

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY







# Iowa Public Transit Long Range Plan

In order to have a strong multimodal transportation system, Iowa's public transit serves as a transportation alternative to all. By providing these alternatives, the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) helps Iowa maintain a higher quality of life by providing connections from people's origins to their required destinations (workplaces, healthcare, groceries, entertainment, etc.). This Plan outlines and guides the Iowa DOT's efforts in supporting a statewide public transit system in the near and far future.

Public Transportation Vision	Goals	Impact of Public Transit
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Advocate and deliver services that support and promote a safe and comprehensive public transit system in Iowa to help support the overarching efforts of the department.

- Service Improvements
- Partnering Opportunities
- Facility and Maintenance Improvements
- Bus Fleet Replacements
- Personnel Development
- Addressing Funding Shortfalls


Tracking the benefits of Public Transit in Iowa	
<p><b>Safety Benefits</b></p>  <p>Reduces total number of vehicles on the road, decreases road congestion, decreases reliance on personal vehicles</p>	<p><b>Economic benefits</b></p>  <p>Spurs economic development, supports local businesses, connects workers to workplaces, and provides cost savings options for commuters</p>
<p><b>Health benefits</b></p>  <p>Reduces vehicle emissions, provides medical appointment connections, promotes sustainable urban living</p>	<p><b>Social Benefits</b></p>  <p>Enhances mobility for individuals that need alternatives to traditional transportation options, provides connections to healthcare, employment, and grocery stores</p>

### Iowa's Public Transit Network

**35 transit agencies** across the state

**17.3 million** annual rides in 2023

**2** Amtrak passenger rail routes, **2** Intercity bus providers, and **8** commercial airports




# Needs and Opportunities

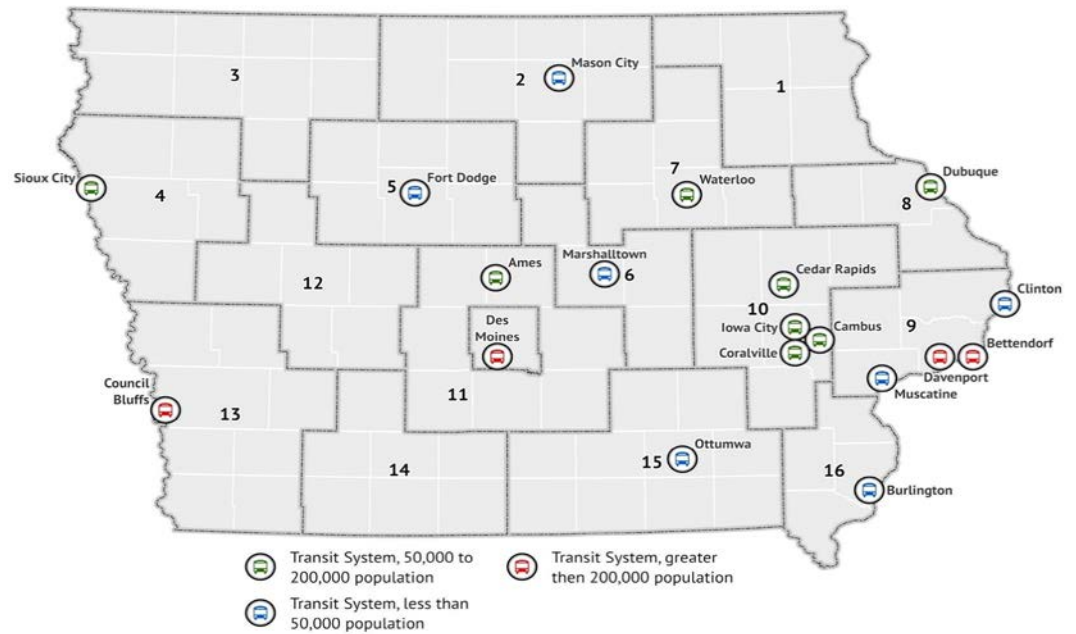
Identified by engaging with transit agencies, analyzing historical and forecasted trends, and developing performance measures. Six key issues stand out as the major needs of transit for today and tomorrow.

## Key Issues

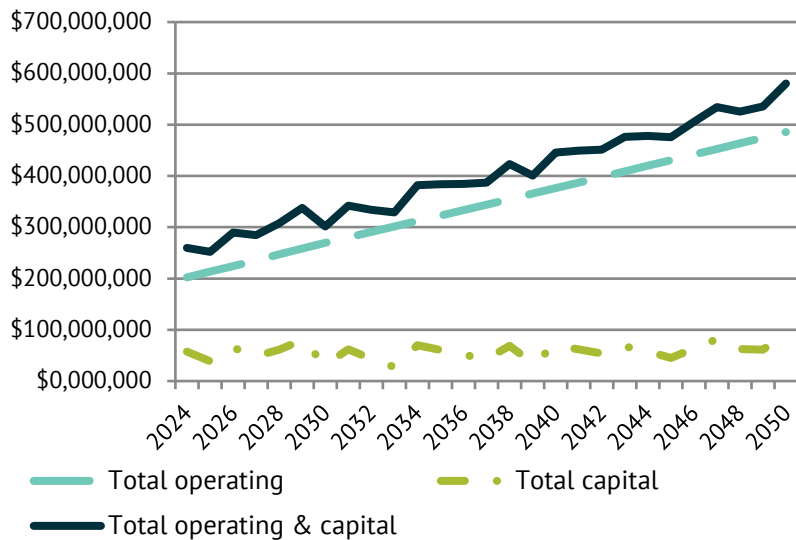


1. Funding
2. Bus replacements
3. Driver shortages
4. Service gaps
5. Facility expansion needs
6. Future demand

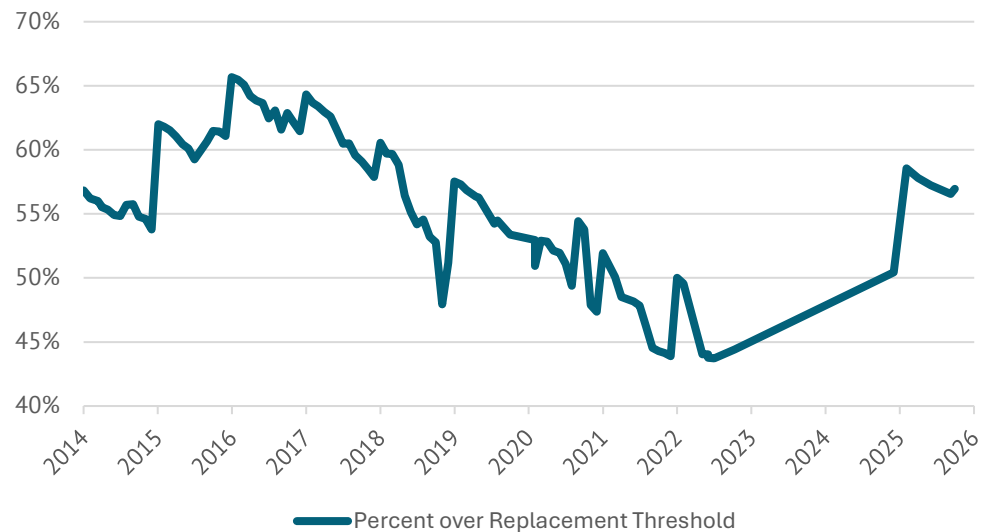
## Transit in Iowa



## Transit Cost Projections



## Buses Exceeding Useful Life Benchmarks



# Strategies to Address Transit Needs

Includes listings of current transit needs and potential strategies that could help the state meet these needs.

## Service Needs

Improving transit coverage, hours, efficiency, and accessibility

### Service Strategies

- Examine the effects of offering fare-free statewide bus service.
- Study and define a statewide minimum level of essential transit service.
- Examine service hours for people who work nights and weekends.
- Examine the effects of creating more urban transit services.
- Continue existing services and establish new inter regional services.
- Start a subscription service that works across all transit services.
- Enable all agencies in the state to accept digital fares.
- Improve accessibility of all transit information.
- Establish standardized transit data collection and reporting.
- Study how to implement intercity bus systems.
- Prioritize funding applications to improve transit services.



## Partnering Needs

Improve interagency transit coordination

### Partnering Strategies

- Improve transit transfers between regions and counties.
- Partner with private companies to support bus routes and provide transportation alternatives.
- Partner with businesses to help employee commutes.
- Partner with non-profit organizations to get people to medical appointments.
- Improve sidewalks and connecting infrastructure to bus stops and transit services.
- Work with businesses to create transportation incentives.



## Facility, Fleet, and Personnel Needs

Improve bus procurement, finding drivers, and expanding facilities

### Facility, Fleet, and Personnel Strategies

- Develop a right-sizing strategy for transit agency bus fleets.
- Decrease fuel costs by adopting electric, hybrid, or flex fuel vehicles.
- Prioritize facilities that are in marginal or poor condition.
- Improve coordination of transit services by hiring mobility managers.
- Encourage transit agencies and local governments to share facilities and staff.
- Target non-traditional candidates to expand the potential pool of drivers.
- Increase driver training to better serve the mobility of riders that may need more meaningful access to transit.
- Identify minimum technology needs for agencies.
- Update the park & ride system plan.



## Funding Needs

Address funding shortfalls and find future funding

### Funding Strategies

- Decrease maintenance costs by replacing vehicles beyond their useful life.
- Examine alternative ways of funding public transit that do not rely on existing federal and state sources.
- Conduct a benefit-cost analysis of transit and project to measure the impact and benefit to social welfare.

