



Survey on Possible Bus Service Cuts in Des Moines

November-December 2023

The City of Des Moines is deciding whether to pay more than it can collect in property taxes to keep DART's existing bus services or make cuts to bus services.

DART would like to hear from riders and residents:

- Would you like more local funding to go to DART to keep existing bus services?
- How should DART provide bus services with the funding it has?
- How would possible cuts to bus services affect you?

Thank you for taking this survey and providing your input.

You can also share your thoughts with your elected city leaders. Learn more at www.ridedart.com/funding-our-future

1. If you would like to receive updates from DART on possible bus service cuts, please share your contact information (*optional*):

a. Name: _____

b. Email: _____

c. Phone number: _____

How Do You Use DART?

Please tell us about how you use DART services. You do not have to answer every question.

2. Which city do you live in? *(Circle one option.)*
 - a. Des Moines
 - b. Altoona
 - c. Ankeny
 - d. Bondurant
 - e. Clive
 - f. Grimes
 - g. Johnston
 - h. Pleasant Hill
 - i. Unincorporated Polk County
 - j. Urbandale
 - k. West Des Moines
 - l. Windsor Heights
 - m. None of these

3. Which DART services do you use? *(Circle all options that apply.)*
 - a. Fixed Route Bus Service (Local Routes, Express Routes, Downtown Shuttles)
 - b. Paratransit (Bus Plus service, Polk County service)
 - c. On Demand (Flex Connect, On Call, DART On Demand)
 - d. I don't ride DART today but am interested in riding if services met my needs.
 - e. I don't ride DART today and don't plan to ride DART in the future.

4. How often do you use DART services? *(Circle one option.)*
 - a. 5-7 days per week
 - b. 2-4 days per week
 - c. 1 day per week
 - d. 2-4 days per month
 - e. 1 day per month or less
 - f. I don't ride any DART service.

5. What is the top reason why you use DART? *(Circle one option.)*
- a. Work
 - b. School or training
 - c. Medical appointments
 - d. Shopping
 - e. Social or recreation activities
 - f. Job searching
 - g. Other
 - h. I don't ride any DART service.
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Funding for DART Services

Please review the following information and share your thoughts on funding for DART services. You do not have to answer every question.

HOW DART IS FUNDED

Twelve communities contribute property taxes to DART to provide transit services for their residents. This is the only option the Iowa Legislature has given communities to pay for public transportation, except in the City of Des Moines.

An owner of a \$200,000 home pays between \$50-\$100 each year to support DART, which is about 1-2 percent of their total property tax bill.

CITY OF DES MOINES CHALLENGE

The City of Des Moines has reached the maximum amount it is allowed to collect in property taxes. The city's contribution to DART will increase from \$9.8 million this year to \$17.5 million in 2029. The increase is due to a new funding formula that aligns what each community pays with the level of services received.

The city has the option of raising its franchise fee – a tax collected on gas and electric utility bills – by up to 2.5 percent.

If Des Moines increased its franchise fee by 2.5 percent:

- Des Moines could lower the amount it collects in property taxes for the next few years.
- Non-profit and government organizations that do not pay property taxes would pay a franchise fee to support DART.
- A Des Moines resident with a \$100 gas or electric bill would pay \$2.50 more in taxes each month, or \$30 more per year.

Without additional funding from the City of Des Moines, DART will need to cut bus services by up to 40 percent over the next five years. DART anticipates service cuts would impact thousands of riders who would have reduced access jobs, services, and other opportunities across Greater Des Moines.

6. Which statement do you agree with the most? *(Circle one option.)*
 - a. City leaders should increase the franchise fee to keep the level of services that DART provides today.
 - b. City leaders should not pass the franchise fee and DART should cut services.
 - c. City leaders should increase the franchise fee and find additional funding to expand services to offer residents better public transit options than today.

 7. Riders who use DART often pay around \$576 per year in monthly bus fares. Most DART riders also pay property taxes to help fund DART, either as homeowners or through rent. Which statement do you agree with the most? *(Circle one option.)*
 - a. The cost for a rider to regularly use DART services is too low.
 - b. The cost for a rider to regularly use DART services seems about right.
 - c. The cost for a rider to regularly use DART services is too high.

 8. The cost for one ride on a local DART bus route is \$1.75 (or \$2.00 on an Express route). The cost for a monthly DART bus pass is \$48.00 (or \$58.00 for an Express Plus pass). Which statement do you agree with the most? *(Circle one option.)*
 - a. I can easily afford the fare and I should pay more to ride DART.
 - b. I can afford the fare and the cost for the service is right.
 - c. I struggle to pay the bus fare and could not afford to ride as often if the fare increases.
 - d. I pay a reduced fare, and the amount I pay is the right cost for the service.
 - e. I pay a reduced fare and still struggle to afford the bus fare.
 - f. I don't use DART and don't pay any fare.
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Possible Bus Service Cuts

If you are a DART rider, please review the information below and share your input on how DART should provide bus services with the funding it receives from the City of Des Moines. You do not have to answer every question.

HOW DART PROVIDES SERVICES

Today, DART provides the most service on bus routes with the most riders and provides more limited service in areas of Des Moines with less riders. Routes with the most riders have buses that run often, all day and all week. Routes with less riders may only offer a few trips each day and no service on weekends.

If DART needs to cut bus services, DART is deciding how to prioritize limited resources. The following questions ask what you value most in public transportation.

9. If DART needs to cut bus services, which option do you prefer as a DART rider?
(Circle one option.)
 - a. Reduce how often buses run in order to keep all routes. DART would serve more areas of Des Moines.
 - b. Eliminate routes to run buses more often on the routes with the most riders. DART would serve less areas of Des Moines.
 - c. DART should balance making cuts to services that both reduce how often buses run and eliminate some routes with less riders.
 - d. I don't use DART.

 10. If DART needs to cut bus services, which option do you prefer as a DART rider?
(Circle one option.)
 - a. DART should run buses often, but only during the busiest times of the day. This may mean no bus service before 6 a.m. or after 10 p.m. on weekdays and limited service on weekends.
 - b. DART should run buses less often but provide services all day and on weekends. This may mean a bus will run every hour instead of every 20 or 30 minutes.
 - c. I don't use DART.
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How Would Bus Service Cuts Affect You

If you are a DART rider, please review the information below and share your input on how possible bus service cuts would affect you. You do not have to answer every question.

IMPACT OF DART SERVICE CUTS

Without an increase in funding from the City of Des Moines, DART will need to cut bus services by up to 40 percent over five years. Possible cuts to bus services may mean:

- Most bus routes would run every 60 minutes instead of every 20 or 30 minutes.
- Bus services would be limited on weekends, with no Sunday service on most routes.
- Bus services would be limited throughout the day, with many routes only running during the morning and evening hours when most people travel.

Riders could experience the following:

- Longer wait times for buses.
- Fewer options for trips, especially in the early mornings, evenings, and weekend hours.
- More bus transfers to arrive at a destination.
- Longer travel times to get to a destination.
- Crowded buses, which may mean having to stand or wait for the next bus.

11. If DART runs buses less often and does not provide bus services in early morning, evening and weekend hours, how would you use DART services? *(Circle one option.)*

- a. I would still use DART services as much as I do today.
- b. I would use DART services less than I do today.
- c. I would stop using DART.
- d. I don't ride DART today and would not start riding.

12. How would having less bus services change how you get to where you need to go? *(Circle all options that apply.)*

- a. I would still use DART as much as I do today.
- b. I would drive my car more.
- c. I would get a ride from someone I know.
- d. I would take a Taxi, Uber or other rideshare service.
- e. I would walk, bike or wheelchair.
- f. I would travel less.
- g. I don't ride DART today.

13. Would you like to share anything else about how possible bus service cuts would affect you? *(Write a response in the space below.)*

About You

The following questions are optional. The information you provide will help DART better understand who will be most impacted by possible bus service cuts.

14. What is your current age? *(Circle one option.)*

- a. 18 or under
- b. 19-24
- c. 25-34
- d. 35-49
- e. 50-64
- f. 65+

15. Which option best describes your race/ethnicity? *(Circle one option.)*

- a. White or Caucasian
- b. Black or African American
- c. Hispanic, Spanish or Latino/a/x
- d. Asian or Asian Indian
- e. American Indian or Alaska Native
- f. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- g. Middle Eastern or /North African
- h. Multiracial
- i. Other: _____

16. Please define your gender (*Circle one option*):

- a. Male
- a. Female
- b. Other
- c. Choose not to specify

17. What is your total annual household income before taxes? (*Circle one option.*)

- a. Under \$20,000
- b. \$20,000-\$29,999
- c. \$30,000-\$39,999
- d. \$40,000-\$54,999
- e. \$55,000-\$69,999
- f. \$70,000-\$84,999
- g. \$85,000-\$99,999
- h. \$100,000-\$124,999
- i. \$125,000 or more

18. What is your job status? (*Circle one option.*)

- a. Working full time
- b. Working part time
- c. Student / training program
- d. Retired
- e. Full-time or part-time caretaker
- f. Not working due to disability
- g. Not working but seeking work
- h. Unemployed

19. Do you have a valid driver's license? (*Circle one option.*)

- a. Yes
- b. No

20. Do you have access to a car in your household? (*Circle one option.*)

- a. Yes
- b. No

Thank You!

Thank you for taking this survey. DART will use your feedback to inform how we cut bus services over the next five years if the City of Des Moines decides not to increase funding for DART.

If service cuts are needed, DART will present a plan with specific route and schedule changes for public input in spring 2024. Service changes will take place in November 2024.

You can share your comments with your local elected leaders and with the Board of Commissioners that oversees DART. Learn more at www.ridedart.com/funding-our-future