

Public Participation Plan

October

2023

Come SIT With Us!

Southern Iowa Trolley



Southern Iowa Trolley serves the counties of Adams, Adair, Clarke, Decatur, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union Counties in Southwest Iowa

www.southerniowatrolley.org | 215 E. Montgomery St., Creston IA 50801 | 1-866-782-6571

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Board Reviewed Approved: 10.26.2023

Southern Iowa Trolley

Southern Iowa Trolley (Region 14) is in southwest Iowa and consists of the seven counties of Adams, Adair, Clarke, Decatur, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union. As of the 2020 census, the total population of region 14 is 51,454.

The Southern Iowa Trolley Board shall be composed of one (1) Supervisor from each of the following counties: Adams, Adair, Clarke, Decatur, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union. Each Southern Iowa Trolley Policy Board member shall be appointed on a yearly basis by their respective Board of Supervisors.

Goals

- **Transparency:**
 - The process will clearly identify and communicate where and how participants can have influence and direct impact on decision-making.
 - Solicit, accept, and expend funds for the purpose set forth above and in accordance with the organization's 28E Agreement.
 - Identify and assess local and regional public transportation needs and changing conditions and to provide a forum of those changes
 - Provide and promote transportation for elderly, disabled, low-income individuals, LEP, commuters and the public in Adams, Adair, Clarke, Decatur, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union Counties.
- **Participation:** Southern Iowa Trolley customers and the public will have opportunities to participate in key decisions such as having multiple options for how they receive critical information and share feedback.
- **Accessibility:** Every effort is made to ensure that opportunities to participate are physically, geographically, and linguistically accessible.
- **Diversity of input:** Participants represent a range of socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural perspectives, with representative participants including residents from low-income neighborhoods, ethnic communities and residents with limited English proficiency, and other traditionally underserved people.

Principals

- **Proactive and Timely** – Participation methods will be ongoing and proactive so participants can influence decisions.
- **Tailored** – Every effort will be made to match local and cultural preferences.
- **Communication of Results** – Southern Iowa Trolley will communicate the factors in the decision making to those giving input. In addition, staff will communicate the results of the public input in terms of the impact on decisions at a broad summary level the decisions reached and rationale for those decisions.

Public Involvement

Public Participation is an open process which seeks out and encourages early and continuous public involvement throughout the development of transportation plans and projects. As part of the transportation planning process, Southern Iowa Trolley encourages citizen input.

The Southern Iowa Council of Governments Transportation Planning Agency (ATURA) and Chariton

Valley Planning & Development Council of Governments (CVTPA) are committed to the availability of timely, complete information; to the notification of and public access to the decision-making process; and to ongoing public involvement throughout the transportation planning process including, but not limited to, the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Both planning agencies aim to identify methods for obtaining public input and encouraging public involvement in the transportation planning process. The TIPs are the responsibility of ATURA and CVTPA.

Public Input

The methods described in the Public Participation Plan cover a range of ways in which Southern Iowa Trolley engages with its customers and the public. Southern Iowa Trolley understands that decisions about budgets as well as reduction in services or increase in fares are of particular importance, and therefore Southern Iowa Trolley has the following guidelines when considering such changes:

- **Major Service Changes and Fare Changes**

Southern Iowa Trolley will solicit public input on major service reductions and fare changes. A major service reduction is defined as decreases that represent a net loss of fifty percent (50%) or more of total service miles or fifty percent (50%) or more of transit hours on any individual service. Major service reductions and fare changes will meet the following public input requirements:

- Changes will be published for public review and comment no less than 45 days before the proposed changes.
- A minimum of one public meeting(s) will be held to gather comments within 45 days of the published notice.
- Public comment is always welcome at regularly scheduled Southern Iowa Trolley Board meetings.
- A notice of the final changes will be posted within 15 days of implementation.
- The Southern Iowa Trolley Board of Directors will be given a verbal and/or written summary of public input and must approve all significant changes.

- **Annual Consolidated Transit Application**

A public hearing must be held for the annual consolidated transit funding application. Iowa's Consolidated Transit Funding Application is used by all transit agencies to apply for State funds and Federal 5310, 5314 and 5339 funds. Any system applying for statewide 5339 capital funds must include its request in the consolidated application.

Objectives

- Inform the public of opportunities available and document opportunities region wide.
- Provide sufficient information for the public to participate effectively and develop ways for the public to provide input and comment.

Actions

- Identify potential interested parties.
- Contact private organizations /groups with an interest or stake in the result.
- Keep elected officials well informed.
- Write clear, concise reports, articles, brochures, press releases.

- Present facts behind recommendations, i.e., criteria for TIP
- Allow for the public to respond to alternatives and state preferences.
- Allow for open and productive group discussions.

Minority, Low-Income, and Traditionally Underserved Involvement

Effort Southern Iowa Trolley is committed to ensuring all citizens of Region 14, especially, low-income, minority, and traditionally underserved populations, have sufficient access to Southern Iowa Trolley Board meetings and are given every opportunity to voice their opinions.

As a recipient of federal funding and, pursuant to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Title VI regulatory guidance and while conducting public outreach and involvement, Southern Iowa Trolley will seek out and consider the viewpoints of minority and low-income populations, as well as individuals who do not fluently speak English.

- **Preferred Customer Communication Techniques**

In the fall of 2020 Southern Iowa Trolley will conduct a survey of its customers to gauge various aspects of customer satisfaction and preferences. Among the questions to be asked: Southern Iowa Trolley

- How customers prefer to receive key updates, such as fare and services changes, from Southern Iowa Trolley
- How customers prefer to share feedback with Southern Iowa Trolley
- Demographic information such as race and household income.

The survey results will be analyzed, and results updated March 2022 in this plan.

Direct Communication Methods

The Public Participation Plan identifies a menu of available methods for providing information to Southern Iowa Trolley customers and the public. While these communication methods are broadcast widely, they are important tools in reaching minority and LEP populations. These include:

- **Southern Iowa Trolley website:** www.SouthernIowaTrolley.org is one of our primary sources of information.
- **On-board flyers:** Placed in highly visible areas of all our buses is an effective means of communicating directly with Southern Iowa Trolley riders.
- **Emails to partner agencies:** These may include notices and/or letters to key staff members at partner agency locations, as well as other announcement and/or promotional materials for them to distribute to their emails list. Iowa Workforce and other Human Service agencies who serve diverse populations. This also includes local Public Health Departments, which operate programs such as WIC are key in assisting Southern Iowa Trolley in spreading important information.
- **Press releases:** These are aimed at generating news coverage of Southern Iowa Trolley changes, meetings, etc. They are distributed via email to Southern Iowa Trolley's media contact list, which includes a local newspaper in each county, as well as any local radio stations. It is also posted on Southern Iowa Trolley's website. Staff will follow-up to inquire about receipt and potential coverage of news release.
- **Partners' websites:** Southern Iowa Trolley provides information to partner agencies, including the County and City websites in our region that are frequented by Southern Iowa Trolley riders and the public. This help ensure we reach the diversity of populations in

each of counties we serve.

- **Public notices:** These are published in the Creston News Advertiser, on Southern Iowa Trolley website and in Southern Iowa Trolley’s main office.
- **Targeted Markets:** Examples include, but are not limited to, churches, restaurants, grocery stores, courthouses, city halls, and WIC offices, especially those who serve large minority communities.
- **Southern Iowa Trolley’s Facebook page:** This social media platform is used to inform and interact with riders. Customer are allowed to contact us via Facebook and will receive a response from staff within 1 business day.
- **Southern Iowa Trolley’s Twitter feed:** Used to share news with riders and other agencies.
- **Transportation Advisory Groups (TAG’s):** The Southern Iowa Trolley Transportation Advisory Group is a diverse group of community stakeholders and business representatives interested in the advancement and improvement of public transportation. The TAG acts as a liaison between local communities, business representatives, agency representatives and Southern Iowa Trolley. The TAG provides local and regional input regarding transportation issues important to the region. The TAG voting members are any governmental entity located wholly or partially within Southern Iowa Trolley’s Region and having a population of at least 1,000, which ensures we have input and first-hand knowledge for diverse representation within our region.

Open Meeting

The Southern Iowa Trolley Board of Directors meetings are scheduled the 4th Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. at the Southern Iowa Trolley office, located at 215 E. Montgomery St., Creston, IA. These meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for the public to comment on items related to public transit. Meeting schedule is subject to change.

In Summary

The Public Participation Plan will direct the notification of the public, elected officials, committee members, state agencies and interested parties of the opportunity to provide and receive information and participate in dialogue concerning transportation in the Southern Iowa Trolley region.

Southern Iowa Trolley may modify public participation methods over time based on feedback from customers and the public. This Participation Plan is a “living” document that will be updated periodically to reflect community preferences, changing demographics and transit services, as well as respond to new communication and outreach methods.

APPROVAL

The Southern Iowa Trolley Policy Board hereby approved and adopted this Public Participation Plan on:

Southern Iowa Trolley Board Member

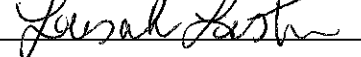
Date



___10/26/2023___

Transit Director

Date



___10/26/2023___