



Contact
 Amanda Wanke
 Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority
 awanke@ridedart.com
 515-360-2125

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DART Forward 2035 public input indicates strong support for expanding transit

Work continues to finalize next steps

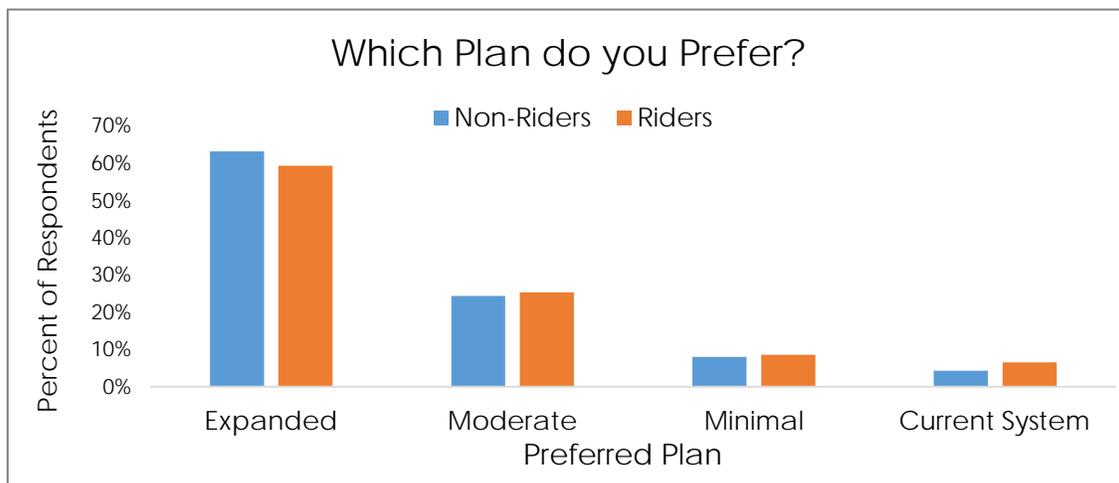
DART collected public input on several draft plan options for the future of transit from October through December 2016. Feedback was collected at public and stakeholder meetings, through emails and phone calls, and through an online tool at dartforward2035.com.

Respondents to the online survey were asked to rank five service characteristics in priority order based on what was most important to them, with 1 being the top priority, and 5 being the lowest priority. The service characteristics were Access (proximity to transit service), Availability (span of service operation), Experience (experience waiting for and riding the bus), Flexibility (availability of a range of mobility options), and Frequency (number of trips per hour).

Overall, 2,170 participants completed the transit priority ranking with the following results:

Service Characteristic	Average Score
Access	1.6
Availability	2.3
Frequency	3.4
Flexibility	3.8
Experience	3.9

In addition, more than 1,400 individuals representing 65 zip codes in the Greater Des Moines region completed the full survey, indicating which plan option he/she preferred. The following chart shows which plan respondents selected.



Overall, the survey yielded the following results:

- 35 percent of respondents are current DART riders and 65 percent are non-riders.
- 62 percent of respondents favor the Expanded plan, 25 percent the Moderate, 8 percent the Minimal, and 5 percent want to maintain the current system.
- 77 percent of respondents “strongly support” an expansion of DART’s existing transit system. An additional 17 percent “somewhat support” expansion, for a total of 94 percent favoring some form of expansion.
- 79 percent of respondents would ride DART more if their preferred plan were implemented.

A full report on public participation will be available shortly at ridedart.com/dart-forward-2035.

After hearing a summary of the public feedback on the plan options, the DART Commission approved two action items as next steps during its January meeting. These include:

- **DART Funding Study Request to Greater Des Moines Partnership:** The Commission requested the Greater Des Moines Partnership and Transit Future Work Group work with DART on an independent study of funding options to advance public mobility in the region. This analysis should look at both public and private revenue streams in order to determine the feasibility of the future transit plans suggested in DART Forward 2035.
- **DART Governance Task Force and Facilitation Services:** The Commission recently approved the formation of an independent task force on governance, which will have funding assistance from the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, to evaluate DART’s governance structure and provide governance recommendations to the DART Commission in spring 2017. The task force will be facilitated by Scott Raecker, director of The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University, with assistance from Cassandra Halls, president of 2 The Top.

In addition, DART will receive modeling information from the Des Moines Metropolitan Planning Organization. This will evaluate the overall costs and benefits of expanding public transportation in the metro by analyzing what impact it will have on traffic congestion, number of drivers and wear on area roadways.

DART staff will work to complete these items over the next several months to bring back to the Commission for review and further discussion regarding next steps related to selecting a transit plan for the future.

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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