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# INTRODUCTION



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From our short travel times to our early adoption of a bike sharing system, Greater Des Moines prides itself on an efficient transportation system. The transportation system underlies our strong economy and enhances our quality of life; we don't have to sit in traffic for hours on end, and we can choose to go automobile-free if we like.

Still, as demographics, desires, and dollars change, our transportation system must evolve into a more mature system that offers even more choice. Further, federal legislation is pushing a fix-it first mentality and compelling the region to look even closer at the impacts of investments.

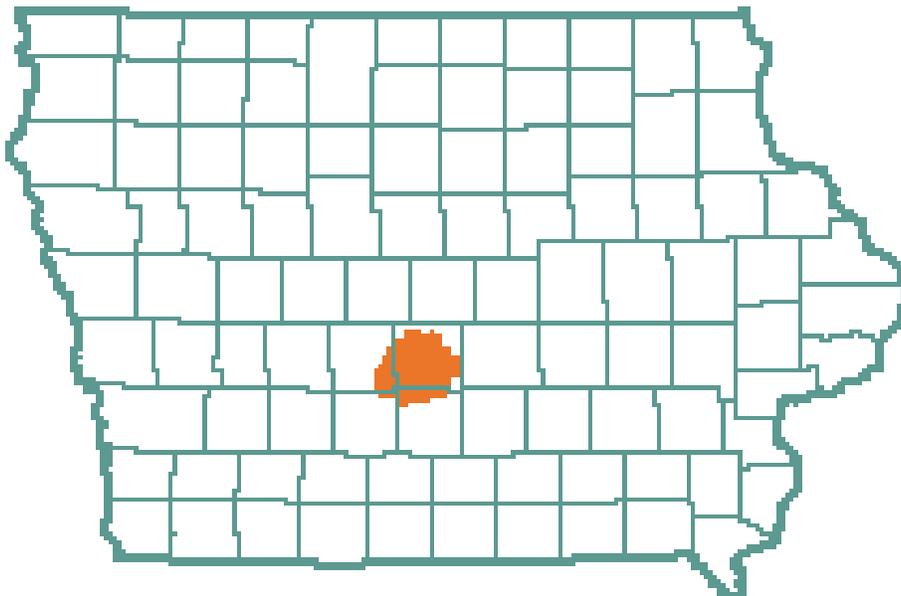
In this context, Greater Des Moines is planning ahead. This plan builds on success but also heeds an undoubtedly shifting future, hence the forward-looking title of Mobilizing Tomorrow.

## The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Federal legislation requires every urbanized area over 50,000 people to have a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). MPOs ensure a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. This legislation also requires that all surface modes of transportation be considered during the planning process. The Des Moines Area MPO fulfills this role for approximately twenty jurisdictions in central Iowa.

Full voting membership is open to any city or county government that is located wholly or partially in the designated Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), has a population of at least 1,500 people, and signs onto the MPO's cooperative agreement.

GREATER DES MOINES  
Metropolitan Planning Area



Currently, sixteen communities and three counties are voting members of the MPO:

- Altoona
- Ankeny
- Bondurant
- Carlisle
- Clive
- Des Moines
- Grimes
- Johnston
- Mitchellville
- Norwalk
- Pleasant Hill
- Polk City
- Urbandale
- Waukee
- West Des Moines
- Windsor Heights
- Dallas County
- Polk County
- Warren County

**GREATER DES MOINES**  
Des Moines Area MPO Planning Area



The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) also is a voting member of the MPO.

The MPO includes three associate cities (Cumming, Indianola, and Van Meter) and one associate county (Madison). Associate members actively participate in the transportation planning process but do not have a vote at the MPO Policy Committee level. Associate membership is available to all governments within the MPO that do not meet the population threshold for full membership. It also is available to those governments located beyond the MPA limits but within the eight county central Iowa region.

Finally, the MPO also includes several advisory members, including the Des Moines International Airport, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA).

## Our Transportation History

Greater Des Moines has joined together for decades to use resources effectively and to position the region to thrive economically, environmentally, and socially. Our leaders have long recognized the importance of working at the regional level, especially when it comes to transportation.

In 1964, the Des Moines Urbanized Area Transportation Study was initiated through a cooperative agreement between local officials and the Iowa Highway Commission. In 1965, the Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission (CIRPC) formed in response to a need for an area-wide transportation planning organization.

In 1972, CIRPC and seven local governments entered into a cooperative agreement for continuing transportation planning. The following year, in 1973, CIRPC restructured as the Central Iowa Regional Association of Local Governments (CIRALG). By 1979, CIRALG's membership included eight central Iowa counties and about eighty cities.

In 1983, the Des Moines Area Transportation Planning Committee (DMATPC), formerly part of CIRALG, was designated as the MPO for central Iowa. The DMATPC contracted with the City of Des Moines for staff support.

A decade later, in 1993, the DMATPC restructured once again as the Des Moines Area MPO, hiring its own staff.

In July 2013, the MPO celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of regional transportation planning in Greater Des Moines as it kicked off the development of Mobilizing Tomorrow.

## The Long-Range Transportation Plan

One requirement of the MPO is to develop a long-range transportation plan (LRTP) that outlines a regional vision and strategy to address a region's long-term transportation needs. The MPO must update this plan at least once every five years.

This iteration of the MPO's plan has been dubbed Mobilizing Tomorrow, recognizing the tie to and working to bring life to The Tomorrow Plan, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Mobilizing Tomorrow looks out to the year 2050, falling in line with the time horizon laid out in The Tomorrow Plan and meeting the federal requirement of an LRTP looking out a minimum of twenty years. The plan is fiscally constrained and will be updated in another five years to reflect completed projects as well as any changes in priorities and/or funding. Any project that seeks to receive funding from the MPO must be included in the LRTP.

### Previous Plans

Mobilizing Tomorrow continues the strong tradition of regional transportation planning in Greater Des Moines. The first plan, the 1990 Des Moines Urbanized Area Transportation Plan, was completed in May 1974.

Nearly a decade later, in 1983, the Year 2000 Street and Highway Plan was adopted to determine the major street and highway improvements needed in Greater Des Moines by the year 2000.

In October 1994, the region approved the Horizon Year 2020 Transportation Development Report. Much more robust than previous efforts, the 2020 plan looked at an integrated intermodal transportation system.

The Horizon Year 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan, completed in 1999, built on the 2020 plan. The plan's primary goal was to "promote both the development and the preservation of a multimodal, intermodal transportation network that facilitates the safe and efficient travel of people, as well as goods, both within and outside the designated boundaries of the Des Moines Area MPO."

In September 2004, the MPO approved the Year 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan, which recognized the need for a flexible plan able to adapt to regional needs over time.

The Horizon Year 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was adopted in September 2009. Designed as a guide for the transportation system decision making process, the 2035 plan is replaced by Mobilizing Tomorrow.

## Related Planning Efforts

### The Tomorrow Plan

In October 2010, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded a consortium led by the MPO a \$2 million grant through its Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. A once in a generation investment in planning, the program aimed to promote regionalism and to break down silos that have traditionally existed between disparate entities. The grant program centers on six livability principles:

1. Provide more transportation choices.
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.
3. Enhance economic competitiveness.
4. Support existing communities.
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment.
6. Value communities and neighborhoods.

Since being awarded the grant, the MPO has cultivated relationships with dozens of community partners in addition to thousands of Greater Des Moines residents. The development of The Tomorrow Plan represented the most robust public engagement strategy in the region's history, making approximately 27,000 contacts. The insights gleaned from these relationships formed the plan, truly making it the community's plan and positioning the region to effectively and swiftly implement the plan. This input resulted in four overarching goals:

1. Create a resilient regional economy.
2. Improve the region's environmental health and access to the outdoors.
3. Further the health and well-being of all residents in the region.
4. Increase regional cooperation and efficiency at all levels.

In addition to each of these goals, the plan includes five initiatives. The initiatives are crosscutting, collaborative ideas for implementing the plan's top priorities. They include:

1. Nodes & Corridors: Encourage development in areas of maximum impact and connect these areas to one another with multimodal corridors.
2. Greenways: Build a fully-connected system of natural resource areas by selectively expanding the existing network of parks, conservation areas, open space, and trails.
3. Resilient Neighborhoods: Support the continued presence of strong, unique neighborhoods that provide a range of housing and transportation choices.
4. Regional Cooperation: Engage in regional cooperation to support stormwater management and infrastructure.
5. Everyday Stewards: Encourage residents to take an active role in bringing The Tomorrow Plan to life by implementing more sustainable everyday practices.

The MPO approved The Tomorrow Plan in November 2013. Mobilizing Tomorrow builds upon The Tomorrow Plan's goals and initiatives to provide a more specific blueprint for the transportation investments that communities must make to achieve the region's vision for a more sustainable future.



## Capital Crossroads

The Greater Des Moines Partnership and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines spearheaded Capital Crossroads, a nine-month visioning process for central Iowa. The Capital Crossroads visioning process culminated in a road map to guide the area's path to short- and long-term economic growth. This initiative formed the foundation for the visioning phase of The Tomorrow Plan and, thus, Mobilizing Tomorrow.

Capital Crossroads is a broad look at the goals for the region's next five years, while The Tomorrow Plan takes a deeper look at a number of issues out to the year 2050. Moreover, Capital Crossroads focuses on a larger geographic region that includes all areas located within a 50-mile radius of the Iowa State Capitol, while The Tomorrow Plan focuses on the MPO's planning area. These two initiatives have been coordinated since the summer of 2010, when both were merely ideas. Since then, the Partnership, the Community Foundation, and the MPO have worked closely to align the two endeavors.

## DART Forward 2035 Plan

As it has with Capital Crossroads, the MPO has closely coordinated with DART on its DART Forward 2035 Transit Services Plan since its beginning. The DART Forward 2035 Plan will guide the growth of the transit system in Greater Des Moines over the next twenty-five years and includes an alternatives analysis that explores different options for rapid transit. The DART Forward 2035 Plan contributes transit analysis and planning to The Tomorrow Plan and to Mobilizing Tomorrow. The three plans will have a dynamic relationship as the region implements elements of each.

## Connect: The Central Iowa Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation Plan

The MPO's Central Iowa Bicycle and Pedestrian Roundtable developed Connect: The Central Iowa Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan as an update to a 1981 bicycle plan for the Des Moines metropolitan area. Connect is an action plan to guide central Iowa's planning development process to improve accessibility and mobility by foot or by bicycle. The plan aims to help guide central Iowa toward transportation alternatives that are bicycle and pedestrian friendly and away from dependence on automobiles.

Connect addresses and targets levels of bicycle and pedestrian use and recommends projects, programs, and policies to improve safety, convenience, education, enforcement, engineering, encouragement, and frequency of walking and bicycling throughout the region.

## Healthy Polk 2020

Healthy Polk is a movement of individuals, businesses, and community organizations focused on improving the quality of life and health status of people in the community. The latest plan, Healthy Polk 2020, began with 54 community conversations during which 750 people voiced their opinions about what a healthy Polk County might look like. From those conversations, a list of more than 900 priorities emerged. With much input, the list was winnowed to ten priorities, including increasing the availability of accessible, affordable public transportation and empowering more people to take responsibility for maintaining their health.

## Special Studies

Over the past few years, the MPO has taken on a number of special transportation-related studies. These studies can be found on the MPO's website, [www.dmampo.org](http://www.dmampo.org).

### Ames-Des Moines Transit Study

The MPO, the Iowa DOT, and the Greater Des Moines Partnership identified the Interstate 35 corridor between Ames and Des Moines as a potential corridor for enhanced public transportation options. As a result, the MPO developed a transit feasibility study in 2014. The study determined a market does exist for express bus service in the peak periods.

### Energy Efficiency in Greater Des Moines

The Iowa Economic Development Authority awarded the MPO a State Energy Program Formula award in early 2014. The award aimed to develop energy reducing transportation strategies and policies. The MPO focused on three areas as part of this study: energy efficiency in Mobilizing Tomorrow, the development of a regional on-street bike feasibility study, and the development of a plan for electric vehicles and related infrastructure.

### Freight Study

The MPO and its Freight Roundtable received a grant from the Iowa DOT to complete a study for a Des Moines area rail port facility. The study looked at transloading feasibility and analyzed both the market and infrastructure. The study also updated the MPO's list of freight impediments. The study found a need for a transloading facility and recommended a site in Des Moines at the intersection of the Union Pacific Railroad, the Iowa Interstate Railroad, the Norfolk Southern/Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, and the Southeast Connector.

## Stakeholder + Public Outreach

As a process, a plan is only as successful as the commitment of the participants who help form the concepts, believe in the vision, and further the recommendations towards implementation. To this end, the MPO built on the public outreach process conducted during the development of The Tomorrow Plan to glean more insights for Mobilizing Tomorrow. Please see Appendix G for more information on the public part

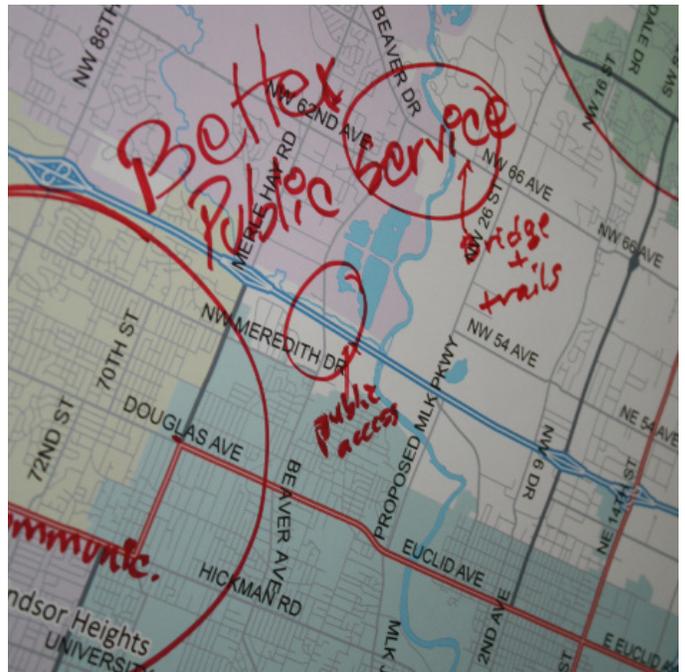
### The Tomorrow Plan Insights

In 2012, the planning team for The Tomorrow Plan conducted a statistically-representative survey of Greater Des Moines. The survey asked respondents to rank certain types of projects they would like to see in the region. The following list ranks the projects by importance, with 1 being the most important and 14 being the least important; transportation projects are in bold.

1. Lower taxes
2. Increase school funding
3. Redevelop vacant properties
4. Enhance the stormwater system
5. Improve the public transportation system
6. Spend money to attract new businesses
7. Support local placemaking
8. Create new parks and conservation areas
9. Create new bicycle paths and facilities
10. Buy out floodplain properties and convert to open space
11. Expand the trail network
12. Build a major regional attraction downtown
13. Add more parking
14. Build more roads

### Outreach Series 1

The MPO hosted the first input series in early 2014. Residents were asked to share their ideas on the transportation system at three public meetings as well as in an online survey. The MPO asked about current perceptions and experiences with the transportation system as well as how to allocate funds.



Participants drew problem areas on maps and explained what they thought were strengths and weaknesses of the system as well.

A survey found that getting to and from work each day in a consistent length of time is most important to Greater Des Moines residents. They also value having a roadway system that is kept in a state of good repair (i.e., pavement and bridge conditions). The survey also found that residents value being able to use different modes of transportation.

When the MPO asked about allocating its funding, maintaining existing roads and bridges received the top priority, followed by enhancing public transportation and supporting pedestrian + on-street bicycle facilities.

### Outreach Series 2

The second outreach series placed an even larger focus on project funding. Specifically, the MPO wanted to understand which kinds of projects were most important to residents. The MPO developed a board game that allowed residents to consider the trade-offs between various kinds of projects before allocating limited funding.

The MPO also received comments from residents unable to attend the public events. These comments pushed for focusing more on maintenance, allocating fewer dollars to expanding roadways, supporting alternate forms of transportation, connecting Greater

Des Moines and Ames via public transportation, supporting high speed rail, and making the region more pedestrian and cyclist friendly, including adding protected bike lanes.

Beyond these general comments, the MPO also sought comments about specific projects submitted by member governments for inclusion in the plan. The MPO provided an online map with all of the proposed projects as well as data points related to crashes, level of service, pavement condition, and more. This tool enabled residents to take an in-depth look at the projects and provide comments at their leisure. The projects and comment form can be accessed online at [www.dmampo.org](http://www.dmampo.org).

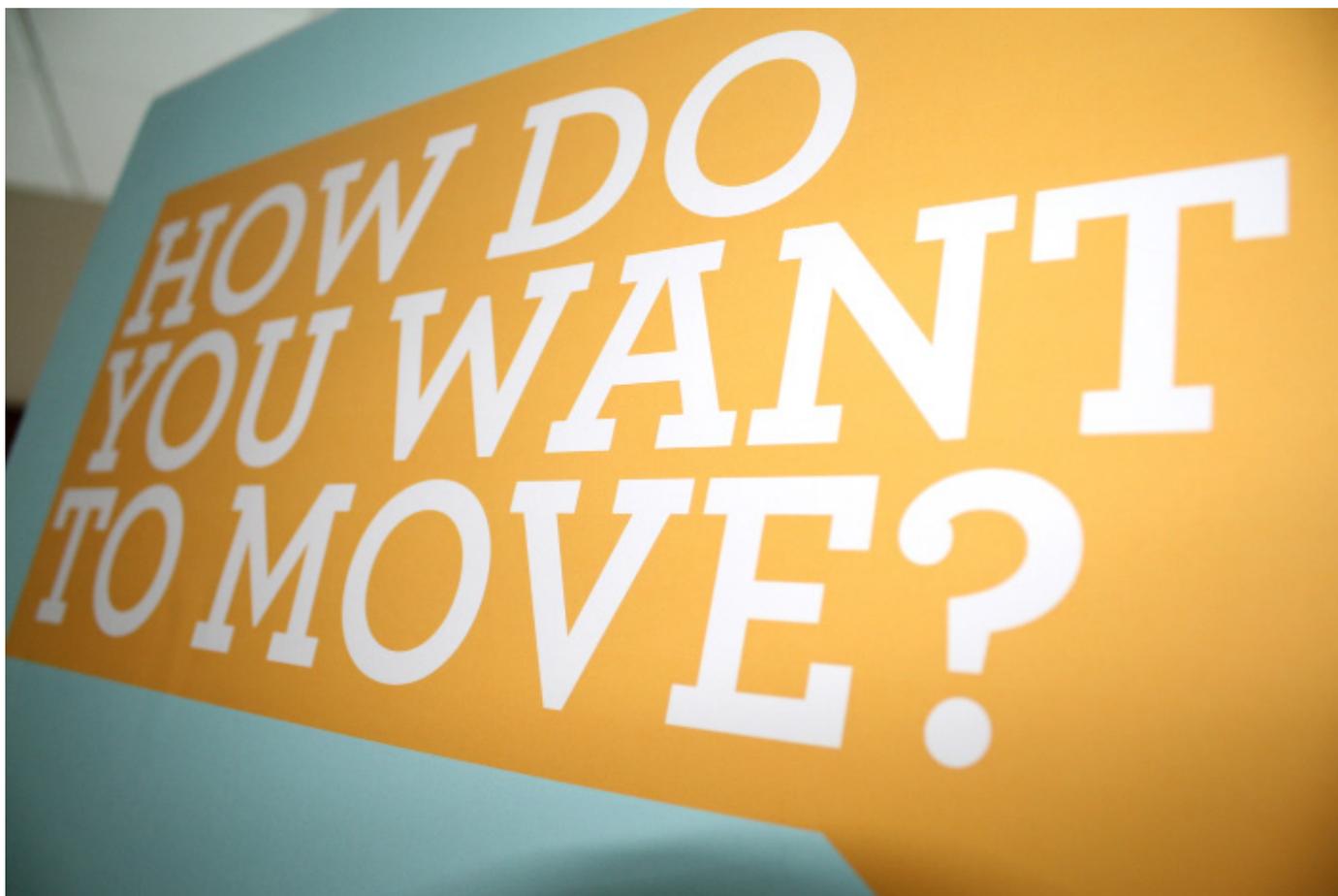
### Outreach Series 3

The MPO held a final outreach series in September and October 2014. This series sought feedback on the final plan. Greater Des Moines residents generally supported the projects identified in the plan, voice support for the proposed investment strategy, and called for increased consideration of multimodal transportation strategies.

## Socioeconomic Trends

Greater Des Moines has been included in a number of 'best of' lists over the past several years, including the Best Place for Young Professionals, the Best Place to Raise a Family, and among the Best Mid-Sized Cities for Jobs — all indicators the region is thriving. This success will lead to continued population and employment growth in the region. The population is projected to increase nearly 60 percent from 480,000 in 2010 to 751,000 by 2050. Likewise, the region's employment is expected to increase by 40 percent by 2050.

Understanding the makeup of this growth as well as the geographic allocation of the growth help the MPO understand potential impacts to the transportation system. For instance, the MPO anticipates tremendous growth in persons over 65 years of age, followed by moderate growth in those under 19 years of age. These demographic changes indicate more demand for multimodal transportation options as the over 65 and under 19 age cohorts generally drive less than the rest of the population.



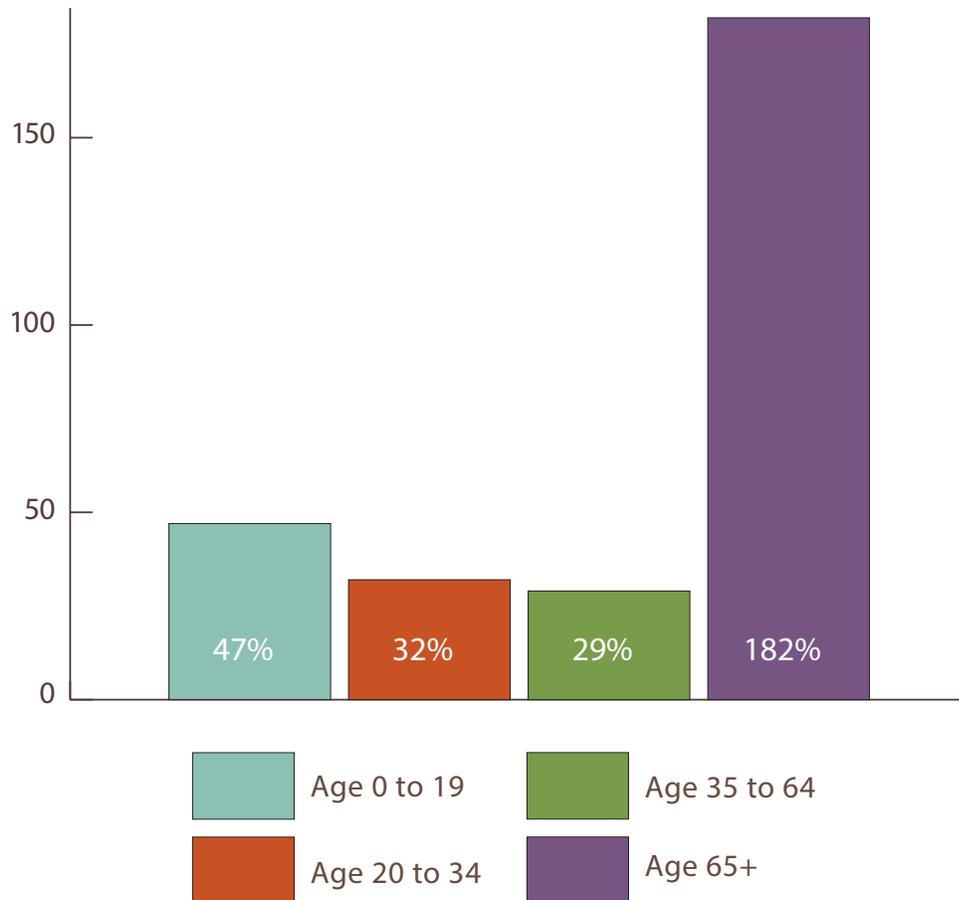
The geographic allocation of growth helps the MPO understand the impacts of land use decisions on the transportation system. To help determine how growth could impact the transportation system, the MPO developed a growth scenario for the year 2050. A growth scenario takes the anticipated regional growth and makes a best guess as to where the growth will occur throughout the region. To develop the 2050 growth scenario, the MPO worked with local governments to ensure consistency with local comprehensive plans and also to identify opportunities for

implementation of strategies recommended in The Tomorrow Plan. The concentration of households and jobs helps to determine what mode of transportation one might take. The growth scenario also can help determine which roads may see higher amounts of traffic as development increases. Appendix C provides more detailed information about the potential impacts of the MPO's 2050 growth scenario on the transportation system.

GREATER DES MOINES POPULATION FORECAST: 2010 TO 2050

MEASURE	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Population	480,000	558,000	614,000	677,000	751,000
Housing Units	202,000	235,000	259,000	285,000	317,000
Households	189,000	220,000	242,000	266,000	296,000

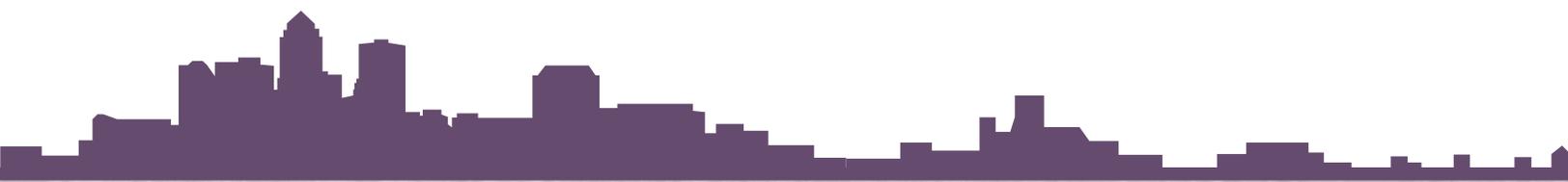
PERCENTAGE GROWTH IN GREATER DES MOINES AGE COHORTS: 2010 TO 2050



GREATER DES MOINES EMPLOYMENT FORECAST: 2010 TO 2050

INDUSTRY SECTOR	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Natural Resources and Construction	17,000	26,000	30,000	32,000	33,000
Manufacturing	15,000	15,000	15,000	16,000	15,000
Wholesale Trade	16,000	17,000	17,000	18,000	17,000
Retail Trade	35,000	36,000	37,000	39,000	42,000
Transportation and Utilities	11,000	12,000	14,000	15,000	17,000
Information	9,000	10,000	9,000	9,000	8,000
Financial Activities	48,000	51,000	53,000	54,000	53,000
Professional and Business Services	58,000	69,000	77,000	86,000	90,000
Educational and Health Services	44,000	57,000	66,000	75,000	85,000
Leisure and Hospitality	30,000	33,000	36,000	41,000	44,000
Other Services	17,000	20,000	21,000	24,000	25,000
Government	38,000	42,000	45,000	49,000	52,000
Total Non-Farm	338,000	388,000	420,000	458,000	481,000

# HERE WE Grow

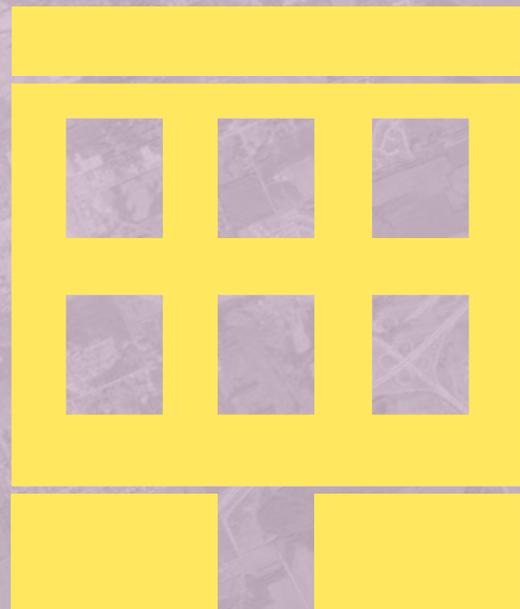


Projections shows a need for nearly 150,000 new housing units by 2050 to accommodate population growth

**113,000**  
additional jobs in Greater  
Des Moines by 2050

**50**

PERCENT  
POPULATION  
INCREASE  
BY 2050



The growth scenario is the MPO's projected vision of future land use conditions in the planning area. The growth scenario considers numerous elements, such as population and employment figures. With these numbers in place, we can forecast the region's future mobility and accessibility needs, and allocate our funds accordingly. More information on this process is provided as part of the Technical Appendices section of the plan.

# 750,000

GREATER DES MOINES RESIDENTS BY 2050

