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** This release was updated Nov. 20 to reflect corrected data from DART; we apologize for the error.*

Metro improves on some, not all, measures of transportation performance

The performance of Greater Des Moines' transportation system is improving by several measures and worsening by others, a new report by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization finds.

For example, the frequency of fatal vehicle crashes has decreased, while the frequency of vehicle crashes causing serious injuries has increased. These findings are included in the Mobilizing Tomorrow Year 1 Report, which checks the performance measures established in the region's long-range transportation plan, Mobilizing Tomorrow.

"We hope this report highlights the good gains that have been made by local governments," MPO Executive Director Todd Ashby said. "We also hope it shows that we are working collaboratively for the continual improvement of the regional transportation network."

Adopted in November 2014, Mobilizing Tomorrow established four central goals for the region's transportation network: to further the health, safety and well-being of all residents in the region; to manage and optimize transportation infrastructure and services; to improve the region's environmental health; and to enhance multimodal transportation options.

To track progress, the MPO established 23 performance measures that the community could use as a gauge of success. The complete Mobilizing Tomorrow Year 1 Report includes updates on all of the performance measures, including a breakdown by government jurisdiction, and is available online at dmampo.org/reports.

Performance measures seeing improvement:

- The frequency of fatal vehicle crashes decreased 4 percent, to slightly less than 30 annually on a five-year average, which is a rate of 0.68 fatal accidents per one million vehicle miles.
- Gaps are closing in the regional paved trail network, with five new miles of trail being developed, bringing to 61 the miles of remaining trail gaps.
- Eight miles of on-street bike facilities have been added, bringing the total to 31 miles.
- Ridership on public transit has increased, rising 2 percent year-over-year to 4.8 million rides in fiscal year 2015.

Performance measures not seeing improvement:

- The frequency of vehicle crashes causing serious injuries increased 12 percent, to more than 202 annually on a five year average, which is a rate of 5.74 crashes causing serious injuries per one million vehicle miles.
- The percentage of deficient bridges increased 1 percentage point, to 26 percent of bridges in the metropolitan area.
- The average age of the public transit fleet increased, with the average age of buses at 8.47 years old in fiscal year 2015, up from the 8.18 years old in fiscal year 2014.
- The percentage of public transit vehicles beyond useful life has increased to 39 percent in fiscal year 2015 from 25 percent in fiscal year 2014.

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.