

**Newsletter Article:** Community Impact

**4 Ways DART Benefits the Community**

From residents and visitors to businesses and communities, DART provides value to all. Let’s dig into DART’s impact and explore how a decrease in public transit service could affect quality of life across the region.

**An economic driver**

Strong public transit supports job creation, worker attraction/retention and economic activity. Every $1 invested in transit results in $4 in economic development.\*

Most people use public transit to make or spend money.

**A workforce essential**

* 87% of central Iowa leaders express concern that they won’t be able to meet future workforce needs.+
* The #1 reason people ride DART is to get to jobs, cited by 57% of riders surveyed.

Simply put, access to transit is a critical piece to employing central Iowans.

**An equity tool**

Of DART riders surveyed, 30% make below $12,000 per household annually. And DART serves a higher percentage of low-income persons, people of color, veterans and individuals with disabilities compared to the overall population.

*“Many students I work with have various disabilities [and] the bus system is the bridge to enjoying an independent life. Their lives would be drastically limited without public transportation.”*

*— Mary, sign language interpreter at Des Moines Public Schools*

Bottom line: DART improves quality of life by removing lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing opportunities across the region.

**Key to future growth**

DART has stretched its services to meet growth: Since 2009, regional population increased 24% while DART’s services increased 1%. And as the fastest-growing major metro in the Midwest, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, central Iowa's population growth is expected to reach 1 million with a 40% increase in jobs by 2040.

Is transit infrastructure aligned for growth? Now is the time to rally behind the most critical needs of the central Iowa community, including public transit.

***DART could face major service cuts without an increase in funding. Elected leaders need to hear why public transportation matters to you.*** [***Learn more.***](https://ridedart.com/funding-our-future)

*The rider quotations used in this article have been edited for brevity.*

SOURCES:

* *DART and ETC Institute: Customer Survey 2022*
* *^ Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Expenditure Survey,* [*“Transportation Economic Trends”*](https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/Transportation-Economic-Trends-Transportation-Spen/ida7-k95k/)
* *\* American Public Transportation Association (APTA),* [*"Economic Recovery: Promoting Growth the Benefits of Public Transportation"*](https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Resources/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/Economic-Recovery-APTA-White-Paper.pdf)
* *\*\* American Public Transportation Association (APTA),* [*"Nearly 90% of Public Transit Trips Impact Economy Through Work Commute and Consumer Spending"*](https://www.apta.com/news-publications/public-transportation-facts/)
* *+BPC and Bâton Global: Envision Iowa: Statewide Leaders Economic Outlook Survey Report 2022,* [*"87% of Iowa leaders express concern the state will not be able to meet workforce needs"*](https://businessrecord.ac-page.com/envision-iowa)