



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Stephen Davis | 202-955-5543x242 | steve.davis@t4america.org
Gunnar Olson | 515.334.0075 | golson@dmampo.org

Greater Des Moines is one of seven U.S. regions selected for national academy

Des Moines metro leaders have been pushing to better measure the return on investments in transportation, and the national nonprofit Transportation for America has taken notice.

Transportation for America announced the selection of Greater Des Moines as one of seven U.S. regions to participate in the 2016 Transportation Leadership Academy, a first-of-its-kind yearlong training program for ambitious metros beginning to use performance measures to better assess the benefits of transportation spending. Greater Des Moines' participation in the academy is being organized by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

"This is the future of transportation in an era of aging infrastructure and limited revenue – continually measuring the performance of the transportation network to ensure we're making the smartest investments possible," MPO Executive Director Todd Ashby said. "We are thrilled to be included in cutting-edge thinking on the best practices in this field."

Performance measurement is an emerging practice used by metropolitan areas to more carefully measuring the impacts of transportation spending decisions to ensure that every dollar is aligned with the public's goals and brings the greatest return possible for citizens. The Des Moines Area MPO incorporated performance measures in Mobilizing Tomorrow, the region's long-range transportation plan adopted in 2014. For example, one of the regional goals established in the plan is to maintain road conditions at status quo, which the MPO now measures annually using pavement-condition forecasting software to analyze the effects of different funding scenarios.

The academy was created by Transportation for America, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, to help educate teams of local business, civic, elected leaders, and transportation professionals at the early stages of performance measure development, prepare participants to act on opportunities within their communities, and plug them into a dynamic national network of like-minded leaders throughout the country. The six other metros participating in the academy include Boston; Cleveland; Indianapolis; Lee County, Florida; Seattle; and South Bend, Indiana.

"More than ever before, citizens want to know how the decisions are being made to spend their money," Transportation for America Director James Corless said. "A more accountable system that sets tangible goals with input from the community, chooses transportation projects that will help the community meet those goals, and then measures the outcomes in a feedback loop will be essential for ensuring that we get the best bang for the buck going forward."

The yearlong academy will consist of in-person workshops with participants, technical assistance throughout the year, regular online training sessions, and expert analysis of their plans and progress on deploying performance measures.

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.