

CRDS 2040 Connections

March 9, 2017

Comprehensive Regional Development Strategy 2040

This document was prepared by the East Central Iowa Council of Governments on behalf of the Region 10 Regional Planning Affiliation and the Economic Development District.

ECICOG would like to thank the members of the Policy Committee, TTAC, PTAC, RTAC, and members of the Regional Vision Rising process, including members of the executive committee, the steering committee, and the technical advisory committee, and Steve Kappler for their work and assistance.

This report was funded in part through grant(s) from the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the authors or agency expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U. S. Department of Transportation.

As a recipient of Federal financial assistance, East Central Iowa Council of Governments has instituted a Title VI program to address nondiscrimination laws that impact transportation investment decision making. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, related statutes and policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, and disability in the Agency's programs, activities, and services.

Table of Contents

To be prepared

WHAT is CRDS 2040

Overview

The East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) is a regional planning agency that provides planning and technical assistance to local governments in Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington Counties. Solid waste planning and transportation planning services are also provided in Tama and Cedar Counties, respectively. Transportation planning services are also offered to Cedar County, however transit services for Cedar County are operated by River Bend Transit from Davenport. ECICOG was established in 1973 under Chapter 28E, and is designated as the planning agency for the six-county region under Chapter 28H of the Code of Iowa.

Economic Development District (EDD)

Governed by a board of directors composed of elected officials and private citizens, ECICOG is also designated as a federal EDD by the Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration. EDDs were created by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to organize and assist with the implementation of economic development activities within their regions. A primary function of EDD is the development and maintenance of a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA)

ECICOG also staffs the Region 10 RPA. Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) established 18 RPAs to allow for local participation in the State's federally-mandated transportation planning process. The RPAs complement the nine Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) that conduct transportation planning activities in the urban areas with more than 50,000 population. These include the urban areas of Ames, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City, Sioux City, and Waterloo. RPAs conduct transportation planning for the non-metropolitan areas of the state and cover all 99 counties. The role of the RPA is to coordinate transportation planning activities for the region, this includes preparing plans and studies, including a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), programming projects that federal transportation funds, and assisting cities and counties with grant applications. The Region 10 RPA includes the traditional six counties that ECICOG serves, as well as Cedar County. The RPA is governed by a Policy Committee comprised of two elected officials from each of the participating counties. Policy Committee representatives are appointed by each of the affiliated county boards of supervisors. The Policy Committee has also established three advisory committees to assist in the planning process:

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)- The TTAC is comprised of three representatives from each county in the Region 10 area. They are appointed by the Board of Supervisors to three-year terms. The committee is comprised of persons with transportation knowledge or expertise to provide recommendations to the Region 10 Policy Committee regarding transportation planning and programming issues for the seven-county area.

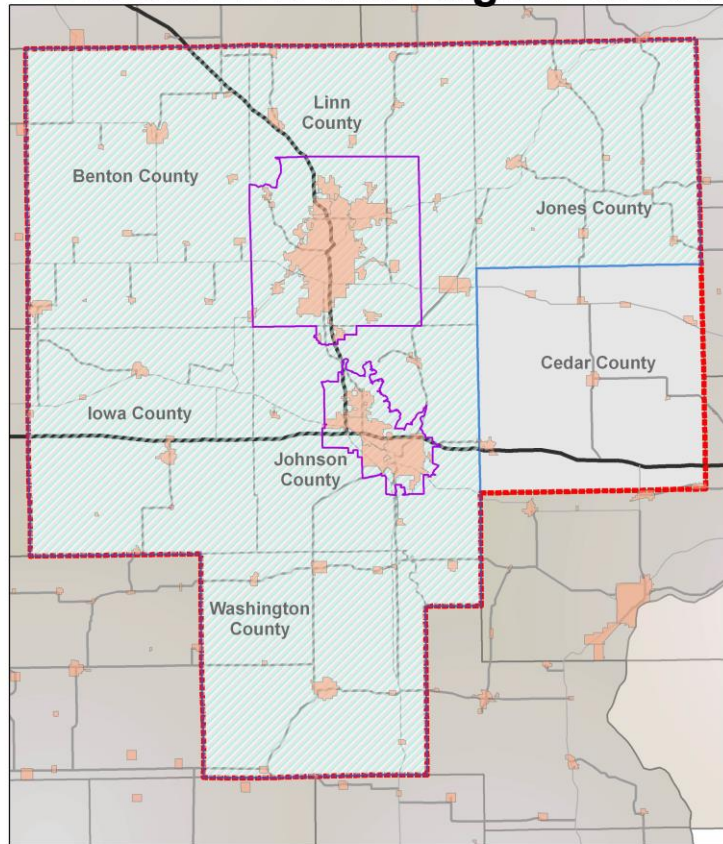
Passenger Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC)- The PTAC is comprised of two representatives from each county in the Region 10 area. They are appointed by the Board of Supervisors to two-year terms. The committee is comprised of persons with passenger

transportation knowledge or expertise to provide recommendations to the Region 10 Policy Committee regarding transit planning and programming issues for the seven-county region. It is recommended that the appointments include someone representing the local transit operation (transit manager) and someone representing human services (county central point of coordination).

Regional Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC) - The RTAC is comprised of two representatives from each county in the Region 10 area. They are appointed by the Board of Supervisors to two-year terms. The committee is comprised of persons with trails knowledge or expertise to provide recommendations to the Region 10 Policy Committee regarding trails planning and prioritization for the seven-county region.

Figure 1.1 ECICOG EDD and Region 10 RPA

ECICOG EDD and Region 10 RPA



MPO Boundaries
 ECICOG
 RPA 10

EDD

The EDD is government by the ECICOG Board of Directors. The EDD boundary includes Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington Counties. The Cedar Rapids and Iowa City metropolitan areas are also included within the EDD's boundary.

RPA

The RPA is governed by a Policy Committee comprised of local elected officials, and advised by three technical committees – the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), the Passenger Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC), and the Regional Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC). Current committee members are noted in Appendix G.

The RPA boundary includes Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington Counties. It does not include the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City metropolitan areas.

CRDS

In 2011, ECICOG completed the Comprehensive Regional Development Strategy (CRDS) to link economic and transportation initiatives, including the required elements for the CEDS and LRTP, into an overall regional strategy. Partnering with the Region 10 Regional Planning Affiliation, Corridor Business Alliance (CBA), and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee, ECICOG prepared the CRDS to guide the economic development, and transportation planning process for the Region 10 area.

A plan update is required every five years. The CRDS update, known as CRDS 2040, will once again serve as a joint document and overall regional strategy, and will be combined with a local strategic planning effort known as *Regional Vision Rising*. Where possible, public input from the *Regional Vision Rising* process will be incorporated into this update, including regional assessment information developed by Market Street Consultants.

CEDS

The CEDS results from a comprehensive strategic planning process and is designed to serve as a guide for local practitioners seeking to leverage their region's assets, create thriving clusters of innovation, and address potential threats to economic stability and growth. It describes regional assets, assesses opportunities, and addresses regional challenges over a five-year horizon. The document is developed to be consistent with section 302 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 3162) and EDA regulations at 13 C.F.R. part 303 governing CEDS development.

LRTP

The regional LRTP is a long range (20+ years) strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in multi-modal transportation facilities within the context of the regional vision. The regional plan provides the context from which the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a short-range capital improvement program for implementing transportation projects, is drawn. The regional plan is updated every five years in consultation with interested parties. The document is prepared in accordance with the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) Section 302 23 C.F.R. Parts 450 .

Transportation Planning Within the Region

Three agencies are responsible for transportation planning in Region 10: the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG), the MPO of Johnson County, and the Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). These three agencies work together to coordinate transportation planning functions within the region; however, planning activities are divided among these agencies as follows:

ECICOG

The East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) works closely with the County Boards of Supervisors, Policy Committee members, and TTAC members from the seven participating counties. Most recently, the RTAC was created to provide input regarding trail planning and regional Transportation Alternative Program project prioritization. In addition, the



PTAC was created to provide input for the passenger transportation process. ECICOG prepares the *Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)*, the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*, the *Long Range Transportation Plan*, the *Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)*, and other special studies as appropriate. In addition, ECICOG is responsible for the preparation of the region's *Public Involvement Plan (PIP)*, the preparation of the public transit grant applications, and functions as the administrative agency for the regional transit system. The RPA and CRDS 2040 address transportation topics in the seven-county area, outside of the two MPOs noted below.

MPO of Johnson County

This is the designated MPO to provide transportation planning services for the University of Iowa and the cities of Coralville, Iowa City, University Heights, North Liberty, and Tiffin. The transportation planning activities are conducted by the Transportation Planning Division and include the annual preparation of the TPWP, TIP, and specialized reports, which address relevant transportation issues confronting the Iowa City Urbanized Area. The MPO of Johnson County is also responsible for the preparation of all federal and state grant applications for the three urbanized transit systems in the area.



Corridor MPO

This is the designated MPO for the Cedar Rapids Urbanized Area, which includes the Cities of Cedar Rapids, Marion, Ely, Fairfax, Hiawatha, and Robins. Corridor MPO is responsible for the preparation of the *Unified Work Plan Program* and the TIP for the metropolitan area. Corridor MPO is also responsible for coordinating public transit planning and grant activities with Cedar Rapids Transit, the urbanized public transit system.



The Planning Process

As noted above, during the 2011 planning process, ECICOG partnered with the CBA to develop one document, known as the CRDS, to serve the interests of both organizations. Given the success of the earlier process, the two organizations intended to replicate it to develop the required five-year update, with the CBA taking the lead role. The update process, tentatively known as *Regional Vision Rising*, got underway in November 2015 under the facilitation of Market Street consultants who were tasked with completing stakeholder input, developing a regional assessment, completing a regional economic analysis, identifying a regional vision, and compiling a regional report. Market Street completed the first two tasks, and then the CBA changed its course and contracted with Steve Kappler, a local consultant to complete the remaining steps. The planned timeline for the *Regional Vision Rising* process was extended due to the change in direction, and become incompatible with ECICOG's timeline to complete their five-year update, so the joint process split. ECICOG effort, CRDS 2040, will focus on requirements specific to the CEDS and LRTP. The partners agreed to continue to share content and information, and to meet when both processes are complete to re-align both efforts, if possible. In addition, the established *Regional Vision Rising* committee members agreed to continue in their advisory role to the CRDS 2040 process. Keeping all of this in mind, the following is a summary of the regional planning process.

Getting the Right People to the Table

Combining the EDD and LRTP, coordinating the CBA's effort, and hiring a project consultant required the participation of large numbers of people, as well as more direct guidance from a smaller committee. CBA established an executive committee comprised of the United Way of East Central Iowa, the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, Metro Economic Alliance, Iowa City Area Development, and ECICOG to lead the initial

effort. CBA also established a Steering Committee and Technical Committee (both committees included members of the RPA's policy and advisory committees) to provide more detailed commentary on the materials prepared by Market Street. Over 80 people, from both the public and private sectors, served on the established committees.

Developing the Overall Direction for the Plan

In November 2015, Market Street held a meeting with executive committee members to discuss the direction and timeline for the plan. The direction for the plan was rooted in CBA's internal planning process, but also took into account planning guidance provided by EDA and Iowa DOT. Public input opportunities were structured to meet the regulatory requirements of the CEDS and LRTP.

Identifying Key Trends, Regional Analysis, and Critical Issues

From November 2015-February 2016, Market Street compiled demographic data, toured the area, and launched an online survey which was available to the general public from throughout the seven-county area. Over 2,000 survey responses were submitted. In addition, Market Street held focus group meetings with economic development professionals and stakeholder interviews with the areas larger employers and elected officials. The result of this work was the development of a regional assessment which provided a regional analysis, and outlined key trends and critical issues. The regional assessment was presented to all committee members for discussion and refinement.

Alternatives to Address Critical Issues and Action Planning

The Executive Committee and ECICOG have lead the process to develop critical issues and action planning related to the economic development portions of this plan, working in consultation with the Steering and Technical Committees. More detailed work and discussion related to economic development will continue throughout 2017, and will be incorporated into CRDS 2040 when complete.

The identification of critical issues and action planning related to workforce development was recently completed and discussed in the *Regional Workforce Plan* prepared by Kirkwood Community College on behalf of regional partners. Their work has been incorporated into the workforce development portions of CRDS 2040.

ECICOG has been responsible for completing the portion of CRDS 2040 related to the development of community development critical issues and action planning, including transportation. Where possible, ECICOG has incorporated work from prior regional planning efforts related to housing, watersheds, and resilience. Transportation issues and actions plans were developed in consultation with the Policy Committee, TTAC, PTAC, and RTAC.

Fiscal Plan

The fiscal plan is only required of the LRTP, and as such, was only developed for the transportation portion of the plan. These projects and costs were identified by input received from the region's county engineers, and the TTAC, PTAC, and RTAC. The transportation funding outlook was estimated using 2016 expenditure and revenue figures provided by Iowa DOT. Draft figures were compiled by the ECICOG staff and presented to the Policy Committee for review.

Public Involvement

Multiple opportunities for public involvement were provided during the preparation of CRDS 2040, which included the online survey, focus group meetings, and stakeholder interviews completed by Market Street. The Steering and Technical Committees held four meetings in 2016 to review reports and public input summaries prepared by the consultant. The Policy Committee met monthly to discuss project updates, and provide an opportunity for public comment. ECICOG also provided regular updates on the agency website and in the agency newsletter. In addition, the draft document was made available to the public for nearly three months, and two public hearings were held prior to adoption of the plan.

Final Document Preparation

Comments from the public comment period, ideas received from the Regional Vision Rising and RPA committees, and suggestions from Iowa DOT were discussed by the ECICOG staff and Policy Committee, and incorporated into the final document as feasible.

Revision/Amendment Process

CRDS 2040 will be updated at least every five years, as prescribed by both the Iowa DOT and EDA. In addition, ECICOG may revise the plan at any time, at the direction of the Policy Committee, to reflect changes in the planning environment, related goals and/or objectives, or financial outlook. The process to revise or amend the document will conform to the procedures outlined in the region's *Public Involvement Plan*, specifically including a 15 day public comment period prior to adoption. CRDS 2040 (and any revision or amendment) will be reviewed and approved by the ECICOG Board and Policy Committee, and copies will be provided to EDA, Iowa DOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).