

# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

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## TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system is vital to the Greater Des Moines (DSM) economy. Businesses and residents depend on a multi-modal network that connects people to jobs, educational opportunities, businesses and services needed to live healthy, productive lives. Additionally, people are driving less with young professionals preferring to walk, bike, use public transit and fly, while the 65 and older population is growing and demanding mobility options.

However, America's transportation network has been stretched beyond capacity and fallen into disrepair. Currently, 35 percent of the region's roads are in poor or very poor condition and 20 percent of the region's bridges are considered functionally obsolete or structurally deficient. Airports Council International – North America has identified an annual need of \$20 billion to simply maintain existing airports. A decaying transportation system costs the economy more than \$78 billion annually in lost time and fuel. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), nearly one-third of the nation's roads are in poor or mediocre condition and one-fourth of its bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Transportation funding also results in job creation. Each dollar invested in highway construction generates \$1.80 of Gross Domestic Product, and according to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), \$1 billion in federal highway investment plus the state match supports 34,000 jobs, and every dollar invested in public transportation generates roughly \$6 in economic returns. Nationally, airports create 9.6 million jobs. However, increased congestion due to crumbling transportation infrastructure and insufficient capacity disrupts the important connections that businesses rely upon, imposing additional costs on workers and employers.

Accordingly, The Partnership advocates for a comprehensive approach to solving the nation's looming transportation infrastructure crisis. Specifically, The Partnership believes that a multi-modal and intermodal vision must prioritize maintenance of existing facilities, manage capacity, expand alternative modes, reduce congestion and improve the efficient, safe and sustainable movement of goods and people throughout the country and world.

## SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

Investment in the nation's transportation network remains one of the key components of economic recovery and the future. As the demand for transportation increases, the financial resources committed to preserve and invest in needed capacity and service improvements remain inadequate. Additional long-term and reliable investment levels are necessary for Iowa's economic future.

The Partnership will continue to work with Congress, the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA), local governments and other key partners to strategically identify and prioritize regional surface transportation projects. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the following:

- A national transportation authorization program utilizing federal funding that allows states the flexibility to accomplish national goals within state priorities.
- Increased federal transportation funding to Iowa. The Partnership advocates against reductions in federal funding or redirection of funds to larger metropolitan centers outside the state. The Partnership also supports increased flexibility in the use of federal funds by local communities.



# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

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- Continued improvements to the existing Highway Trust Fund, which finances roughly one-quarter of all public highway and mass transit spending in the U.S. The Partnership supports the development of a sustainable, dedicated and sufficient funding solution for the Highway Trust Fund to ensure federal resources are adequate for the ongoing needs of transportation infrastructure.
- A transportation reauthorization (preferably a 5-year reauthorization) to support critical transportation infrastructure. The reauthorization bill should include the following:
  - Protections against unfunded mandates that at expenditures at the state and local level.
  - Making funding available for all modes of transportation including public transportation and critical infrastructure maintenance.
  - Maintaining federal infrastructure programs, such as the Better Utilizing Infrastructure to Leverage Development (BUILD), and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant programs.
- The use of value capture as a public financing tool to recover a share of the value created by public transportation investment (i.e., tax increment financing, special assessments, land value tax).
- Designating the U.S. 65/Iowa 5 beltway, also known as the Purple Heart Highway, as part of the U.S. Interstate System. Designating this part of the beltway as an interstate would open up economic development opportunities for communities along the route and help to defer congestion on the existing interstate system in the metro area. Designation must be approved by both the Federal Highway Administration and the Iowa DOT. Although no new construction is necessary, new signage and a minimum speed limit would be required, and future maintenance and upgrade responsibilities will need to occur.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The Partnership supports policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of emerging transportation technologies. These technologies include, but are not limited to, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, transportation network companies and vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure Smart City technology necessary for autonomous vehicles.

Additionally, The Partnership supports federal policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of electric vehicles, including policies that simplify the establishment of more charging stations nationwide.

## **COMPLETE STREETS**

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act made significant strides in directing states and metros to build safer streets by including Complete Streets policy in federal surface transportation for the first time. The Partnership supports continued federal support for Complete Streets, including increased flexibility



# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

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to allow multimodal transportation amenities on streets and roadways. The Partnership also supports design standards like the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide, that focus on design streets for all users.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

As Congress and the Administration consider the FY 2020 appropriations process and an infrastructure package, The Partnership encourages further investment in public transit and mobility options. With one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, more and more businesses are turning to public transportation as a way to help attract and retain employees. Specifically, The Partnership supports:

- Increasing funding to the Bus and Bus Facilities program through the FY20 Appropriations process to \$900 million, which is equal to the FY12, pre-FAST Act amount.
  - Grant programs targeting bus transit have a strong return on investment for localities. For example, the federal grant program that resulted in DART Central Station allowed for the revitalization of the Walnut Street corridor and a safer, more attractive transfer facility for customers.
- Action on a robust Infrastructure Package that includes \$7.42 billion in federal funding for bus transit programs. Unfortunately, 57 percent of the public transit vehicles in Iowa are past their useful lives, reducing the dependability of public transit and increasing maintenance costs. At an average cost of \$600,000 per bus and factoring in a 20 percent local match, it would take \$151 million to replace all of these buses.

## **AVIATION**

The Partnership supports the Des Moines International Airport's Terminal Concept Plan to create an airport that keeps up with Iowa's growing corporate aviation and commercial passenger demand. The Des Moines International Airport has a \$644 million annual economic impact on the State of Iowa. The Partnership believes that as the current facility comes to the end of its useful economic life that it is imperative to invest in a facility and space that accommodates DSM's economic growth and allows the flexibility that the airport will need in the future.

The Partnership also supports the efforts of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to work with the Des Moines International Airport and Ankeny Regional Airport to fund capital improvement projects. The Partnership requests the Airport Improvement Program funding be increased to \$3.8 billion from the current \$3.35 billion and encourages Congress to make timely appropriations of the Airport Improvement Program funds necessary for the capital improvement projects.

Specifically, the Ankeny Regional Airport requests \$1.7 million for land acquisition for the Runway 18 Approach Protection and Future Runway Extension and \$786,000 for Rehabilitation of Runway 18/36.

Accordingly, The Partnership supports:

- Increasing the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC). PFCs are not a tax, but instead a user fee charged to passengers using the airport. PFCs have no impact on the federal budget, as the fees are collected by the



# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

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airlines and returned directly to the airport for use on projects that are approved by both the FAA and the airlines.

- Ensuring the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office fully staffs its office at the Des Moines International Airport by adding staff positions to match staffing levels with other comparable airports in the Midwest, such as Omaha (four full-time employees) and Sioux Falls (two full-time employees).
- Continue the intermittent processing of Global Entry applications in Des Moines.

## **RAIL**

The Partnership supports extending high-speed passenger service connecting Chicago, the Quad Cities, Iowa City, DSM, Council Bluffs and Omaha, studying the extension of high-speed passenger rail service from Minneapolis-St. Paul to DSM to Kansas City, and continued enhanced federal investment in high-speed passenger rail funding.

The Partnership supports the enactment of an infrastructure investment tax credit for, and opposes the re-regulation of, the freight rail industry.

## **TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

The Partnership annually develops a list of priority transportation projects of importance to the region. This list is intended to keep Iowa's Congressional Delegation and the DOT apprised of key transportation investments planned for the region, should additional federal resources become available. The list of transportation projects identified by and approved by The Partnership Government Policy Committee is included on the following page.

# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

2019 MPO/Greater Des Moines Partnership Priority Transportation Projects				
ID	Sponsor	Project	Description	Total Cost
1	City of Ankeny	West First Street Widening and Improvements - Phase 1	Reconstruct 4-lane arterial street to a 5-lane PCC section with raised medians, new traffic signals, a transit bus turn-out stop and 8' shared use sidewalk.	\$6,900,000
2	City of Carlisle	Scotch Ridge Road and Highway 5 Improvements	Improvements to Scotch Ridge Road from Highway 5 to Bellflower Drive to add turn lanes and traffic signals at the intersection with Bluestem Drive and a roundabout intersection at the Middle School. Improvements to the Highway 5 and Scotch Ridge Road intersection include adding turn lanes and pedestrian crossings to the intersection.	\$3,249,000
3	City of Windsor Heights	University Avenue, 69th to 73rd Street	Narrowing existing street from four to three lanes to slow traffic and include various streetscape improvements.	\$6,689,723
4	City of Des Moines and City of Pleasant Hill	SE Connector	Four-lane complete street connecting Downtown Des Moines to US-65.	\$50,000,000
5	Des Moines International Airport	New Terminal	The development of a new 14-gate terminal at the existing airport.	\$500,000,000
6	Iowa Department of Transportation	I-35 in Ankeny from IA 160/Oralabor Road to NE 36th Street (4-Year. Project, plus FY21 erosion control)	Construct auxiliary lanes from IA 160 to First Street; Reconfigure First Street Interchange; Widen to six lanes from First Street to NE 36th Street.	\$20,292,000 (FY20) \$51,304,000 (FY17-20)
7	Polk County and City of Ankeny	NW 26th Street Reconstruction Project	Reconstruction of NW 26th Street including widening from a 2-lane rural roadway to a 5-lane urban roadway from NW 66th Avenue to Oralabor Road in Ankeny.	\$6,750,000
8	Polk County and City of Des Moines	Broadway Avenue Multi-Modal Improvement Project	Reconstruction of 5.2-mile two-lane rural minor arterial to a three-lane urban road with an underpass below UP Railroad, fixing minimal clearance under I-235 bridge, and adding a paved trail connecting more than 50 miles of regional trails together. Includes storm water runoff cleansing amenities and improved traffic signal system.	\$39,891,000
9	City of West Des Moines	Grand Avenue, 1st Street to 6th Street	Widen existing street to accommodate turn lanes and various street-scape improvements.	\$5,586,440

# 2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

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10	City of West Des Moines	8th Street, I-235 to Clegg Rd	Widen existing street to accommodate turn lanes and various pedestrian enhancements.	\$4,570,000
11	City of Ankeny	High Trestle Trail Regional Trail Connection	Extension of the High Trestle Regional Trail within SE Ankeny to connect with the Gay Lea Wilson Trail and Neal Smith Trail System. Includes 10-foot PCC trail and two overpasses.	\$2,400,000
12	City of West Des Moines	Raccoon River Pedestrian East Trail Bridge	Pedestrian bridge across the Raccoon River between Raccoon River Park and Walnut Woods State Park.	\$5,000,000
13	City of West Des Moines/City of Windsor Heights	73rd Street/8th Street Trail Connection	Trail to connect Windsor Heights and West Des Moines at 73rd Street/8th Street	\$2,500,000
14	City of West Des Moines	Sugar Creek Greenway Trail	Trail along Sugar Creek to connect Waukee and West Des Moines	\$8,000,000