

Questions and Answers

MPO/RPA Quarterly
September 21, 2022


Q:

(To Systems Planning Bureau)

As we prepare to submit our SS4A planning grant application, we have been researching existing safety planning information. We came across this draft [Safety Analysis Guide](#) from Iowa DOT Traffic & Safety and it looks to be really useful. Could you let us know when this report may be finalized?


A:

Iowa DOT Traffic & Safety said that it is their hope that it will be finalized by the end of the year. A few of the district offices are beta testing the guide with some of their projects.

The change from draft to final may include a few tweaks as a result of the district testing; however, feel free to reference or use the draft in the meantime.

Q:

(To Program Management)

I received a call from an engineer working with a city on a streetscape enhancement project. They are designing the project this year, and the city plans to pursue grants to fund the project. The city currently does not have the money to fund it, thus the programming year is questionable. The engineer mentioned he wished to obtain a TPMS account to submit concept drawings to the Iowa DOT for approval, since the city eventually will pursue grant funds. Does he need a TPMS account to do this?

He made it seem like he needed the project in the TIP to gain access to TPMS to then submit concept drawings? Not sure how the process goes, so I thought I'd reach out for some clarification. I let him know that since the project is not fiscally constrained, it is too early to be amended in the TIP.

A:

A project has to be programmed before it will show up in the Project Development side of TPMS so the engineer you were talking to was correct.

The first issue is getting it programmed by the agency, so once the TIP is updated/amended, then they could activate the project in TPMS on the Project Development side to submit concept drawings. Because they want to start developing a project that has zero funding and is not programmed, the project could be added to the TIP as an illustrative project. Leaving the entry as "In Prep" should allow the project to be activated in TPMS Development.

Q:

(To Systems Planning Bureau)

I read the transit update slides from the last MPO/RPA quarterly meeting but I would like to know if Blackcat is going to replace the existing Transit TPMS, or is it something different?

A:

Blackcat is different than Transit TPMS.

Blackcat is the contract and inventory management system for the transit agencies that is used for managing vehicles and grant funds, while Transit TPMS is where transit projects are programmed for the TIP.

Q:

(To Systems Planning Bureau)

I had a question about transit summit meetings that we are required to have every year. In the past, it was recommended to us to go out and present to established groups to solicit feedback on transit issues. There is a promising human services group in our area that meets via Zoom every month. Would presenting to this group virtually count as one of our mobility summits? I'm looking for alternative groups, but this one seemed promising.

A:

Yes, a human services group meeting can definitely count to fulfill the minimum two transportation advisory group (TAG) meetings. That said, the meetings are intended to represent the interests of your organizations' entire region. So if this group only represents a half portion of your area, then you will need to find a way to ensure the other half portion is covered as well. Then both of these "halves" would count as one, if that makes sense.

There are no issues with staff presenting to this group virtually, but you will need to make sure that transportation topics appear in the minutes of the meeting you attend in order to document it. It doesn't have to be a majority of the meeting, but it should be there somewhere, as we are looking for transportation-related discussions rather than human service meeting minutes.


Q:

(To Systems Planning Bureau)

I received a voicemail and an email today from a sales rep for urbansdk and they would like to talk next week. In the email they imply working with other MPOs and RPAs and on the voicemail working with IDOT. Do you know anything about urbansdk and whether IDOT uses it? Just curious whether this person was being completely honest or cold-calling trying to get someone to talk to for a sale.


A:

I have checked with others in the office, and we have not used UrbanSDK, nor are we aware of others in the bureau or division using it either; however, it is possible that someone in all of the DOT has. Jeff VonBrown noted that if UrbanSDK are working with MPOs, he thought his team would have heard about it by now.

Hope that helps.


Q:

(To Systems Planning Bureau)

We had a request from a city about purchasing an old bridge to be used for bike-ped use. I'm not familiar with the program and I'm curious if you could tell me what the name of the program is and if there is any more information or a website on it.


A:

There is a DOT webpage on Historic Bridges of Iowa ([see link](#)).

It notes that Iowa DOT and its local transportation partners are making available these historic bridges for reuse. More information on the webpage notes that proposals for their reuse should be submitted to the respective contacts for each bridge listed. It also notes that TAP funds can be used to aid in the relocation/adoption of historic bridges, so please reach out to your District Planner and the TAP grant program administrator (Susan Hollenkamp) for more information.

Q:

(To Traffic & Safety Bureau)

We are applying for two SS4A grants to create safety plans for the MPO and RPA regions. We assume that we will receive \$12,000 for each plan from Iowa DOT. I am requesting that you provide a letter confirming the match for each plan so we can submit this for the grant.

A:

Traffic & Safety will make up to \$12,000 of funding available to an MPO safety action plan and up to \$12,000 of funding available to an RPA safety action plan for your area.