

IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

Barnett (Chair) called the meeting of the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to order at 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Title	Representing	Role
Ritch Kurtenbach	Supervisor	Black Hawk County	Policy Board Member
Duane Hildebrandt	Supervisor	Bremer County	Policy Board Member (Vice Chair)
Joel Wikner	Councilmember	City of Denver	Policy Board Member
Mark A. Schildroth	Supervisor	Grundy County	Policy Board Member
Greg Barnett	Supervisor	Butler County	Policy Board Member (Chair)
Steve Geerts	Mayor	City of New Hampton	Policy Board Member
Landon Moore	County Engineer	Bremer County	TTC Member
Jeff Skalberg	County Engineer	Grundy County	TTC Member
Michael Schares	Mayor	City of Dunkerton	TTC Member
Roman Lensing	County Engineer	Chickasaw County	TTC Member
Alex Davis	County Engineer	Buchanan County	TTC Member
Cathy Nicholas*	County Engineer	Black Hawk County	TTC Member (Online)
John Riherd	County Engineer	Butler County	TTC Member (Online)
Matthew Schmitz *	City Manager	City of Independence	TTC Member (Online)
Cherrie Northrup	Planning Administrator	Black Hawk County Conservation	Attendee
Travis Halm*	MPO and RPA Coordinator	IADOT	Attendee (Online)
Nick Fratzke*	Director of Transportation	INRCOG	RTA Staff (Online)
Oghogho Oriakhi	Transportation Planner I	INRCOG	RTA Staff
Sanzida Rahman Setu	Transportation Planner II	INRCOG	RTA Staff

Online Attendees *

The meeting started with the approval of the agenda. Motion was made by Skalberg, seconded by Geerts to approve the agenda. Motion carries unanimously.

Next was to review and consider approval of the minutes for the January 15, 2026, meeting. There were a few corrections made in the minutes. After that, a motion was moved by Hildebrandt, seconded by Schares to approve the minutes with amendments. Motion carried unanimously.

Afterwards, Barnett (Chair) commenced the discussion items.

Discussion Items

1. Call for Public Inputs RTA LRTP 2050

Oriakhi explained that the purpose of public input period is to solicit public comments on the 2050 LRTP. The LRTP is a comprehensive document outlining the current state of transportation infrastructure across the entire region along with plans for future improvements based on anticipated needs and projected revenues. The final draft is scheduled for adoption in March 2026 and the public input survey was posted on February to allow a 30-day public comment period. The document is available on the Black Hawk County MPO website and in hard copy at INRCOG office. Public

comments, corrections, and suggestions are encouraged before adoption, and even after approval, the LRTP may be amended in the future as needed. Fratzke mentioned that Iowa DOT reviewed the plan and it passed with minimal comments. The process also evaluated unfunded projects to better reflect local needs and help position the region for future funding opportunities.

2. Cedar Valley Trails Guide Update 2026

Fratzke discussed that recently INRCOG updated the Cedar Valley Trails Guide, a handout that helps trail users and bikers to navigate better. This map is being updated every two to three years, and in the latest revision the map elements were simplified to make it less cluttered and easier to read, grouping information and separating trail loops onto the back. While focused on the Cedar Valley, the effort has included collaboration with nearby counties. The map is a well-used product, especially for tourism. Other jurisdictions interested in creating something similar can explore partnership and funding options with INRCOG. Setu mentioned that the trail map was updated using the same database shared with the DOT for the Statewide Bike Plan. While the printed map shows only the MPO area, a QR code links to the interactive online map with trail information for the entire regions. Oriakhi added that the back of the map now features clearly defined trail loops with estimated ride times and starting points, making it more user friendly and less overwhelming, especially for visitors exploring the area.

3. Reminder - STBG project deadline in March for FY 2027 – 2030

Setu gave a gentle reminder for STBG application deadline which is March 13 at 3 p.m. and there is still time to apply for next year's programming. Application guidelines and the Google Form are available on the Black Hawk County MPO website. Currently two TAP projects have been received, and STBG remains open, so applicants are encouraged to submit proposals soon.

4. Project updates (TASA/TAP and STBG).

- Buchanan County is preparing to roll W-45 project with an estimate of \$200,000. Additionally, a foot bridge project is included in a bundle with six other counties and is scheduled for an April letting.
- Butler County got approval for two federally funded off-system bridge projects, both coming in near estimates with competitive bids. They are also partnering with six other counties on a BUILD grant application to help fund seven bridge replacement projects which are difficult to finance.
- Bremer County is expecting grant agreements, including CHBP funding, but plans to move forward with CHBP funded bridge projects for a fall letting. Meanwhile V21 project is being prepared for next year's STBG project.
- Chickasaw County is preparing for getting the STBG funding for V56 project in FY27. Additionally, a letting was held for the local Cold in-Place Recycling (CIR) project which came in at 83% of the estimate and two bridge lettings averaged nearly 100% of estimates.
- Black Hawk County's STP-funded paving project has no set start date yet with part funded by the City of Waterloo. The federal aid bridge project on Winslow Road will begin in July 2026. The county is also waiting for the FY25 CHBP grant award decision.
- City of Independence started preparing to reapply for the BUILD grant to fund street project on 1st St West. Additionally, they are preparing to bid for a \$50 million planned treatment plant project with continuing delays. The City secured \$2 million in grants through community project funding. The engineering work for Enterprise Drive Trail is still in progress with construction expected this summer.

5. General Discussion

Fratzke mentioned that at the recent Iowa DOT's MPO-RTA quarterly meeting, members discussed advocating for more programmatic funding in the next funding round instead of relying heavily on discretionary grants which are difficult for rural areas to compete for without bundling multiple counties together.

The board discussed the recent governor's proposed property tax reform that could limit or phase out the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for new projects after July 1, 2027, though existing agreements would be allowed to continue. TIF might be restricted to public purpose projects like roads, while other incentives could be eliminated. A concern was expressed about losing TIF would reduce funding flexibility for economic development projects like wind farms.

The board also discussed the HR 7437 Bill which is a recently introduced bipartisan transportation bill called the Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act. It aims to strengthen and improve federal transportation programs with a focus on prioritizing local and regional transportation needs like bridges, safety improvements, and other infrastructure projects across communities.

There being no further discussion, Barnett called for a motion to adjourn. Skalberg moved the motion, seconded by Hildebrandt. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

Sincerely,

Sanzida Rahman Setu
RTA Staff