) as well as roads at a very large cost of installation and maintenance. It also means transportation needs must include planning for public transit and alternative modes to discourage single-occupancy car use.

Municipal zoning ordinances should encourage town within the town construction so that residential, commercial and educational facilities are within walking/biking distance. Planning also should accommodate increased use of public transportation by increasing density.

In regard to long distance travel, we need to return to the use of railroads for both commercial and passenger use. Air flight is proving to be unpleasant, unduly expensive and hazardous because of congestion in the skies. Trains are far more fuel efficient and have the potential to even be more convenient. I would like to see passenger routes available that would enable travel both east and west to Chicago and to Omaha. In addition rail should be available for commercial and passengers to both north to Minneapolis and south to Kansas City.

Thank you,

Marilyn E. Staples
3509 Caulder Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa

Mr. Parris:

I appreciate what the DMAMPO is attempting to do for the Des Moines area transportation system. Back in 2001 before the half-billion I-235 updating program was finalized, there were those of us pounding for a light rail system for the area to help solve the growing automobile traffic and urban sprawl morass. In a letter to the DM Register of August 18, 2001, I stressed needed support for a light rail system that instead of the inane \$426 million (final cost?) I-235 "all-in-one-basket," a better solution would have been light rail with communities growing around train stations.

I see the idea of a rail system is still being considered. Please stay with the idea as a benefit to the Des Moines Metro Area as it continues to grow, especially looking to surrounding areas also on the north, south, and east

As to the issue, I met with and commented at a Des Moines meeting of the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration on April 22, 2002 where your Tom Kane attended. In subsequent meetings with Tom he was adamantly in favor of looking into light rail. In the process some of us studied the situation, maps etc.

Our hopes were that in a not too distant future there would be a Des Moines Metro Light Rail System (DMMLRS).

And please DMAMPO do not fail to consider by 2035 an ultimate high speed Des Moines rail hub, not only for the Omaha-Des Moines-Chicago corridor but also Minneapolis-Kansas City, and Minneapolis-St. Louis. The economic and commercial impacts to the DM Metro area (and the State of Iowa) would be fantastic.

In the process, the best to DMAMPO in your efforts. Hopefully much of your planning will prevail.

Sincerely

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WRITTEN STATEMENTS

May 29, 2008

Comments:

- Are young persons ~~on~~ on any of your committees?
- Also support "complete streets" concept
- Integrate "Dark Skies" concepts along all transportation routes + parking lots. - also use LED lighting
 - this is both a safety + aesthetic issue
 - ~~high~~ lights that are too bright actually create spaces that are unsafe because they may be blinding or create dark spaces ~~around~~ in the periphery
 - light pollution is becoming a major aesthetic issue - we can't even see the stars any more!
 - lights should point down, not up (at all)
- Utilize rail for freight over air cargo - the more traffic on those rail lines, the better infrastructure it will demand, which can support improvements for passenger transport

DMAWPO @ DMAWPO.org

May 29, 2008

Comments:

GOAL 1, C ADD following "and provide benches for the use of pedestrian traffic."

GOAL 3, M add "bus and rail travel"

GOAL 3, L "using airport + as transportation hubs."

GOAL 5, H Restore abandoned RR right-of-way to branch line freight + passenger usage."

GOAL 7, F ADD "and conduct potential freight car utilization study to establish fiscal feasibility of reactivating abandoned branch railroad lines."