

ITEM #:	<u>4</u>
DATE:	<u>05-26-26</u>
DEPT:	<u>AAMPO</u>

TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AMENDMENT

BACKGROUND:

The Public Participation Plan is a federally required document maintained by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) which outlines how the MPO will involve the public in its transportation planning and decision-making processes.

The Ames Area MPO's (AAMPO's) [Public Participation Plan](#), last updated in 2024, includes detailed plan development, public involvement, and amendment processes for each of its five core planning documents:

1. Public Participation Plan (PPP)
2. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
3. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
4. Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)
5. Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)

Currently, the Public Participation Plan dictates that the AAMPO must follow these steps, at a minimum, to amend a core planning document:

1. Review by the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) (amendments to the PTP must also be reviewed by the Transportation Collaboration of Story County)
2. Initial review by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) & setting date of public hearing
3. Minimum 10-day public comment period (45 days for PPP amendments)
4. Public hearing & final approval at a second TPC meeting

Due to the relatively infrequent meeting schedule of the AAMPO's TTC and TPC, the current amendment process often takes a long time to complete without the addition of a special meeting of the TPC, since the amendment must be brought to the TPC twice due to the requirement to hold a public hearing.

In response to the increasing number of requests to amend AAMPO core planning documents, particularly the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), staff has reviewed the public participation procedures utilized by peer MPOs in Iowa and neighboring states and found that **many MPOs do not require a formal public hearing for all amendments to planning documents, including the TIP.** Instead, these MPOs generally provide a public comment

period and consider adoption of amendments during a regularly scheduled committee meeting.

Federal regulations require MPOs to provide adequate public notice, time for public review and comment, and reasonable opportunities to comment on MPO planning documents, but do not specifically require a formal public hearing for all amendments.

As such, **staff is proposing an amendment to the Public Participation Plan to remove the requirement to hold a separate formal public hearing for each amendment to the AAMPO's core planning documents.** Under the proposed amendment process, amendments would still require TTC review, the applicable public comment period, and approval by the TPC at a public meeting.

This change would maintain opportunities for public input while allowing the AAMPO to complete amendments in a more efficient and timely manner and maintain consistency with other peer MPOs in Iowa.

The proposed amendment as it would appear in the Public Participation Plan is attached. **Note, the proposed amendment includes language which preserves the TPC's discretion to require a public hearing prior to final approval for amendments that may warrant additional public review.**

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Set July 14, 2026, as the date of public hearing for the amendment to the Public Participation Plan.
2. Do not amend the Public Participation Plan.

MPO DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposed amendment streamlines the amendment process for the AAMPO's core planning documents by removing the formal public hearing requirement while continuing to provide opportunities for public review and comment consistent with federal public participation requirements and in alignment with other Iowa MPOs. Additionally, the Transportation Technical Committee unanimously recommended its approval. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the MPO Director that the Transportation Technical Committee adopt Alternative No. 1.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Proposed Public Participation Plan Amendment.pdf](#)