

July/ August 2011 -Mayor Report

1)The members of the Urbanized Area Policy Board voted unanimously at the July 13th meeting to approve sending a similar letter of support (listed below) to area legislators and recommend that each MPO community do the same. This letter is regarding new threshold designation language that *may* be included in the next surface transportation legislation bill. Potential changes include a provision that would eliminate MPOs with populations less than 200,000. Grandfathering provisions for existing MPOs are unclear. Should Congress elect to adopt these new provisions, approximately 220 of the 385 MPOs nationwide (including MPOJC) could be eliminated. The result of this action would presumably shift a large, unfunded, burden to local government, the state and/or adjacent MPOs and drastically reduce our community's ability to program federal capital funds, manage transit operations assistance funding, and conduct meaningful long range transportation planning.

Below is a sample of the letter suggested to send to area legislators. I have edited below for the City of University Heights. Let me know at Tuesday's meeting if you want to edit any specific items. I would like to ask the city council to consider approval of sending this letter of support.

Dear Legislator:

The Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County (MPOJC) provides essential transportation planning services to more than 100,000 residents in the Cities of Iowa City, Coralville, North Liberty, Tiffin, University Heights and the University of Iowa (as well as portions of unincorporated Johnson County), and programs several million dollars in federal funding annually.

The purpose of this correspondence is to register the City of University Heights serious concerns related to new threshold designation language that may be included in the next surface transportation legislation bill. Proposed changes include a provision that would eliminate MPOs with populations less than 200,000 with no grandfathering provision for existing MPOs. Should Congress elect to adopt these new provisions, approximately 220 of the 385 MPOs nationwide (including MPOJC) would be eliminated. The result of this action would presumably shift a large, unfunded, burden to either the State or adjacent MPOs and drastically reduce our community's ability to conduct meaningful transportation planning, programming, and related services.

As required under U.S Code Title 23, Chapter 1, Section 134, MPOs are responsible for carrying out federally required transportation planning activities that include, but are not limited to, the development of long-range multimodal transportation plans, selection of transportation improvements in a fiscally constrained manner, public outreach, and coordination of numerous public and citizen interests. MPOJC has had a strong multi-modal focus, with planning and programming of the metropolitan trails and wide sidewalk network, a complete streets policy, and coordinated transit systems with the highest ridership in the State of Iowa. MPOJC also coordinates arterial street planning, programming of improvements, and traffic signal timings within the metropolitan area.

As Congress debates the reauthorization of surface transportation legislation, we would like to encourage you to act to retain all existing MPOs under 200,000 in population, regardless of any new MPO threshold designation changes that may be included in future legislation. While we agree that certain changes in law may be necessary to improve the planning process, all existing MPOs must remain in operation to continue their critical roles in planning and programming for the movement of people and goods that support our economy and provide healthy communities in which we live.

Sincerely,
Louise From, Mayor
City of University Heights

2) The MPO-JC is forming a committee to discuss and make recommendation on future transit needs in the Iowa City Urbanized Area. The committee's two main goals are to determine where we want to be in terms of transit service in the next 20 years and what steps should be taken to get there. Each MPO-JC Board voting entity is being asked to appoint one person to the committee by Sept. 2. They suggest that the appointee have some knowledge or interest in transit and be available for monthly meetings. The appointee does not need be an

elected official. Please let me know if any member of the public or council member is interested by Sept. 1st. Let me know if you need further information about specifics needs of this transit committee. There are also two at-large positions on the committee that need to fill out an application that I can provide to anyone that maybe interested.

Note**I wanted to note an apparent change in apportionment of the FY13-15 STP/TE funds during TTAC and Urbanized Area Policy Board Meetings. The federal funding dollars available are down. This time we had \$5.5 million available for \$20+ million STP/TE project requests. In visiting with Board members several said to me they think the “days of the 80%- 20% federal match is probably a thing of the past”. This time around each city entity that was granted monies was around the 60% federal funding-40% municipal funding match level. Each city scores higher for receiving funding if they increase their contribution.

Figures from Johnson County Refuse about University Heights (366 pickups) and comparative towns

	Tons	Percentage of Total	Tons	Percentage of Total	Total Tons
U Heights	GARBAGE		RECYCLING		
July 2009 - June 2010	172.30	62%	103.59	38%	275.89
July 2010 - June 2011 366 residents	167.89	61%	108.73	39%	276.62
Lone Tree					
July 2009 - June 2010	191.77	73%	70.37	27%	262.14
July 2010 - June 2011 464 residents	182.86	68%	84.16	32%	267.02
Riverside					
July 2009 - June 2010	123.97	71%	50.18	29%	174.15
July 2010 - June 2011 357 residents	117.93	71%	48.98	29%	166.91
Shellsburg					
July 2009 - June 2010	191.23	78%	52.49	22%	243.72
July 2010 - June 2011 353 residents	191.02	80%	48.97	20%	239.99