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**The MPO Wants to Know: Dump the Pump**

In an effort to better understand public views, the MPO has launched a series of online surveys about various transportation-related topics. The survey results will help the MPO develop plans and projects for the future. The responses also will be shared with appropriate roundtables and policymakers. For a list of available surveys, please visit the MPO website at <http://www.dmampo.org/user/survey.html>. Below are the results of the latest survey, which was distributed to highlight the upcoming National Dump the Pump Day on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

*Question 1. Do you utilize public transportation?*

Yes .....31.3%  
 No.....68.7%

*Question 2. If yes, how many days per week do you ride public transportation?*

One .....19.0%  
 Two three days .....19.0%  
 Four to six days .....52.4%  
 Daily .....9.5%

*Question 3. Why do you use public transportation instead of another mode of transportation?*

To reduce my environmental impact .....29.6%  
 To save money .....29.6%  
 Convenience .....11.1%  
 Do not have to park a vehicle .....7.4%  
 Do not own a vehicle .....7.4%  
 Other (please specify) .....14.8%  
     • I do not use it since I can't get to work with the routes.  
     • To teach others how to use the bus.  
     • I hate to drive.  
     • During the state fair, it is easier and quicker.

*Question 4. How satisfied are you with the public transportation service available in the Des Moines metropolitan area?*

|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Not satisfied .....      | 31.9% |
| Somewhat satisfied ..... | 51.1% |
| Very satisfied .....     | 17.0% |

*Question 5. Have the recent DART service cuts adversely impacted you? Please explain.*

Most of the respondents explained that the recent service cuts have not directly impacted them. However, several individuals did report that acquaintances, such as students and low income residents who live in downtown Des Moines, have been adversely impacted by the cuts. The cuts mean some buses only run every hour instead of every twenty minutes, which has made riding the bus “more frustrating.” Furthermore, it has made traveling around town and arriving at a specific destination on time problematic.

One respondent who has been impacted by the cuts stated that there are fewer buses to arrive at specific destinations. This respondent stated, “I cannot use public transportation unless I map out my entire day around the bus schedules. It is a lot less convenient.”

*Question 6. What changes would you recommend to increase public transportation ridership?*

Respondents offered several suggestions to increase public transportation ridership in the Des Moines metropolitan area. The most common replies related to the frequency of service. Individuals desire buses that run more often, that run later into the evening, and that run to and from the suburbs. Riders want routes that do not require them to go into downtown Des Moines. The routes also should be extended to take advantage of growing areas, such as Ankeny, Waukee, and Grimes, according to one respondent.

Additional suggestions for increasing public transportation ridership include reducing fares, expanding marketing and education efforts to make people aware of the savings and ease of use associated with public transportation, offering incentives for first time riders, and posting schedules on buses. Some riders feel safety needs to be increased on buses, while others point to improvements at bus stops (e.g., shelters, benches, etc.). Several respondents recommended more park and ride locations; one individual suggested turning vacant lots along Ingersoll Avenue into park and ride locations to serve downtown Des Moines.

Others proposed the addition of a light rail from Des Moines to the western suburbs, the installation of a rail system from Waukee to Altoona,

and a train, light rail, or bus rapid transit system running along the Interstate 35 corridor between Ames and Des Moines.

*Question 7. Are you familiar with the Rest Your Car program?*

Yes .....53.2%  
No.....46.8%

*Question 8. If you participate in the Rest Your Car program, what mode do you generally use?*

Mass transit .....27.3%  
Bicycle .....15.9%  
Carpool.....13.6%  
Vanpool.....4.5%  
I do not participate in the program.....38.6%

*Question 9. What could the MPO do to help enhance the public transportation system in the Des Moines metropolitan area?*

Respondents would like the MPO to help create a passenger rail system or tram; one individual thought this addition would be a “prestige factor.” Such solutions would be cheaper in the long run, would diminish pollution, and would hold more riders, according to the individual.

Riders are happy with the bike racks on buses but would also like bike lockers to be installed near bus stops. They want routes that do not necessitate traveling through downtown, routes that are convenient for those working after 5:30 p.m., and routes that improve connectivity in and around the metro. One individual proposed special routes for specific events, such as the downtown farmers market, while another individual suggested a focus on transit-dependent populations.

Several individuals want the MPO to encourage activity-oriented development and to support land use initiatives that may increase housing density. These individuals also want more promotion of the Rest Your Car program, noting they often forget about the program.