

# PUBLIC TRANSIT SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2024



## 2023 URBAN IPTA AWARD SPOTLIGHT

### Certificate of Recognition to CAMBUS as the Large Urban Transit System of the Year

In the Large Urban Category, CAMBUS was the 2023 Transit System of the Year with the highest percentage of rides per dollar of operating expense and highest percentage of rides per revenue mile in the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2023



### FY2023 LARGE URBAN PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP AND REVENUE MILES:

**14,233,759**  
Rides

**12,446,821**  
Revenue Miles



for keeping us moving.

## KRISTIN'S KEYWORDS

Welcome to the special edition of our newsletter where we celebrate the large urban transit systems in Iowa. Rural transit day was in July, and we celebrated that with a special edition, but we couldn't pinpoint an official urban transit day or public transportation week to tag on to, so we're making one up! Whatever day you're reading this is now urban public transportation day!



Recently I was messaging a colleague here at DOT about our small but mighty public transit team and finished my message with, "We're the hidden gem of the DOT!" And, really, that is a good way to describe the urban public transit agencies in this state, you're all hidden gems in your communities. Urban fixed route public transit is pretty visible in the communities it serves; however, I doubt many city dwellers and suburbanites know how impactful public transit is to the lives of their friends and neighbors.

### WHO TO CONTACT

#### FIND YOUR TPA!

Tammy Nicholson, Modal Transportation Bureau Director  
tamara.nicholson@iowadot.us

Kristin Haar, Public Transit Director  
kristin.haar@iowadot.us

Brent Paulsen, Transit Programs Manager  
brent.paulsen@iowadot.us

Travis Estep, Grants Manager  
travis.estep@iowadot.us

In FY2024, Iowa's large urban transit systems provided 14,233,759 fixed route and ADA Complementary Paratransit rides. That's nearly 39,000 rides for every day of the year. Those rides are school days attended, classes taught, widgets manufactured, tables waited, treatments administered, treatments received, movies watched, festivals celebrated, prescriptions picked up, groceries bought, and paychecks cashed.

I know how all of the negative feedback can drown out the positive role public transit plays in our communities. You're grappling with tight budgets, old buses with hard-to-find parts, driver applicants with no CDLs, NTD reporting, and - my personal favorite - the call from a citizen concerned about seeing empty buses driving around. In the midst of the everyday busyness, take moments to reflect on and realize that your public transit system is a gem in someone's life. Be proud of the role you and your agency play in the health and vitality of the community.

You're all gems! Thank you for all you do for public transit in Iowa.

- *Kristin*

**The Iowa DOT would like to thank all of the hard working Large Urban transit employees who help  
"Make Lives Better Through Transportation."**



#### APTA PUBLIC TRANSIT INDUSTRY FOOTPRINT TOOL AVAILABLE

The American Public Transportation Association has tools on their website, <https://footprint.apta.com/>, to calculate the impact of public transit on communities around the nation. According to APTA, "Public transportation is a \$79 billion industry that employs more than 430,000 people and supports millions of private sector jobs. ...87% of bus and rail trips directly benefit the economy by getting people to work and connecting them to local businesses." The APTA website linked above has searchable transit information by state, district, or legislator. While this data may not drill down to a transit agency's exact service area as closely as one might like, it does offer higher level talking points for conversing with elected officials and citizens about public transit's overall impacts.

Emma Simmons, Transit Planner  
emma.simmons@iowadot.us

Amy Colwell, Administrative Assistant  
amy.colwell@iowadot.us

Jamie Wingert, Compliance and Training Specialist  
jamie.wingert@iowadot.us

Laura Lutz-Zimmerman, Transit Programs Administrator  
laura.lutzzimmerman@iowadot.us

Matt Oetker, Transit Programs Administrator  
matthew.oetker@iowadot.us