
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING — OCTOBER 2023

The Transportation Commission met for an informal workshop on October 9, 2023, in Arnolds Park. The Commission discussed the following actions:

Director's Welcome. The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) Director, Scott Marler, provided opening comments to the Commission regarding the recent legislation passed by Congress to avoid a shutdown of the federal government. Director Marler also provided an update on the Commission's trip to Washington, D.C., last month. Director Marler informed the Commission of the groundbreaking on October 4, 2023, of the new airport terminal being built at the Des Moines International Airport.

Transportation Trends. The DOT provided the following updates:

- For U.S. rail carloads, the six-week moving average in August 2023 was below the average in 2021 and 2022.
- Monthly passenger counts at Iowa's eight commercial service airports are currently higher than prepandemic levels, with the August 2023 monthly passenger counts higher than 2019 levels for the third month in a row.
- Monthly State vehicle miles of travel for August 2023 were lower than August 2019 but higher than August 2022 levels.

The DOT also gave a brief overview of the drought affecting the Mississippi River and the Panama Canal resulting in less cargo being shipped via these routes overall.

2024 Highway Program Balance Report. The Commission received an update on the FY 2024 Highway Program Balance. The Program balance in September 2023 was negative \$11.2 million.

Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) Fund Project. The Commission received the following updates on RISE projects:

- Story City Local Development. The DOT gave an overview on a RISE Fund project for Story City. The project will provide access to five lots totaling 41 acres for industrial purposes and will consist of construction of 1,160 feet of Rich Olive Street. The recommended RISE Fund grant amount is approximately \$402,000.
- City of Mount Pleasant Project Settlement. The City of Mount Pleasant was awarded \$113,000 in November 2022 for construction of approximately 1,300 feet of Industry Avenue south of Commerce Drive in the Crossroads Industrial Park. The recommended repayment from the city in RISE funding is approximately \$6,000.
- City of Waukee Project Settlement. The City of Waukee was awarded \$865,000 in July 2016 contingent on the creation of 83 new jobs and for the construction of approximately 650 feet of SE Esker Ridge Drive. The recommended repayment from the city in RISE funding is approximately \$36,000.
- Local Development status update. Three projects were withdrawn in the February 2022 application round and two projects were withdrawn in the September 2022 application round.

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program. The DOT provided an update on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program created in the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA). Under the IIJA, Iowa was allocated \$51.0 million over federal fiscal years 2022 through 2026. To access funding, states must submit a state deployment plan that is required to be approved by the Federal

Highway Administration. State Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program policies were not approved last year because of the novelty of the Program.

Commercial Service Airport Terminals. During the 2023 Legislative Session, there was a new appropriation of \$10.0 million from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund for FY 2024 to be awarded as grants for commercial service airport terminal improvements. Actions will be requested at the next meeting in November. Airports must provide 90.0% local match and cannot use federal funds for the match. The only applicant to meet the criteria is the Des Moines International Airport for a new passenger terminal building with a total project cost of \$113.7 million. The DOT recommendation for the grant to the Des Moines International Airport is \$10.0 million.

Transportation Assets Management. The Commission received a Transportation Assets Management (TAM) overview. The TAM goal is to make investments for the DOT that can benefit the transportation system. TAM helps the DOT build, preserve, operate, maintain, and upgrade the transportation system.

The Transportation Commission held a business meeting on October 10, 2023, in Arnolds Park. The Commission took the following actions:

Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) Fund Project. The Commission approved funding for the following RISE projects:

- \$402,000 to Story City for the construction of approximately 1,160 feet of Rich Olive Street located on the southeast side of town.
- Settlement repayment from the City of Mount Pleasant of \$6,000.
- Settlement repayment from the City of Waukee of \$36,000.

State Recreational Trails Program. The Commission approved State Recreational Trails Program funding of approximately \$2.8 million for seven separate projects.

Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant Program. The Commission approved Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant Program funding of approximately \$2.7 million in loans and grants for two projects.

FY 2025 Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Program. The Commission approved Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Program funding of \$6.1 million for various projects.

FY 2025 Highway-Railroad Crossing Surface Repair. The Commission approved Highway-Railroad Crossing Surface Repair Program funding of \$951,000 for various projects.

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program. The new policies and development plan under the IIJA was approved.

The Commission also met for a public input meeting on October 10, 2023. The following participants discussed transportation matters with the Commission:

- Arnolds Park provided updates regarding traffic cameras in the area and the assistance that the cameras provided to local law enforcement.
- The City of Spencer Public Works Director Mark White gave updates on development of 10 lots and other projects in the city.
- The U.S. Highway 30 Coalition expressed that every dollar invested into the highway will increase to \$1.70 back into the Iowa economy.
- Sioux City Delegation gave updates on existing projects as well as updates on a future project on the Gordan Drive Viaduct that is expected to start construction in 2028.

Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for November 14, 2023, in Ames.

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