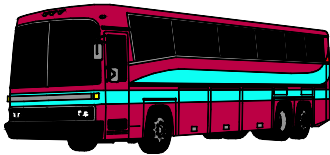
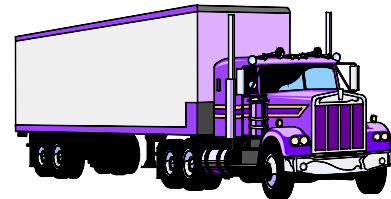
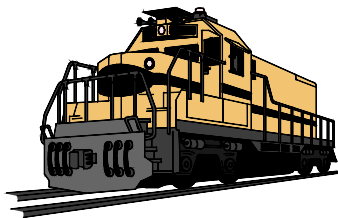
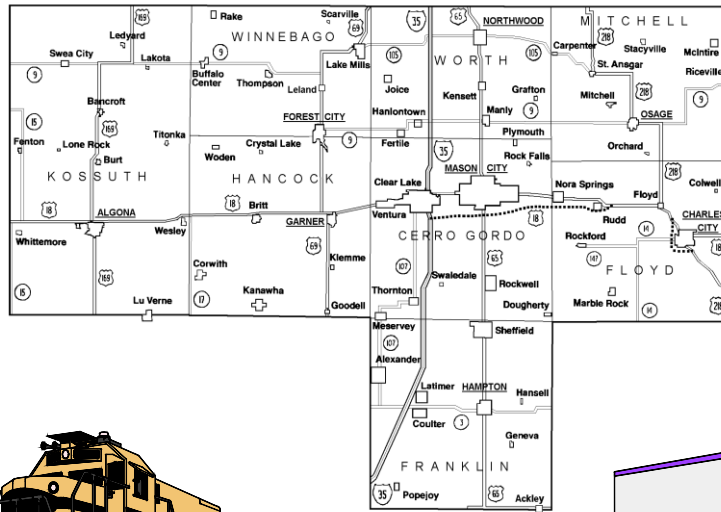


LRTDP

RPA 2 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2015-2035



North Iowa



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I. INTRODUCTION

“Our Nation's economy has been built on a foundation of individual freedoms. Often unheralded but a fundamental source of the economy's strength is our freedom of mobility.” Beyond Gridlock, Advisory Committee on Highway Policy of the 2020 Transportation Program, 1988.

That is the first few lines of the 1993 RPA 2 Long Range Transportation Plan. As true as it was then, it is even more so now. Transportation, in its many and diverse modes is critical not only to the freedom of mobility of people, but to their well-being, emotionally, economically, socially and otherwise. Quality transportation systems are critical to the economic stability of not only this region, state, and country, but to the world. Whether by walking, bicycling, vehicular, transit, the quality and quantity of the infrastructure itself remains as the single most important factor to the health of the “transportation system”.

The State of Iowa is well known for its extensive road network. In many places throughout the state, there is a road every mile, be it a county gravel road, rural paved road or a state highway. Farmers and rural residents are very well supplied with transportation access not only to their homes, businesses and farms, but to grain elevators, feed mills and bio-fuels processors. Also available in rural Iowa is a rural public transportation system that in Region 2 alone provided over 400,000 rides. Urban residents can utilize local roads, trails, sidewalks and urban transit systems as well.

While this extensive access can be a very good thing, it can also create issues for operation and maintenance. As costs continue to increase, all levels of government must thoroughly evaluate the costs and benefits of continuing to maintain this transportation system.

The role Iowa’s transportation system has played in its development is clearly identifiable on an aerial photograph. Cities were laid out on navigable rivers and past rail lines, the regularity of county seats on state highways, the grid pattern of a road every mile in many rural areas. The interdependent relationship between transportation and land use means that decisions made today about the transportation system will not only affect where and how people travel, but how cities, counties, and the state continue to develop. In the RPA 2 Region, the main population centers are county seat communities. These are the areas most likely to see growth and the need for increased transportation capacity.

Thus, an important aspect of maintaining and improving this transportation system is reviewing its current state and planning for future needs based on the system’s condition and societal trends. High growth areas may require new roads or additional capacity, or improvements to public transportation. Routes often used by heavy farm machinery and trucks may require additional maintenance or safety features. Modes of transportation other than vehicles and trucks, such as buses, air, and rail, may become more prevalent based on changing economic conditions.

The aim of the RPA 2 Long Range Transportation Plan is to provide a current view of transportation and infrastructure in the area across different modes. This view will guide the development of a course action for future maintenance and improvement of the system based on anticipated needs and revenues with an approximate horizon year of 2035.

While this Plan is a 20 year document, yearly review of the various elements of the plan will occur with full updates every five years.