

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

June 2022

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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 Mike Swesey

Central Iowa will remain a regional leader in economic growth.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

The Greater Des Moines Partnership

- The Economic Development team worked with EY to deliver a targeted industry analysis to drive industry growth and recruitment strategies.
- Regional population growth continues to lead all Midwest metros. Des Moines has recently been ranked 14th in the U.S. in U.S. News & World Report's annual ranking of the Best Places to Live in the U.S.
- International travel is coming back and foreign visitors are traveling to Greater Des Moines more frequently. The Partnership hosted IEDA foreign officials in May and is planning to attend foreign marketing trips with the Iowa Economic Development Authority in 2023.
- The Greater Des Moines Partnership launched the Scale DSM Minority Business Accelerator powered by Interise. The accelerator aims to help businesses gain access to knowledge, management know-how and networks needed to increase revenue, create jobs and positively impact the community. The program is tuition-free and will run from June through December 2022. Scale DSM participants complete Interise's award-winning and internationally recognized StreetWise 'MBA,' (minority business accelerator) which is centered around practical, case-based peer learning for minority-led businesses. Programming will be divided into five modules and participants will be required to attend one session every other week. Module topics include business strategy and leadership, financial management, sales and marketing, talent and capital resources, and strategic growth action plan.

Entrepreneurial Community

- [Six Iowa startups receive IEDA funding](#)
- Ames startup Brainsoft [receives \\$256K SBIR grant](#)
- Ames startup Genvax [Technologies receives grant to develop African Swine Fever vaccine](#)
- [ISU research team wins \\$1 million award for carbon removal plan](#)
- BrokerTech [Ventures announces its 2022 cohort](#)
- [Insurtech Bestow establishes office in Des Moines with plans to hire 35+ in Iowa](#)
- [SBDC Iowa announces winners of 2022 Special Entrepreneurial Awards](#)

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Low unemployment continues to slow growth opportunities across the metro.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- In April, The Greater Des Moines Partnership launched a survey to better understand how to serve traditionally underrepresented entrepreneurs and small business owners. The Inclusive Small Business Owners Survey is geared toward minority-owned businesses in Greater Des Moines (DSM). Its purpose is to provide an understanding of the needs of diverse business owners in the DSM region and to inform resource organizations on how to best approach diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within the DSM startup and small business ecosystem.

NEWS & EVENTS

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership will host their annual Economic Impact Awards event on September 7th honoring 8-10 companies in the region.
- The Greater Des Moines (DSM) and Ames region has been selected to be part of the prestigious MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Accelerator Program (REAP) to help drive entrepreneurship in the region. The program is a two-year training program for stakeholders in entrepreneurial communities to strengthen their existing ecosystem. MIT REAP is a global initiative that engages with communities around the world to supercharge innovation-driven entrepreneurship (IDE) ecosystems and transform economies. Representatives from five core areas of partnership between Greater Des Moines and Ames will participate in this opportunity: government, university, corporate/existing businesses, risk capital and entrepreneurs. The Des Moines and Ames-based team members include the following:
 - Steven Brockshus, FarmlandFinder
 - Tej Dhawan, Principal Financial Group® and Plains Angels
 - Alison Doyle, ISU Research Park
 - Nadilia Gomez, Iowa State University
 - Brian Hemesath, VolunteerLocal
 - Kevin Kimle, Ag Startup Engine and Iowa State University
 - Anne McMahon, BioConnect Iowa
 - Nancy Mwiroti, Pi515
 - Hank Norem, Ramco Innovations and Maple Ventures
 - Mikayla Sullivan, ISA Ventures
 - Geoff Wood, Gravitate Coworking and Clay & Milk
 - Diana Wright, Greater Des Moines Partnership

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

InvestDSM

- Invest DSM released its [2021 annual report](#) and completed 300 projects last year. The completed projects include \$1.69 million invested by the non-profit, leveraging over \$5.93 million of investment by the private sector. Approximately 95% of the projects were completed by existing homeowners making improvements to their own homes. The organization has another 250+ projects in progress already in 2022.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership, Bâton Global and Reworc released the results of the DSM Workforce Trends and Occupancy study as it relates to the regional workforce, including Downtown Des Moines. The study included nearly 5,200 participants from 18 organizations to identify trends specific to the Greater Des Moines region and Downtown DSM. This is the first-of-its-kind community-level study of knowledge workers in the world. Insights will be used to drive action steps in the Downtown DSM: Future Forward vision plan and action plan to be finalized in the coming months. The study helped organizers uncover the following key insights regarding the future of Downtown DSM.
 - Memorable Experiences: Cultural events, socializing and outdoor recreation drive high Downtown DSM utilization, satisfaction and were a priority for respondents.
 - Generational Approach: Age is a lead driver in the variation of preferences and utilization of Downtown. For example, people in their 20s use Downtown DSM more than anyone else and parking is more important to people 50 years and older.
 - Build It and They Will Come: A total of 86% of study participants said they would utilize Downtown more with continued improvements.
 - Step by Step: A total of 50% of study participants desire greater walkability vs. drivability, with concentrated parking, and another 32% feel today's ratio between walking and driving is ideal.
 - Building for the Future: Work is changing, and how people are using Downtown DSM is changing. These trends are evolving in parallel. Downtown DSM and its office environments must satisfy people's need for connection rather than just being a space for their work duties.
- The Partnership held a Downtown DSM: Future Forward reception on May 25th to allow community members to get a preview of the Downtown DSM: Future Forward Vision Plan and Action Plan and give feedback. The Vision Plan is expected to be finalized in June.

- On May 18th, The Partnership launched their most extensive Out to Lunch series ever, taking place each Wednesday for 12 weeks from 11am to 1:30pm. They received feedback during the DSM Workforce Trends & Occupancy Study that people are seeking events for socialization in the workplace, and this series was designed to create a unique and fun opportunity for Downtown DSM employees and residents to socialize with others in vibrant, outdoor Downtown DSM settings with food and live music.
- The Partnership announced that the World Food & Music Festival will return on Sept. 16 – 18 at Western Gateway Park in Downtown DSM. Applications to participate in the 2022 Festival are now open.
- The City of Des Moines, Polk County and Operation Downtown partnered on entering into a contract with the Responsibility Hospitality Institute to conduct a Sociable City Assessment for Downtown Des Moines, looking specifically at safely managing the social and nightlife economy. The assessment will be approximately a year-long process which aims to: 1) Preserve and advocate for the social, cultural, and economic value of dining and entertainment; 2) Examine risk factors for crime, harm, and disorder in social districts; 3) Sustain peaceful co-existence of residents and businesses in mixed-use areas; and 4) Enhance communications between government and businesses regarding policy, procedures, and resource allocation. The Responsible Hospitality Institute has conducted similar assessments with over 80 cities in the US.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Pandemic impacts continue to affect the housing market and construction industry.
- Downtown loop scooping remains an issue for downtown businesses, travel, and residents.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- In May, The Partnership opened two new minority-owned business incubator spaces at the Downtown Farmers' Market presented by UnityPoint Health – Des Moines, one brought to the community by Principal Financial Group, one in partnership with Center @ Sixth and brought to the community by EMC Insurance.
- In April, the Greater Des Moines Partnership co-hosted a Multicultural Reception with the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC)'s Urban Campus.

NEWS & EVENTS

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership is hosting a Welcome to DSM USA Reception on June 7 at Jasper Winery. Please make sure to invite anyone who you know who has recently relocated to DSM.
- The World Food & Music Festival will return on Sept. 16 – 18 at Western Gateway Park.
- Out to Lunch Series - Wednesdays, 11am to 1:30pm, May 18th through August 3rd at various locations around Downtown.

- Downtown Farmers' Market - Every Saturday, May 7th through October 29th. 7am to noon (October hours: 8am to noon).
- Art Week 2022 will have events located in each of Invest DSM's Special Investment Districts, in addition to Downtown Des Moines, Valley Junction, and The Avenues. The goal is to attract visitors that might not otherwise frequent these neighborhoods. Neighborhood stakeholders helped to organize the event in their area, and over 90 artist submissions were received and considered. More information can be found here: <https://artweekdesmoines.com/>
- After a robust public input process, the Grubb YMCA is getting ready for redevelopment as the new North Side Recreation Center. The City of Des Moines has committed \$12 million over four years to the project.

CULTIVATION CORRIDOR

Billi Hunt

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

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

- Cultivation Corridor has been reconnecting with partners now that most of the industry and leadership is fully open following COVID protocols.
- The team continues to find many engagement opportunities within Iowa and outside the state to present and connect others to value the Corridor brings to communities and our industry.
- In the last year, over \$1.3 billion in infrastructure development was committed for economic development grants given by the state.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Cultivation Corridor continues to support groups that are target workforce in particular. Activities like the sponsorship of the Young Professionals in Iowa Agriculture help them target others. It is one of the more diverse opportunities within the state. Engagement with the World Food Prize organization also brings in such opportunities.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Cultivation Corridor will be hosting a press engagement opportunity at World Pork Expo on June 9th
- Farm Progress Show will be held August 30th - September 1st
- Launch of Ag Sustainability Project - August
- Governor's Reception at World Food Prize - October 18th

COLLABORATION

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

CULTURAL CAPITAL

Sally Dix, Greg Edwards, Brock Konrad 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 has secured the following events: Dew Tour, National Congress on School Transportation (2025), USA Swimming Speedo Champions Series Sectionals (2023), and USA Racquetball Junior Championships. All Iowa Attack – Midwest Festival of Teams, Professional Disc Golf Association, Meister Media Worldwide – Tech Hub Live (2023), National Association of Theater Owners – Central State Convention (2023), and National Association of America – PBL State Leadership Conference (2024, 2025).
- The team has hosted many great events, including the Iowa High School State Basketball Tournaments, Iowa State Association of Counties, USA Volleyball – Iowa Regionals, Iowa Communications Alliance State Conference, Drake Relays and many others.
- Catch Des Moines launched a new animated commercial into their leisure TV markets. The animation was done by Calabash out of Chicago who has done work for Nickelodeon and many others.
- The team also won several awards, both statewide and national, including an Iowa Tourism Award for 'Outstanding Event' for Dew Tour and two American Advertising Awards: Best Internet Commercial and Best Audio/Visual Sales Presentation.

Bravo

- Bravo will be completing a new 3-year strategic plan in June 2022.
- Bravo is also completing a grant award cycle that will infuse more than \$3 million into non-profit arts, culture and heritage organizations in Greater Des Moines.
- A collaborative effort to support complimentary Juneteenth events across the region has established new strong partnerships and a robust calendar of activities in June.
- Broadway has returned, national and local musical performances are plentiful, cultural festivals and events are back, the Opera is kicking off their 50th Anniversary season, and the region has much to enjoy in terms of arts and cultural experiences.

- Bravo, with support from the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, launched Passport to Culture, a program that provides funding for cultural experiences for students across the metro. We anticipate serving tens of thousands of students through this program in the years to come.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Labor shortages remain a challenge for many cultural partners, as does a lack of space to produce and present programming.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

Bravo

- Bravo continues to work with cultural partners on ways to advance equity and cultural competency. They are currently working with leaders of the Iowa Juneteenth Celebration to create a regional strategy to lift up the holiday with complimentary programming as well as partnering with and sponsoring DE&I events such as Capitol City Pride and Latino Heritage Festival.

Catch Des Moines

- Catch Des Moines' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee met to discuss how they can better impact metro visitors and events through inclusion and marketing efforts.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Catch Des Moines is looking forward to hosting the following major events this summer:
 - Principal Charity Classic – June 3rd – 5th
 - World Pork Expo – June 8th – 10th
 - IRONMAN North American Championships – June 12th
 - Red Bull Soapbox Race Iowa – June 18th
 - USA Gymnastics Championships – June 21st – 26th
 - USA Racquetball Junior Championships – June 22nd – 26th
 - State Games of America – July 27th – 31st
 - Dew Tour – July 29th – 30th
- Art Week is around the corner! In addition to big art festivals the weekend of the 24th – 26th, like the Des Moines Arts Festival and ArtFest Midwest, communities all over the metro are hosting events to showcase arts and culture in our neighborhoods. A full list of events can be found here: <https://artweekdesmoines.com/neighborhoods/>

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 Andrew, Mayor Courtney Clarke and Art Wittmack

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

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

- Hickman Road (US Highway 6) at I-35/80 is one of the busiest intersections in the Des Moines Metro Area, servicing over 150,000 vehicles per day. It is over capacity for the volume of traffic, presenting safety and efficiency concerns. The IDOT, Clive, and Urbandale are working together on a project to reconstruct the interchange—slated for 2024 – 2028. The project has an approved Interchange Justification Report. The Iowa Department of Transportation and the Des Moines Metropolitan Area Planning Organization have programmed funding for the project. The Cities of Clive and Urbandale are working together with state partners to capitalize on this major public investment. This critical piece of transportation infrastructure can also advance state and regional community development and environmental stewardship goals.
- Des Moines Water Works Board of Trustees received and filed a draft 28E/28F agreement in late February. The agreement outlined Central Iowa Water Works' functions, responsibilities and roles, plans for drinking water needs, water rates, and a voting board.
- The Central Iowa Code Consortium will resume meetings since the state legislature did not pass legislation that required cities to follow state codes rather than granting local control.
- The City of Norwalk broke ground on a 70-acre project with residences, stores, restaurants, sports, recreation, fitness, outdoor trails, parks and an amphitheater.
- Main Street Iowa celebrated achievements in downtown revitalization. Multiple Central Iowa communities were recognized.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Capital Crossroads convened a regional conversation with local governments to discuss opportunities to collaborate around Destination Iowa grant funds through the Iowa Economic Development Authority. These grants are available to bolster the quality of life in Iowa's communities and attract visitors and new residents to the state. The new effort will provide grants to help communities move forward on transformational, shovel-ready attractions. Learn more about these funds here: <https://www.iowaeda.com/destination-iowa/>

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.

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 major focus of this legislative session was advocating in defense of childcare policies that could hinder the accessibility and quality of much-needed childcare for working families – such as 16/17-year-olds providing unsupervised care, increasing the number of children in an individual's care, and allowing centers to voluntarily collect market rates from families utilizing Child Care Assistance, all passed the House and Senate, and await signature by the Governor.
- As session closed, many of the proposed restrictions on public assistance benefits failed to advance this year. Policies like asset tests, quarterly eligibility checks and other barriers to stabilizing programs did not pass. This was a favorable outcome. However, food assistance benefits did receive cuts beginning in April 2022, due to the expiration of the state's emergency public health order. A pandemic relief policy, participants in Iowa's food assistance program received expanded benefits throughout the pandemic. These cuts come when rising food costs, and other pandemic relief measures expire, for working families.
- Unemployment Insurance benefits were reduced this session – to 16 weeks of total benefits, down from 26. This will make it difficult for workers who lose their jobs, through no fault of their own. Earned unemployment benefits are often what helps families stabilize and recover. Workers must also accept lower-paying jobs sooner, or risk losing benefits in a new 'suitable work' schedule.
- United Way of Central Iowa has released the 2022 Community Report, highlighting the community's challenges in each of the 5 Elements of a Thriving Community; Essential Needs, Early Childhood Success, Economic Opportunity, Education Success, and Health and Well-Being. Read the report here: <https://www.unitedwaydm.org/community-report>

Greater Des Moines Partnership

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership hosted several webinars for the region, focusing on topics such as Women in the Workforce: The New Normal, Hiring Afghanistan Refugees to Your Workforce and Untapped Talent communities. The team met with regional superintendents as well to discuss workforce attraction, retention, and providing career exploration opportunities for as early as middle school to better understand the career opportunities in Central Iowa. The team is also looking at ways to improve internship and apprenticeship opportunities for the region.
- The team at the Greater Des Moines Partnership is working to relaunch the Business Education Alliance. They have been working with partners on the Equitable Credential Attainment cohort.

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 hosted the second Multicultural Reception of the year.

NEWS & EVENTS

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership announced its intern series, DSM Intern Connection, will return in June and July. The series will feature opportunities for interns and college-aged students to connect with community leaders and executives, as well as opportunities to network with fellow students while learning about what makes DSM unique and truly the place to be. All interns and college students working in Greater Des Moines are invited to attend, and all events are free. The current 2022 calendar is:
 - Thursday, June 16 | 5:30 – 7 p.m. | What Young Professionals Should Know About Benefits at EMC Insurance sponsored by EMC Insurance Companies
 - Thursday, June 30 | 5:30 – 7 p.m. | Young Professional Panel at Mainframe Studios, The Big Room sponsored by American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company
 - Thursday, July 14 | 5:30 – 7 p.m. | TBD
 - Friday, July 15 | 7 p.m. | I-Cubs vs. Buffalo Game and Fireworks Event
 - Wednesday, July 27 | 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Executive Luncheon at Embassy Club Downtown sponsored by Bankers Trust
- The next Multicultural Reception is on Wednesday, August 3rd at the Iowa Bankers Association building in partnership with Central Iowa SHRM.
- The next Untapped Talent webinar is on June 23rd, focusing on the LGBTQ+ community.

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 is currently working on building out the Raccoon River run experience through the completion of the projects at Fleur Drive, Scott Ave and Harriet Street that will allow users to put in as far upstream as Van Meter or West Des Moines and paddle through the heart of downtown Des Moines. Due to completed funding for these projects, this will be the first completed run of the project showing momentum related to the downtown projects and allow ICON to activate their business plan. They are currently in the process of bidding out the Scott Ave project and are working through pre-design for the Fleur Drive project
- Due to the shift in completing the Raccoon River run experience, the team has been working with a consultant to revise the initial water trails business plan. That report should be completed in the next week or so. As part of that process, ICON has hosted several site visits with the consultant as well as an outfitter from Columbus, GA to help identify their programming opportunities related to the project.
- ICON and Bravo are partnering on creating a water trails public art grant that will be rolled out next year.
- ICON recently kicked off a summer social media campaign, The ICONic Summer of 2022, to help drive awareness of the organization and project, as well as to promote use and activity at existing access points. More details can be found below.
- The Great Outdoors Foundation will host two roundtable discussions around water quality implementation and education and outreach in June with upstream and downstream stakeholders. These groups will discuss the feedback that GOF received from outreach to over 80 water quality stakeholders. The roundtable participants will review and agree on the priority project matrix and identify projects to identify as goals in the next year.
- In May, Natural Capital and Capital Crossroads issued the challenge to the region to plant and preserve one million trees in Central Iowa over the next ten years; Trees Forever accepted this challenge. Details about the initiative are still being developed, but Natural Capital will provide support by convening communities and city staff to discuss best practices for tree planting and preservation in order to identify model ordinances that cities can adopt.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- ICON is currently working through the direct impact of increased construction costs. This has caused them to have to revise the scope of the first phase of the project to ensure they complete the most critical piece for the future of ICON, Scott Avenue. They have been working on a plan with

local and state partners that keeps the initial intent of the project and allows them to retain the \$25 million BUILD Grant funding.

NEWS & EVENTS

- ICON is currently running a summer social media campaign to drive awareness of the organization and project, as well as to promote use and activity at existing access points. The campaign is called the ICONic Summer of 2022. From May 27 to July 29, they'll be sending out weekly prompts asking for photos of Central Iowans enjoying the ICON Water Trails along with bonus local events throughout the summer. Pictures that get posted on Facebook or Instagram with the hashtag #iconicsummer2022 enter them for a chance to win ICON swag. Details can be found on the event page at <https://www.iconicsummer2022.com/>

COLLABORATION

- As the 1 Million Trees initiative is launched, there will be opportunities for collaboration with most other Capitals to identify ways to incorporate equity, regionalism, placemaking, and more into the project.

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

- MPO finished grant activity for the transload facility. The BUILD grant received its last reimbursement, and the facility is up and running. A ribbon-cutting will occur soon.
- Water Trails is moving forward with revisions to the BUILD grant agreement. The new plan will propose a phasing mechanism, with Scott Ave Dam and Harriet Park improvements in the first phase. The rest of Harriet, Birdland, and Prospect would be done at a later time as the team continues to raise funds. The new bidding cycle will be announced later this summer or early fall.
- MPO is also watching the Infrastructure Bill announcements, as it has several new programs that are of interest. Rules have not been announced, but the team is keeping an eye on movement around new opportunities for safety projects and planning funds.
- The Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance for Community Development (MIPA) is up and running! The MPO has hired a staff member to run the program.

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)

- Last fall, DART launched a new service in Ankeny called DART On Demand, a point-to-point service within a designated zone. Trips can be booked in real-time (on-demand) or scheduled in advance. Ridership in Ankeny has more than doubled since the introduction of DART On Demand, with ridership continuing to increase each month. A second vehicle was added to keep up with the demand. Now, DART is developing plans to bring the on-demand service to West Des Moines in the coming months. Learn more about DART On Demand: <https://www.ridedart.com/dart-demand>.
- This spring, DART collected feedback from Express Route riders to understand when and where they need to travel. This feedback, along with recent ridership data and office hour information from local employers was used to create new Express Route schedules. The new schedules, which begin June 12, were designed to maintain popular trip times, shift trip times to better align with new working hours, provide maximum flexibility and discontinue trips with very low ridership. Learn more: <https://ridedart.com/June>
- The DART Commission has voted to make permanent a half-fare program that allows individuals receiving food assistance, workforce training and housing assistance to purchase half-fare bus passes. More than 550 individuals have enrolled, taking more than 22,000 trips since the pilot program began in January 2021. In addition to making the program permanent, the Commission expanded eligibility, defined eligibility periods and discontinued the former reduced fare program. Learn more: <https://ridedart.com/reduced-fare-programs>

Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF)

- PCHTF completed their annual Affordable Housing Week series of events with a student design challenge, landlord forum, and affordable housing week symposium. Capital Crossroads was one of the sponsors of the symposium.
- PCHTF is focused on preparing for a special allocation of \$15 million in federal ARPA funds they will allocate on behalf of Polk County. They have had great success with their annual investment campaign called Stable, Steady, Strong which they will announce the results of soon.
- The Polk County Housing Trust Fund announced the return of their popular bus tour highlighting the region's progress toward providing housing choice and opportunity for everybody. The tour will feature projects that match the priorities of the Here We Grow initiative focused on adding housing that is located near jobs, that is affordable at the wages local workers are paid, and that advances equity. The tour will visit sites in Urbandale, Johnston, Des Moines, and West Des Moines and discuss the strategies communities are using to achieve housing success - and what we can all do to achieve even more!

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)

- DART appreciates the Iowa Legislature's support in continuing to work towards funding diversification for public transportation. DART began the 2022 Iowa Legislative Session seeking support for an up to 5 percent local option transit hotel-motel tax, which would have provided

significant property tax reductions to DART member communities. As the session progressed, legislators decided to study the issue further, including a provision in the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF) requiring the formation of an advisory committee to evaluate “the most efficient and effective methods to increase funding for DART that are alternative to an increase in property taxes.” The committee is required to submit a report containing its findings or recommendation to the general assembly on or before December 15, 2022. The bill is awaiting the Governor’s signature.

Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF)

- The housing market continues to experience major disruption, not only with supply chain issues influencing housing production but also with changes to social service programs as pandemic emergency assistance programs end.

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’ve been using the 4 Equity tool to help guide their public outreach plans as they gathered public feedback on Express Route changes and expansion of the DART on Demand program that will help gather diverse feedback as they plan for the future.
- During this quarter, DART staff continued planning work through its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee including work to recruit new members.

Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF)

- PCHTF have continued to advance their work on housing equity through our Redlining in Des Moines project and are active participants in the One Economy housing strategic implementation team.

NEWS & EVENTS

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)

- Ridership promotions including \$1 fares through the end of June: <https://www.ridedart.com/1-fares-extended-through-june-30>
- DART submitted a report as part of the FTA’s Sustainable Transit for a Healthy Planet Challenge: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/climate-challenge>
- DART hosted several area mayors as part of its annual Rodeo competition. Special thanks to recently elected mayors from City of Ankeny - Government, City of Bondurant, Iowa Government, City of Clive, City of Windsor Heights, Iowa and City of West Des Moines - City Manager’s Office for taking a spin through the competition course and learning first-hand what it’s like to drive a bus. Check out a video of the event on DART’s Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/ridedart>

Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF)

- PCHTF will host a bus tour of the region's latest and greatest housing projects on June 17. Registration can be found at <https://herewegrow.eventbrite.com>

COLLABORATION

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)

- Funding diversification will continue to be a focus for DART through the DART funding advisory committee noted above. DART will likely need significant community engagement and support to bring the committee's proposals to the legislature next session and earn passage of those potential solutions to diversify DART's funding away from a heavy reliance on property taxes. 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.

Polk County Housing Trust Fund

- PCHTF worked with Capital Crossroads, Urban Land Institute Iowa, Iowa Housing Partnership, Homeward, OpportUNITY, United Way of Central Iowa and two dozen collaborating organizations on events during Affordable Housing Week.

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

- The DSM USA 4 Equity Collective received approximately 170 responses to the Organizational Equity Practices Assessment (OEPA) that was distributed earlier this year. The assessment was developed to get a better understanding of how Central Iowa employers are implementing equity practices ranging from recruitment, retention, data collection, training, and more.
- With the results of the OEPA in hand, the 4 Equity Collective is turning their attention to addressing requests for support from the community and creating resources for Central Iowa employers to use to expand their equity practices. The Collective has created seven different subcommittees that will work to identify promising equity practices and examples of local organizations that are implementing those strategies with success. These resources will serve as playbooks for employers of all sizes and types in the region that they can use to make meaningful change in their organizations and in the community at large.
- The results of the OEPA and the corresponding playbooks will be released to the community at an event this fall. More details will be shared soon.

- 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.

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

- Honor Juneteenth by attending events throughout the month of June. A list of events across the metro can be found here: <https://www.iowajuneteenth.org/events.html>
- Happy Pride Month! Capital City Pride is hosting several events this month. Learn more here: <https://www.capitalcitypride.org/items>
- Additional events that further the equality of the metro can be found on the Capital Crossroads website on the 4Equity Calendar: <https://www.capitalcrossroadsvision.com/events/>

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

- Iowa Healthiest State Initiative hosted the Workplace Wellbeing Conference in April. The event was well attended and hosted several fantastic speakers. Topics and speakers included: [Dr. Rosie Ward](#), co-founder of Salveo Partners, LLC, on Building Emotional and Change Agility in People and Organizations; Tony Wilson, co-founder and director of curriculum development and transformation and Rachel Rockwell, Director of Organizational Development and Partnerships for [Central City Development Corporation](#), on Burnout: How to Identify It, Prevent It and Overcome It; Lou Raiola, ESG Consultant and Michelle Weil, Organization Engagement Consultant for [ethOs](#) on ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance); Healthiest State Annual Award Workplace Category Winner panel featuring strategies and efforts to improve the health of Iowans; and [Peter Dunn](#) a.k.a. Pete the Planner®, ended the conference with a session focusing on Financial Well-Being
- May was Mental Health Awareness Month! In honor of the month, Iowa Healthiest State Initiative released tools and resources for employers across the state to raise awareness of mental health and take steps to end the stigma during Mental Health Awareness Month in May. Learn more [here](#). The Polk County Produce Prescription Program will expand through a partnership with Primary Health Care to serve the pediatric population.

AARP

- AARP is partnering with Capital Crossroads on a plan to improve walkability throughout the Central Iowa region. They have hired Smart Growth America to lead the initiative working in conjunction with the DMAMPO. The goal is to pull together current MPO planning and have Des Moines and the surrounding suburbs agree on a collaborative approach and vision to creating a walkable region.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Iowa Healthiest State Initiative

- Iowa Healthiest State Initiative is working on capacity building as work expands beyond the Central Iowa region. At this point, the team is continuing the work of Make It OK in Central Iowa and expanding statewide.

AARP

There are many existing walkability plans, but there doesn't seem to be a universal, regional vision for walkability. Culturally, the region and the state remain very car-centric, yet this approach is counter to what the next generation of workers seeks in a community. Additionally, there are budget challenges tied to any additional walkability measures.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Central Iowa leaders announced the results of a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), which provides a vision for a healthy community environment that supports and enables all Central Iowans to live healthy lives and encourages everyone to take responsibility for their health. In alignment with the Capital Crossroads Regional Vision Plan, a steering committee that included Broadlawns Medical Center, MercyOne, UnityPoint Health – Des Moines, the Dallas County Public Health Department, the Polk County Public Health Department, Warren County Health Services, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, United Way of Central Iowa, and Everystep, led the CHNA process. The 2021 CHNA plan identifies ten areas of opportunity, including:
 - – Mental Health
 - – Respiratory Disease/COVID-19
 - – Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight
 - – Substance Abuse
 - – Heart Disease & Stroke
 - – Access to Health Care Services
 - – Infant Health & Family Planning
 - – Injury and Violence
 - – Sexual Health
 - – Cancer
- The CHNA plan will be used by local health organizations to guide organizational practices, priorities, investments and policies. The Capital Crossroads Wellness Capital committee will provide an umbrella for organizations to continue to coordinate their efforts during the implementation stage. Read the final report [here](#).