

PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

I. Overview

Five years since the completion and adoption of the SRTPA 2040 LRTP, a few things have changed including a new transportation bill. Even with these changes, several of the concerns mentioned in the 2040 LRTP are still applicable and relevant today. This chapter will outline the major goals agreed on for transportation in the SRTPA and the specific objectives by which those goals will be achieved.

In January 2016, the SIMPCO MPO completed and adopted the SIMPCO MPO 2040 LRTP which laid out several desired goals to be achieved in the SRTPA. Several of these goals are directly transferable from the Urban to the Regional Planning Process and were subsequently borrowed from that planning process. These goals, in addition to goals specific to the regional planning process include the following:

A. Goal: Mobility

Develop, maintain and enhance the most effective and efficient transportation system for the movement of people and freight in the region.

1. Objectives

- Maximize the useful life of existing elements of the transportation system by constant and prompt condition surveillance and maintenance.
- Undertake and utilize the results of continuing applied research into pavement behavior, performance and cost effectiveness particularly as it relates to the impact of weather, very heavy loadings from specialized farm machinery, and developing wind energy. Research results can be procured via state and national research entities specializing in rural pavement issues. Iowa State University is a prime example.
- Minimize and/or eliminate localized congestion wherever it exists.
- Develop transportation investment decisions, which maximize the full benefits of the system while considering the full costs, such as life cycle.

- Plan for the use and preservation of alternative modes like rail, barge, pedestrian, and bicycle where applicable.

2. Implementation

- Use advanced pavement monitoring equipment to assess roadway pavement conditions on a regular basis.
- Do cost/benefit analysis of investment alternatives to determine the most useful and efficient options.
- Encourage the creation of bicycle facilities, sidewalks, trails, greenways and other non-motorized facilities in areas where appropriate.
- Develop a transportation plan giving priority consideration to transportation system improvements preventing crashes, injuries, and minimizing losses.
- Ensure that problem intersections with congestion are adequately engineered to minimize delay. Signal timing, intersection geometry and lane storage are key issues to be evaluated.
- Increase information available to the public on transportation choices and issues regarding maintenance.

B. Goal: Safety

Promote and implement transportation system improvements for all modes that minimize the occurrence of and potential crashes that might result in the loss of health, life, and property.

1. Objectives

- Develop a transportation plan giving priority consideration to transportation system improvements preventing crashes, injuries, and minimize losses.
- Promote the standardization of geometric design criteria across transportation agencies paying particular attention to known hazardous locations, particularly curves and intersections.

2. Implementation

- Keep transportation facilities in a state of good repair, including streets, buses, sidewalks, trails, and other modes, particularly where modes intersect such as highway-rail grade crossings.
- Focus on high crash areas for transportation improvements. Utilize advanced tools such as the Iowa Crash mapping software to locate and prioritize high crash areas.
- Minimize motor vehicle, truck, bus, train, bicycle, and pedestrian conflicts.
- Create a centralized safe driver campaign and educational program.
- Do not violate driver expectancy when planning projects, be consistent in approach.

C. Goal: Security

Promote and implement transportation system improvements for all modes maximizing security of the transportation system.

1. Objectives

- Develop a transportation plan giving priority consideration to security improvements particularly concerning vulnerable areas or modes.
- Support programs which ensure safe, secure operation of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Improve disaster, emergency and incident response preparedness and recovery.

2. Implementation

- Utilize Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology for surveillance of the transportation network and facilities wherever practical.
- Install optimal lighting, fencing, surveillance and other security measures on transportation facilities.
- Support activities that enhance the communication of emergency personnel within the region.
- Participate in public outreach programs that inform the public of security issues in the SRTPA. Encourage the public to take a proactive role in aiding with security such as reporting suspicious behavior etc.

D. Goal: Environment

Preserve and enhance SRTPA's unique and natural environmental features by protecting the integrity of air, land, water, energy, cultural, and aesthetic resources.

1. Objectives

- Minimize adverse impacts of the regional transportation system on the environment, such as noise and water runoff.
- Undertake and promote energy conservation programs in transportation.

2. Implementation

- Plan and develop a transportation system that preserves environmentally sensitive areas, conserves energy and natural resources, and minimizes adverse environmental impacts.
- Ensure that all environmental regulations pertaining to transportation system development are followed.
- New or reconstructed transportation facilities shall be designed to prevent and control soil erosion, minimize clearing and grubbing operations, minimize storm runoff, and avoid unnecessary changes in drainage patterns.
- Pursue and support transportation programs and modes (e.g. freight and passenger rail, bikeways etc.) that have lower environmental footprints, help conserve energy in a period of increasing energy prices and provide the community with travel alternatives. Work with other regional, state and national agencies to promote these alternatives.

E. Goal: Economic Development

Promote the balanced and sustained economic growth of the region through the fast and efficient movement of goods and people in a safe, energy efficient, and environmentally sound manner.

1. Objectives

- Give priority consideration to transportation projects and system improvements that facilitate local job creation and retention.

- Promote efficient land-use patterns along with appropriate commercial and industrial development and redevelopment locations in the rural towns.
- Prioritize transportation projects that to the maximum extent possible preserve existing agricultural land uses.
- Give consideration of the true cost and benefits of providing the transportation facilities necessary to move goods in the metropolitan area.

2. Implementation

- Continually inform elected officials of the need to keep funds flowing to SRTPA for economic development.
- Ensure that specific requests of the transportation system such as the need to transport large machinery like wind turbine blades and towers that support rural economic development are efficiently and competently handled.
- Assist prospective businesses with information on specific transportation services available in an area and render any local help possible with establishment of necessary new infrastructure to support such businesses.

F. Goal: Fiscal Responsibility

Utilize available personnel and financial resources efficiently, ensuring that the transportation system meets the users' needs in a timely fashion and remains financially stable.

1. Objectives

- Provide a balanced and viable funding mechanism for transportation systems and services within the region.
- Develop a positive working relationship with the system users, the public and political officials.
- Develop transportation investment decisions that consider the full costs and benefits.
- Give priority to funding those transportation needs identified in state, regional, and local transportation system plans.
- Consider the funding implications of federal and state actions on the regional transportation system and services.

2. Implementation

- Identify stable, long term sources of local, state, and federal funding for construction and maintenance of a multimodal transportation system to address the maintenance deficit for roads, bridges and other infrastructure faced by the rural towns/cities and counties, preventing further deterioration of the existing transportation system.
- Obtain funding to expand non-motorized transportation opportunities.
- Refine a system to prioritize projects for the allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds through a collaborative process that involves the major stakeholders and the general public. Utilization should be made of all decision making tools available like GIS Safety software, cost-benefit tools, pavement condition system etc.
- Identify and seek funding sources for bicycle-related road improvements and maintenance programs.
- Continue to support the optional management systems originally established under the no longer existing MAP – 21, which was replaced by the FAST Act, to generate information to establish priorities for allocation of transportation funds.

G. Goal: Accessibility

Develop a transportation system that is reliable and accessible to all potential users

1. Objectives

- Encourage multimodal accessibility to employment, shopping and other commerce, medical care, housing and leisure, particularly in the rural towns.
- Give appropriate consideration to the needs and requirements of disabled persons who are system users.
- Seek out and consider the needs of those who are underserved by the existing transportation system.
- Facilitate increased communication between government agencies and officials, the system users, the public, and other interested parties.

2. Implementation

- Use reliable public transit vehicles that accommodate all patrons.
- Design driveways and medians to meet appropriate access management standards.
- Review proposed projects regarding their impacts/benefits to specific populations and groups. Ensuring that no segment of the population is disproportionately affected in terms of access to the transportation system.

H. Goal: Connectivity / Compatibility

Encourage and implement system improvements which promote the efficient and effective movement of people and goods by integrating and linking various modes of transportation and plans, enabling users' access to the entire region.

1. Objectives:

- Identify a multimodal network of facilities to meet the requirements for moving people, goods, and service throughout the region.
- Encourage the development of efficient intermodal freight facilities, with access to all, to encourage effective shifts among modes.
- Identify future right-of-way needs and establish a program for protection and advanced acquisition prior to development occurring.

2. Implementation:

- Address truck accessibility and maneuverability to and within commercial and industrial areas.
- Encourage the establishment of a rail-to-truck intermodal freight container facility.
- Consider off-roadway travel corridors, such as drainage canal, railroad, and utility right-of-way property, as potential corridors.
- Develop a safe, usable pedestrian circulation system by providing sidewalks along all major streets adjacent to schools, between school sites and selected major streets, between school sites and parks or recreational areas, and add sidewalks, where necessary, to connect or complete either existing or proposed sidewalks in a manner that provides a complete pedestrian circulation system.