

community

mobility

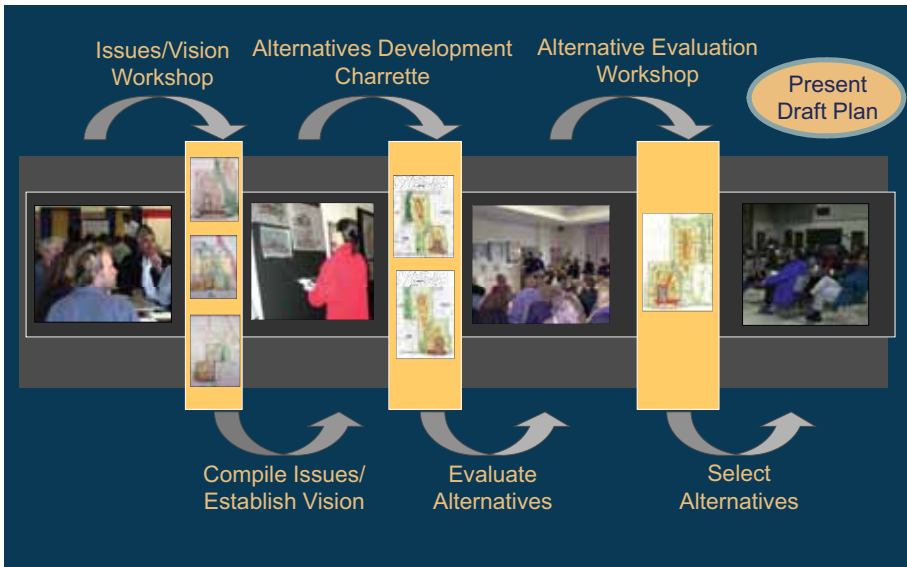
environment

Chapter 3: Public Involvement Process

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Transportation improvement projects represent a major public investment and will affect the citizens who live in the Ames area and those traveling through the area. Public input into the planning for these improvements is necessary for community support for the Long Range Transportation Plan Update. The public was invited to provide input on the LRTP throughout the update process, and specifically at workshops, charrettes, and presentations which are outlined in **FIGURE 3.1**. In addition to the public meetings, the Ames area was also involved in the LRTP through a survey and project website, which are also discussed in this chapter.

FIGURE 3.1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE LRTP UPDATE PROCESS



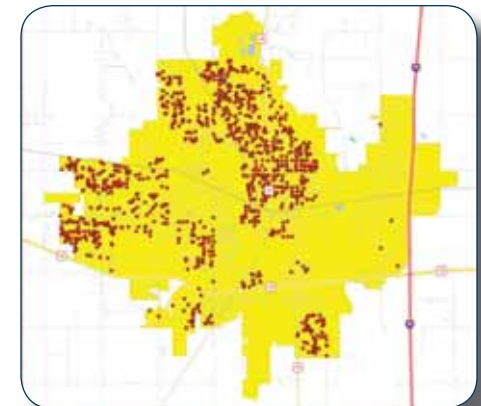
3.1 COMMUNITY SURVEY

A research group specializing in transportation studies, ETC Institute (Research Team) worked with the AAMPO Staff to design a survey instrument that gathers input from residents about the transportation needs and priorities for the Ames metropolitan area. The survey was given to residents in the Ames area during January and February of 2010.

Some of the specific topics that were addressed in the survey included:

- Perceptions of current transportation issues.
- Commute issues for those who worked outside of the home.
- Methods of transportation used.
- Perception of the current transportation system in Ames area.
- Perception of traffic congestion in the area.
- Concern about traffic safety.
- Perceived quality of public transit.
- Barriers to using public transit.
- Bicycle and pedestrian issues.
- The importance of various issues to transportation improvements.
- Preferred sources of funding for transportation improvements.

Over 1,200 surveys were taken to ensure that the results can be analyzed for subgroups of the populations (e.g., students, seniors, families with children, persons with disabilities, etc.). The Research Team administered the survey through



a combination of mail and phone interviews. The Research Team prepared a report that documents the findings of the needs assessment survey. The report and the survey instrument are available on the AAMPO website (www.aampo.org).

METHODOLOGY

The survey was mailed to a random sample of over 4,000 residents and administered to 1,267 through either the mail or a follow-up phone interview during January and February of 2010. The original goal of 800 surveys was exceeded by 467 additional surveys. The overall results for the 1,267 surveys that were administered have a precision of at least +/- 2.6% at the 95% level of confidence.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- **PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT TRANSPORTATION ISSUES.** Those surveyed were asked about their level of satisfaction with various transportation issues. The issues with which residents were most satisfied, were the ease of traveling from Ames to other Iowa cities (81%), the ease of traveling from home to parks and recreation facilities (74%), and the ease of traveling from home to work (74%). The lowest amount of satisfaction was the availability of “on street” bicycle lanes (23%) and the condition of roadways (18%). When asked to name the most important issues to address over the next ten years, residents named the condition of roadways, the ease of north/south travel in the Ames area, and the flow of traffic on area streets during peak times.
 - **TREND FROM PREVIOUS LRTP:** *In most topics that were measured in both 2004 and 2010, there were declines in satisfaction, with the most notable being the condition of roadways. In 2004, the satisfaction was 69% and in 2010 it was 18%.*

WHEN ASKED TO NAME THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES TO ADDRESS OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS, RESIDENTS NAMED:

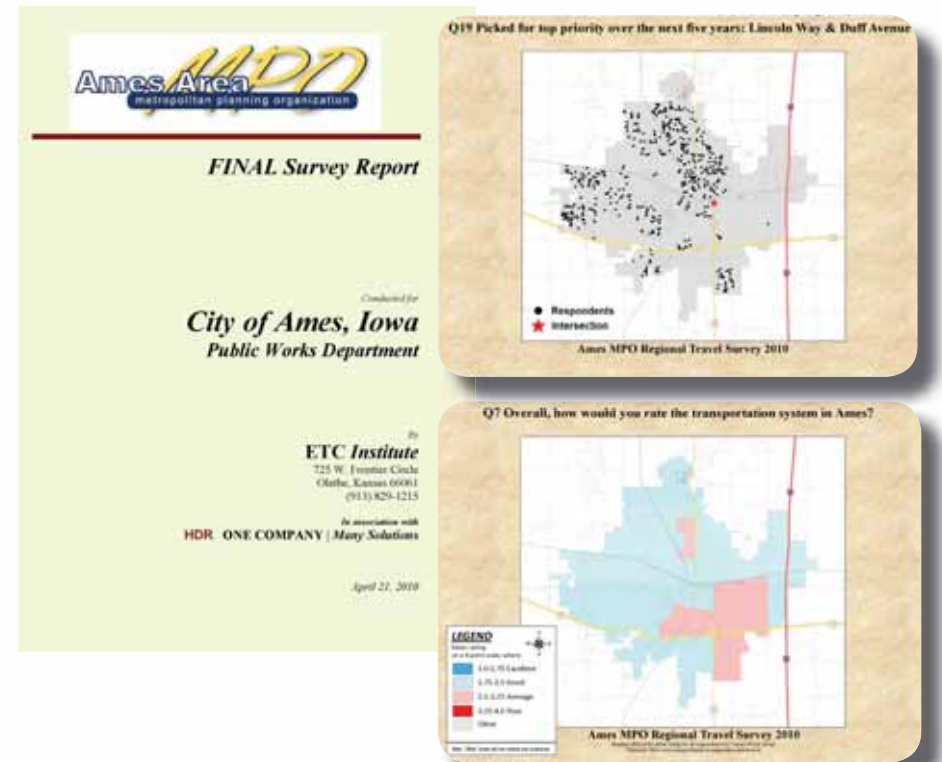
- The condition of roadways
- Ease of north/south travel in the Ames area
- Flow of traffic on area streets during peak times

- **OVERALL RATING OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN AMES.** Sixty percent (60%) of those surveyed rated the transportation system in Ames as “excellent” or “good”, compared to 76% who rated it as “excellent” or “good” in 2004.
- **PARKING.** Sixty-six percent (66%) of those surveyed were satisfied with parking availability in residential areas; 46% were satisfied with parking in downtown Ames, and 15% were satisfied with parking on campus.
- **PUBLIC TRANSIT.** The availability of public transit was rated “excellent” or “good” by 85% of the respondents, compared to 88% in 2004. Those surveyed were asked how satisfied they were with various aspects of transit in Ames; 79% were satisfied with the availability of information about public transit, 70% were satisfied with the frequency of bus service, and 70% were satisfied with the distance to the nearest transit stop from home.
 - **TREND FROM PREVIOUS LRTP:** *There was a significant increase in satisfaction with the availability of information about public transit (79% in 2010 vs. 75% in 2004). All of the other four areas had declines in satisfaction from 2004.*

- BICYCLING IN AMES.** The percentage of respondents who reported riding a bike in the last year was 58%, compared to 48% in 2004. Of the 58%, 50% felt safe on major streets in the area where they live, 47% felt unsafe and 3% did not know.
- WALKING IN AMES.** Ninety-four percent (94%) of those surveyed had walked on the streets in their area during the past year. Of those, 84% felt very safe or somewhat safe, 15% did not feel safe and 1% did not know. Seventy-nine percent (79%) had walked on a shared-use path in the area where they live and 91% felt very safe or safe, 8% did not feel safe and 1% did not know.
- SUPPORT FOR SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS.** Those surveyed indicated the most important 2 issues out of 10 for system enhancements were adding more turn lanes, and widening existing roads.
- IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS.** Of several possible issues related to transportation improvements, those most important to those surveyed were supporting area economic opportunities (79%), protecting environmental resources (78%) and addressing community health and quality of life (78%).
- HOW TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE FUNDED.** Those surveyed were asked their preference of funding sources for transportation improvements. Their greatest support was for applying a road impact fee for new developments (55%), an increase in gas tax (47%) and an increased vehicle registration fee (36%).
- SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING.** Forty-six percent (46%) of those surveyed were “very supportive” or “somewhat supportive” of increased funding for public transportation for improvements to the current bus system and expansions into areas not currently served by the bus.

- PRIORITIES FOR INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS.** Fifty-one percent (51%) of those surveyed felt that the intersection of Grand Avenue and 13th Street was the most important to improve over the next five years and 44% felt that Lincoln Way and Duff Avenue was the most important.

A full copy of the Community Survey is available on the AAMPO website (www.aampo.org).



3.2 FOCUS GROUP

A Focus Group includes specifically selected individuals brought together to provide reactions to a specific topic, policy, project or issue. A focus group of community members and stakeholders was formed to help engage key decision makers and stakeholders of the Ames community in the transportation planning process. The Focus Group was comprised of personnel from the following agencies:

- AAMPO
- City of Ames
- Iowa State University
- Story County
- Boone County
- CyRide
- Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- City of Ames Fire Department
- City of Ames Police Department
- Main Street Cultural District (MSCD)
- Ames Economic Development Commission
- Ames School District
- Mary Greeley Medical Center
- Friends of Central Iowa Bicycling
- Government of the Student Body, Iowa State University
- Ames/Story County Habitat for Humanity

The Focus Group met three times throughout the process and provided input and guidance on the Plan throughout the update process.



3.3 PUBLIC MEETINGS

The public involvement process included a series of public meetings throughout the LRTP development process. These included the following meetings:

- Issues and Visioning Workshop
- Alternatives Development Workshop
- Transportation Concept Evaluation Workshop
- Draft Plan Presentation
- Presentation of the Final Plan

Each of these meetings are discussed in the following sections.

ISSUES AND VISIONING WORKSHOPS

The first public meeting, entitled the Issues and Visioning Workshop, was held on October 29, 2009. The consultant team, along with AAMPO staff, conducted one session with the Focus Group and one session with the Public.



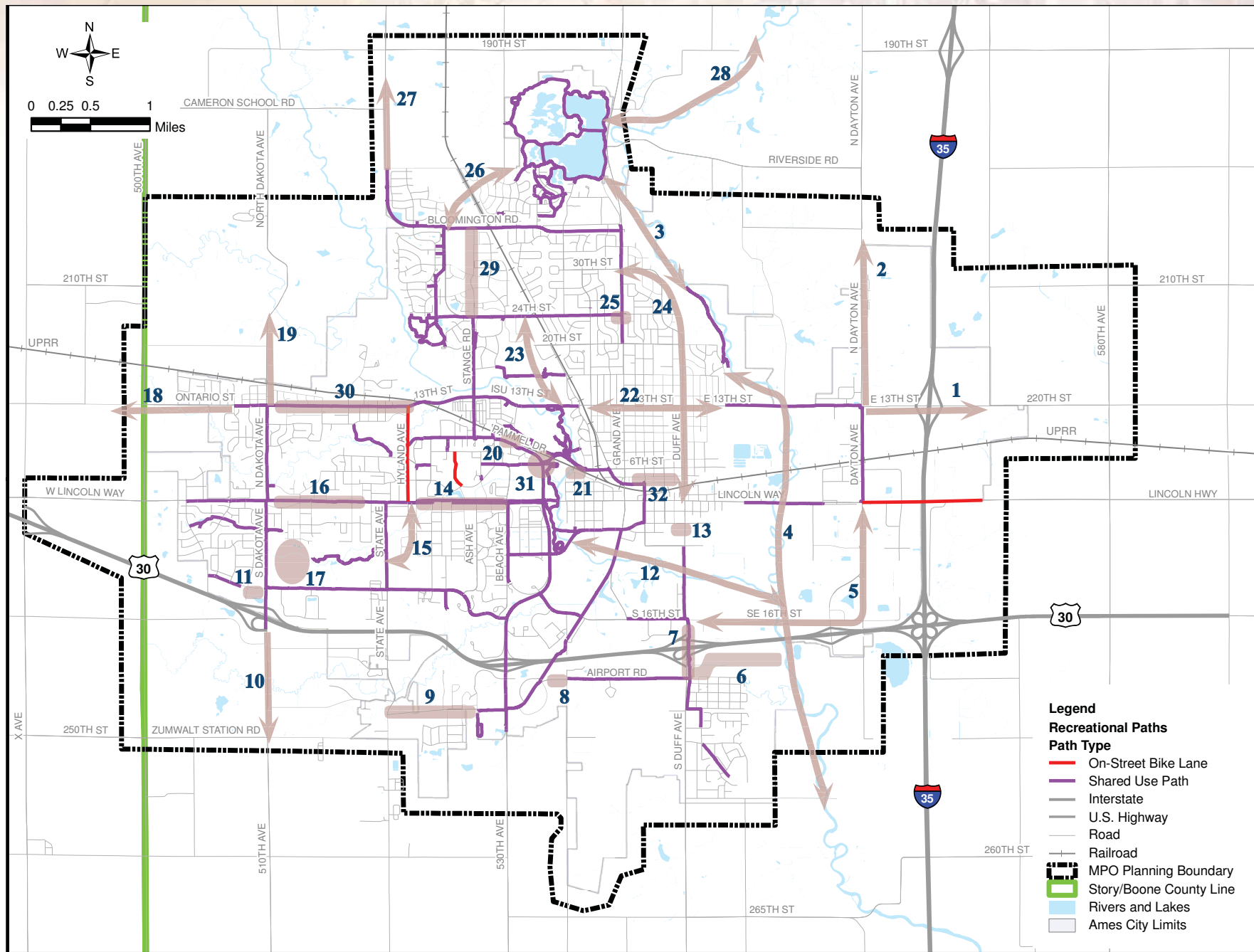
The Issues/Visioning Workshop included small group activities such as

an Issues/Opportunities analysis, geographic mapping exercises and a vision statement exercise.

GEOGRAPHIC MAPPING EXERCISE/ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

In the geographic mapping exercise, meeting attendees were asked to identify issues, congested corridors and intersections, and service gaps relating to the bicycle/pedestrian, transit and roadway systems. A compilation of the issues identified through this exercise are shown in **FIGURE 3.2**, **FIGURE 3.3** and **FIGURE 3.4**.

FIGURE 3.2. BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOPS



LIST OF BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOP

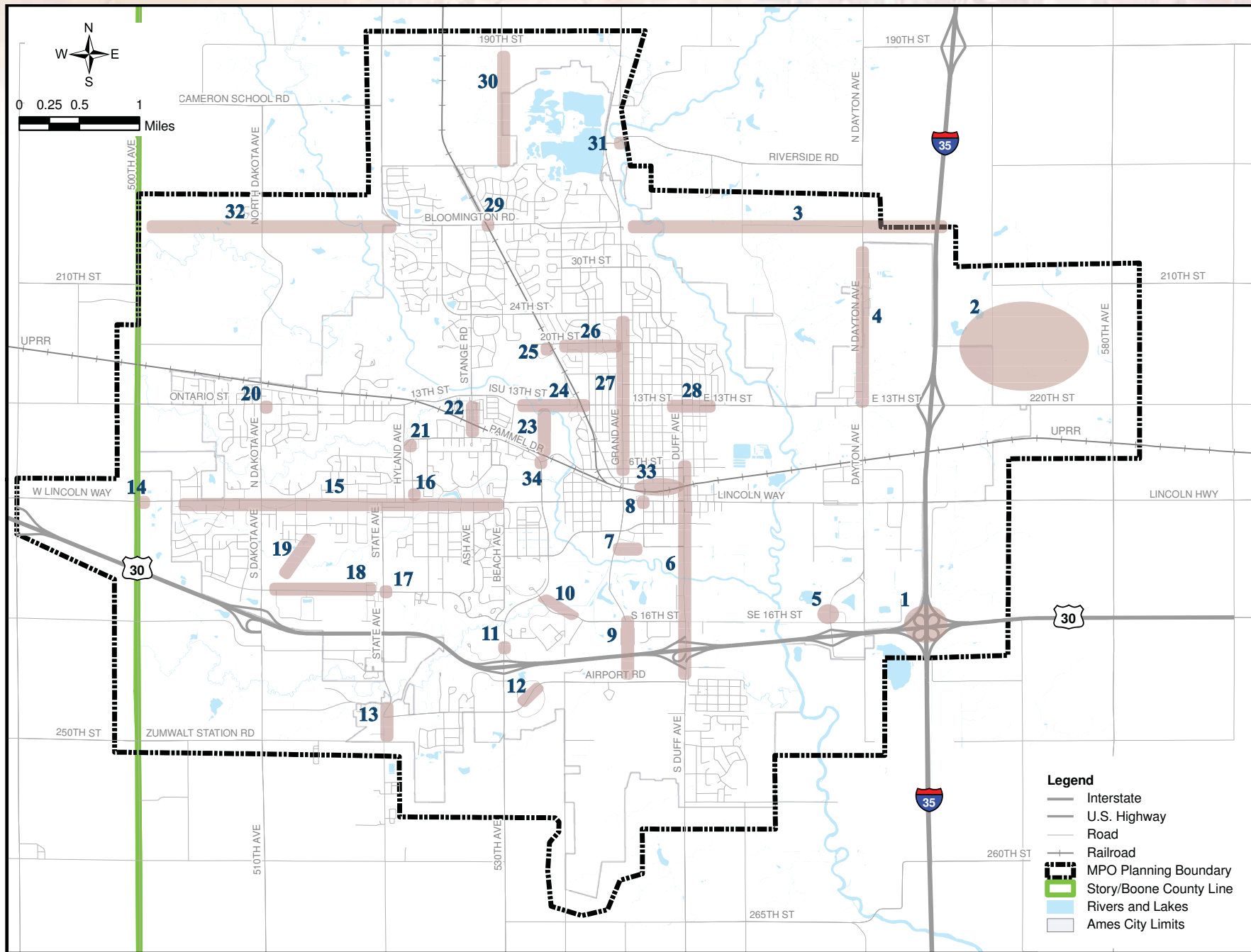
1. Extend Path East along 220th Street
2. Extend Path North along N. Dayton Avenue
3. Connect Paths along South Skunk River
4. Extend Bike Path South of Ames to connect to Heart of Iowa Trail
5. Connect Paths between Dayton Avenue and S. 16th Avenue
6. Connect with Access to Sports Complex
7. Safety Concern- Non-Motorized Travelers along S. Duff Avenue at US-30
8. Connect Paths to Airport Road
9. No Sidewalk along Oakwood Road
10. Extend Path South along S. Dakota Avenue
11. Connect Paths along Mortenson Road
12. Connect Paths along Squaw Creek
13. Safety Crossing Issues for Non-Motorized Travelers at 5th Street/ Duff Avenue
14. Student Safety Crossing Issues along Lincoln Way for Non-Motorized Travelers
15. Connect Paths from State Avenue to Lincoln Way
16. Sidewalk Not Well-Suited for Bicyclists
17. Connects Paths in School Area
18. Extend Path West to Boone
19. Extend Path North along N. Dakota Avenue to MPO Boundary

20. Safety Issue Under Railroad Tracks
21. Narrow Bridge across Squaw Creek
22. Connect Paths; Safety Concerns along 13th Street
23. Connect Paths between 24th and 13th Streets
24. Connect Paths between Lincoln Way and 30th Street via Duff Avenue
25. Congested 24th Street and Grand Avenue Intersection for Non-Motorized Travelers
26. Connect Paths between George W. Carver Avenue and Grant Avenue
27. Extend Path North to Gilbert
28. Connect Path to Peterson Pits
29. Extend Bicycle Facilities
30. Driveway Cut Outs along Shared Use Path
31. Safety Concern for Bicycle/Pedestrians
32. Safety Concern in Downtown with Angled Parking

OTHER GENERAL BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOP

- Need Bike Lanes for Commuters
- No Traffic Detection for Bicycles
- Consider Emergency Medical Service Access Along Shared Use Path
- Lack of Bicycle Parking
- Some Shared Use Paths Are Too Narrow

FIGURE 3.3. ROADWAY ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOPS



LIST OF ROADWAY ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOP

1. Safety Concern- Traffic Weaving Conflicts at Highway 30/I-35 Interchange
2. Need Roadway Connectivity to Future Growth Areas
3. Bloomington Road Access to I-35
4. Congested Dayton Avenue Corridor during Peak Commuter Times
5. Congested Intersection at SE 16th Street/Dayton Avenue
6. Congested Duff Avenue Corridor; Numerous Access Points; Not Aesthetically Pleasing
7. 5th Street Connection to Grand Avenue
8. Intersection Safety Concerns at Lincoln Way/Clark Avenue
9. Grand Avenue Access to Airport Road
10. Widen S. 16th Street
11. Safety Issue for Westbound off-ramp Traffic from Highway 30 to University Boulevard
12. Safety Concern- Restricted Access from Side Streets
13. No Direct Connection between Oakwood Road and Zumwalk Station Road
14. Consider Traffic Signal at Lincoln Way/ 500th Avenue
15. Neighborhoods Interface with Lincoln Way
16. No Left-Turn Lanes from Lincoln Way onto Hyland Avenue and Sheldon Avenue
17. Intersection Congestion at Mortensen Road/ State Avenue
18. Congested Mortensen Road Corridor, especially due to Middle School Traffic; Poor Lighting

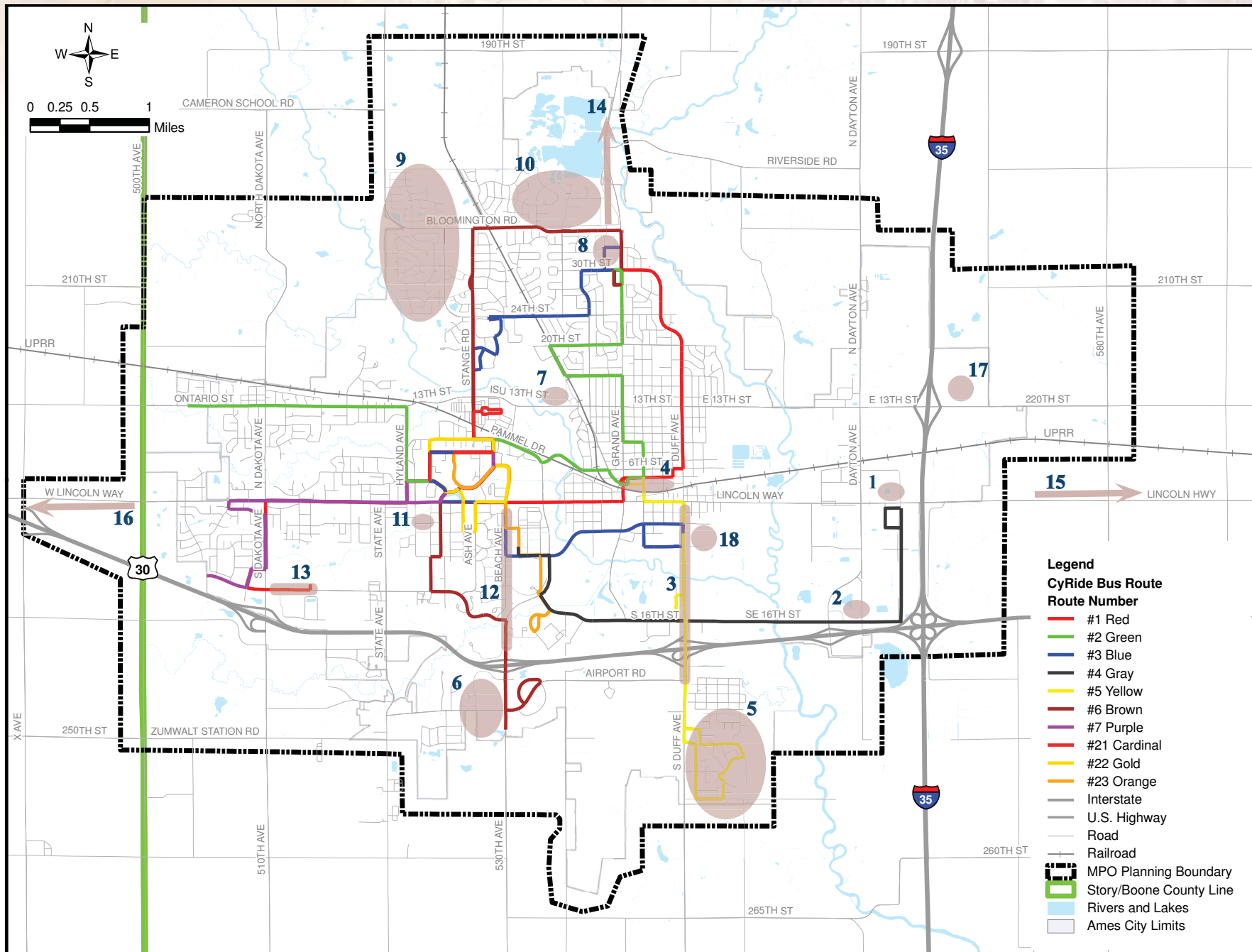
19. Dotson Drive Connectivity to Middle School
20. Congested Intersection at N. Dakota Avenue/ Ontario Street
21. Safety Issue for Westbound Left-Turning Vehicles at Pammel Drive/ Hyland Avenue
22. Need to Minimize Traffic Not Related to the University
23. Connectivity between 13th Street and University Boulevard
24. High Travel Speeds along 13th Street
25. Sight Distance Issue at 20th Street/ Railroad Gates
26. Poor Pavement Condition along 20th Street East of Grand Avenue
27. Congested Grand Avenue Corridor; Safety Concern at Intersections; Neighborhoods Interface with Corridor
28. Congested 13th Street/Duff Avenue Intersection; Difficult to Access Side Streets and Businesses at Adjacent Intersections
29. Safety Concern- Bloomington Road Westbound Merge Visibility
30. Grant Avenue Not Paved
31. Safety Concern- Westbound Left-Turns at Riverside Road/Grand Avenue
32. Bloomington Road Access to 500th Avenue
33. Railroad Conflicts in the Downtown Area
34. Intersection Safety Concern at 6th Street and University Boulevard

OTHER GENERAL ROADWAY ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOP

- Lack of Turn Lanes along Lincoln Way
- Lack of North/South Connectivity
- Lack of Traffic Signal Progression



FIGURE 3.4. TRANSIT ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOPS



LIST OF TRANSIT ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOP

1. Current Burlington Trailways Stop with No Cy-Ride Connection
2. Need Park-and-Ride (to Des Moines)
3. Transit Safety Concerns along Duff Avenue
4. Safety Concern - Too Narrow for Bus in Downtown
5. More Transit Services Needed
6. New Transit Services Needed
7. New Transit Services Needed (Access to New Pool)
8. Need Park-and-Ride
9. New Transit Services Needed
10. New Transit Services Needed
11. Need Intermodal Center
12. More Transit Services Needed
13. Transit Safety Concerns along Mortensen Road
14. Extend Transit Services North to Gilbert
15. Extend Services East to Nevada
16. Extend Services West to Boone
17. Need Transit Service to Future Commercial Development
18. Wal-Mart/ Target: Better Access for Buses
19. Formalized Transit Service to Des Moines
20. More Frequency Needed on Yellow Route and Southern Portion of Blue Route

OTHER GENERAL TRANSIT ISSUES FROM ISSUES/VISIONING WORKSHOP

- Safety Concern- Vehicles Driving Around Buses
- Lack of Space at Existing Cy-Ride Facility
- Need for Real-Time Trip Information

VISION THEMES EXERCISE

The Focus Group and public meeting participants were also tasked with helping to establish an overall new vision for the Plan. Input on vision themes was discussed in small groups, and then presented to the rest of the meeting participants. The vision themes gathered from each of the Issues/Visioning workshops are summarized below.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY OF VISION THEMES

- Context Sensitive Solutions
- Efficient System/Connectivity/Alternative Fuels
- Reduce VMT/Improve Health/Improve Quality
- Return on Investment/Value
- Sustainable Future
- Forward Thinking
- Synergistic Solutions
- Excellence/Quality

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY OF VISION THEMES

- Connected
- Alternatives
- Sustainable
- Complementary of Natural Environment
- Unique Character
- Accommodating and Safe
- University

At the end of the issues/visioning process, a Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives for the transportation plan update were established based on Vision Themes from the public meetings and additional comments received during the issues/visioning process. The Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives were discussed in Chapter 2.

ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

A 2-day charrette was held to develop the various transportation alternatives on April 21-22, 2010. This charrette was an intensive, collaborative exercise in which a team of experts worked together with the community to address the planning and design issues associated with the LRTP.

DAY ONE

On the first day of the charrette (April 21, 2010), a workshop was held with the Focus Group. During this meeting, a project update presentation was given, including a summary of the community survey, and Issues/Visioning workshop information. Next, the Focus Group broke into smaller groups to brainstorm transportation alternatives that would address the issues previously brought forward from **FIGURE 3.2, FIGURE 3.3 AND FIGURE 3.4**. The alternatives for Bicycle/Pedestrian, Transit, and Roadway projects were then presented to the overall Focus Group.

The public meeting on April 21, 2010 included an open house format with a review of the vision and issues developed in the Issues and Visioning Workshop, followed by the opportunity to share concepts, alternatives and



strategies, either by drawing on large maps or by writing down comments in text form, that would address the public's transportation vision and issues for the area.





Workshop stations were set up for viewing at the open house. The stations included:

- Vision/Survey
- Bicycle/Pedestrian:
 - Issues Map (**FIGURE 3.2 ON PAGE 3-6**)
 - Level of Service Analysis for Bicycles/Pedestrians (**FIGURE 5.5. BICYCLE LEVEL OF SERVICE ON PAGE 5-13 AND FIGURE 5.6. PEDESTRIAN LEVEL OF SERVICE ON PAGE 5-14**)
 - Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects from previous LRTP
- Transit:
 - Issues Map (**FIGURE 3.4 ON PAGE 3-10**)
 - Proposed Transit Projects from previous LRTP
- Roadway
 - Issues Map (**FIGURE 3.3 ON PAGE 3-8**)
 - Level of Service Analysis for Roadway (**FIGURE 5.3 ON PAGE 5-9**)
 - Safety Analysis for Roadway (**FIGURE 10.5 ON PAGE 10-7 and FIGURE 10.6 ON PAGE 10-8**)
 - Proposed Roadway Projects from previous LRTP

DAY TWO

On April 22, 2010, a follow-up meeting was held with the Focus Group to review the transportation alternatives that had been brought forward by the Focus Group and the Public on the day prior.

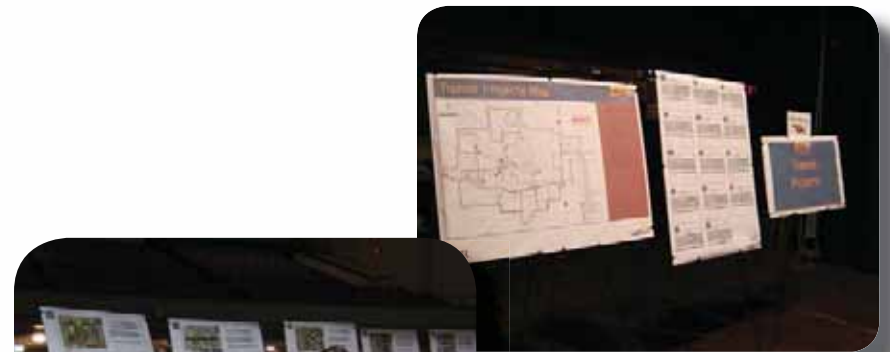
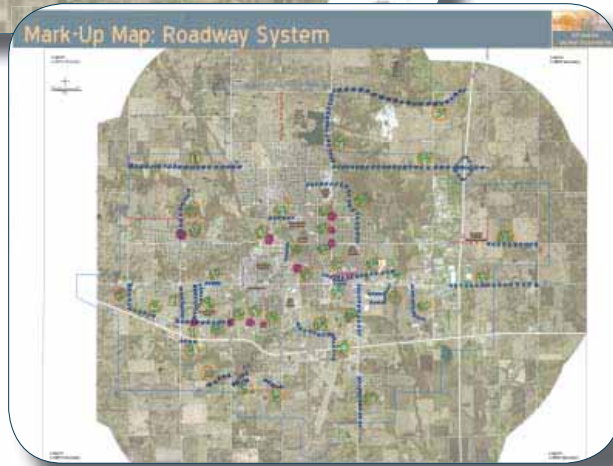
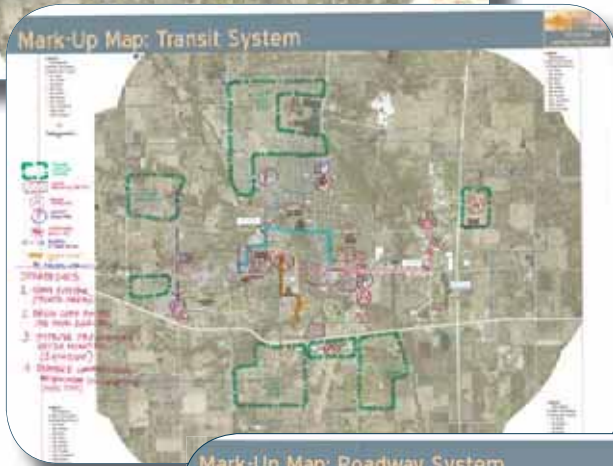


A second session was held the evening of April 22, 2010 with an open house “pin-up” session with the public. The ‘pin-up’ session included a review of the initial projects identified during the previous day’s workshop. The input and comments received at this session was used to develop the initial list of projects to be further developed and evaluated.

A meeting was held with the AAMPO staff on April 23, 2010 to review the information obtained from the workshops on the previous 2 days and to finalize the list of projects to be further developed and evaluated.

TRANSPORTATION CONCEPT EVALUATION WORKSHOP

After individual potential project alternatives for bicycle/pedestrian, transit and roadway were analyzed, the resulting evaluations were made available for comment, refinement, and discussion at a Transportation Concept Evaluation Workshop.



The public workshop was held on the evening of July 21, 2010 with a presentation followed by an open-house style format. The purpose of this meeting was to review the potential projects and draft “scorecard” for each projects. The scorecards show the rating of each project against evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria and ratings are further discussed in Chapter 6 and shown in Appendix A.

The public was asked to provide feedback on the potential project alternatives and the corresponding scorecards on comment forms at the meeting. This information was also made available on the project website and open for public comment for one week following the meeting.

A staff meeting was held with AAMPO staff to review the evaluation and input from the workshop. This information was used to develop the projects to be included in the Draft Plan.

DRAFT PLAN PRESENTATION

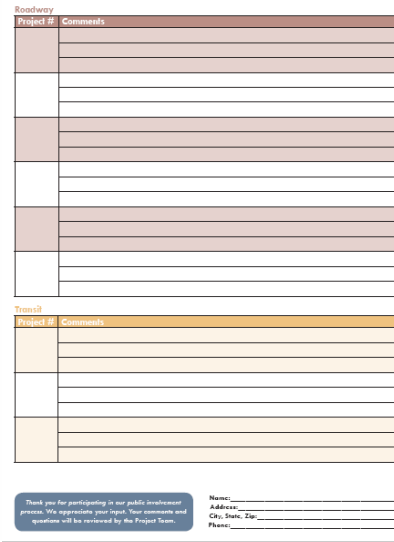
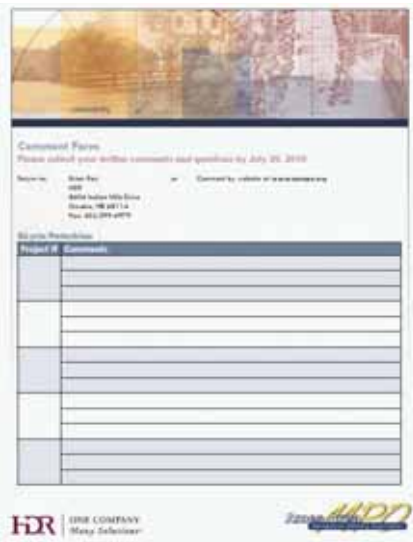
The Draft Plan was presented to the AAMPO Transportation Policy Committee on August 31, 2010. An overview of the Draft Plan was presented followed by a question and answer period.

DRAFT PLAN PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held on September 29, 2010 to receive input on the Draft Plan. The meeting was an open house and allowed the general public to provide feedback on the Draft Plan directly to AAMPO staff.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL PLAN/PUBLIC HEARING

The Final Plan was presented to the AAMPO Transportation Policy Committee on October 12, 2010. This presentation was also the public hearing for the Plan.



3.4 ADVERTISEMENTS AND PRESS RELEASES

The 2035 LRTP provides the transportation vision for the Ames area. The plan should reflect the needs and desires of citizens in the community. Public meetings were a primary channel of engaging the community in the transportation planning process. Workshops, public meetings, and public hearings were advertised in the local newspaper, sent to various groups/organizations and on the AAMPO website.



Press Release

City Manager's Office
515 Clark Avenue Ames, IA
Phone: (515) 239-5101
Fax: (515) 239-5142

Contact: Susan Givada, Public Relations Officer, (515) 239-5204
Damion Pregitzer, Public Works Department, (515) 239-5275

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 21, 2009

Public Invited to Share Ideas for Transportation Future

AMES, Iowa – The Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) seeks citizen input at a public meeting concerning transportation issues and the direction of the long range planning effort.

cheduled to attend the Issues/Visioning Workshop 10 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber. The meeting will start promptly at 6:00 p.m. The AAMPO and the transportation-planning effort include an overview of the planning process, share ideas and determine the public's transportation vision for the LRTP update.

meeting in a series of public meetings. The Ames Area Long Range Transportation Plan is a 25-year horizon (year 2035) and transportation improvement projects that the citizens who live in the Ames area. The public's input and community support will be used to help shape the future of transportation in the Ames Area. Visit our website (www.aampo.org) for a refresher on the issues and vision you helped establish. Then, join us for the workshops to provide input on the plan in development.

Community Workshops

You Are Invited
to help shape the future of Transportation in the Ames Area

Visit our website for a refresher on the issues and vision you helped establish at our last workshop. Then, join us for these workshops in April to start the plan off on the right foot.

These workshops will:

- Identify new concepts and improvements for roadway, bicycle/pedestrian and transit system modifications within the region.
- Define how mobility, equity, and sustainability should shape the development of the transportation plan.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
Give your input on new transportation alternative concepts!

Wednesday April 21, 2010
6:00pm to 8:00pm. Open House
City Hall, Rooms 231/235

FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOP: PLAN-UP ALTERNATIVES
Review the potential transportation alternatives!

Thursday April 22, 2010
6:00pm to 7:30pm. Open House
City Hall, Room 235

WORKSHOPS WILL BE HELD AT:
City of Ames City Hall
515 Clark Avenue

www.aampo.org

Community Workshop

You Are Invited
to help shape the future of Transportation in the Ames Area

Visit our website (www.aampo.org) for a refresher on the issues and vision you helped establish. Then, join us for the workshops to provide input on the plan in development.

TRANSPORTATION CONCEPTS EVALUATION WORKSHOP
Review preliminary evaluation and provide input on the transportation concepts!

Wednesday July 21, 2010
6:00pm to 8:00pm
Presentation to begin at 6:00 with guest house to follow
City Hall Auditorium

WORKSHOPS WILL BE HELD AT:
City of Ames City Hall Auditorium
515 Clark Avenue
Enter the Auditorium from the north side of City Hall (6th Street)

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:
City of Ames
Susan Givada
Public Relations Officer
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 239-5204

www.aampo.org

3.5 PROJECT WEBSITE

A project website (www.aampo.org) was developed and hosted by HDR with a link to the City of Ames website. The website contains project information, comment forms, project schedule and contact information. The project website was updated prior to and after each public meeting.

To date there have been 1,490 visits by 650 unique visitors.

