

# THE TOMORROW PLAN TODAY

2016 EDITION

INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS BY THE THOUSANDS LABOR DAILY TO IMPROVE GREATER DES MOINES, AND THEY DO SO WITH A COMMON VISION FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: THE TOMORROW PLAN. ADOPTED IN 2013 AS A VOLUNTARY PLAN FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION FOR THE NEXT 40 YEARS, IT SEEKS TO BUILD A COLLABORATIVE, VIBRANT AND DYNAMIC REGION OF LASTING VALUE, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY. IN THIS ANNUAL EDITION OF THE TOMORROW PLAN TODAY, WE AGAIN TAKE A SHORT PAUSE TO LIFT OUR HEADS UP FROM THE TASKS AT HAND, TOAST THE PROGRESS OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR, AND LOOK AHEAD TO THE MEANINGFUL WORK BEFORE US IN THE COMING YEAR.



# GOAL 1

## Create a Resilient Regional Economy

A healthy economy is the foundation upon which to build a more sustainable future. The Tomorrow Plan builds on our strengths to compete in a changing global marketplace. Economic analysis indicates opportunities to diversify our economy by leveraging the work of other planning efforts, expanding the capacity for entrepreneurship, and growing educational options in necessary skills.

## 2015 Achievements

### Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets

- Urban Land Institute speaker event in March with Jeff Speck, author of Walkable City, and Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett
- Model Complete Streets policy drafted by MPO and distributed to all cities in the region
- Windsor Heights and West Des Moines adopted complete streets policies in 2015; others, including Pleasant Hill and Johnston, followed in 2016
- Wellmark Foundation Mini-Grants program paid for more than \$75,000 in complete street projects

### Better Streets for People

- Transportation performance metric-tracking was implemented to show progress toward long-term goals relating to the quality of the regional transportation system including crash rates, pavement conditions and improving access to the transportation network
- Partnership's Transit Task Force convened to strategize Bus Rapid Transit implementation in the metro
- MPO Transportation Funding Task Force convened to brainstorm means to diversify funding for transportation projects
- Stand Up for Transportation Day event held to highlight the need for a long-term, sustainable and reliable federal transportation funding bill
- Progress on Beaver Avenue Corridor and 6th Avenue Corridor streetscape projects
- ART RTE, an effort to support artful wayfinding to downtown public art, became fully funded
- Central Iowa Works expanded services including retraining programs

# 2016 Initiatives

## Downtown Walkability

- Study is planned identify potential pedestrian and traffic improvements in downtown Des Moines
- Pilot program implemented all-day parking in downtown Des Moines on select routes

## Nodes & Corridors efforts

- Des Moines secured funding for the development of an ordinance to support Transit Oriented Development
- Norwalk kicked off a plan to support the city's node of the regional nodes-and-corridors network
- West Des Moines commenced the Historic West Des Moines Plan to enhance the area around Valley Junction

## Others

- The Tomorrow Plan goals and initiatives were integrated into the newly updated comprehensive plans for Des Moines and Pleasant Hill
- The Congestion Management Process was adopted through the MPO that outlines steps to a community should take to optimize the transportation system first before opting for expansion of the system
- City of Des Moines received bids from potential operators of a new transload facility to better link rail and highway freight networks
- Iowa State University's CyBiz Lab completed a study to support more efficient use of the rail system including the elimination of empty freight containers
- EDGE & Skills2Compete launched
- DART Forward 2035 update launched by Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority

## OpportUNITY Plan

Poverty should not be a permanent condition. For the OpportUNITY Plan, central Iowa's leading nonprofits, companies, government entities and faith-based organizations signed a pledge and stated their commitment to the goal of helping 20,000 individuals escape poverty. Because if everyone does more together, it will be far more effective than any one group can do on its own. Central Iowa can be the first region in America to reduce poverty at this scale. We call on all central Iowans to read the OpportUNITY Plan and commit to creating change, large or small, to reduce poverty in our community.

<http://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/opportunity>

## Step It Up Action Plan

In 2015, the Surgeon General issued a call to action to Step It Up and build more walkable communities that promote physical activity for people of all ages and abilities. A regional coalition answered that call and were awarded a National Association of Chronic Disease Directors grant to develop a Step It Up Action Plan. The City of Des Moines, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Healthiest State Initiative, Des Moines Public School Board, and the MPO have committed to piloting a replicable process to improve walkability around three Des Moines schools, update City policies, and develop a health and transportation model that will help decision-makers track the health impacts of transportation decisions.



## **GREATER DES MOINES Nodes and Corridors**

Greater Des Moines is developing a system of walkable employment and residential nodes while taking advantage of existing and underutilized infrastructure to enhance community strength and resiliency.

One of the key themes of The Tomorrow Plan is recognizing the connection between land-use and transportation. This theme is highlighted in the nodes and corridors initiative. The City of Des Moines has embraced this theme in the development of its comprehensive plan, PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow. PlanDSM outlines a growth strategy that focuses development at key nodes and along transit-supportive corridors. This strategy promotes the efficient use of existing infrastructure, and focuses on establishing vibrant centers of activity that will strengthen Des Moines neighborhoods for generations to come. A key initiative for 2016 will include the update to the City of Des Moines zoning code. This will provide an opportunity to incorporate the node and corridor elements from PlanDSM into a legally binding code that will facilitate the goals from PlanDSM becoming a reality.

## NODES AND CORRIDORS:

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- Are compact, walkable development
- Have capacity for employment and economic vitality
- Provide housing in close proximity to jobs
- Are accessible by transit, walking, and biking



VISIT: <https://plandsm.dmgov.org/>  
EMAIL: [plandsm@dmgov.org](mailto:plandsm@dmgov.org)  
TWITTER: @PlanDSM



# GOAL 2

## Improve the Region's Environmental Health and Access to the Outdoors

How the region manages energy, waste and natural resources provides the backdrop for vibrant economies, welcoming communities, and public and personal health. The stormwater management, clean air, reduced waste, energy conservation and public recreation strategies greatly benefit the region in measurable ways.

## 2015 Achievements

### Regional Water Trails Plan

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has partnered with the Des Moines Area MPO to develop the state's first region-wide master plan for water trails in Greater Des Moines. Once developed, the plan will provide the region and local governments with a road map for enhancing citizen experiences in and along the 150 miles of creeks and rivers.

### Water Quality Task Force Formed

Capital Crossroads formed the Iowa Soil and Water Future Task Force, which is comprised of thought leaders in business, agriculture, public policy, and academia. The group is outlining a comprehensive approach to address the state's water quality challenges, with layers of solutions that may include legislation, education, and technology. The solutions are intended to position Iowa agriculture, Iowa communities, and Iowa businesses as global leaders in water quality and soil health.

### Greenway Inventory

Capital Crossroads initiated a study of all levels of waterways in the Capital Crossroads' 50 mile radius region. Data were collected to outline ownership, soils, parks, trails, slope, etc. This information is being analyzed to prioritize gaps to better connect the greenway system.

## 2016 Initiatives

### Watershed Management Plans

- Watershed Management Authorities have been established for Fourmile Creek, Walnut Creek, and Mud/Camp/Spring Creeks. Additional WMAs are being created for the North and Middle Rivers and Beaver Creek.
- Fourmile Creek completed the area's first watershed management plan.
- The Des Moines Area Council of Watershed Management Authorities was established. The Council consists of the executive committee members of each of the area WMAs and is tasked to support regional efforts in implementing and funding the work of the WMAs.

### Others

- Clive initiated a masterplan for the Clive Greenbelt, an economic driver for redevelopment, natural resource restoration, recreation and public health.
- Johnston constructed a green street on NW 55th Avenue.
- Jester Park Nature Center launched a capital campaign.
- Water Works Park Foundation conducted a funding feasibility study to plan for Phase I Implementation of the Des Moines Water Works Park Master Plan.

### Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership Designation

Area leaders hope to designate the Greater Des Moines region as an Urban Wildlife Refuge by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in order to create a connected conservation community by engaging urban neighbors and fostering a sense of stewardship for sensitive lands. Partners are also looking into connecting with the Urban Bird Treaty City Program as a way to help municipal governments conserve birds that live in, nest in, overwinter in, or migrate through their cities.

### Preparing for Electric Vehicles

The Iowa Department of Economic Development has kicked off a study to evaluate the feasibility of increasing publically accessible electric-vehicle charging, such as in public parking areas or retail locations, in Iowa. The consultant will also examine electric-vehicle charging offered by businesses for their employees, also known as workplace charging. The main objectives of the study are to evaluate current status of electric vehicle charging in Iowa; analyze trends in electric vehicles and charging demand, growth and gaps; analyze the feasibility of charging station business models and mechanisms to sustain them; and deliver education, technical assistance and recommendations.

# GOAL 3

## Further the Health and Well-Being of all Residents in the Region

Quality of life sets Greater Des Moines apart from its competitors. The region earns high marks for its affordability, access to the outdoors and family-friendly atmosphere. Yet challenges to the region include access to ample housing choices, jobs and local food; a lack of transportation options; decreasing physical activity; and more. For Greater Des Moines to flourish, all aspects of health and well-being need promotion throughout the region.

## 2015 Achievements

### Community Health Needs Assessment

A Community Health Needs Assessment, completed in 2016 as required of charitable hospitals by the Affordable Care Act, fully embraces the idea that health is more than the absence of sickness and that health care extends beyond the walls of hospitals and into the communities that affect residents' wellbeing.

The assessment was developed by a diverse group of stakeholders, including hospitals, health departments, philanthropic organizations, service providers, academic institutions, and the private sector, with Capital Crossroads coordinating their efforts. The group studied access to care, youth, the physical environment, workforce, and mental health before developing six overarching priorities:

- Increase opportunities for expanded and alternative means of healthcare delivery to address issues limiting access to care
- Establish more vibrant communities and neighborhoods characterized by mixed- and joint-use spaces and facilities that are accessible and available to everyone, including public gathering places for diverse and integrated engagement, and designs that promote healthy lifestyles
- Expand statewide training efforts for all professionals working with children across the various health and child-serving systems in Trauma Informed Care, cultural competency, and mental health first aid
- Identify additional sources of funding to create new and expand existing training programs in Psychiatry and Psychology and improve the mental health and disabilities training of primary care doctors and other primary care providers
- Ensure access to high-quality pre-K and K-12 education for Central Iowa children
- Ensure access to health care services and education for Central Iowa's newcomer population



## 2016 Initiatives

### Housing Tomorrow

- Polk County Housing Trust Fund began implementing the first long-term plan for affordable housing
- Evaluated housing policies for the PlanDSM
- Housing Matters Symposium held in April
- Commissioned a study from ISU and Oakridge on refugee housing needs, which was released in January

### Others

- Great Des Moines Public Art Foundation and DART teamed up for first-ever Art on DART buses
- MPO piloted the Smart Trips program to support alternate transportation trips in targeted Des Moines neighborhoods with good access to transit, biking and walking amenities
- Open street events held
- Partnership for a Hunger Free Polk County launched
- Dallas County Health Department's efforts in Waukee to map access to food
- Community Behavioral Health Report completed
- Hunger Free Polk County & Hunger Free Dallas County launched
- PlanDSM, City of Des Moines updated comprehensive plan, added goals and initiatives relating to health

### Community Needs Assessment

In 2015, the region's hospitals and county health departments completed a Community Health Needs Assessment, which identified key strategies to improve access to care, youth health outcomes, the physical environment, workforce health, and mental health in Polk, Dallas, and Warren counties. 2016 is an opportunity to set the tone in meeting these community health needs through collaborative design and putting health at the center of the region's decisions.

### Healthy Homes Des Moines

Healthy Homes Des Moines is a dynamic collaboration among public health and housing officials, hospitals and clinics, and Des Moines Public Schools to improve the health outcomes of Des Moines children. The program refers households with children suffering from asthma to receive home repairs that address asthma triggers and tailored health education to self-manage asthma and maintain a healthy home.

<http://www.healthyhomesdesmoines.org/>

# GOAL 4

## Increase Regional Cooperation and Efficiency at all Levels

For any of the goals of The Tomorrow Plan to succeed, increased regional collaboration is essential. These collaborations lead to efficiencies in cost, time and materials without sacrificing the character and particular advantages of each of the local communities or counties connected in the region.

### 2015 Achievements

#### Local Government Collaboration Project

Collaboration among local governments often is easier said than done. Now, there's a formalized process in place through the Local Government Collaboration Project, which was established with 15 cities and three counties in central Iowa to better collaborate on public services for reducing costs, redundancies, complexity, and time commitments.

Born out of the Capital Crossroads' Governance Capital, the process has been used by public safety, fire, police, parks and recreation, libraries, and human resources departments from metro-area governments to identify opportunities for collaboration. One example: The cities of Altoona, Clive, Waukee and Windsor Heights joined forces to recruit police officers by establishing a common day for testing recruits. Then, rather than multiple tests with several agencies, the recruits could test once and their results would be shared with multiple cities.

#### Finalist: 2016 International Award for Planning Excellence

The Tomorrow Plan was recognized this year by international planning experts, who named it a finalist for the 2016 International Award for Planning Excellence from the Royal Town Planning Institute based in London. The finalists - from a disaster reconstruction plan for a Chinese village to a future-proofing plan for the city of Aluva, India - highlight outstanding examples of planning that have made a positive impact on the local communities and environment.

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## Central Iowa Code Consortium

The Central Iowa Code Consortium is a collaborative effort to improve uniformity and consistency in the adoption and enforcement of construction codes in Central Iowa communities. Over the past year, teams have worked to address various elements of the building code to develop a model for consideration by local communities.

## The Tomorrow Plan Speaker Series

The Tomorrow Plan Speaker Series started while the plan was being developed and has been kept alive as a strategy for encouraging the plan's ongoing implementation. The speaker series features regional, statewide and national thought-leaders, whose views and experiences offer valuable insights on topics of keen interest to the metro's residents, businesses and governments. The range of speakers has included author Jeff Speck on walkability, engineer Chuck Marohn on financially resilient city-building, and Maureen Collins on the sharing economy.

Mud/Camp/Spring  
Creek



## 2016 Initiatives

### Council of Watershed Management Authorities

The newly established Council of Watershed Management Authorities, a group of executive committee members of area watershed management authorities, will strategically work together in 2016 to recommend region-wide adoption of policies recommended in each of the WMA watershed plans including floodplain management and stream buffer ordinances. Regional coordination of area Watershed Management Authorities plans for improving water quality and flood resiliency in Greater Des Moines.

### Capital Crossroads 2.0

Greater Des Moines is hitting the refresh button on Capital Crossroads, a community-led strategic plan for the region within a 50-mile radius of State Capitol. Now in the fifth year of a five-year plan, Capital Crossroads is credited with nearly 400 successful implementations. The revised plan, Capital Crossroads 2.0, is expected to be complete in November.



Ever mindful of future generations,

**we collaborate across  
political boundaries**

to achieve social, economic, and  
environmental resilience for

**Greater Des Moines**

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

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