

# DART Governance Task Force

Research and Interview Findings Review  
Friday, March 24, 2017

# Task Force Purpose

The Governance Task Force is established by the DART Commission of the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) for the sole purpose of **reviewing the governance structure of DART** and **providing advisory recommendations to the DART Commission on any changes to the overall governance structure.**

# Responsibilities and Duties

1. Review the overall governance structure of DART as currently set forth in the DART 28E Agreement and Bylaws;
2. Review other Central Iowa regional governance models;
3. Review governance models of other regional transit authorities nationally;

# Responsibilities and Duties

4. Develop advisory recommendations to be presented to the DART Commission on what governance structure would best govern DART into the future;
5. In addition, develop advisory recommendations to be presented to the DART Commission which would address:
  - What the role and responsibilities of a DART Commissioner are;
  - Identify appropriate term limits, if any; and
  - Address DART Commission make-up considerations, if any.

# Responsibilities and Duties

6. Perform any other activities consistent with this charter which pertain to the governance structure of DART and that the DART Commission or Task Force determines are necessary or appropriate.

# Task Force Operating Functions

1. An open and inclusive process of gathering input and recommendations from key stakeholders.
2. To be good listeners, be respectful of all points of view, and have robust discussions on the key governance issues.

# Research and Interview Findings

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# Overview of the Report

- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- Findings
  - Key Themes
  - Common Perspectives by Question
  - Data Comparisons
  - Non-Governance Themes
- Governance Models
- Appendices



## Process Notes

- 35 interviews with 37 participants
- All interviews hosted during March, 2017
- Mostly individual unless otherwise requested
- Mayors, City Managers, Supervisors, Other Staff
- Those who did not participate:
  - Alleman
  - Granger
  - Runnells
  - Warren County

## The Findings

- Represent primary themes
- All comments reflected in aggregate
- Did include questions related to finance and services
- Primary themes should not be confused with staff performance

## Finding #1

### **Need for Transit:**

All interview participants agree there is a need and a purpose for regional transit. There was a shared view the service is necessary for those in need (who lack their own transportation,) local workforce and as a valuable economic development tool.

## Finding #2

### Representation:

89% of those interviewed agree modifications must be made to the current DART governance structure. 11% felt their current representation was adequate.

Municipal representation needs to increase. Options proposed:

- One representative per city (most common response)
- Realign representation by aligning cities with common needs, size and service levels
- One representative per city above a threshold population/tax base/ridership, the communities not meeting the threshold, still represented by regional appointee
- Consider a fully elected board (DMAACC or Broadlawns Models)
- Concern was equally expressed about keeping the board size manageable
- Representation should be by an elected official – due to tax levying authority to ensure accountability to tax payers
- Committees could be utilized to offer broader perspectives: technical expertise, user feedback and business/employer input
- Current rotation process ineffective and not managed well by the community partners. Many partners, in this particular instance, are not comfortable leveraging their weighted vote for a position on the Commission.

## Finding #3

### Leadership:

Advocacy must be a balance between DART priorities and for the communities participating in the service.

- Taxpayer interests will always be top priority, understand and are open to opportunity cost, but require greater focus on ROI
- When conflicting interests arise, local elected official obligation will always place the interest of their community first and then will address DART interests second
- DART needs to operate more as a business
- Concern was shared as to how all regional collaborations overlap and expression of opposing viewpoints on one board, impacting other boards

# Most Common Perspectives by Question

- Governance
- Opting Out
- Future Participation

## Data Comparisons

- DART Levy
- Property Tax Valuations
- Population

# Most Common Perspectives by Question (Non- Governance)

- Services
- Funding
- Miscellaneous



## Governance Models

- Other Regional Collaborations

# Governance Models

- National Transit Comparisons

## Key Factors

- Trust building needs to be reinforced
- Balance and commitment needs to be defined with regard to serving your constituency and a regionalism effort
- Clarification around process is needed to identify who is responsible for which efforts and to provide consistency
- Everyone is watching!

# DART Governance Task Force

- Questions
- Comments
- Next Steps

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