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Public transit use on the rise in Greater Des Moines ***Increases follow investments in DART Central Station, DART Forward 2035 Plan***

Use of public transit is on the rise in Greater Des Moines, DART ridership data show. DART's ridership increased more than 7 percent in the first six months of fiscal year 2014, compared to the same period of fiscal year 2013. Ridership totaled 347,213 in December – a 15 percent increase over December 2012.

Ridership figures for the month of December are especially significant, because December is the first reporting period for which year-over-year comparisons can be made on all of DART's individual routes after the network redesign of 2012. (A list of the fastest growing routes is included below.)

"The region's investment in public transit is paying off," said Steve Van Oort, Polk County Supervisor and Chair of the DART Commission. "People told us they would ride DART more often if the bus went more places, more frequently, with faster travel times – and that's what we're seeing happen in the numbers."

The ridership gains follow significant investments into the region's public transit system:

- The \$21 million DART Central Station opened in November 2012 in downtown Des Moines, providing riders with a much-improved experience over the former Walnut Street Transit Mall;
- A redesigned and expanded network of bus routes was implemented in June and November of 2012 as part of the DART Forward 2035 Plan;
- Service improvements, including frequency additions, a new route and later hours, were made in August 2013;
- Technology enhancements such as the MyDART Trip Planner BETA were launched in October 2013, making it easier for people to plan their trips on transit. People can now also search for transit directions using Google Maps and Bing Maps.

Additional improvements will be made in the coming year as part of the DART Forward 2035 Plan. Real-time bus location information will become available later in 2014. A new fare collection system with smart cards will be added in late 2015.

DART promoted the improved routes in October 2013 during Try Transit Week, a seven-day promotion that resulted in 108,000 rides – a 20 percent increase over the previous week's total of more than 90,000 rides. In February, DART will host "DART Date Night" on Friday, February 14, offering free rides after 5 p.m. for Valentine's Day.



Fastest Growing New or Improved DART Routes

Route Name	Service Improvement	December 2012 Ridership	December 2013 Ridership	Percent Increase
Route 60 – Ingersoll/University	New route	15,763	26,354	67 percent
Altoona Express Route 99	Added trips	1,573	2,263	44 percent
E.P. True Express Route 96	Service to Jordan Creek	1,862	2,634	41 percent
Jordan Creek / Valley West Crosstown Route 52	New route	8,270	11,228	36 percent
Flex Route 72 – West Des Moines and Clive	New route; replaced WDM On Call	2,553	3,451	35 percent
Route 15 – 6 th Avenue	Streamlined route	19,558	24,661	26 percent
Route 6 – Indianola Avenue	Streamlined route; added frequency	18,314	22,622	24 percent
Route 17 – Hubbell Avenue	Streamline route; added frequency	13,795	16,831	22 percent
Ankeny Express Route 98	Midday service added	6,076	7,369	21 percent