



## IOWA CHAPTER

### Iowa Chapter Transportation Policy Initiatives

The Iowa Chapter Supports 21<sup>st</sup> Century transportation smart spending solutions that encourage people to

- Drive fuel-efficient vehicles
- Reduce the number of miles driven, such as combining trips, car-pooling, driving to locations closer to home, riding a bike, walking
- Use public transportation, such as buses and rail, which are more energy efficient



These solutions will

- Reduce pollution, including green house gases and particulate matter (PM 2.5 and PM 10)
- Provide health benefits, by encouraging walking and bicycling
- Support job growth and economic development that will be spurred by transit and rail development
- Reduce sprawl and minimize the impacts on and use of land
- Improve the mobility of senior citizens, lower income residents and individuals who are unable to drive

#### Public transportation and transportation alternatives

The Iowa Chapter supports transportation policies that promote public transportation and other transportation alternatives to reduce the impact of personal cars. These alternatives include:

- Support encouraging passenger rail in Iowa; encouraging the development of spur connections; expanding Amtrak service in Iowa, including lines extending from Chicago to both Dubuque and Davenport
- Support light rail between and in major cities in Iowa
- Support expansion of bus routes, along with increasing the number of hours the buses operate, increasing the frequency of service and expanding the service to weekends
- Support for park-and-ride parking areas so that people can commute to a point where they can catch light rail or a bus
- Support for policies that require any urban street project funded with state taxpayer dollars needs to have sidewalk on at least one side of the street
- Support for expansion of railroads for freight
- The Chapter supports increased funding for transit in Iowa



## Roads and highways

With respect to roads and highways, the Chapter supports

- A fix-it first policy that would repair existing roads and bridges before new roads are constructed, by-passes around communities are built and new lanes of traffic are added.
- Planting of prairie plants in highway ditches. This reduces the cost for mowing and herbicide application.
- The Iowa Department of Transportation must have real public hearings for projects where the public can speak in front of each other, not just poster boards put on display in a meeting room.
- The Chapter supports the use of context-sensitive design principles when street, road and highway projects are designed. Using these principles, the designers take into consideration the natural areas, cultural history of the area and architecture and blend the road projects into the environment in a way that preserves the historical and environmental treasures.
- The Chapter supports protection of natural areas from road projects. Iowa has lost significant acres of its natural areas and the remaining prairies, woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat need to be protected from the destruction that accompanies road projects.



## Smart Planning for more efficient communities

A number of Iowa cities have sprawled around the edges of town while the downtown is a donut hole of empty buildings.

- The Iowa Chapter supports policies that allow denser, mixed-use communities. This will result in smarter land use where residents can reduce trip length between their homes and businesses.
- Although tax-increment-financing began as a program to revitalize downtown businesses, it has long-since been used to promote building on farmland and undeveloped areas. The Chapter supports retiring tax-increment financing for all projects.
- The Chapter supports complete streets in urban areas, where streets allow for walking, biking, transit stops and automobiles.

## Resources

- [http://www.iowadot.gov/transit/regulations/final\\_funding\\_study\\_report\\_12-15-09.pdf](http://www.iowadot.gov/transit/regulations/final_funding_study_report_12-15-09.pdf)
- <http://www.iowadot.gov/iowainmotion/rail.html>
- Neha Bhatt, Colin Peppard, Stephanie Potts, "Getting Back on Track: Aligning State Transportation Policy with Climate Change Goals," Smart Growth America and Natural Resource Defense Council
- Tony Dutzik, Benjamin Davis, Phineas Baxandall, "Do Roads Pay for Themselves? Setting the Record Straight on Transportation Funding," Iowa PIRG Education Fund, January 2011
- Steve Gravelle, "Heavy Metal – Agricultural Loads Destroying Rural Roads, Bridges," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, November 30, 2010