

dart

PUBLIC

PARTICIPATION

PLAN

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1 PURPOSE

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) encourages timely public involvement and participation and strives to deliver information, services and programs that reflect community values and benefit all segments of the community. DART developed this Public Participation Plan to ensure all members of the public, including minority and limited English proficient populations, have meaningful opportunities to participate in DART's decision-making process.

DART's public engagement strategies are designed to provide community members with effective access to information about DART services and to provide a variety of methods for receiving and considering public comment prior to implementing changes to services. DART also recognizes the importance of engaging many types of stakeholders in the decision-making process, including other units of government, metropolitan area agencies, community-based organizations, major employers, passengers and the general public, including low-income, minority, limited English proficient, and other traditionally underserved populations.



As a recipient of federal funding and, pursuant to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Title VI regulatory guidance, DART should therefore seek out and consider the viewpoints of minority and low-income populations, as well as individuals who do not speak English fluently "in the course of conducting public outreach and involvement activities." (FTA Circular 4702.1B) Additionally, the funding recipient should offer "early and continuous opportunities for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic and environmental impacts of proposed transportation decisions at DART."

DART may modify its public participation methods over time based on feedback from its customers and the general public. The Plan is a "living" document that is updated periodically to reflect community preferences, changing demographics and transit services, as well as to respond to new communication and outreach methods.

1.1 Regulations and Policies Relevant to DART's Public Participation Plan

DART functions under a wide variety of federal and state requirements. This list provides an overview of the basic laws and regulations DART operates within:

- Federal Requirements:
 - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
 - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Executive Order 13166 -- Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency
 - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- State of Iowa Requirements:
 - Open Public Meetings Act
 - Public Records Act

2 GOALS

The Public Participation Plan endeavors to promote meaningful opportunities for the public, including low income, minority, and limited English proficient populations, to be involved in identifying potential impacts of DART's proposed transportation decisions.

The specific goals of DART's public engagement efforts include:

- **Transparency** – The process should clearly identify and communicate where and how participants can have influence and directly impact decision-making.
- **Participation** – DART customers and members of the public should have ample opportunity to participate in key decisions, such as having multiple options for how they receive critical information and share feedback.
- **Accessibility** – Every effort is made to ensure that opportunities to participate are physically, geographically, temporally and linguistically accessible.
- **Diversity of input** – Participants represent a range of socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural perspectives, with representative participants including residents from low-income neighborhoods, ethnic communities and residents with limited English proficiency, and other traditionally underserved populations.

3 PRINCIPLES

Public participation at DART is based on the following principles:

- **Proactive and Timely** – Participation methods should allow for early involvement and be ongoing and proactive so participants can influence decisions.
- **Tailored** – DART's public participation methods should be tailored to match local and cultural preferences as much as possible.
- **Authentic and Meaningful** – DART should support public participation as a dynamic and meaningful activity that requires teamwork and commitment at all levels of the organization.
- **Clarity in potential for influence** – DART should communicate to those giving input the factors weighing on the decisions, so they understand the potential for influence. In addition, staff should communicate the results of the public's input in terms of the impact on decisions at a broad summary level, providing major themes, the decisions reached and rationale for the decisions.

The recommendations in the Public Participation Plan reflect feedback from DART customers and the public, as well as best practices in the field. Information on customer preferences was collected primarily through a survey conducted in fall 2022. DART staff analyzed the survey results based on self-reported demographic information to cater recommendations to the expressed preferences of respondents who are low-income or from marginalized communities. DART also has close relationships with many human service organizations that provide feedback on how DART can best communicate with the populations they serve.

4 PUBLIC INPUT POLICY

The methods described in the Public Participation Plan cover a range of ways in which DART engages with its customers and the general public. However, DART understands that decisions about budgets as well as changes to services or fares are of particular importance. DART, therefore, has the following guidelines when considering such changes:

4.1 Major Service Changes and Fare Changes

DART will conduct public input on major service changes and fare changes. A major service change is defined as when 25 percent or more of a route's revenue hours or revenue miles is added or reduced, or when the total revenue hours for the system are expanded or reduced by 10 percent or more.

Major service changes and fare changes will meet the following public input requirements:

- Changes will be published for public review and comment no less than 60 days before the proposed changes are implemented.
- The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback through at least two of the top five methods for providing feedback preferred by customers, as highlighted in Section 5.2.
- Public comment is always welcome at regularly scheduled DART Commission meetings.
- A notice of the final changes will be posted at least 15 days before the changes are implemented.
- Notification methods may include on-board printed, digital and audio announcements, posted notices at DART Central Station or affected bus stops, and various forms of digital communication.
- The DART Commission must be given a verbal and/or written summary of public input results and approve all significant changes.



In the event the DART Commission approves a comprehensive fare policy that involves multiple phases or implementations of fare or service adjustments over a period of time, DART reserves the right to modify this public comment process.

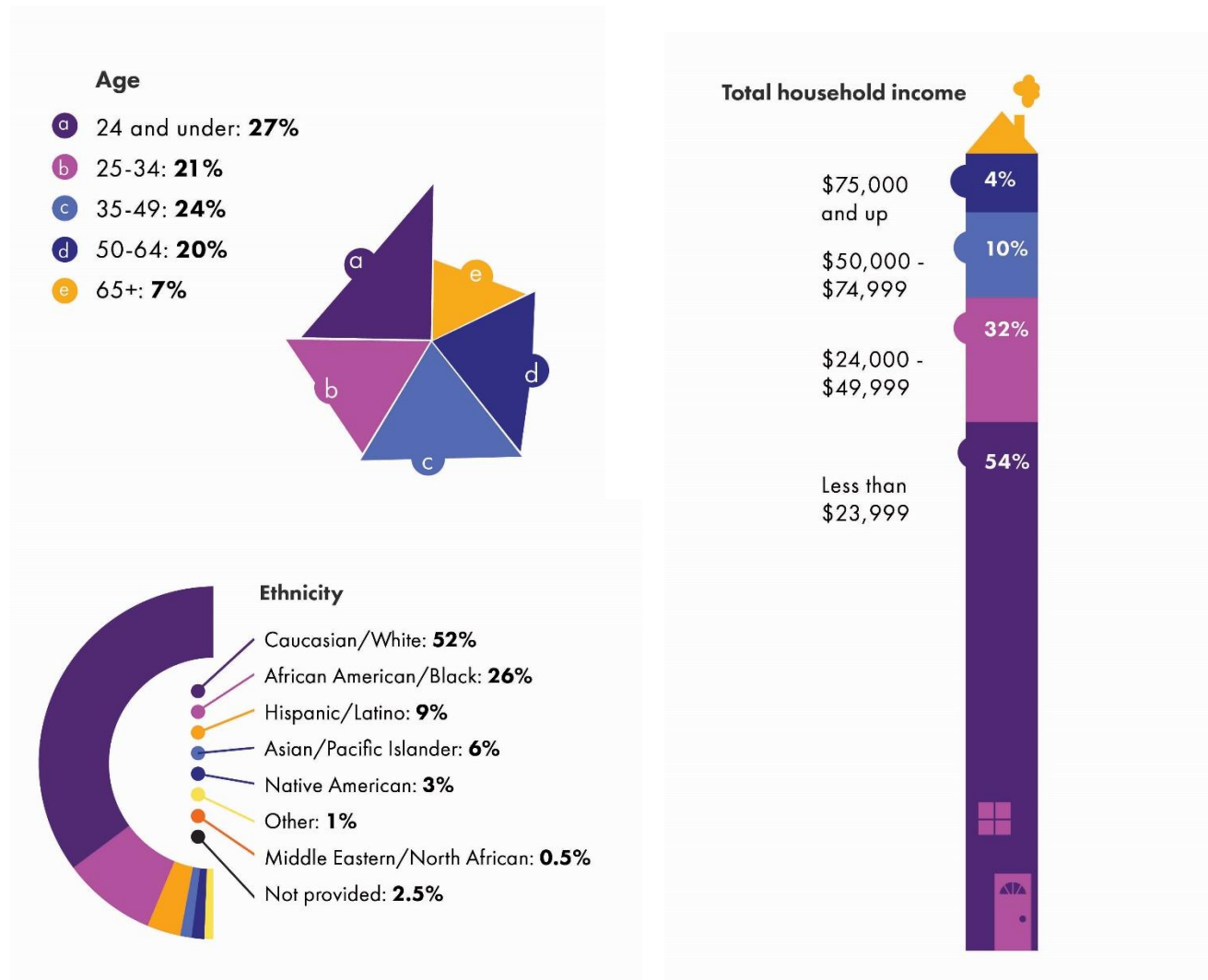
4.2 Budget and Tax Levy Changes

DART's annual budget and any associated tax levy changes will have a scheduled public hearing at a DART Commission Meeting. The public hearing will be advertised per Iowa Code, not more than 20 (twenty) days and not less than 10 (ten) days in advance.

5 CUSTOMER PREFERENCES

5.1 Customer Profile

DART understands the importance of tailoring communication and public participation techniques to the preferences of intended audiences. For most aspects of service planning and communication about DART's services, the primary audience is DART customers. In order to understand who DART's customers are, the following information was collected as part of a customer satisfaction survey:



5.2 Preferred Customer Communication Techniques

In fall 2022, DART conducted a survey of its customers on all fixed routes to gauge various aspects of customer satisfaction and preferences. Questions asked included how customers prefer to receive important updates from DART, how they prefer to share feedback with DART, as well as demographic information, such as race and household income. The survey resulted in

825 unique responses, and a statistically significant sample size for the system as a whole and on each DART route.

The survey revealed the top five methods DART customers prefer to receive important service updates are:

1. DART website
2. Printed signs at DART bus stops
3. Bus audio announcements
4. Posters and signs at DART Central Station
5. Printed on-board brochures (hangtags) printed in English and Spanish

Other response options included emails from DART, interior/exterior bus ads, public meetings, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and member city communications, which collectively represented 30% of all responses.

DART analyzed the responses from minority (45% of respondents) and low-income (54% of respondents) and found that the same top five methods for receiving information were preferred by these sub-groups of DART customers.

Additionally, the survey revealed the top five methods DART customers prefer to share feedback with DART are:

1. Online surveys
2. Printed surveys
3. Emailing DART
4. Calling Customer Service
5. In-person public meetings

Other response options included online public meetings, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which collectively represented 15% of responses.

DART analyzed the responses from minority (45% of respondents) and low-income (54% of respondents) customers and found that the same top five methods for sharing feedback with DART were preferred by these sub-groups of customers.

DART also analyzed the responses from separate surveys of paratransit and Caravan (formerly known as Rideshare) customers. While a much smaller proportion of DART's customers, tailoring communications about these programs to the formats preferred by established customers should improve participation rates.

- Paratransit customers have similar preferences for receiving information and sharing feedback as fixed-route customers (described above), with the exception that



Paratransit customer have a stronger preference for interpersonal forms of communication, such as calling DART or receiving emails from DART.

- Caravan customers strongly prefer electronic forms of communication, such as receiving emails from DART or visiting DART's website.

The customer preferences described above were used to guide the methods described in this public participation plan. Additionally, the tabular results of the surveys can be analyzed by bus route, member community and demographics in order to tailor communication with specific subgroups of customers as needed.

6 DIRECT COMMUNICATION METHODS

The Public Participation Plan identifies a menu of available methods for providing information to DART customers and the public. While these communication methods allow DART to broadcast information widely, they also are important tools in reaching minority and limited English proficient populations, who identified these methods as ways they want to receive relevant information. Communications methods include:



- **DART's website*** – DART's website, www.ridedart.com, is one of the primary sources of information for DART riders. Several tools are available within the site to communicate changes in service, as well as to notify the public of opportunities to participate in DART's decision-making process. These include "news items" that appear as short summaries on the home page and, when selected, can lead to longer news items, including meeting schedules and links to route maps, surveys, etc. DART's website translates into more than 100 languages.
- **On-board newsletters or "hangtags" *** – These are printed materials with round cutouts (shaped like "Do Not Disturb" door hangers at hotels) that hang from the handlebars on buses. They are printed on both sides, with English on one side and Spanish on the other side. Their size can increase with additional folding panels, depending on the amount of information. They are a highly visible and effective means of communicating directly with DART riders.



dart
RIDER NEWS

SERVICE CHANGE
AUG. 25, 2024



DART Service Change – Sunday, Aug. 25

DART will make minor schedule changes to several local and express bus routes beginning August 25, 2024.

Minor changes to stop times are planned for these routes:

- ▶ Local Route 8 – Fleur Dr
- ▶ Local Route 11 – Ingersoll Ave
- ▶ Local Route 13 – SE Park Ave
- ▶ Local Route 14 – Beaver Ave
- ▶ Local Route 15 – 6th Ave
- ▶ Local Route 16 – Douglas Ave
- ▶ Express Route 92 – Hickman
- ▶ Express Route 93 – NW 86th
- ▶ Express Route 94 – Westown
- ▶ Express Route 95 – Vista
- ▶ Express Route 98 – Ankeny

Time changes on local routes will follow a new bell schedule for the 2024-2025 Des Moines Public Schools academic year, while time changes on express routes are planned to better serve riders.

Trips will also be added to some local bus routes on school days during the 2024-2025 Des Moines Public Schools academic year.

Local Route 8 – Fleur Dr: Service will be added to Local Route 8 that travels along Fleur Drive. A new weekday morning trip will travel outbound from DART Central Station to the south side of Des Moines. On weekday evenings, a new inbound trip will travel north from the south side of Des Moines to DART Central Station.

Updated schedules and route maps are available now at ridedart.com/August or from DART Customer Service. Printed brochures will be available on buses and at DART Central Station after August 21, 2024.

www.ridedart.com ▶ 515-283-8100

Ride to Thrive Re-Enrollment

DART's Ride to Thrive program allows people who are receiving food assistance, housing assistance or workforce assistance to pay about half the cost of a regular bus fare. Once signed up for Ride to Thrive, riders are eligible for two years. Many Ride to Thrive customers will need to enroll in the program this fall. Please check the expiration date on your Ride to Thrive ID card to see when you need to re-enroll to continue paying half fare to ride DART. Learn more about re-enrolling in Ride to Thrive at ridedart.com/RidetoThrive.

Public Input on November Service Changes

DART plans to eliminate the D-Line downtown shuttle in November 2024 because ridership has not recovered like most other routes here since the pandemic and some funding sources dedicated to operating the D-Line are no longer available. In addition, Route 52 will change from running every 30 minutes to running every 40 minutes to ensure buses are running on time. DART will also adjust sections of Route 17 in Altoona and Route 74 in Urbandale, which will impact a few bus stops.

Please look for an announcement later this summer about these changes and ways to provide feedback on how they will impact you.

Important Dates

Monday, Sep. 2 – DART will not have service due to the Labor Day holiday. Regular service is scheduled on the weekend before the holiday.

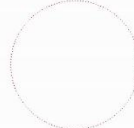
Next planned service change: November 2024

Thông tin này có thể được cung cấp bằng tiếng Việt theo yêu cầu. Vui lòng liên hệ với bộ phận Dịch vụ Khách hàng theo số 515-283-8100 để nói chuyện với đại diện hoặc gửi email đến dart@ridedart.com.

يمكن توفير هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية عند الطلب. يرجى الاتصال بخدمة العملاء على الرقم 515-283-8100 للتحدث إلى ممثل أو بريد إلكتروني dart@ridedart.com.

dart
RIDER NEWS

CAMBIOS EN EL SERVICIO:
25 DE AGOSTO, 2024



Cambios en el servicio de DART – domingo 25 de agosto

A partir del 25 de agosto del 2024 DART realizará cambios menores en los horarios de varias rutas de autobuses locales y exprés.

Están planeados cambios menores en los horarios de parada de las siguientes rutas:

- ▶ Ruta local 8 – Fleur Dr
- ▶ Ruta local 11 – Ingersoll Ave
- ▶ Ruta local 13 – SE Park Ave
- ▶ Ruta local 14 – Beaver Ave
- ▶ Ruta local 15 – 6th Ave
- ▶ Ruta local 16 – Douglas Ave
- ▶ Ruta exprés 92 – Hickman
- ▶ Ruta exprés 93 – NW 86th
- ▶ Ruta exprés 94 – Westown
- ▶ Ruta exprés 95 – Vista
- ▶ Ruta exprés 98 – Ankeny

Los cambios de horario en las rutas locales serán de acuerdo al nuevo horario del año académico 2024-2025 de las escuelas públicas de Des Moines, mientras que el cambio en los horarios de las rutas exprés son para brindar un mejor servicio a los usuarios.

También, durante el año académico 2024-2025 de las escuelas públicas de Des Moines, se agregarán viajes en algunas rutas de autobuses locales durante los días de escuela.

Ruta local 8 – Fleur Dr: se aumentará el servicio en la ruta local 8 que va por Fleur Drive. Entre semana, habrá un nuevo viaje matutino que irá desde la estación central de DART hacia el lado sur de Des Moines. Entre semana por los fines de semana, habrá un nuevo viaje que irá del lado norte del sur de Des Moines hasta la estación central de DART.

Los horarios actualizados y los mapas de rutas están disponibles en ridedart.com/August o en el servicio de atención al cliente de DART. Los folletos impresos estarán disponibles en los autobuses y en la estación central de DART después del 21 de agosto de 2024.

www.ridedart.com ▶ 515-283-8100

Programa Ride to Thrive

El programa Ride to Thrive de DART permite a las personas que reciben asistencia alimentaria, asistencia para vivienda o asistencia laboral pagar aproximadamente la mitad del costo de una tarifa de autobús regular. Una vez inscritos en Ride to Thrive, los usuarios son elegibles por dos años. Este año, muchos clientes del servicio Ride to Thrive deberán inscribirse en el programa. Por favor verifique la fecha de vencimiento en su tarjeta de identificación Ride to Thrive para ver cuándo necesita volver a inscribirse y continuar pagando la mitad de la tarifa para viajar en DART. Obtenga más información sobre Ride to Thrive en ridedart.com/RidetoThrive.

Opinión pública sobre los cambios en el servicio de noviembre

En noviembre del 2024, DART planea eliminar el servicio de transporte de la Línea D que va al centro, debido a que el número de pasajeros no se ha recuperado desde la pandemia como lo han hecho la mayoría de las otras rutas y algunos fuentes de financiamiento dedicados a operar la línea D ya no están disponibles. Además, la ruta 52 cambiará de circular cada 30 minutos a circular cada 40 minutos para garantizar que los autobuses lleguen a tiempo. DART también ajustará secciones de la ruta 17 en Altoona y la ruta 74 en Urbandale, lo que afectará algunas paradas de autobús.

Por favor esté atento al aviso que saldrá a finales del verano acerca de estos cambios y les formos en que puede dar retroalimentación de como lo impactarán.

Fechas Importantes

Lunes, 2 de septiembre: no habrá servicio de DART debido al feriado de Día del Trabajo. El fin de semana anterior al día festivo está programado servicio regular.

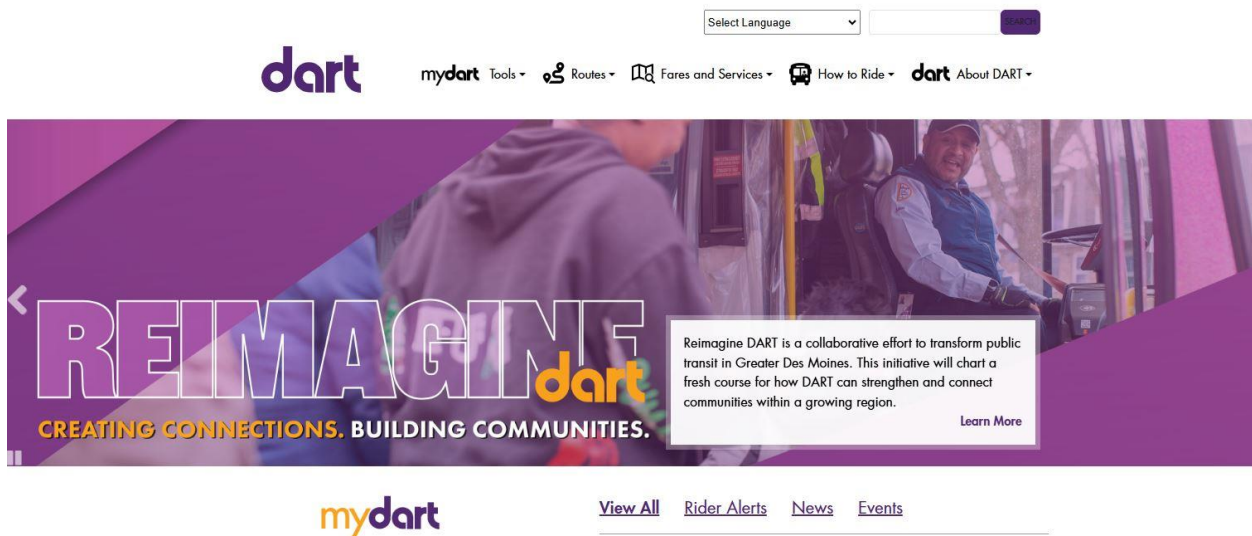
Próximo cambio de servicio programado: noviembre 2024

Thông tin này có thể được cung cấp bằng tiếng Việt theo yêu cầu. Vui lòng liên hệ với bộ phận Dịch vụ Khách hàng theo số 515-283-8100 để nói chuyện với đại diện hoặc gửi email đến dart@ridedart.com.

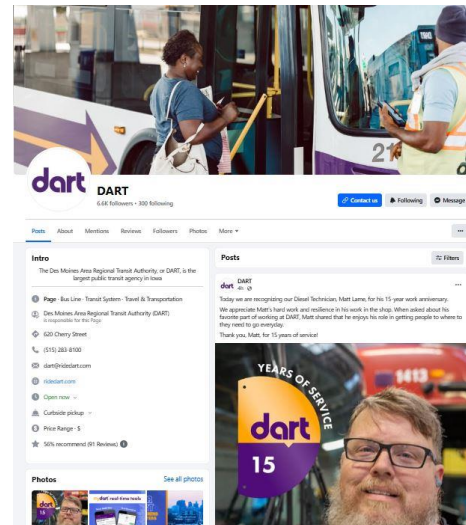
يمكن توفير هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية عند الطلب. يرجى الاتصال بخدمة العملاء على الرقم 515-283-8100 للتحدث إلى ممثل أو بريد إلكتروني dart@ridedart.com.

- **On-board audio announcements*** – DART's Automatic Vehicle Location System has the capability of scheduling automatic audio announcements on buses. These announcements can be scheduled on all routes, or single routes, and can be triggered by location on a route or on regularly timed intervals. Announcements can be recorded in both English and Spanish.
- **Emails to DART email subscribers (customers)** – These electronic communications are sent out via DART's mass email subscription service. Customers can sign up on DART's website to receive emails from DART. Staff has the flexibility to target email communications to subgroups of DART riders, such as those on a particular route. Staff can also elect to send an email to all email subscribers.
- **Emails to partners** – These electronic communications can be sent out from staff members' email accounts, as well as through DART's mass email program. Similar to mailers, these can include informational letters, as well as resources for partners to share information with their networks, such as newsletter copy, social media posts and fliers.
- **Press releases** – Press releases are aimed at generating news coverage of DART events, changes, meetings, etc. They are distributed via email to DART's media contact list, as well as posted on the Press Releases page of DART's website.

- **Community newsletters** – DART has several partners in the community that publish newsletters, including several member governments. DART can provide articles to these partners for publication in their newsletters.
- **Ads on buses and bus shelters** – Overhead advertisements can be posted inside DART's buses. Additionally, printed advertisements can be posted on the sides of DART's bus shelters.
- **Posters at DART Central Station and bus stops** – Printed posters can be posted around DART Central Station, including designated news bulletin areas within the waiting area, using sandwich boards on the platform and at the Customer Service window. Flyers can also be posted at specific bus stops.
- **Mailers to partners** – These printed materials can be distributed via mail to DART's partners. They can include letters to key staff at these locations, as well as posters or other materials for them to distribute at their offices.
- **Paid advertisements** – DART can pay for advertisements in local publications (Des Moines Register, Axios, Business Record, Black Iowa News, etc.), in community newsletters and on local broadcast channels (radio and TV), reaching both broad and targeted audiences. DART can also advertise public input opportunities through social media and as digital ads on websites.
- **Paid ads in non-English media*** – DART can publish paid advertisements in non-English newspapers, magazines, websites and radio stations to reach a wider span of the population.
- **Public notices** – These are published in the daily newspaper of record, The Des Moines Register, and are also posted on DART's website.



- **DART's Social Media Platforms** – DART staff uses several social media accounts to interact with riders and share information regarding service changes and opportunities for the public to participate in DART's decision-making process. DART has accounts on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn, but primarily uses Facebook to publish important information for riders and partners.
- **DART Technology Tools** – MyDART Tools that allow customers to book and plan trips can also be used to send alerts and automated messages.
- * **All communication methods are available for translation or interpretation upon request.**



7 METHODS OF INVOLVING THE PUBLIC

DART employs several methods for involving the public in DART's decision-making process. Staff consider many factors when designing public outreach, such as the magnitude of the proposed change or decision, what level of influence public opinion has on the decision, and who will be impacted by the decision. As cited above, DART customer surveys indicate that minority and low-income populations have similar preferences to DART riders as a whole in how they provide input.

DART's public involvement methods include:

- **Public Meetings** – A public meeting is an opportunity for DART to present information about a proposed change or upcoming decision and collect feedback from interested parties, often including riders. DART staff typically present an overview of the proposed change and then answer questions and hear feedback from participants. These meetings can be held in-person at DART Central Station, at a transit-accessible location in a member community, virtually using Zoom or a similar online meeting software, or a hybrid approach that allows attendees to attend in-person or login through a virtual platform. DART staff considers audience and other factors, such as high levels of illness in the community, before deciding what format a meeting will be held in. A public meeting is NOT required by federal regulations and comments do not go into the public record.
- **Public Hearings** – A public hearing is required by federal or state regulations where comments from the public go into the public record. A public hearing is governed by rules concerning who speaks when and for how long and is overseen by a DART official. A public hearing is NOT a question-and-answer format.
- **Grab-and-Go Events** – DART will staff informational tables at community events and at DART Central Station to share information about changes to service, new initiatives or community resources. These events allow DART to interact with a wide variety of community members for a shorter time span.

- **Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations** – To ensure feedback from specific populations or groups, DART may provide a small amount of funding and materials to support community-based organizations (mostly nonprofits) in gathering public input from the clients they serve and/or their broader networks. This process aims to honor the trusting relationships their staff already has with community members and the time and resources organizations dedicate to helping DART with its public input efforts. Community-based organizations can decide the best ways to reach their networks, such as having conversations during case-management meetings, sending emails or distributing a survey during a group meeting.
- **Open House** – DART hosts Open House events, which allow the public to attend and visit specific stations to meet with DART staff and provide feedback. The nature of this type of event allows flexibility for attendees, permitting them to come and leave at any time during the scheduled time. Open House events can be held in-person at DART Central Station, at a transit accessible location in a member community, or virtually using Zoom or a similar online meeting software. DART staff considers audience and other factors, such as high levels of illness in the community, before deciding what format an Open House will be held in. Open Houses are NOT required by federal regulations and comments do not go into the public record.
- **Surveys** – Surveys contain a series of specific questions, often in multiple-choice format, and can be distributed in print and/or digital form. The results from surveys can be quantified and analyzed, but are not as conducive to broader, more open-ended discussions.
- **Focus Groups** – At times, the complexity of a project, issue or needed input may require engaging specific audiences of stakeholders where more in-depth discussion and feedback can occur. Focus groups generally work better if held in-person but can be conducted through a virtual format, like Zoom.
- **DART Commission Meetings** – The Board of Commissioners typically meets the first Tuesday of each month at 12:00 p.m. at DART Central Station, 620 Cherry Street, Des Moines, IA, 50309. These meetings are open to the public to attend in-person and also may be available online via Zoom and include an opportunity at the beginning of the meeting for the public to comment on any item relating to transit.
- **Public Comment Cards** – Public comment cards are open-ended questionnaires that can be distributed in print and/or digital form. Comments from comment cards are valuable for open-ended discussions, although they are not as easy to quantify or analyze.
- **General Comments** – DART is always open to and accepting of public comments, regardless of whether they were given as part of an organized effort. Comments can be shared with DART by phone at 515-283-8100, by email at dart@ridedart.com, via a comment form on DART's website at ridedart.com, in-person at DART Central Station, or by mail at 620 Cherry Street, Des Moines, Iowa, 50309.

7.1 Selection of meeting times and locations

Selecting meeting times and locations that are convenient for target audiences is crucial to providing meaningful opportunities for public participation. For example, meeting announcements for service changes should be shared with the public on-board buses and through digital platforms; they should be held not only in the early afternoon but also in the late afternoon or early evening; and they should be held at locations in downtown Des Moines, as well as regional locations such as suburban and Des Moines library locations.

8 PUBLIC OUTREACH BETWEEN APRIL 2022 – APRIL 2025

DART's outreach for its long-range planning, major service changes and other changes impacting riders and the public included the following activities:

- DART hosted three virtual and in-person public meetings between May 24-26, 2022, to collect input on changes to service in West Des Moines, including re-routing one local route and discontinuing service on one local route to replace it with a new microtransit zone. These meetings were promoted in English and Spanish on buses and in signage posted at DART Central Station. English language promotion of these meetings also included emails to rider, social media posts and posts to DART's website. DART staff members were periodically available on buses during the month of May to discuss the proposed changes with riders and collect their feedback.
- DART collected feedback on a major service change in Des Moines and West Des Moines between January 12-18, 2023. The service change included making changes to two local routes and adding two new microtransit zones. DART hosted three public meetings and offered print and digital surveys to members of the public. To promote the meetings and survey opportunities, DART shared signs and on-bus audio announcements in English and Spanish.
- DART collected significant public input from mid-November through mid-December 2023 on a possible 40% cut in service in the City of Des Moines. DART sought input on the public's desire to increase funding to maintain public transit service, as well as how riders would be impacted by service cuts. DART held a public meeting in each of Des Moines' four wards, as well as an open house at DART Central Station and a virtual meeting on Zoom. DART also provided a survey in digital and print formats. Public input opportunities were promoted widely, including signs, newsletters, audio announcements, and emails directed to riders; toolkits shared with partners to distribute; radio and digital advertising reaching Latino and Black communities; and boosted social media posts to neighborhoods surrounding public input meetings. DART provided fliers in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Arabic.
- An online survey was open for two weeks starting November 6, 2023, for riders to provide input on realigning a portion of one route. The survey was promoted on DART's website,



in two emails directed to riders of the route and in a toolkit sent to the city's government and chamber of commerce.

- DART held one public meeting on May 28, 2024, to collect feedback on a proposed fare increase for DART On Demand, DART's microtransit service. In addition to the meeting, print and digital surveys were offered to the public in English and Spanish.
- In September 2024, DART gathered public input on proposed changes to four local routes and discontinuing a free shuttle in downtown Des Moines. DART held one in-person meeting and one virtual meeting between September 19-25, 2024, and distributed print and digital surveys to the public in English and Spanish. The two meetings and surveys were promoted in English and Spanish on buses and in signage posted at DART Central Station. English language promotion of the meetings and surveys also included emails to riders, emails to stakeholders, social media posts and posts on DART's website.
- DART held one virtual public meeting on November 14, 2024, to collect feedback on proposed changes to one express route and DART's mobility service zone following the City of Grimes' decision to withdraw from DART in summer 2025. The meeting was promoted in both English and Spanish through on-bus audio announcements and signs posted at bus stops in Grimes and the adjacent city of Johnston. Comment cards were mailed with a letter to more than 50 affected riders living in Grimes or using mobility services in that city.
- Public hearings on DART's budget process were held annually in either March or April.

Participation in public input opportunities can vary significantly depending on the type of change DART is considering and how broadly the opportunities are promoted. For example, during public input on possible service cuts, DART had significant attendance at public meetings (253 individuals over six meetings) and a high response rate to an online and print survey (1,136 responses). Public input meetings for other service changes have had minimal attendance (about 3-7 members of the public).

Mailing comment cards and sharing a link to an online survey have resulted in more participation than in-person meetings in several instances. DART has also found that paid promotion of public meetings on social media, bus audio announcements, signs at bus stops, and working with community-based organizations have led to higher participation. Also, DART found that having technical staff available at engagement events, in addition to customer service and communications staff, can allow for more detailed conversations with customers and members of the public.

9 TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Providing translation and interpretive services is critical to the success of the Public Participation Plan in reaching minority and limited English proficient populations. DART provides translation and interpretive services upon request:

- At the customer service window,
- over the phone,
- at public meetings, and
- for important documents.

For example, DART contracts with a firm called CTS Language Link to provide interpretation services in over 240 languages to customers upon request. These services can be accessed by phone or at the customer service window at DART Central Station. Additionally, DART makes interpretation services available at its public meetings to anyone who requests them. The interpretation services are publicized in meeting notices.

Most applications available on DART's website and from DART Customer Service are in English and Spanish, and DART will provide documents in other languages upon request. In addition, on bus communications about public meetings, including bus audio announcements and hangtag newsletters are provided in both English and Spanish. DART translates some public meeting fliers in other languages, such as Arabic, based on needs identified by riders and partner organizations.

More details about DART's strategy and resources to ensure that language is not a barrier for people to take full advantage of DART's services can be found in DART's Language Assistance Plan.

10 DART PARTNERS

DART utilizes a network of local partners to enhance its reach within the community.

- DART can “amplify” its messages by routing them through partners' communication networks, thereby reaching more minority and limited English proficient populations. These messages include:
 - Valuable information about DART's services
 - Opportunities to participate in DART's decision-making process
- DART can consult with these partners' staff and clients on:
 - Transportation needs
 - Solutions to potential or real issues

DART counts more than 200 organizations, businesses and other government agencies among its list of partners. These organizations span the following categories (*a complete list of partners can be found in Appendix A*):

- Youth centers
- Rehabilitation centers
- Agencies serving low-income individuals
- Refugee resettlement agencies
- Human rights organization
- Shelters
- Community action centers
- Correctional facilities
- Agencies for people with disabilities
- Residential properties
- Corporate partners
- Pass sales outlets
- Member governments
- State government agencies
- Federal government agencies
- Neighborhood associations

In particular, these DART partners may provide valuable avenues for reaching minority and limited English proficient populations.

11 EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

DART recognizes that minority and low-income populations have historically been systematically excluded from participating in public decision-making. Due to persistent societal and cultural influences, ensuring diverse public participation in DART's decision-making can be difficult, despite the concerted efforts described in this plan. DART therefore recognizes the need to think carefully about how to design inclusive outreach processes and to build in measures that consider whether a public participation process and its outcomes are achieving the intended results.

DART staff will utilize the following considerations developed as part of the Capital Crossroads program, a collaborative vision for improving Central Iowa, to evaluate the racial equity implications of key decisions:

- Have a variety of ethnic communities/people of color been informed, meaningfully involved and authentically represented in this process/decisions?
 - How has this been done?
 - How has the feedback been considered, incorporated and lifted up?
 - What challenges have we faced in hearing that voice?
- Is there a group that benefits more than another because of this process/decision?
- What could be one unintended consequence of this process/decision for ethnic communities/communities of color?
- What action will be implemented to advance equity in this process/decision?

12 OUTCOMES

The outcomes of public participation will be reported in an open and transparent manner. The expectation is that DART will follow-up with community members after they have participated in the process to inform them how their participation influenced the outcome. DART should be able to demonstrate that it explored the public's suggestions and recommendations and considered that feedback as part of the process.

13 CONCLUSION

This Public Participation Plan must, first and foremost, be accountable to the public. The strategic approach, goals and guiding principles DART has established are intended to foster public participation by providing early, continuous and meaningful public engagement opportunities for its stakeholders regardless of race, color or national origin, including populations and individuals who may be underserved because of limited English proficiency, racial or socioeconomic status, or disability. The methods and techniques employed by DART help increase public participation rates, particularly among those individuals and populations that are often overlooked or underrepresented.

While the methods and techniques used during the public participation process may vary according to each circumstance, DART will make every effort to achieve the standards it has set and to design public outreach efforts with the goal of most effectively reaching out to the diverse populations throughout DART's service area. As a living document, the Plan may evolve according to the demographic makeup of DART's communities and their unique needs, as well as DART's evaluation of its public participation effectiveness.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF DART COMMUNITY PARTNERS

APPENDIX A: LIST OF DART COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- AARP IOWA
- AGE FRIENDLY DSM
- AGING ADVOCATES
- AGING RESOURCES OF CENTRAL IOWA
- AHEPA
- ALLIANCE TECHNOLOGIES
- AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
- AMERICAN RED CROSS
- AMERIGROUP
- ANAWIM HOUSING
- ANKENY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
- ARTFORCE IOWA
- BANKERS TRUST
- BEACON OF LIFE
- BETHEL MISSION
- BHUTANESE COMMUNITY IN IOWA
- BIDWELL RIVERSIDE CENTER
- BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF CENTRAL IOWA
- BRAVO GREATER DES MOINES
- BRIDGES OF IOWA
- BROADLAWNS MEDICAL CENTER
- CANDEO
- CASH SAVER
- CATHOLIC CHARITIES REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
- CENTRAL IOWA CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
- CENTRAL IOWA SHELTER AND SERVICES
- CENTRAL IOWA WORKS
- CENTRAL SENIOR CENTER
- CHAPEL RIDGE
- CHAPEL RIDGE WEST DES MOINES
- CHI LIVING COMMUNITIES
- CHILDREN & FAMILIES OF IOWA
- CHILDSERVE
- CITIZENS FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
- CITY OF ALTOONA
- CITY OF ANKENY
- CITY OF BONDURANT
- CITY OF CLIVE
- CITY OF DES MOINES
- CITY OF DES MOINES HOUSING
- CITY OF GRIMES
- CITY OF JOHNSTON
- CITY OF PLEASANT HILL
- CITY OF URBANDALE
- CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
- CITY OF WINDSOR HEIGHTS
- CLIVE SUITES & CONFERENCE CENTER
- COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DES MOINES
- COMMUNITY HOME SERVICES
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT ADVOCATES
- COMMUNITY YOUTH CONCEPTS
- CONLIN PROPERTIES
- CORINTHIAN GARDENS
- CREATIVE VISIONS
- CREST SERVICES
- DADS WITH A PURPOSE
- DEAF ACTION CENTER
- DEER RIDGE
- DENTAL CONNECTIONS
- DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- DES MOINES AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
- DES MOINES AREA RELIGIOUS COUNCIL
- DES MOINES CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
- DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS
- DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY
- DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- DES MOINES REGISTER
- DES MOINES STREET COLLECTIVE
- DES MOINES UNIVERSITY
- DISABILITY RIGHTS IOWA

- DOWLING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
- DRAKE UNIVERSITY
- EASTERSEALS IOWA
- ELSIE MASON MANOR
- EMBARC
- EMC INSURANCE
- EMPLOYEE & FAMILY RESOURCES
- EPILEPSY FOUNDATION OF IOWA
- EVELYN K. DAVIS CENTER FOR WORKING FAMILIES
- EVERYSTEP
- EYERLY BALL
- E-Z MONEY CHECK CASHING
- FIFTH DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
- FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF IOWA, POLK COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
- FOOD BANK OF IOWA
- FORT DES MOINES CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
- FRESH START WOMEN'S CENTER
- GENESIS YOUTH FOUNDATION
- GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF CENTRAL IOWA
- GRANDVIEW COLLEGE
- GREATER DES MOINES CONVENTION AND VISITORS' BUREAU
- GREATER DES MOINES PARTNERSHIP
- GREATER DES MOINES PUBLIC ART FOUNDATION
- GRIMES SENIOR CENTER
- GRUBB YMCA
- HAWTHORNE HILL
- HAYMARKET MALL
- HEART OF IOWA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY (HIRTA)
- HOPE AGENCY DES MOINES
- HOPE MINISTRIES
- HOMES OF OAKRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD
- HORIZONS: A FAMILY SERVICE ALLIANCE
- HOUSE OF MERCY
- HY-VEE
- HY-VEE COMMISSARY
- IMMANUEL PATHWAYS
- IMPACT COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY
- INTERNATIONAL CENTER
- IOWA ASIAN ALLIANCE
- IOWA BUREAU OF REFUGEE SERVICES
- IOWA COUNCIL OF THE UNITED BLIND
- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC DEFENSE
- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF THE BLIND
- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
- IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
- IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY
- IOWA HEALTHIEST STATE INITIATIVE
- IOWA HOMELESS YOUTH CENTER
- IOWA JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS
- IOWA LEGAL AID
- IOWA LUTHERAN HOSPITAL
- IOWA MEDICAID ENTERPRISE
- IOWA METHODIST MEDICAL CENTER
- IOWA MIGRANT MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE
- IOWA OFFICE OF OMBUDSMAN
- IOWA STATE FAIR
- IOWA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
- IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- JOHN STODDARD CANCER CENTER
- JOHNSTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
- JOPPA OUTREACH
- JORDAN CREEK TOWN CENTER
- KATECHO
- KINGDOM LIVING
- LATINO RESOURCE CENTER
- LIFESERVE BLOOD CENTER OF IOWA

- LIGUTTI TOWER
- LINK ASSOCIATES
- LUTHER PARK
- LUTHERAN SERVICES OF IOWA
- LUTHERAN SERVICES OF IOWA - REFUGEE SERVICES
- MAINSTREAM LIVING
- MARSH
- MERCY MEDICAL CENTER
- MEREDITH CORPORATION
- MERLE HAY MALL
- MID-AMERICAN ENERGY
- MILL POND
- MONSOON ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN SOLIDARITY
- MOSIAC IN CENTRAL IOWA
- NATIONWIDE
- NEWBURY LIVING
- OAKRIDGE NEIGHBORHOODS
- OFFICE OF ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS' AFFAIRS
- OFFICE OF LATINO AFFAIRS
- ONE IOWA
- OPTIMAE LIFE SERVICES
- ORCHARD PLACE
- PACE
- PENELOPE 38
- PIONEER INTERNATIONAL
- PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF THE HEARTLAND
- PLYMOUTH PLACE
- POLK COUNTY
- POLK COUNTY ADULT SERVICES
- POLK COUNTY COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES
- POLK COUNTY CRISIS AND ADVOCACY SERVICES
- POLK COUNTY DECATAGORIZATION
- POLK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
- POLK COUNTY FAMILY ENRICHMENT
- POLK COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES
- POLK COUNTY JAIL
- POLK COUNTY SENIOR COMMUNITY CENTER
- POLK COUNTY SUPPLEMENTAL FOODS
- POLK COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS
- PRELUDE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
- PRICE CHOPPER
- PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
- PRINCIPAL
- PROGRESS INDUSTRIES
- REFUGEE ALLIANCE OF CENTRAL IOWA
- RUAN TRANSPORTATION
- SALVATION ARMY
- SAVATION ARMY ADULT REHAB. CENTER
- SCAVO CAMPUS
- SCIENCE CENTER OF IOWA
- SE POLK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
- SHALOM COVENANT CHURCH
- SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
- SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY SERVICES
- SOUTHRIDGE MALL
- SQUARE ONE ASSESSMENTS LLC
- ST VINCENT DE PAUL
- ST. JOSEPH EMERGENCY SHELTER
- ST. MARY'S FAMILY CENTER
- STATE OF IOWA
- THE HOPE CENTER
- THE PROJECT OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE
- THE ROSE OF DES MOINES
- TRANSIOWA CAB COMPANY
- U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
- UNITED COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.
- UNITED HEALTHCARE
- UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL IOWA
- UNITY POINT
- URBAN DREAMS
- URBAN DALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



- URBANDALE COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK
- URBANDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
- URBANDALE FOOD PANTRY
- VALLEY VIEW VILLAGE
- VALLEY WEST MALL
- VINTAGE HILLS RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
- VOYA FINANCIAL
- WALMART
- WELLMARK
- WESLEY ACRES COMMUNITY SERVICES
- WEST DES MOINES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
- WEST DES MOINES HUMAN SERVICES
- WEST DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY
- WILKIE HOUSE
- WITTERN GROUP
- YMCA SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
- YOUNG WOMENS RESOURCE CENTER
- YOUTH EMERGENCY SHELTER
- YOUTH JUSTICE INITIATIVE