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Business and Community Leaders Encourage Participation in DART's Long-Range Plan Updates

(Des Moines, Iowa – January 28, 2016) - The region's master plan for public transit, DART Forward 2035, is ready for its first update, and everyone from the Greater Des Moines area is invited to help. Adopted in 2011, the long-range plan is being updated at this five-year mark to ensure it meets the needs of the community's growing and changing population. A DART Forward 2035 Advisory Committee*, made up of representatives from businesses, human service agencies, chambers, and other organizations across the community, will help ensure the industries and people they represent are heard throughout the process, and the plan developed meets the needs of the region.

"As a growing region that seeks to continue to be a top place for people to work, live and play, we know having access to multiple modes of transportation is essential," said Eric Crowell, President and CEO of UnityPoint Health, co-chair of the Transit Future Work Group and member of the DART Forward 2035 Advisory Committee. "The DART Forward 2035 update is a chance for the people and businesses of our community to influence the future of public transit in the region, and I hope as many people as possible will take the opportunity to participate in surveys and public meetings."

DART provides nearly five million rides a year, including 3,500 students a day on weekdays, and is seen as an essential service for employers, schools and economic development.

"As the United Way continues its work to reduce poverty in Central Iowa, we know transportation is key to connecting people with jobs, education and daily-life activities," said Elisabeth Buck, Chief Community Impact Officer for United Way of Central Iowa and member of the DART Forward 2035 Advisory Committee. "Great work went into creating the DART Forward 2035 Plan five years ago, and now is the time to help ensure services are expanded or added where they are needed most."

Community members have several ways to give input.

- Complete a survey at ridedart.com/dartforward.
- If contacted, participate in a random sampling of citizens who will be asked to be part of a statistically significant survey being completed by the ETC Institute.
- Schedule a DART Forward 2035 plan presentation for your organization or business to learn more about the update and how to give feedback. A presentation request form is available at ridedart.com/dartforward.
- Attend one of the public meetings taking place the week of Feb. 29. Details will be announced at a later date.
- Provide direct feedback by calling 515-283-8100, emailing dartforward2035@ridedart.com or mailing DART Forward 2035 Update, 620 Cherry Street, Des Moines, IA 50309.

***DART Forward Project Advisory Committee Members:**

Elisabeth Buck – United Way

Eric Burmeister – Polk County Housing Trust Fund

Jake Christensen – Christensen Development

Shannon Cofield – Drake University

Eric Crowell – Unity Point Health

Angie Dethlefs-Trettin – The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines

Jason Gross – Nationwide

Amber Lynch – City of Des Moines

Michele Meadors – State Independent Living Council

Matt Nuetzman – Representing Local Chambers of Commerce

Mark Phillips – Polk County Continuum of Care Board

Tim Schott – Des Moines Public Schools

Cory Sharp – Young Professionals Connection

Connie Eastman – AARP

Gretchen Tegeler – Taxpayers Association of Central Iowa

Bethany Wilcoxon – The Greater Des Moines Partnership

Nick Wuertz – Lutheran Services in Iowa

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority is the public transportation provider that serves Polk County. DART operates a family of transportation services that makes getting around the Greater Des Moines area easier and more convenient. For more information about DART services, schedules, route changes, or directions to the nearest DART stop, visit the website at ridedart.com or call 515-283-8100. The MyDART Tools, Trip Planner and RideTime App are now available at ridedart.com.

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