

# PRIORITY ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

*February 2022*

Jay Byers, Greater Des Moines Partnership  
Teree Caldwell-Johnson, Oakridge Neighborhood  
Angela Connolly, Polk County Board of Supervisors  
Kristi Knous, Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines

Capital Crossroads is a **bold but achievable vision** pushing Central Iowans to dream big, not settle for good enough, think long term and work together.

## BUSINESS CAPITAL

*Kathryn Kunert, Rick Sanders, Geoff Wood and Brian Crowe*

Central Iowa will remain a regional leader in economic growth.

### **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

#### **The Greater Des Moines Partnership**

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership and regional partners have unveiled Broadband User Dashboard Maps based on data and research from the Central Iowa Broadband Internet Study. The maps were created as a part of a long-term goal to create a framework under which governments, the public and providers can align in new and innovative ways to create solutions to the digital divide present in Greater Des Moines (DSM). The Broadband User Dashboard Maps outline a path where technology would be best matched to the varying demographics of the region to create the most cost-efficient and highest impact solutions in each area across the region. Each map highlights a key component of the overall deployment process — outlining demographics, technology plans, infrastructure deployment costs and site assessment.
- The Greater Des Moines Partnership and Clay & Milk are partnering to develop the Iowa Innovation Dashboard, a comprehensive indicator of entrepreneurial activity in the state of Iowa. The dashboard will compile several key metrics of entrepreneurial information into one location to capture the pulse of Iowa's entrepreneurial and startup climate. The dashboard will track several different metrics including startup growth, external funding, success of accelerator programs, patents filed, team diversity, perceptions of Iowa's startup community, and more. The Partnership and Clay & Milk will update the dashboard annually, with plans to add new metrics in future years.
- The Greater Des Moines Partnership announced the winners of the 2021 Economic Impact Awards. The Economic Impact Awards recognize Greater Des Moines companies that have had a significant influence on the local economy in terms of job creation, capital investment and facility expansion. The 2021 Economic Impact Award winners are:
  - Des Moines Industrial
  - Helena Industries, LLC
  - i2-tech
  - Lely North America
  - Mrs. Clark's Foods
  - Premier Tech
  - Vermeer Corporation
- The Greater Des Moines Partnership, Capital Crossroads and Young Professionals Connection hosted a Public Policy Issue Forum on the topic of Inclusive Economic Development on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Entrepreneurial Community**

- Iowa Go-to-Market (G2M) Accelerator announced their second cohort in February.
- Startup Iowa Hot List, showcasing startups raising capital and companies to watch in Iowa, in February.
- Iowa awarded \$1.4 million in Employer Innovation Fund awards in January.

- Four Iowa startups received IEDA funding in January.
- Applications open for 2022 Techstars Iowa Accelerator. Apply [here](#).
- Iowa State admissions staff and students traveled to Dubai in December to engage with high school students in the Innovation Fellows-in-Training program.
- Greater Des Moines Partnership was selected for National Workforce Training Program.
- ISU Startup Factory announced its eleventh cohort in January.
- Global Insurance Symposium announced its return to Des Moines for their conference in April.
- Clay & Milk announced the winners of the 2021 Startup Iowa Awards.
- Governor Reynolds announced \$210 million in grants to improve broadband access in Iowa.
- Iowa State University announced plans to use a giant 3D printer to manufacture affordable homes in rural Iowa in December.
- Techstars Iowa alum Onward Delivery raised \$4.7 million in their seed round.

## **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

- Workforce availability is a critical challenge facing the region, state, and country.

## **NEWS & EVENTS**

- The second annual Athene Black & Brown Business Summit Pitch Competition applications are now open. Applications are available here:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe1di5oJHh9ebp0UaFiZS3u-20iJwbmTb7GZgFzJPclfSMiow/viewform>.
- The Partnership will host the Small Business Success Summit at the FFA Center at DMACC Ankeny Campus on Friday, Mar. 11 from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. This event, geared towards small business owners, will include presentations by keynote speakers from industry leaders that will inform and inspire, participate in workshops with fellow business owners in DSM. Learn more here:  
<https://www.dsmpartnership.com/growing-business-here/business-resources/small-business-resources/small-business-success-summit>.

## **CAPITAL CORE**

*Jo Christine Miles and Scott Sanders*

The urban core of Central Iowa will continue to enhance its role as the region's principal activity, hospitality, and employment hub and benefit from safe, dynamic, desirable and affordable neighborhoods.

## **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

**Principal**

- Principal had a soft launch of a learning center situated in the atrium of their building at 711 High Street. They plan to formalize the center and are working on obtaining feedback and input from community organizations to prepare for a full launch in Fall 2022.
- Principal is working with the Greater Des Moines Partnership to bring a golf-themed event to downtown in May 2022 in advance of the Principal Charity Classic in June 2022.

### **City of Des Moines**

- Federal COVID recovery and infrastructure funds continue to be a significant focus some of this work includes:
  - The City has allocated more than \$14.6 million in federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to housing assistance programs in response to the pandemic, including programs that address utility payments, homelessness, eviction prevention, rental assistance, and mortgage assistance. More than 80% of those funds have been expended and the DSM community has been nationally recognized for effectively getting funds to those in need.
  - Through a combination of federal and local funding, the City has allocated another \$6.6 million to programs for food assistance, small business recovery, mental health, and childcare. Recent activities include funding the DMARC mobile food pantry, mental health services to address the stress of the pandemic, internet service for students to access school remotely, and scholarships for children to attend programming outside of school.
  - Federal funding sources include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-CV), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV), and the US Department of Treasury. In addition, the City will be looking to allocate \$3.5 million of HOME Investment Partnerships Program from the American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) in the upcoming year to assist with projects that help house those who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

### **Krause+ and the City of Des Moines**

- Demolition and remediation continues at the former DICO site. The City and EPA have worked to demolish all vertical structures over the past several months. Ongoing work to remediate the site will continue through 2022. Design continues for a soccer stadium on the site.
- Pro Iowa announced that a United Soccer League expansion soccer team has been secured for the community.
- The ISDF, the fundraising arm of the Pro Iowa Initiative, has completed 87% of its \$25 million fundraising goal.
- The City of Des Moines will submit the final application to the State's Iowa Reinvestment Act funding program later this month, with a request to secure over \$20M in state funding through rebates of state sales and hotel/motel taxes.
- Once constructed, Des Moines' USL Championship club will be poised for the first kick in 2024.

### **Downtown DSM: Future Forward**

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership, in collaboration with Bravo Greater Des Moines, Catch Des Moines, City of Des Moines, Des Moines Regional Transit Authority (DART), Des Moines Downtown Chamber of Commerce, Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), FuseDSM, Operation Downtown and Polk County, are working to develop Downtown DSM: Future Forward, a community-driven Downtown vision plan and action plan, to help position Downtown Des Moines (DSM) for short-term economic recovery and long-term economic vitality and vibrancy. The vision plan creates a roadmap for the next chapter of Downtown and helps the region build upon the excitement that already exists in Downtown through events, attractions, major projects, major employers and more. Downtown DSM: Future Forward will also roll up into the Capital Crossroads regional vision plan, which will be updated in 2022.
- The Downtown DSM: Future Forward Steering Committee is working extensively with a consulting team made up of local, regional and national experts who have international downtown experience as well. The team consists of Bâton Global, Civitas Consultants and RDG Planning & Design. As part of the process, the plan's leaders and consultants are engaging the public to garner feedback and ideas for the future of Downtown DSM. Over 2,000 people have participated in the plan through the online platform, focus groups, open houses, and other avenues.
- A draft of the plan will be available for public feedback this spring.

### **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

- Return to office efforts still remains uncertain for many large downtown employers. As of now, office vacancy rates are over 20% and are projected to approach or exceed 30%. This has a significant impact on downtown businesses and future planning.

### **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

- Equity and inclusion is a primary focus for the Future Forward Council which was appointed by the Steering Committee of the Downtown DSM: Future Forward plan. The Future Forward Council is made up of more than 40 leaders representing organizations from throughout Greater Des Moines. The Future Forward Council is designed to give input and drive ideas for the planning process for the future of Downtown DSM. The Council includes a diverse array of representatives from community organizations to ensure people of many different backgrounds and interests have an opportunity to cultivate a growing and thriving Downtown that is inclusive and welcoming to everyone. The Future Forward Council Leaders are Teree Caldwell-Johnson, President and CEO of Oakridge Neighborhood; Jen Carruthers, President of Capital City Pride; and Mary Sellers, President of United Way of Central Iowa. All who will also serve as liaisons for the council on the Future Forward Steering Committee.
- Principal is developing programs on or near their campus that provide opportunities for Des Moines youth, from all over the city, to experience downtown and corporate environments.

## **NEWS & EVENTS**

- The City of Des Moines is soliciting public input for the use of Federal ARPA funds throughout the Spring. Residents of Des Moines can provide feedback through this link: [https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=yvTRtZprxkGF4e2PSYpaNaBCtT9pfwRCnP\\_h2QCH6SQpUODZQTDNTWTdaWIBEMkZCVzZJR1FJTzdRSi4u](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=yvTRtZprxkGF4e2PSYpaNaBCtT9pfwRCnP_h2QCH6SQpUODZQTDNTWTdaWIBEMkZCVzZJR1FJTzdRSi4u).

## **COLLABORATION**

- Capital Core continues to work with Physical Capital for the workforce housing initiative Here We Grow and Governance Capital for their Central Iowa Code Consortium work and stormwater ordinances.

# **CULTIVATION CORRIDOR**

*Billi Hunt*

Central Iowa will become the global center for agricultural technology and associated employment.

## **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

- Six companies completed the second cohort of the Cultivo Virtual Academy in November, wrapping up a six-week program of facilitated discussions with Iowa business, research and farmer leaders, as well as networking opportunities in targeted areas. Three of the six businesses have signed affiliate agreements with Iowa State University Research Park.
- Cultivation Corridor welcomed Hy-Vee and Scoular as stakeholders and investors. Investors and partners of the Corridor are working together to accelerate the development of new technologies, strengthen Iowa's ag bioscience workforce, and attract economic development, all focused on meeting the challenge of feeding a growing world population in a sustainable way.
- Overall momentum in the food and agriculture industry in Iowa is strong.

## **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

- Cultivation Corridor continues to intentionally work to bring forth diversity in new Cultivo Cohorts alongside amplifying this diversity in the storytelling of innovation within the industry.

## **NEWS & EVENTS**

- Cultivation Corridor is launching a student project with Iowa State University.

The third cohort of Cultivo will kick off on March 22, 2022, and run through April 26.

## **COLLABORATION**

- Cultivation Corridor has recently worked with Business Capital and Human Capital.

## CULTURAL CAPITAL

*Sally Dix, Greg Edwards and Myrna Johnson*

Recommendations emerging from the Regional Cultural Assessment will be effectively implemented to maximize the role of arts and culture as vital contributors to Greater Des Moines' quality of life and economy.

### **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

#### **Catch Des Moines**

- Catch Des Moines released the new 2022 Catch Des Moines Visitors Guide! They made a concerted effort to create a guide that was not only informative, but also engaging, entertaining, and representative of the communities, people and different scenes that make DSM unique. For the first time, the intro to each section contains a feature on a local representative of that scene. For example, highlighting Mike Valley on the cover, Nick Tillinghast of Des Moines Does Things in the Restaurants & Nightlife section, Tobi Parks from xBk for our Arts & Culture, and Sid Juwarker of TeeHee's for Things to Do. The Guide is available at hotels and newsstands throughout the metro and can be ordered on their website at <https://www.catchdesmoines.com/visitor-info/request-visitors-guide/>.
- Catch Des Moines launched new videos in our 'Des Best' series featuring the state sandwich of Iowa, the breaded pork tenderloin, and one that highlights Greater Des Moines' buzzy cocktail scene!
- Catch Des Moines launched a successful month of a co-op TikTok campaign with the Science Center of Iowa and crossed the 3,500 follower mark on TikTok, which is higher than most of our Midwest counterparts.
- Catch Des Moines' weekly e-newsletters had the highest open rate percentages of the year in December.
- Their 2021 Local Gift Guide was featured in [Newsbreak](#) and had more than 9.2 million impressions.

#### **Bravo**

- Bravo continues to run grantmaking programs that are putting money into the cultural organizations that make our community vibrant.
- Bravo also returned to an in-person Gala this year to highlight Bravo's role on advancing the cultural sector. We have begun working on a strategic plan that will inform the organization's focus for the next 3-5 years and shape the future we want to see in 15-20 years.

## **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

### **Bravo**

- The cultural sector continues to struggle as the pandemic lingers. Audiences are returning but not entirely and revenues are severely depleted. The labor shortage is real for the sector and the transition to hybrid continues to strain operations. Although Q1FY22 Hotel/Motel Tax revenues were almost back to pre-pandemic levels, it is difficult to project how long it will take to annualize return to full investment levels.

## **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

### **Bravo**

- Bravo continues to work with cultural partners on ways to advance equity and cultural competency. We are currently working with leaders of the Iowa Juneteenth Celebration to create a regional strategy to lift-up the holiday with complimentary programming.

### **Catch Des Moines**

- Their Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee met for the first time this quarter. This committee is designed as a strategic think tank in which members collaborate and advise on efforts to promote Greater Des Moines as an ethnically diverse visitor destination. The committee will share insights, and make recommendations to assist Catch Des Moines in attracting and welcoming diverse groups to the city.

## **NEWS & EVENTS**

### **Catch Des Moines**

- On January 24, Catch Des Moines announced that the Red Bull Soapbox Race will be coming to Des Moines on Saturday, June 18. Since the first race in Brussels in 2000, more than 100 Red Bull Soapbox events have been held in places like Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and Sydney, Australia. This is the first time the event has come to Iowa.
  - The Red Bull Soapbox Race is a race competition in which amateur teams see who can navigate their homemade cart the fastest through a downhill course, filled with obstacles and potential crashes, in front of a crowd of tens-of-thousands.
  - Applying to participate in Red Bull Soapbox Iowa is free, but applicants must be 18 years or older to enter.
  - Red Bull Soapbox Race Iowa's course will run the length of East Walnut Street, alongside the State Capitol Complex, from E 12th Street to E 7th Street. Viewing is free and open to the public.

## **COLLABORATION**



- Catch Des Moines is in talks with Capital City Pride to work with them on some content creation and marketing efforts that help amplify and highlight Pride Month and LGBTQ initiatives this coming year.

## GOVERNANCE CAPITAL

*Mayor Bob Andeweg, Mayor Courtney Clarke and Art Wittmack*

Central Iowa governments will sustain partnerships to optimize process coordination and regional governance.

### HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

- The cities of Des Moines and Urbandale finalized an application to Iowa Economic Development Authority for a \$26.5 million allocation from the Iowa Reinvestment Act regarding reinvestment in the Merle Hay campus in Urbandale and Des Moines. Almost \$140 million are planned to be invested in the 75-acre area.
- Urbandale and Grimes renewed annexation agreements to help guide orderly community growth for both cities in the decades ahead.
- The City of Urbandale is currently working with a consultant to develop a new Comprehensive Plan. The plan will not only look at the development of the area within the current and future city limits but will also study three sub-areas: 1) Downtown Urbandale; 2) the Douglas Avenue Corridor from eastern to western city limits; and 3) the Northpark and Plum Drive corridors.
- Worldwide Logistics announced a new office facility in Urbandale. A spring 2022 construction start is planned.
- The executive committee for the Central Iowa Code Consortium announced that fourteen metro area communities have signed the memorandum of understanding which recognizes the Central Iowa Code Consortium (CICC). The CICC is a collaborative effort to improve consistency in the adoption and enforcement of construction codes in the many communities that make up our metro area. This idea was first brought forth through the Capital Crossroads planning effort as one of the five pilot projects looking into the possibilities of local government collaboration. The CICC has successfully guided the metro through the 2015 and 2018 code adoption processes. The Executive Committee is busy working through the schedule for the 2021 process.
- Des Moines, Clive, Pleasant Hill, and Urbandale have passed the regional stormwater ordinances created by Capital Crossroads. Several other cities are planning to adopt these ordinances this spring.

### EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Urbandale has expanded employee recruitment efforts to better reach communities of color by utilizing the 4 Equity Tool.

## **NEWS & EVENTS**

- Several communities are having public feedback opportunities for the use of American Rescue Plan Act funding.

## **COLLABORATION**

- Governance Capital continues to collaborate with Natural Capital and city governments to promote the passage of the regional stormwater ordinances.
- Governance Capital is exploring potential collaborations with Social Capital on the topic of civility in local governments.
- Capital Crossroads also seeks opportunities to identify areas of regional collaboration for investing federal COVID-19 relief funds.

## **HUMAN CAPITAL**

*Renee Miller, Marvin DeJear and Greg Nichols*

Central Iowa will feature a workforce with the skills and training necessary to support optimal economic development.

## **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

### **United Way of Central Iowa**

- A collaboration of Central Iowa Healthcare industry partners, led by Central Iowa Works Healthworks program, are supporting a large-scale grant application to the U.S. Economic Development Authority/Department of Commerce who issued a Good Jobs Challenge opportunity as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The two primary goals of this effort are to support employers to attract and retain diverse individuals to fill the much-needed positions in central Iowa's healthcare sector. The second goal is to help individuals who face systemic barriers to employment overcome those obstacles and use their skills to earn a livable wage.
- A diverse healthcare workforce leads to better health outcomes and a stronger local economy. Like other parts of the country, Central Iowa is experiencing racial disparities in health outcomes and shortages of healthcare workers. This effort would build upon the HealthWorks program framework which, over the past 4 years, has been successful in training and placing nearly 800 diverse individuals in high-demand, high-quality healthcare careers. 78% of participants were Black/African American, 26% White, 8% Asian, 5% Latinx, 4% more than one race, and 2% Native American.

### **Greater Des Moines Partnership**

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership hosted the 9th Annual Inclusion Summit on November 10, 2021.

- Additionally, The Partnership team hosted another Career DSM Launch webinar in partnership with Tallo. The event covered healthcare, and educational institutions Des Moines University and Mercy One were highlighted. The event also highlighted healthcare employers Broadlawns Medical Center and UnityPoint.
- The first Multicultural Reception was on Martin Luther King day on Monday, January 17, 2022 in partnership with the City of West Des Moines, Des Moines University, West Des Moines Human Rights Commission, and the West Des Moines Chamber.
- The Partnership hosted its first Future Ready DSM talent webinar on January 26, 2022. The webinar highlighted internships for college students and programs for college graduates. The event included a panel discussion with representatives from Principal Financial, Bankers Trust, Merchants Bonding, and the Greater Des Moines Partnership.
- Additionally, the Partnership launched the two part workshop “Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture” on Wednesday, February 9, 2022.

### **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

- The pandemic has presented a significant number of hurdles as it relates to human capital – including extended unemployment, the inability of companies to recruit and retain the number of employees needed to meet their business needs, and continued systemic barriers that prevent Central Iowans from thriving like affordable/safe/stable housing, food insecurity, unsustainable wages, etc. Community partners are continuing to evaluate the current environment and define strategies that will address both supply and demand barriers.

### **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

- Human Capital remains focused on Equity and Inclusion through our work to create a more diverse healthcare workforce.
- The Greater Des Moines Partnership has continued to host its own internal DEI trainings. Additionally, the Inclusion Council had a retreat in December to debrief for the year and plan for 2022.

### **NEWS & EVENTS**

- The next Future Ready DSM talent webinar is on Wednesday, February 23rd, 2022. The webinar will cover Internships for High School Students. They will be having a panel discussion with the representatives from Pella Corporation, Broadlawns Medical Center and I-Jag.  
<https://members.dsmpartnership.com/events/details/future-ready-dsm-webinar-internships-high-school-students-02-23-2022-59845>
- The second part of the workshop “Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture” is on Wednesday, February 23, 2022.

<https://members.dsmpartnership.com/events/details/awake-to-woke-to-work-building-a-race-equity-culture-hosted-in-collaboration-with-equity-in-the-center-02-09-2022-59814>

## **COLLABORATION**

- As we make decisions about programming and strategy, we are continuously working to utilize the 4 Equity tool.

## **NATURAL CAPITAL**

*Hannah Inman, Larry James and Julie Stewart*

Central Iowa will be recognized nationally as a best practice community for its environmental sustainability.

## **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

- ICON received an award of \$15 million from the State's Water Infrastructure Fund. This aid will be the catalyst to constructing the Fleur Drive site, the second of the three downtown Des Moines dam mitigation projects.
- Currently, ICON is completing the bid process for the BUILD Grant phase of the project, which included the project sites of Prospect Park, Birdland Marina, Scott Avenue and Harriet Street.
- ICON is shifting focus from the design of Scott Avenue to kicking off the design at Fleur Drive and Center Street.
- The team is working to establish the new ICON Water Trails non-profit organization following the split from Great Outdoors Foundation. This includes evolving into a regional entity and identifying the organization's strategic goals

## **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

- Right now, ICON's main focus is getting the regional entity established and running. They are working through the transition from CIWT to ICON both administratively and operationally, as well as the evolution to the new format of the Board with 70% public representation, 30% private. In addition to setting up the new organization, they are also maintaining project management of their downtown projects. All of this is due to the tremendous support and momentum of the project and being able to continue that while also creating the long-term sustainability and identity of the ICON organization.

## **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

- As ICON worked through establishing their new ICON Board, they were intentional about bringing on new and diverse voices to the table. There was a bit of a struggle with a balance in keeping a sense of continuity with some of those key stakeholders and champions who have been involved since the beginning and bringing in those new players. There is certainly a specific need with some of those original stakeholders for the time being, but they have it on their radar to start folding in those new voices and the project continues to mature.

## **NEWS & EVENTS**

- ICON will be seeking significant public and stakeholder input as they move into their next phase of design for the downtown projects. They will be looking for participation from several local partners and community members to help influence and determine the future design. Organizations include Botanical Gardens, Pro Iowa, Can Play, DEI, etc. They are always looking for ways to collaborate with other organizations, specifically those that play a role on the riverfront. They want to ensure they are creating efficiencies with what is already in the works or what is looking to be accomplished.

## **COLLABORATION**

- The Natural Capital intersects with most Capitals.

## **PHYSICAL CAPITAL**

*Todd Ashby, Eric Burmeister and Elizabeth Presutti*

Smart planning, timely infrastructure development, and implementation of state-of-the-art technologies will sustain Central Iowa's population growth for the present and future.

## **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

### **MPO**

- Transload Facility construction has been completed and they have started having shipments going through the facility
- An Economic Development District has been created. The Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance for Community Development (MIPA) will cover Polk, Warren, Dallas, Story, Boone, Jasper, and Marion counties, and will allow for the region to apply for competitive, regional grants and pool resources together for collaboration.
- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs act was passed. MPO is waiting for further guidance on the law.

- **Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority**

**(DART)** A final draft of the Transit Optimization Study was shared with the Commission in February for review and feedback prior to adopting the final study in March. The process for the study included three workshops with the Commission, two rounds of public outreach including 50 virtual and in-person public meetings and events, and the collection of more than 2,000 survey responses and stakeholder interactions. The Commission's recommendations for near-term and future service changes for enhanced mobility are detailed in the upcoming report. Included in the recommendations for this year is a microtransit on-demand service in West Des Moines similar to the one that recently launched in Ankeny in November called DART on Demand, and has seen a significant increase in ridership from the On Call service it replaced.

- DART staff have presented a proposed FY 2023 budget to the DART Commission and a public meeting will be held on March 1 for feedback. DART presented the proposed budget to the Commission during a workshop in late January, and staff also met with DART's 12-member government city managers on January 31. In addition to budget work, DART staff have been compiling extensive information as part of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Triennial Review.

#### **Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF)**

- PCHTF is planning to return an in-person version of their annual Affordable Housing Week April 4-8 with the main event, their affordable housing week symposium, set for Thursday, April 7.

#### **Here We Grow: Workforce Housing**

- The Workforce Housing Committee has met with the cities of Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Clive, Des Moines, Grimes, Johnston, Norwalk, Urbandale, Pleasant Hill, Waukee, and West Des Moines to discuss workforce housing and opportunities for collaboration.
- Now that the initial community meetings have concluded, the Committee will be focusing efforts on planning roundtable meetings and creating tools that communities can use to increase the availability of workforce housing in the region.

### **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

#### **Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)**

- In response to COVID-19 cases among its workforce, DART removed select trips from Local Route 52 and six of its Express Routes in late January. The trips were removed to adjust DART's service levels to match its available workforce. DART is trying to keep buses running on all routes at the scheduled times, but this has been difficult as bus operators are temporarily out of work because of the significant community spread of COVID-19. DART will restore service to these trips when staffing levels improve.
- Like many other organizations, DART is experiencing challenges due to supply chain disruptions. A variety of supplies from parts for bus repairs to print passes to vans and buses are either on

backorder or the time-to-fill orders are greatly extended. Despite the challenges, DART is moving forward with some purchases including the purchase from Tolar Manufacturing of approximately 26 bus shelters, most of which will include colored art glass, and 20 benches for bus stops. DART Commissioners also recently approved the purchase of seven light-duty buses that will be used to support DART's Paratransit, microtransit and shuttle services. The buses are smaller than the buses DART currently uses for these services and is part of an ongoing effort by the DART Commission and staff to right size its fleet.

### **Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF)**

- Many communities are working through their use of American Rescue Plan Act funds and PCHTF is making an extra effort to monitor and provide support where possible if communities express an interest on working on housing with those funds.

### **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

#### **Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)**

- DART is regularly considering equity impacts in how they plan and deliver public transit service in Greater Des Moines. Recently, they used the 4 Equity tool to help guide their public outreach plans as they gathered public feedback on near- and long-term service proposals that will serve as a roadmap for DART Commission and staff as they plan for the future.
- During this quarter, DART staff continued planning work through its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. In addition, DART staff began planning the celebration of Rosa Parks Day. To commemorate this day, DART reserved one seat on each fixed route bus in service on Feb. 4 to Mrs. Parks. A sign was tied to the first forward-facing seat on each bus and it shared a little bit about her legacy and impact in de-segregating public transportation during the Civil Rights Movement. DART also created a webpage to further celebrate Mrs. Parks and her legacy.
- DART DEI Committee Co-Chair Georisha McGregor says as 2022 gets underway: "It is our commitment to keep our DEI goals at the forefront. We've had a great start to the year encouraging and creating awareness surrounding Black History, and we also understand there's a deeper need in our communities, because of this we have recently reviewed our DART & DEI Community Events to ensure we are intentional about our representation."

#### **Polk County Housing Trust Fund**

- Equity and Inclusion is the third guiding principle for the Regional Housing Strategy. This has been instrumental to PCHTF's work with Here We Grow. Additionally, PCHTF set several DEI goals in their strategic plan that was approved this month; in addition, they are doing a month of outreach on social media related to the redlining project.



## **NEWS & EVENTS**

### **Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)**

- DART has several things to watch for this spring:
  - Several more art bus shelters will be installed – see the video about one of the projects [here](#).
  - DART will be collecting feedback on its Express Routes in February and March as it works to better align trip times and the number of trips to the demand.
  - This spring, DART will be collecting feedback on several proposed changes to service in West Des Moines that were identified as part of the Transit Optimization Study.

### **Polk County Housing Trust Fund**

- Affordable Housing Week returns in person with events from April 4-8, 2022. The main event, the Affordable Housing Week Symposium, is set for the morning of April 7. Watch for registration information out soon at PCHTF.org.

## **COLLABORATION**

### **Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)**

- Funding diversification will continue to be a focus for DART with a proposal for a transit hotel/motel tax that gained traction last year in the Legislature and will hopefully move forward during the 2022 session and through a voter referendum next fall with the help of many community partners.
- DART continues to work closely with BRAVO Greater Des Moines, public art stakeholders, artists, and member governments on the planning and installation of art bus shelters throughout the region.
- Staff has been conducting outreach to organizations who work with individuals who qualify for our half-fare pilot program, particularly as it relates to housing assistance, food assistance, or workforce and job training programs.
- DART will work closely with local school systems as they contemplate changes in the school calendar.

### **Polk County Housing Trust Fund**

- PCHTF continues to collaborate with Capital Crossroads and United Way on the Here We Grow effort and with the Iowa Finance Authority on the #WelcomeHomeIowa campaign.
- So far Project Iowa, the Des Moines Police Department and several other organizations are helping PCHTF plan their annual Landlord Forum.
- PCHTF is excited to be working on a plan to help HOME, Inc., tell the story of an accessory housing unit they are building in the Highland Park neighborhood.



## SOCIAL CAPITAL

*Angie Dethlefs-Trettin, Shaimaa Aly, Daniel Zinnel and Izaah Knox*

Central Iowa will become the gold standard of the successful 21st-century region.

### **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

- Social Capital continues to elevate the work happening within the DSM USA 4 Equity Collective. Through providing feedback and insight into the process, to promoting the completion of the survey that will inform the long-term work, Social Capital is eager to engage in even greater impact opportunities throughout the region.
- Social Capital is also energized by the launching of The Latinx Project's report- *Nuestro Iowa*- that highlights statistics and stories about the Central Iowa Latino Community. Its corresponding website and interactive data tool is an incredible resource for our community. We look forward to helping elevate this incredible body of work as part of community-wide conversations and actions.
- The DSM USA 4 Equity Collective has launched the Organizational Equity Practices Assessment for Central Iowa employers to get a better understanding of how organizations in the region are implementing equity practices.
- The survey takes approximately 25 minutes to complete and it includes questions covering recruitment, retention, data collection, training, and more.
- The anonymous results of the survey will be compiled, analyzed, and shared with the community and data can be disaggregated by county, organization type, and organization size.
- The results will help the Collective identify where to invest more time, energy, and resources to support employers in their work of creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all in our region.
- Simultaneously, the Collective is also working on a data dashboard, employer equity playbooks, and an event to launch these resources into the community.

### **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

- Social Capital stands ready and eager to assist various capitals within Capital Crossroads to engage diverse leaders at decision-making tables for our region's future. How can we assist? What are the barriers to engagement? How can we lean into this work together and see positive change and more representation within leadership?

### **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

- We continue to promote and elevate the 4Equity Tool as well as provide reflection and serve as a sounding board for various community initiatives.

## **NEWS & EVENTS**

- The leadership of The Latinx Project has released its Nuestro Iowa report. Please check it out and spend time in the dashboard learning even more about the community and its potential! <https://www.iowalatinxproject.org/>

## **COLLABORATION**

- Social Capital would love to engage with any or all capitals and support efforts related to integrating the 4Equity tool, leadership, etc.

## **WELLNESS CAPITAL**

*Jami Haberl and Brad Anderson*

Lead in elevating the conversation and giving voice to the vast number of opportunities to improve the community's overall social and emotional well-being through advocacy and awareness.

## **HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS**

### **Iowa Healthiest State Initiative**

- The Polk County Produce Prescription Program will expand due to the recent award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Learn more at this blog post:  
<http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/blog/press-room/polk-county-produce-prescription-program-wins-award-mayors-conference-des-moines/>
- The 2021 Annual Report for Healthiest State Initiative along with their program annual report is now available. The reports are available at:
  - HSI Annual report - [https://issuu.com/healthiestiowa/docs/hsi\\_annualreport\\_2021\\_final](https://issuu.com/healthiestiowa/docs/hsi_annualreport_2021_final)
  - Make It OK report - [www.iowahealthieststate.com/MIOreport](http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/MIOreport)
  - Healthy Incentives report - [www.iowahealthieststate.com/HealthyIncentivesreport](http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/HealthyIncentivesreport)
  - 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count report - [www.iowahealthieststate.com/5210report](http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/5210report)
- The Healthiest State Initiative is working to secure a state appropriation to sustain the Double Up Food Bucks program which would impact the ability to continue to support the program in Central Iowa..

### **AARP**

- AARP Iowa has continued to focus on advocacy related to Livable Communities. While much of their work has focused on housing and expanding the use of Accessory Dwelling Units, they are continuing to focus on walkability measures and pushing communities to focus on walkability and address issues such as sidewalk gaps. Thankfully the federal government has provided funding related to infrastructure needs that can work in conjunction with local and state resources.

## **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

### **AARP**

- Many communities are trying to figure out how to appropriately spend federal funding and ensure funding is sustainable. The challenge is coming up with projects that are sustainable, narrowly focused and not duplicative. The 2021 "Return to Town" survey conceptualized by the Wellness Capital and conducted by AARP clearly showed walkability as a top priority for Iowans coming out of the pandemic, so any walkability-type projects will likely have broad public support

## **EQUITY & INCLUSION**

### **NEWS & EVENTS**

#### **Iowa Healthiest State Initiative**

- Celebrate the great work of workplaces, schools, early care, out-of-school time, individuals and communities by joining the virtual Healthiest State Annual Awards on Feb. 17th at 6pm on the Healthiest State Facebook page. The Central Iowa finalists include individual finalist Jordan McCormick, Girls on the Run of Central Iowa; Healthcare finalist UnityPoint Health Clinic - Walnut Creek; school finalist Clay Elementary in Altoona; out-of-school programs Girls on the Run of Central Iowa and YMCA of Greater Des Moines Before and After School Care; Workplace finalists DLL Finance of Johnston; Merchants Bonding Company of West Des Moines, Kreg Tool of Ankeny; Optimae Life Services of Des Moines and Polk County Government of Des Moines and early care finalist Ms. Hollie's Preschool at The Big Red Barn in Huxley. To learn more visit [www.iowahealthieststate.com/awards](http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/awards).
- Save the date for the Healthiest State Workplace Wellbeing Conference on Wednesday, April 27 at the FFA Enrichment Center. This year's theme is THRIVING over SURVIVING: Fostering a Resilient Workplace with speakers focused on Resiliency & Psychological Safety; Burnout: Identify & Overcome It; Financial Wellbeing; ESG 101: Environmental, Social, and Governance in the Workplace. Registration will open in early March on <http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/events/annual-conference/>
- Make It OK presentation is open and free to attend but registration is required. The next presentation is scheduled for March 23 at noon. There are also upcoming Make It OK virtual ambassador trainings posted to <http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/calendar/>