

Bi-State Regional Commission

Commission in Review

Nov/Dec 2021

GIS/Mapping

GIS Analysts Keeney-McGurk and Robert Burke provided an overview of Bi-State's GIS and mapping services. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is used to provide Bi-State and its members with geospatial analysis and mapping services. Regional efforts that make use of GIS include long-range transportation planning, the Transportation Improvement Plan, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), QCTrails, and more. Members benefit from technical services such as fact sheets, data collection, grant application maps, and print and interactive municipal maps. Graphic design services are also available.

A highlight of the presentation was the unveiling of the updated 2022 Quad Cities Regional Map. The regional map was last updated in 2015, and covers the Quad Cities metropolitan area. The 2022 edition is Bi-State's first fully in-house street map – prior editions were contracted out. GIS staff worked with members to ensure the map would be the most accurate of its kind, and it contains hundreds of up-to-date and indexed points of interest. A wall-sized (51" x 42") map is available now, and a folded version, which will include surrounding communities, is coming soon.



NEXT COMMISSION MEETING:

Wed., Jan. 26, 2022

3:30 p.m.

The meeting will be held in person at 1504 Third Ave., Rock Island.

General public can submit questions or comments by calling (309) 793-6300

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Commission Approves *Bi-State Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy Document*

Principal Planner Bryan Schmid reviewed the update to Bi-State Regional Commission's Title VI Program and Non-Discrimination Policy. All Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Planning Associations (RPAs) must submit policies documenting that the organization and its procedures are consistent with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Title VI programs are typically updated every three years. Bi-State, covering the urban area and Region 9 in Iowa, seeks an open and inclusive planning process for its documents and programs, conducting outreach to environmental justice populations, namely populations with low incomes, minority residents, and residents with limited English proficiency (LEP). One method of decreasing barriers to public participation Bi-State uses is offering in-person input opportunities in various locations and times, while providing

language services and ensuring that facilities are accessible to all.

Bi-State's Title VI Program was amended in 2020 in response to recommendations from the triennial review in April 2020. At that time, the public involvement process was reviewed by Bi-State and the Iowa DOT to ensure compliance and consistency. Included in the 2021 update, staff members were designated for responsibility of Title VI oversight and data, and mapping updates were completed in the LEP Plan.

Mr. Schmid concluded that upon adoption, the *Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy* document will be submitted to the Iowa Department of Transportation as the lead agency for transportation planning.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

Gena McCullough, Assistant Planning Director/Planning Director, shared an overview of transportation and non-transportation elements. U.S. DOT (Federal Highway Administration \$351 billion and Federal Transit Administration \$91 billion) will be working on rule-making for two new formula programs and 11 new competitive grant programs. The act did not address Highway Trust Fund solvency and utilized a \$118 billion transfer from the general fund. New programs focus on additional infrastructure funds, mobility, safe and healthy streets, and complete streets with active transportation in mind. A new rural surface transportation competitive grant at \$2 billion is for areas outside an urbanized area.

Public Law 117-58, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL), was signed into law on November 15, 2021. The \$1.2 trillion package

contained \$550 billion in new spending. Major components included the reauthorization of the transportation act at \$280 billion, energy/environment/climate at \$192 billion and broadband at \$65 billion.

Non-transportation elements of IIJA included funding for safe drinking water, FEMA's BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities), pre-disaster mitigation low interest loans, weatherization assistance, 6 broadband grant programs, and funding for the inland waterway system to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. As more information comes out through the rule-making and granting processes, Bi-State staff will share the information with its members.

Corn Belt Ports and Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois

Dr. Anshu Singh from Tri-State Corn Belt Ports has been working closely with Colonel Bob Sinkler (Ret.) on the upper Mississippi River and Illinois River port statistical areas as a corporate citizen project. Both do consulting for Riverside Global for integrated water solutions and environmental services. Ms. Singh noted a misperception that there are no inland ports, and the data consolidated for the Corn Belt port statistical areas will document the significant volume of commodities moving on these inland waterways through a linear collection of ports and terminals. The effort also coincides with gaining recognition on the importance of maintaining these inland waterway systems as an important economic driver of our national economy.

In the 2020 listing of leading US ports by the US Army Corps of Engineers USACOE, the Mid-America Port, IA/IL/MO ranked 41st with 15 million (M) tons. Illinois Waterway Ports, IL ranked 42nd with 14.9 M tons, and the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois ranked 56th with 8.4 tons. She notes the power in numbers with 12 regional planning agencies, 11 city and county ports and 40 riverfront communities now having an opportunity to provide a voice for inland waterway freight movement.

Goals set for the Corn Belt Ports include gaining stature in the national ranking, continued media and government relations, strengthening linkage to the Louisiana ports, securing funding for staffing of the effort, forming a waterborne commerce association, and seeking funding opportunities. For the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois, Ms. Singh suggested seeking greater recognition and ranking, identifying capital needs, leveraging local and state resources, and looking at a more formal structure to solidify efforts and increase recognition of the port statistical area (PSA).

She concluded with a slide of FY2021 construction ready projects, including a mooring cell at Lock 14. Additionally, there are opportunities through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The USACOE is to receive \$17 billion (B) for investigations, construction, operations and maintenance, among other programs. With this funding and the timing of the PSAs formation, there are opportunities to make inland waterway improvement to leverage greater freight movement on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to benefit the tri-state region.