



## GREATER DES MOINES PARTNERSHIP 2020 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

### United to Drive Economic Growth: One Voice, One Mission, One Region

The Greater Des Moines Partnership is the economic and community development organization that serves Greater Des Moines (DSM), Iowa. Together with 24 Affiliate Chambers of Commerce, more than 6,600 Regional Business Members and 360+ Investors, The Partnership drives economic growth with one voice, one mission and as one region. Through innovation, strategic planning and global collaboration, The Partnership grows opportunity, helps create jobs and promotes DSM as the best place to build a business, a career and a future.

The Partnership believes that state government plays an important role in setting the stage for business competitiveness, small business growth and employment-generating investment by the private sector to promote economic growth. Economic growth is achieved by creating an environment that is conducive to business success, leading to job expansion and increased state and local revenues. The result will be an economically thriving state and growing communities that plan and build for the future. Accordingly, The Partnership supports policies that promote economic growth statewide and align with the Capital Crossroads vision plan for DSM.

The Partnership appreciates the opportunity to work with the Governor, the General Assembly and state agencies to accomplish mutually beneficial legislative goals and objectives for the economic betterment of the State of Iowa.

### FEATURED PRIORITIES

Although all of the policy positions included in The Partnership's 2020 State Legislative Agenda are important, The Partnership will focus on the following priorities:

- **Iowa's Water and Land Legacy** – The Partnership supports passage of this permanent funding source to address water quality and conservation projects including funding for regionally transformative quality of life projects that can attract and retain talent.
- **Angel Investor Tax Credit** – The Partnership supports increased funding for the Angel Investor Tax Credit Program as a necessary tool for incentivizing investment in entrepreneurs.
- **Des Moines International Airport Terminal Project** – The Partnership supports increased funding for Iowa airports for projects that increase traffic and support Iowa's business growth.

- **Talent** – The Partnership supports increased funding for the Future Ready Iowa initiative, policies that support the affordability and accessibility of child-care options and legislative efforts that reduce barriers to employment for those with a criminal history.
- **Enhance Iowa** – The Partnership supports increased funding for Enhance Iowa programs to fund recreational attractions, arts and culture that serve as economic catalysts throughout Iowa.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Business Climate and Economic Growth

Robust incentive programs are a critical element in Iowa’s effort to create and retain high-quality, high-paying jobs. Therefore, The Partnership supports state business development programs for local economic development projects that use performance-based criteria to ensure job creation, capital investment, workforce training, wages and wealth creation in exchange for tax incentives and direct financial assistance. Such programs should not be constrained until fully studied and carefully analyzed to determine how they impact economic development across the region.

- **Business Development Incentive Programs** – To create jobs and grow the economy, it is essential that the Governor and the General Assembly continue to provide adequate resources for the state’s business development programs. The most effective way to do that is to increase the resources available to programs such as the High Quality Jobs Program. Therefore, The Partnership supports: (1) a maximum aggregate tax credit cap that is set high enough to spur growth in local communities; and (2) an economic development budget for direct financial assistance that keeps Iowa competitive with other states. Additionally, The Partnership supports the continued refinement of program requirements, such as laborshed wage thresholds, so state programs remain easy to use and accessible to local communities.
- **Public-Private Partnerships** – Both the private and public sectors have a role to play in improving global competitiveness. The Partnership supports continued funding for the Iowa Innovation Corporation (IIC). The relationship between the IIC and the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) represents a unique delivery structure for economic development programs, and it has great potential to foster entrepreneurship, diversify the economy and upskill Iowa’s workforce.
- **Entrepreneurship and Early-Stage Industries** – A balanced approach to economic development requires the care and feeding of new business startups in addition to traditional relocation and expansion programs. Accordingly, The Partnership supports increased funding for programs that promote entrepreneurship and provide capital to targeted industries. IEDA programs like the Angel Investor Tax Credit, Demonstration Fund and Innovation Fund Tax Credits accelerate the growth of innovative businesses, enhance the development of early-stage industries and create critical pathways to follow-on funding.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – The Partnership supports Iowa’s TIF law and opposes any effort to limit its scope, duration or flexible use for commercial and industrial development.
- **Public Accountability in State Programs** – The Partnership supports transparency in the administration of state economic development programs and also seeks to ensure that such transparency strikes a prudent balance between private interests and public accountability.

- **Preservation of Business Climate** – To maintain and enhance Iowa’s attractiveness to current and potential businesses, it is essential that Iowa do what is possible to lower costs to employers and maintain the current balance of employee and management protections. Accordingly, The Partnership strongly supports the preservation of Iowa’s “Right to Work” law, supports Iowa’s current workers’ compensation system, opposes mandating prevailing wage rates and project labor agreements for public construction projects and opposes changes to Iowa’s current collective bargaining law that would put additional burdens on local governments and/or business owners.
- **Government Purchasing** – The Partnership supports Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) as the preferred process for the selection of design professionals and Construction Manager at-risk (CMaR) as a viable delivery method option for all public projects.

## Research and Development

The Partnership supports programs and initiatives to create and leverage scientific and technological developments to keep the region at the forefront.

- **Research Activities Credits (RAC)** – Iowa’s continued economic strength depends on the ability to generate and harness the latest in scientific and technological developments and to apply these developments to real-world applications. Iowa must continue encouraging companies to invest additional resources in the research, development and experimentation of various products and services that promote both job creation and economic expansion. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the preservation of Iowa’s refundable RAC.
- **Renewable Chemical Production Tax Credit** – America’s Cultivation Corridor is a global center of investment, talent, research and technology in the agbiosciences. To aid in the expansion of the bioeconomy and create new jobs in the Corridor and across the state, The Partnership supports the recent creation and funding of the renewable chemical production tax credit and encourages continued support for this important economic development initiative.
- **America’s Cultivation Corridor Priority Projects** – As global demand for food, feed, fiber and energy increases, the need to invest in innovation, technology and production capacity will also increase. Accordingly, The Partnership supports projects within America’s Cultivation Corridor, a dedicated effort to establish DSM and Iowa as a global center for agbioscience investment, talent and research. This includes the establishment of a nationally renowned innovation ecosystem in Iowa-advantaged bioscience platforms to grow and diversify Iowa’s economy. Additional priority projects within The Corridor include, but are not limited to, the ISU Agriculture Experiment Station, the ISU Research Park, Small Business Development Center and Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. The Partnership supports additional renewable energy, value-added agriculture and other research and development initiatives; commercialization and technology transfer initiatives; enhanced Science, Technology, Education and Math (STEM) education programming; and other initiatives to enhance and expand the region’s agbioscience ecosystem.

## Tax and Budget

The Partnership believes Iowa’s tax code should encourage business growth, limit the size and costs of government and reflect the principles of equity, neutrality, simplicity and predictability. Accordingly, The Partnership supports continued exploration of income tax reform and opposes efforts that would increase the tax burden on Iowa employers.

- **Commercial and Industrial Property Taxes** – The Partnership supports the current implementation of property tax relief and will continue to support meaningful property tax relief that is coupled and linked with targeted alternative revenue streams, meaningful regulatory relief and state backfill for local governments.
- **Corporate and Personal Income Taxes** – The Partnership supports efforts to simplify and reduce Iowa's corporate and personal income tax rates to strengthen Iowa's economic competitiveness.
- **Single Factor Corporate Income Tax** – The Partnership supports the preservation of Iowa's corporate single-factor income tax formula. The single factor formula has been a pillar of economic development for the state since 1934. In recent years, other states have recognized the success Iowa has had with the single factor formula and are moving to adopt similar statutes to compete in today's global economy.
- **Federal Deductibility** – The Partnership supports giving individuals the option of either retaining the ability to deduct federal income taxes or choosing to forego federal deductibility in exchange for significantly reduced state income tax rates.
- **Combined Corporate Reporting** – The Partnership opposes the adoption of a combined corporate income tax reporting structure in Iowa. Moving to combined reporting would add complexity to an already complex system, may lead to costly litigation and may result in a net revenue decrease for the state.
- **Retirement Savings Options** – The financial services industry offers a wide variety of retirement savings options, including 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, 401(a) plans, 457(b) plans, SIMPLE IRAs, SEP IRAs and traditional IRAs. The Partnership supports state initiatives – such as education and incentives – that promote retirement savings by private sector workers in such plans and products and supports state-sponsored marketplaces open to all interested plan and product providers. The Partnership opposes efforts by states to launch state-run retirement plans for private sector workers.
- **Access to Justice** – The Partnership supports funding opportunities and programs that help ensure fair and equal access to the justice system. Access to justice initiatives include but are not limited to adequately funding the judicial branch, supporting programs to promote efficient and fair access to the court and legal system, alternative methods to provide appropriate assistance from legal counsel, including legal aid programs, and various studies and task forces seeking ways to more efficiently and fairly ensure justice for all.

## Energy

The Partnership supports non-mandated incentives to develop, expand and promote Iowa's renewable energy sources, research and development to improve traditional energy sources, cost-effective energy efficiency programs and other green products and processes.

- **Energy Development** – The Partnership supports comprehensive policies that ensure energy remains affordable, reliable and available for the state's businesses and communities. The Partnership urges lawmakers and regulators to continue to act on energy policies that will bring long-term benefits to all Iowans, reduce the nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy and implement regulatory changes that will allow Iowa businesses to better compete. Specifically, The Partnership supports the continued development, expansion and promotion of Iowa's renewable energy sources, including biofuels, wind, solar, hydrogen and other forms of alternative energy, while avoiding mandates or cross subsidies. The Partnership also supports continuing to explore the transport of biofuels via pipeline.

## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership believes that a strong and aligned education system and proven workforce development programs are critical to Iowa's quality of life and are leading factors in recruiting business to Iowa. Learners from pre-kindergarten to adult must have access to quality education and skills development opportunities that will encourage DSM residents to become lifelong learners and economically secure citizens.

To properly educate and develop the region's students and current workforce, and attract and retain skilled workers, The Partnership supports the following:

- **Early Childhood Education** – The Partnership supports continued investment in 21st Century accredited pre-kindergarten early education and supporting quality early childhood education programs to help ensure readiness for kindergarten, increase high school graduation rates and develop a strong, stable and productive workforce for tomorrow. The Partnership maintains that all children, including 4-year-olds, should have access to high-quality pre-school. The Partnership also supports improving literacy and school-readiness skills among at-risk children by raising the per-pupil funding level for children in pre-school. Additionally, The Partnership supports funding a full-day program for children in poverty to support the schedules of working families.
- **Child Care Assistance “Cliff Effect”** – The Partnership supports efforts to increase eligibility for the Child Care Assistance (CCA) program to 200 percent of the federal poverty level through a tiered co-pay system using state investments and federal Child Care and Development Block Grant funding. To help stabilize the child-care provider market, state reimbursement rates should also be increased from current levels.
- **Child Care Options** – The Partnership supports policies that increase child-care options for all Iowans. Current workforce shortages are exacerbated by limited availability of providers, impacting both employees and employers. Policies should promote an expansion of affordable and accessible choices, balanced with a need for safety and oversight.
- **K-12 Education** – The population of DSM is becoming more diverse due to shifts in race, ethnicity, immigration and economic diversity. These shifts are changing the landscape with profound implications for education, policymakers, parents and the community. Changing demographics have and will continue to alter school practices, policies and budgetary needs.

To minimize the impact of political and economic swings, The Partnership supports establishing a benchmark of an appropriate investment in the education of Iowa's future workforce, such as a comparison with the state's GDP.

Additionally, all Iowa students need to be better prepared to make informed career pathway decisions aligned to the workforce needs of the future through expanded Career and Technical Education (CTE), career exploration opportunities and regional planning involving both educators and employers.

The Partnership supports legislative solutions that can be enacted to better equip the region's students to compete in the global marketplace and enjoy a high quality of life. To this end, The Partnership supports the following initiatives and reforms:

- Children raised in poverty are twice as likely to start kindergarten needing extra help to read by third grade and are four times more likely to drop out of school. Therefore, The Partnership supports a funding formula that includes weighting for poverty level.

- As the region's school districts continue to seek paths to recruit and retain qualified educators in a variety of disciplines, The Partnership supports increased flexibility in teacher certification and accelerated approval of teachers who are credentialed in another state.
- Expansion and enhancement of the Iowa Teacher Loan Forgiveness program to effectively address critical shortages in curricular areas such as math, science, computer science, foreign languages, English Language Learner (ELL) and special education.
- To support the growing need for STEM education, Iowa will need more young people choosing to become STEM educators. Therefore, the state must create additional incentives to encourage STEM careers in education.
- To support summer learning and literacy programs for all at-risk students to prevent summer learning loss. Specifically, provide funds for schools to provide research-based, intensive literacy programming for all students who are not proficient in reading.
- To support programs and initiatives that expand the time and opportunities for school counselors to work with students on college and career planning.
- **Postsecondary Education** – Technological advancement, global competition and the emerging knowledge-innovation economy are driving an increasing demand for postsecondary education and training. In the United States, 65 percent of all jobs in 2020 will require some level of postsecondary education, and the demand will reach 68 percent in Iowa. Iowa's future economic growth and competitiveness depends on increased postsecondary attainment by the workforce.

Accordingly, The Partnership supports efforts to expand college accessibility, affordability and completion through:

- Expanded promotion of financial literacy initiatives, college savings options, available tax incentives and other programs designed to help students and families prepare financially for future higher education expenses.
- Continued support for the state-funded Iowa Tuition Grant, Kibbie Grant, Iowa Scholars and other programs that invest in financially eligible students attending Iowa's high-quality public and private higher education institutions. Support for initiatives that help students efficiently complete postsecondary degree or certificate programs, including but not limited to ideas such as awarding prior learning credits to adult students, dual credit programs for high school students, internship programs and policies that make it easier for students to transfer credits.
- Continued support of the Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund, Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program and the Iowa Jobs Training Fund as implemented through the community college system throughout Iowa.
- **Talent Development** – The Partnership believes the state should continue to encourage partnerships between Iowa's business and industry and all education institutions, as well as support training incentives to businesses. The Partnership supports:
  - Continued funding for the Last Dollar Scholar program and marketing of the program, Future Ready Iowa Grant and the Iowa Employer Innovation Fund within the Future Ready Iowa Initiative to better align Iowa's talent pipeline to be prepared for the jobs of today and the future.
  - Expanded funding for the STEM Internship program to Iowa employers developing STEM talent.

- Continued funding and refinement of proven programs within the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Education that: (1) measure success and ensure accountability; (2) invest in regional strategies and industry-based public-private partnerships; (3) build career pathways to good jobs for all Iowans; (4) secure new investments for Iowa's integrated learning programs, which combine basic skills development and occupational skills training for low-skilled adult workers; and (5) expand access to supportive services for adult learners enrolled in education and training programs.
- The work and recommendations of the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition to further up-skill and train more workers for Iowa's key industries. This includes programs and efforts to increase high school graduation and equivalency diploma completion, adult education programming for offenders and apprenticeships that train skilled workers in a career pathway while earning credits toward an equivalent diploma.
- The development of a Certificate of Qualification for Employment program designed to help individuals with criminal convictions obtain employment and professional licensure which certifies to employers the returning citizen has gone through a rigorous employability review process.
- **Global Talent** – The Partnership strongly believes that enabling hard-working global talent who choose to live and put their skills to work in the United States will enhance the region's international competitiveness and net many high-paying jobs for all Americans. To strengthen talent acquisition and retention, business development and economic growth in DSM, The Partnership supports immigration-related legislation that will continue to improve the economy and opposes state-based punitive anti-immigration proposals. Therefore, The Partnership encourages support for the following key priorities:
  - Increased programming and access for ESL and ELL classes, for both K-12 students and adult members of their families.
  - Create incentives for Iowa companies to hire international students as interns by adding this population as a category in the state intern program.
  - The creation of a statewide refugee task force, appointed by the Governor, to address the challenges and create efficient methods of resettlement for refugees in Iowa.
  - Increased supportive services for refugees to address the adjustment challenges that refugees face in navigating their new communities across the state.
  - Recognizing the contributions of foreign-born residents to the economy and workplaces by creating welcoming initiatives that seek to integrate and maximize those contributions of immigrant workers and entrepreneurs of all backgrounds, including the ability of immigrants to obtain safe, reliable transportation options.
  - The creation of a task force to study and recommend a process to review professional certifications, credentials and licensure, held by foreign-born residents and residents new to Iowa, granted by institutions outside of the State of Iowa and/or the U.S., and where applicable, recertify to state and federal standards in an effective and efficient manner.
- **Talent Recruitment and Retention Benefits** – The Partnership supports policies that offer employees and employers benefit options to attract and retain an educated workforce. Specifically, The Partnership supports:
  - The creation of loan forgiveness and/or tax credit programs designed to benefit Iowa higher education students who stay in the state following graduation.

- The establishment of a state income tax deduction for employees receiving employer-paid student loan repayment benefits.
- Expanding existing programs or new initiatives that incentivize Iowa employers to provide tuition assistance to incumbent workers who seek to improve their skills through continuing educational attainment.
- **Military Recruitment/Retention** – The Partnership recognizes that returning or retiring military personnel have many skills and talents that Iowa businesses need and supports aggressive efforts to recruit and retain these honored individuals to Iowa. The Partnership supports the state’s Home Base Iowa initiative as a “one stop shop” approach to assisting veterans with their employment and education needs as well as integration into the community.

## HEALTH CARE

The health of our community is the foundation for the Greater Des Moines Partnership’s education, workforce and quality of life initiatives. The Partnership supports access to health care for everyone through public and private options. For this reason, we support the following basic objectives in the upcoming legislative session.

- **Health Care Coverage for All Iowans** – Iowa enjoys one of the highest rates of health care coverage in the nation. The Partnership supports reforming the current system to make sure that all Iowans, no matter who they are or where they live, have health care coverage. To that end, the Partnership supports:
  - **Medicaid** – A well-managed, adequately supported and sustainable Medicaid program is essential to protect the most vulnerable Iowans. Ensuring sustainability requires adequate reimbursement rates and reliable payments to all Medicaid providers, including hospitals, physicians, dentists, home health care workers, transportation providers and everyone else who provides care and access to care.
  - **Health Insurance Market** – Iowans – be they large or small businesses, state and local government, employees or families who buy insurance on their own – depend on private insurance to cover the costs of health care. The Partnership supports efforts to build upon the current system to achieve universal coverage rather than creating a single-payer system that will increase taxes and reduce access to care.
  - **Mental Health Funding** – The Partnership supports adequate, equitable and sustainable funding for adult and children’s mental health services. Policymakers should work toward timely implementation of key pieces of the new children’s behavioral health system including universal screening and workforce development.
  - **Children’s Mental Health** – The State of Iowa needs to make the necessary investments to ensure statewide availability of robust mental health crisis services for children, which include trained staff to take crisis hotline calls, dispatch teams that have a background of working with children in crisis and the case management services to assist the family and help prevent repeated episodes.
- **Health Care Workforce** – Iowa has significant shortages of health care providers. An adequate health care workforce is critical for access to care and economic development for the entire State of Iowa. The Partnership supports a variety of initiatives to increase the health care workforce:



- **Graduate Medical Education (GME) Funding** – The Partnership supports funding for additional graduate medical and dental education to grow Iowa's health care workforce, with a focus on priority needs such as primary care, fetal maternal health, psychiatry and dentistry. With numerous rural hospitals at risk of closing, we need to ensure we have an adequate number of physicians for our rural health systems. In addition, The Partnership supports strengthening educational infrastructure to ensure Iowans are given preference in enrollment and for GME positions to state and federally funded health professional programs.
- **Workforce Study** – The physician workforce study being prepared for the legislature by the University of Iowa will help determine future needs for our Iowa physician's workforce and should be acted on with long-term plans to encourage those with an Iowa connection to stay and practice in Iowa.
- **Dental and Medical Education Loan Repayment** – The Partnership continues to support loan repayment programs for health care professionals. The aging population of both dentists and physicians in Iowa requires a robust pipeline of newly trained providers for Iowa.
- **Public Health** – Today's greatest public health challenges are highly complex and often linked to causes and solutions beyond traditional public health departments (e.g., housing, transportation, education, water and air quality, criminal justice and employment). The Partnership supports a focus on the social determinants of health to achieve meaningful, systemic care savings and efficiencies. Additionally, The Partnership supports adequate funding and policy changes that curb vaping and tobacco use for both young people and all Iowans.
- **Prescription Drug Price Transparency** – The Partnership supports policies that bring more transparency to prescription drug pricing decisions.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is widely recognized as a critical factor in location decision-making for both workers and companies. A region cannot be world-class without a comprehensive and consistent commitment to its culturally rich diversity, the arts and recreational amenities, all of which serve as key economic drivers for globally minded rural and urban community development.

As the communities develop to be more competitive, DSM's most pressing need for the future is to attract and retain a strong workforce. At the heart of this issue is how DSM is perceived by those who live here and perhaps more importantly, those the region is hoping to attract. The Partnership supports efforts to develop and build upon plans that develop a long-term community vision for the arts to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. This includes plans such as a Regional Cultural Assessment, Capital Crossroads, Global DSM: International Talent Strategy, The Tomorrow Plan, Central Iowa Community OpportUNITY Plan, Age-Friendly Greater Des Moines Initiative and existing city master plans.

Accordingly, The Partnership supports the following legislative initiatives:

- **State Historical Building Renovation** – The Partnership strongly supports continued funding for the renovation of the State Historical Building and State Historical Museum to become a world-class attraction for visitors to the capital city. Phase one renovations to replace the roof and skylights have been funded while also updating some of the visitor amenities. Phase two renovations will allow greater access to and better preservation of the state's artifact collection to become a 21st century educational resources for Iowa history and culture while better connecting Iowans to the people, places and points of pride that define Iowa.

- **Enhance Iowa** – The Partnership supports an expansion of the Enhance Iowa program, which includes the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT), River Enhancement Community Attraction and Tourism (RECAT) and Sport Tourism funds, as an opportunity for public-private investment in quality of life projects that provide an economic impact and attract and retain a strong workforce. The Partnership supports continued CAT funding and new funding for the RECAT and Sports Tourism funds.
- **Multi-Use Trails** – Multi-use trails are utilized as a mode of transportation and provide economic development benefits, significant quality of life enhancements and recreational opportunities for Iowans. To help DSM become the “Trails Capital of the World,” The Partnership supports:
  - Amending the Iowa Code to remove recreational trails as a form of private development, which furthers efforts to create a connected network of trails in DSM.
  - Continued investment in the Iowa DOT State Recreational Trails Program.
  - Continued investment in trails by fully funding and extending the Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program.
  - A funding mechanism for regionally coordinated development and maintenance of the trails network that has become an important cultural tourism amenity.
  - Funding for the strategic completion of critical gaps in the existing trails network and making connections between major trails and destinations.
  - Investing in signature trail projects that generate economic opportunities for local communities and celebrate the heritage of our places, such as the Great American Rail Trail.
- **Local Revenue for Quality of Life Investments** – The Partnership recommends that the General Assembly allow additional local option hotel/motel tax to be collected and distributed according to the requirements of the existing Iowa statute and to be used at the discretion of local governmental entities for quality of life expenditures.
- **Cultural Investments** – The Partnership supports continued investment in arts and culture through the Department of Cultural Affairs and Iowa Arts Council to develop culturally vibrant communities and places that attract businesses and highly skilled workers to Iowa. Research shows arts, film and media, culture, history, historic preservation and science can serve as catalysts for vibrant and livable communities that will position Iowa to be more competitive as a leader in innovation. Arts and cultural organizations enhance the quality of life by making communities more desirable places to live, work and play, attracting young people and families with unique experiences.
- **Endow Iowa Tax Credits** – The Partnership supports the continuation and expansion of the Endow Iowa Tax Credit program to further strengthen communities through charitable giving and building permanent endowment funds to benefit Iowa charitable causes.
- **Gaming** – The Partnership recognizes the economic and community development importance of Prairie Meadows and the gaming industry across Iowa. Accordingly, The Partnership opposes increasing the tax rate for the gaming industry.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WATER QUALITY

## Water Infrastructure

The State of Iowa has a unique opportunity to invest in Iowa's soil and water infrastructure – an infrastructure critically important to the state's wealth and prosperity. While the state has started down a path of increased investments, more resources are needed to address the challenges.

The Partnership sees the primary pathway to success as a public-private investment in waterways across the state. Therefore, The Partnership supports the following important water quality, quantity and infrastructure issues:

- **Wastewater, Stormwater and Flood Mitigation Infrastructure** – Frequency and intensity of flooding has increased in recent years, with devastating impacts to both our rural and urban communities. These events provide a grim reminder of the need for more strategic investments in flood mitigation, resiliency and stormwater infrastructure that prioritized multi-benefit solutions. Addressing this challenge will take a unified statewide approach that supports natural as well as built infrastructure. Therefore, The Partnership supports a statewide focus on policies and funding for modernization of flood mitigation and resiliency strategies, water systems, source water protection, wastewater treatment and comprehensive planning.
- **Support Watershed Investment Strategies and Establish Financial Resources at Scale** – The Partnership supports allocating funding sources to meet infrastructure needs for flood mitigation and water quality improvements that are targeted and prioritized by watershed with annual accountability for the state's investment. Funding must be permanent, adequate, timely, reliable and sustainable, and create incentives that spur public and private investments in watersheds across jurisdictional boundaries. Priority should be given to funding the Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (IWILL) and the recreation, conservation and water quality goals outlined in the formula. In addition, The Partnership supports tax credits and market-based approaches focused on multi-benefit collaborative transactions. These investments should be used to leverage additional dollars through public-private partnerships.
- **Waterways and Land Protection** – The Partnership believes in the importance of creating and maintaining parks, trails, natural places and Iowa's creeks, rivers and lakes. Strategic investments in outdoor recreation serve as catalysts to revitalize our communities, enhance quality of life and grow the region's workforce. The Partnership supports increased investments in our state's water and land resources by funding programs that build our water trails network, enhance safety, improve water quality and provide connected habitat corridors in and along the many miles of waterways and adjoining greenways that are a vital natural asset in Iowa.
- **Dam Mitigation and Water Trails** – Creating vibrant communities with recreational amenities is essential to workforce attraction and economic development. As such, The Partnership strongly supports the funding of programs that mitigate low-head dams and help to establish water trails. Specifically, The Partnership supports the restoration of Iowa's Low-Head Dam Mitigation and Water Trails program – a line item of the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund. There is significant interest in water trails and dam mitigation in rural and urban areas, and state funding for these efforts is essential for leveraging investments from local jurisdictions and private-sector partners.

- **Data Driven Investment** – The Partnership supports the effective use of public funds to encourage water quality monitoring at the watershed level by using technology and data to inform state investment within watersheds. This data is important to inform and implement adaptive management. Meaningful measurement networks will require collaborative work across jurisdictional boundaries, building from monitoring work already accomplished through public utilities, private partnerships and voluntary monitoring. In addition, the Partnership supports investments in continued and expanded academic research of best practices, programs and policies.
- **Watershed Approach and Planning** – To provide safe and affordable drinking water, wastewater treatment and stormwater mitigation, The Partnership supports regional watershed planning. It also asks for ongoing funding to implement these plans through targeted conservation and flood mitigation practices, proactive approaches to optimize nutrient and other chemical applications, and sustainable urban development. As the watershed providing drinking water to 500,000 of the region's residents (one-sixth of the state's population), the Raccoon River watershed must be designated as a top priority.
- **Regional Water Utility Efforts** – The Partnership recognizes local solutions often provide the best policy. Therefore, The Partnership supports local efforts to regionalize DSM's existing water utilities.

## Community Development

Communities need to grow and develop, but development should be done as efficiently, responsibly and sustainably as possible. Therefore, The Partnership supports incentives that encourage green development that spurs energy efficiency and conservation. The Partnership also supports transit-oriented development, historic preservation, environmental remediation, complete streets and redevelopment that is pedestrian-friendly and encourages walkability.

- **Housing** – The availability of affordable housing for all people, regardless of their age, race, ability level or socioeconomic status, is foundational to the continued economic vitality and livability of DSM. Safe, stable and affordable housing improves the health of residents, improves educational outcomes for children and contributes to the recruitment and retention of the region's diverse and growing workforce. The Partnership supports strategies that leverage a variety of state and local resources to increase the number and variety of homes available in the region.

Specifically, The Partnership supports:

- Increased investment in the State Housing Trust Fund (SHTF), by removing the annual cap on the Real Estate Transfer Tax. This would allow the SHTF to grow to approximately \$8 million through its dedicated 30% share of the Real Estate Transfer Tax.
- Increasing the annual allocation of credits to the Workforce Housing Tax Credit program. Recent revisions to the program make much needed improvements to the program and allowing the program to grow annually will keep Iowa from falling behind in meeting its housing needs.
- A specially designed State Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program that targets the housing needs for projects too specialized or too small to compete for the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Credits from the program should be designed to appeal to local investors seeking a vehicle to invest in their communities.
- Needed changes in legislation to make it easier for cities to obtain ownership of abandoned homes for purpose of conveyance to redevelopers such as local land banks that support the conveyance of residential property for redevelopment.

- Exploring additional incentives for communities and employers to invest in housing specifically suited to their local needs, including programs that help fund modifications of existing homes to help lowans age in place and support people with disabilities.
- **Brownfield and Grayfield Redevelopment** – The Partnership supports efforts to enhance the Brownfield and Grayfield Redevelopment program to encourage green, sustainable redevelopment efforts and to revitalize economically obsolescent and energy-inefficient structures and commercially blighted areas. The Partnership supports additional funding for the program due to its current limited reach.
- **Historic Tax Credits** – Historic Rehabilitation Tax Incentives stimulate Downtown housing, business expansion and neighborhood revitalization. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the continued improvement and further expansion of the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program.
- **Distressed Areas and Urban Core Development** – Some areas of the state need more time, resources and attention than others in order to return to economic prosperity. Therefore, The Partnership supports efforts to drive state resources and public-private partnership investments into distressed areas and urban core projects.
- **Topsoil** – The Partnership supports the federal standard as set by the Environmental Protection Agency and adopted by the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission with respect to topsoil requirements in effort to help prevent urban stormwater runoff and keep excess nutrients and pollution out of the waterways. Protection of topsoil is crucial to the livelihood and long-term sustainability of our rural, agricultural economy, and funding efforts to limit erosion and keep soil on the landscape, as outlined in the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, should be prioritized.
- **Comprehensive Planning and Iowa Smart Planning Principles** – In an effort to advance DSM’s competitiveness nationally and internationally, The Partnership supports comprehensive planning and the Iowa Smart Planning Principles. These include collaboration; efficiency, transparency and consistency; clean, renewable and efficient energy; occupational diversity; revitalization; housing diversity; community character; natural resources and agricultural protection; sustainable design; and transportation diversity.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Partnership strongly believes that investing in a complete, multimodal transportation system and infrastructure is a core function of state government that is critical to driving commerce, efficiently moving goods and people, creating jobs and spurring additional economic growth. The Partnership supports the following public policy priorities:

- **Surface Transportation Funding** – Continuous investment in Iowa’s transportation system is essential to support economic growth and help attract new businesses to the state. The Partnership supports the funding formula for surface transportation funding established by the Transportation Investment Moves the Economy in the Twenty-First Century Fund (TIME-21).
- **Road Use Tax Fund** – The Partnership supports continued improvements to the existing Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF) to reallocate funding to more highly-traveled primary roads. Additionally, The Partnership continues to support the Iowa Transportation Commission’s swapping process that allows federal transportation dollars to be exchanged for state transportation dollars to give local governments more flexibility with transportation decisions.

- **U.S. 65/Iowa 5 Interstate Designation** – The Partnership supports designating the U.S. 65/Iowa 5 Beltway/Purple Heart Highway as part of the U.S. Interstate System. Designating this part of the beltway as part of the U.S. Interstate System would open up economic development opportunities for the communities located along the route, give DSM a true Interstate ring like many other competitor metro areas across the country and possibly decrease current Interstate congestion. Designation must be approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, with an application submitted by the Iowa Department of Transportation. Although no new construction is necessary, new signage and a minimum speed limit would be required and future maintenance and upgrade responsibilities will need to occur.
- **Mobility Infrastructure and Safety** – The Partnership supports diverse mobility options, including micro-mobility innovations and the development of on-street bike and mobility facilities that connect to and integrate with the existing system to have a complete network and encouraging all forms of active transportation. The Partnership also supports strengthening traffic laws to improve the safety of bicyclists using Iowa’s roadways. Specifically, The Partnership supports a ‘Vision Zero’ policy that utilizes data-driven and evidence-based best practices to reach the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on city streets.
- **Transit Funding** – As the community looks to recruit and retain employees and businesses, connect people to jobs, grow the economy and ensure age-friendly communities, it is essential to provide funding for a variety of mobility options. The Partnership strongly supports the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) Commission’s efforts to increase and diversify funding options available through state legislation. Options could include raising the property tax levy cap, allowing access to additional levies and funding options that encourage revenue diversification.
- **Rail Funding** – The Partnership supports continued investment in the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Rail Revolving Loan and Grant Fund to help develop rail improvements and support DSM’s freight rail facilities in recognizing that the freight rail system provides critical infrastructure for transporting certain commodities and other commercial goods. The Partnership also supports continued funding for the IDOT Passenger Rail Fund Program to provide matching funding for passenger rail infrastructure development, with the goal of establishing intercity passenger rail service from Chicago to DSM to Omaha along the Iowa Interstate Railroad.
- **Aviation Funding** – Airports provide a significant economic impact to the area and regions served. The infrastructure of these national resources is deteriorating and in desperate need of rebuilding and expansion. Therefore, The Partnership supports increased funding for Iowa airports, including the Commercial Service Vertical Infrastructure program and the General Aviation Vertical Infrastructure program.
- **Alternative Fuel/Power Vehicle Readiness** – The Partnership supports state policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of electric vehicles in Iowa including policies that simplify the establishment of more charging stations statewide. The Partnership also supports state policies to incentivize the development of cellulosic ethanol from perennial sources such as switchgrass.
- **Technology** – The Partnership supports state policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of emerging technologies in Iowa. These technologies include, but are not limited to, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, transportation network companies and vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure Smart City technology necessary for autonomous vehicles.
- **Broadband** – The Partnership supports increased access to Broadband, including the Connect Every Acre initiative, to better connect Iowans while supporting workforce readiness.