

2024 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

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FEATURED PRIORITIES

1. THE DES MOINES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Partnership supports closing the funding gap for the Des Moines International Airport's Terminal Project through the Airport Terminals Program.

2. DESIGNATING U.S. 65 AS AN INTERSTATE

The Partnership supports designating U.S. 65 as an interstate and supporting a federal increase in weight and size limits and exemptions on the corridor.

3. HOUSING

The Partnership supports the expansion of housing options through funding and policies that incentivize communities and employers to invest in new and existing housing for all Iowans population and workforce including a Conversion Tax Credit.

4. CHILD CARE

The Partnership supports additional investment and policies that increase child care options for families and promote stabilization in the child care workforce, including the availability of 7A and 504 microloans to nonprofit child care providers.

5. IMMIGRATION

The Partnership supports a modernized immigration system and policies that support an inclusive population to meet workforce needs, including the expansion of the Conrad 30 waiver program.

These priorities are listed in no particular order.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BUSINESS CLIMATE

The Partnership's mission is focused on economic development. As a membership organization representing businesses, municipalities, nonprofits and more in the 11-county Greater Des Moines region, The Partnership is focused on recruitment and retention of business and talent through policies that advance economic growth opportunities and reduce the regulatory burden to ensure a strong business climate. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- A strong federal business climate and tax structure that ensures fiscal predictability, stability and efficiency while balancing incentives for economic growth, investment and innovation.
- Reauthorization of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).
- The SBA's efforts to provide technical and financial assistance and access to capital for small businesses.
- Streamlining the government procurement process and increasing business opportunities for the private sector in the federal market.
- Programs and policies that promote public-private partnerships and remove barriers to access to capital to expand entrepreneurial activity.
- Reforming the rulemaking process by streamlining and accelerating the regulatory permitting process, allowing regulations to provide for regional flexibility and ensuring regulations are applied consistently and are based on science and the inclusion of economic and employment impacts.
- The preservation and protection of state-based regulatory standards in the private insurance market whether through legislation or the rule-making process.
- Legislation to allow life insurers' debt investments to receive ordinary tax treatment.
- Restoration of three critical tax policies that will allow businesses to continue to thrive, namely immediate R&D expensing, pro-growth interest deductibility and 100% accelerated depreciation.

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- Pension and tax policies to enhance retirement security, such as encouraging greater adoption of automatic enrollment, support for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), and removing barriers and promoting access to annuities and long-term care insurance.
- The enactment of a credible long-term deficit reduction and balanced budget plan.
- Maintaining the ability of state and local governments to utilize tax-exempt bonds, re-instituting the ability of state and local governments to advance the refunding of outstanding tax-exempt bonds and opposing elimination or limitations on the exclusion of interest thereon from federal tax.

WORKFORCE

Talent recruitment and retention is a top priority for Partnership Investors, Affiliates and Members, impacting every industry and area of the state. To that end, The Partnership supports:

- Additional investment and policies that increase child care options for families and promote stabilization in the child care workforce, including the availability of 7A and 504 microloans to nonprofit child care providers.
- Efforts to create a modernized federal employment and training system that is driven by the needs of employers based on accurate and timely regional labor market data.
- Increasing the pre-tax contribution limits for Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (DCFSA).
- Increasing workforce funding for digital skills and on-the-job, incumbent worker training to increase worker access to career pathways and to upskill the workforce.
- The reauthorization of Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that supports additional pathways for workers and businesses to access and engage in the workforce system.
- Passing the Community College to Career Fund Act.
- Expansion of apprenticeship support by the Department of Labor.
- Redirecting the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to support apprenticeship and other work-based learning.
- The U.S. Department of Treasury's Financial Literacy and Education Commission. Funding the Senior Community Service Employment Program and the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA).
- Continued funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service and programs such as AmeriCorps and SeniorCorps.
- Programs that ensure veterans receive comprehensive counseling and related services regarding all higher education options, in addition to funding the Centers of Excellence for Veterans Success in the Higher Education Act.
- Policies that support tax-free educational assistance employers can offer to assist employees with tuition, education loan.
- Policies and programs to make post-secondary education accessible and affordable for all qualified students through significant increases in need-based aid programs, including increasing the maximum annual Pell Grant award and expanding use of the award. Additionally, reinstating the asset exemptions for families with family farms and small businesses.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND HOMELAND SECURITY

The Partnership is dedicated to building DSM's global presence, balanced with the critical need for security, including active involvement of the private sector. Therefore, The Partnership supports the following policy priorities:

- Pro-growth international trade and investment policies and principles, including the pursuit of additional rules-based, market-access-oriented agreements, modernizing U.S. export controls, renewing the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill, streamlining the section 301 exclusions process and removing harmful tariff on agricultural and manufacturing inputs.
- Accountability for the goals and measures set forth in the U.S.-China Phase I Deal.
- Efforts of the Safeguard Iowa Partnership, the U.S. Chamber National Security Task Force, Emergency Preparedness Department and others to continue to develop public-private partnerships to enhance homeland security and emergency preparedness efforts.
- Promoting and defending robust Intellectual Property (IP) rules globally, while increasing efforts in the U.S. and abroad by:
 - Strengthening IP protection and enforcement.
 - Improving the patent and trademark systems.
 - Protecting companies from frivolous litigation by “patent trolls.”
 - Expanding the efforts of the U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator.
 - Advancing trade agreements with modern-day IP provisions.
 - Fighting IP theft online.
 - Ensuring IP compliance by America's trading partners.
- The mission and goals of the Iowa National Guard through the preservation and enhancement of key infrastructure in DSM.

ENERGY

The Partnership supports policies and balanced regulatory practices that ensure energy remains safe, affordable and reliable, while promoting Iowa's renewable energy sources and avoiding directives or cross subsidies. Specifically, this includes:

- Policies and programs aimed at reducing carbon emissions, ensuring those efforts are done in a common-sense manner, promote innovative technologies and efficiencies, recognize the problem is international in scope, are not designed to favor some regions of the country at the expense of others and do not cause undue harm to the U.S. economy.
- Policies that further energy development in the state with regional or interstate impact through the modernization and expansion of energy infrastructure.
- Improve transmission planning, siting and permitting to provide reliable, affordable electricity at the state and federal level.
- Sustained levels of research and development funding for energy-related programs through Ames National Laboratory and the greater Department of Energy national laboratory network.

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AGRICULTURE

A strong agriculture industry is essential for economic vitality in Iowa. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- Programs and incentives to promote and assist in research, development and commercialization of biofuels, biotechnology and bio-based materials, including:
 - Implementation of the current Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) as intended by Congress.
 - Continuation of the biodiesel blenders tax credit.
 - Market development, infrastructure and full funding for loan guarantee and grant programs.
- Passage of a new Farm Bill, including:
 - The Federal Crop Insurance Program.
 - Conservation programs.
 - Investment in research and development to support the agriculture ecosystem, including animal virus/disease research, funding and program support for rural development including broadband and precision Ag support.
 - Increasing market access through the USDA Foreign Market Development and Market Access Program, and the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training Program.
- A strong investment in capacity and competitive agricultural research funding for Iowa State University and the land-grant university system.
- Expanding conservation programs that address environmental challenges including soil erosion, flooding, water quality and wildlife habitat, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and the Precision Conservation Management Program.
- Continuation and expansion of the Source Water Protection program, which authorizes Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the State Technical Committees to work with community water systems to identify state and local source water protection priorities.

TRANSPORTATION

The Partnership supports investment in a complete, multimodal transportation system that efficiently moves goods and people, creates jobs and spurs economic growth. To that end, The Partnership supports:

- Closing the funding gap for the Des Moines International Airport's Terminal Project through the Airport Terminals Program.
- Designating U.S. 65/Iowa 5 as an interstate and supporting a federal increase in weight and size limits and exemption on the corridor.
- A stable funding process through the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and an increase in the Passenger Facility Charge.
- Continued federal support for Complete Streets, including increased flexibility to allow multimodal transportation accommodations on streets, roadways and the public right of way.
- Design standards like the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide, which focuses on street design for all users, ages and abilities.
- A comprehensive approach to transportation infrastructure that prioritizes maintenance of existing facilities, manages capacity, expands alternative transportation modes, reduces congestion, reduces GHG emissions and improves the efficient, safe and sustainable movement of goods and people.

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- Continued funding for public transportation through regulatory flexibility and federal infrastructure funding, specifically for the funding of a new DART Operations and Maintenance Facility and HIRTA facility.
- Extending high-speed passenger service to cover Iowa and continuing enhanced federal investment in high-speed passenger rail funding.
- Enactment of an infrastructure investment tax credit for, and opposing the re-regulation of the freight rail industry.
- Continued funding for multipurpose trails and other transportation and recreation programs, such as the Federal Recreational Trails Program, the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Set Aside program and continued funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program.
- Increased transportation funding to Iowa through federal formula funding and increased flexibility in the use of funds by local communities.
- Continued improvements to the existing Highway Trust Fund to ensure adequate funding for the ongoing needs of transportation infrastructure, including consistent transportation reauthorization with flexibility at the state and local level, including funding for all modes of transportation.
- Maintaining federal infrastructure programs such as the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant programs.
- Policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of emerging transportation technologies and a national approach to automated transportation.

Regional priority transportation projects and regional trail projects as determined in partnership with the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

See pages 10 and 11 for list of priority transportation projects.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Partnership supports investments in the types of infrastructure that support business, people and communities. To that end, The Partnership supports:

- Policies that spur private sector investment in broadband infrastructure, foster public-private partnerships, recognize the competitive nature of today's telecommunications market and avoid over-regulation.
- Streamlined federal financing and refined mapping of broadband gaps that qualify for funding in underserved communities.
- Policies to address cybersecurity threats and attacks through a uniform minimum standard for the notification of consumers after a breach occurs, legislation to create a Systemically Important Critical Infrastructure and a process to facilitate better information flows between the federal government and the private sector.
- Continued funding for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs and policies that support the ongoing need for affordable housing options.
- Funding for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields program.
- Expanding the flexibility of the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program to assist low-income families in emergency housing situations and policies that expedite HUD disaster resources following a natural or human-caused disaster.
- Funding for and flexible use of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).
- Tax credits and other provisions that, when leveraged with additional resources, can be used to reduce the cost of construction and rehabilitation of housing and require a period of guaranteed affordability for low-income owners and tenants.

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- Increased funding for the programs administered by the local Public Housing Authority and simplification of federal regulations, allowing the Public Housing Authority to create more local policies to support the needs of the community and the expansion of partnership programs with local service providers.
- Tax incentives for commercial, industrial and residential green building and redevelopment programs that promote and encourage energy efficiency and other environmentally friendly practices.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Partnership believes that investment in soil and water infrastructure is crucial to a healthy community and the foundation for a strong economy. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- Flood mitigation policies and strategies through collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other partner organizations, including the continued coordination between the City of Des Moines and USACE and plans such as the Polk County Watershed Flood Protection Operations plan.
- Prioritizing the use of green infrastructure techniques, such as restored wetlands or restored oxbows installed upstream to slow the flow in the upper reaches of the watershed and working with agency partners and metro communities to secure funding through programs such as the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program.
- Policies and funding that further a regional approach with public-private and urban-rural partnerships to address water quality, soil health and water management strategies and goals.
- Financial incentives and continued education to support and expand the implementation of programs designed to minimize the quantity of nutrients and soil entering the Iowa's rivers and streams.
- New and ongoing funding for research, prevention, reporting and mitigation of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and harmful algal blooms (HABs), including the remediation of PFAS sites affecting water sources that supply drinking water to the region, as proposed in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act.
- Policies, practices and funding opportunities for progress toward Iowa's share of the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force Interim Target of 20% reduction in total nitrogen and phosphorus load by 2025 and 45% reduction in total nitrogen and phosphorus load by 2035.
- The establishment of a Restoration Initiative in the Upper Mississippi River Basin through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), dedicated to research and restoration of regional watersheds.

EDUCATION

The Partnership believes a strong aligned education system and proven workforce development programs are critical to the quality of life in DSM and are leading factors in recruiting business to Iowa. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- Increased federal investment in early childhood education programs coupled with accountability systems that measure results, ensure high program standards and expand the number of children served, including the support of the U.S. Department of Education Preschool Development Grants Program.
- Increased funding and support for work-based learning programs.
- Adequate funding for Title I and Title II programs to recruit, retain and train a high-caliber teaching force, 21st Century After School Programs and special education services.
- College and career planning systems, programs and staffing, along with promotion of methods to encourage K-12 students and families to become informed consumers of all available postsecondary options.

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- Policies and programs to make post-secondary education accessible and affordable for all qualified students through significant increases in need-based aid programs, including increasing the maximum annual Pell Grant award and expanding use of the award.
- Simplification of federal education programs, and promotion of innovation, research and the development and expansion of post-secondary training options.
- Multi-state cooperatives for educational institutions, such as the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) initiative.

IMMIGRATION

The Partnership has consistently supported reforms to the federal immigration process, recognizing the importance and the profound need for talent and the opportunity it provides to support a diverse workforce. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- A modernized immigration system and policies that support the workforce needs of Iowa, while furthering the goals of a diverse and inclusive population.
- Expansion of the H-1B Visa Program for highly skilled workers, without the use of a wage ranking system.
- Streamlining the travel visa process and expanding the Visa Waiver program to facilitate business and global commerce.
- Increasing the number of available H-2B Visas and making both H-2A and H-2B programs non-seasonal to realistically account for the needs in agriculture, landscaping, hospitality, construction and other temporary non-agricultural occupations.
- Expansion of the Employment-Based (EB) Immigrant Visa Program, including recapturing unused visas from past years and ceasing to count spouses against the total allocation.
- Creating a clear path for foreign-born entrepreneurs to open businesses in the U.S. and to hire U.S. workers.
- Dual intent for international students and codifying access to practical training benefits for F-Visa, M-Visa and J-Visa holders.
- Passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act.
- Funding of the Office of Refugee Resettlement budget at a level that allows local service providers and communities to be prepared to receive new Iowans.
- Expanding the “Conrad 30” program along with additional measures to ensure foreign physicians are a viable option.

HEALTH CARE

A strong health care system is integral to a healthy business ecosystem. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- Efforts to lower drug costs by providing a pathway for generic versions of brand name drugs and biosimilars to safely enter the marketplace and safeguarding the 340B Drug Pricing Program.
- Expansion of programs and funding for mental health services along with efforts to strengthen parity within the Medicaid and Medicare programs.
- The Affordable Care Act (ACA), including its consumer protections, such as prohibitions on preexisting condition exclusions, no annual or lifetime dollar limits on coverage, allowing young adults to stay on parents’ health plans until age 26 and protection of pre-ACA grandfathered and grandmothered plans.
- Programs that lower premiums, such as high-risk pools, reinsurance and premium assistance and insurance rules designed to ensure participation in the insurance market.

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- Expanded funding for programs and policies aiming to address health care provider shortages, such as Graduate Medical Education (GME).
- Expansion of programs designed to encourage health care providers to provide care in underserved areas including the National Health Service Corps and Nurse Corps.
- Equity in Medicare payments and the implementation of new reimbursement models, such as the shared savings program, and eliminating the inaccuracies and inequities in the Geographic Practice Cost Index (GPCI) geographic adjusters.
- Extended postpartum coverage for women with Medicaid-covered births.
- Policies and funding that enable health care providers to coordinate care, lower costs and improve quality outcomes for children with complex medical conditions on Medicaid who require specialized care.
- Funding to increase the wages of direct support professionals as well the creation of a standard occupational classification.
- Efforts to address the opioid epidemic, including funding for the prevention and treatment of substance use disorder (SUD) programs.
- Initiatives that require the Drug Enforcement Administration to use data to track and prevent the diversion of prescription opioids into illegal sales, and to provide education and training for health care providers to learn best practices when prescribing controlled substances.
- An extension and expansion of telehealth services through permanent billing of Medicare, expansion to Medicaid, coverage of telehealth hospice services and with an additional focus on children.
- Modifying Health Resources and Services Administration measurements to address urban provider shortages, ensuring funding meets the needs of underserved populations in urban communities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership supports investment in arts, culture, heritage and the creation of place, recognizing the importance to the attraction and retention of a strong workforce. To that end, The Partnership supports:

- Additional federal funding for the Iowa Confluence (ICON) Water Trails. Federal programs that can help advance this transformational project include: HUD Economic Development Initiative; the National Park Service's Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP); Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State-Side Grants; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funding for fish passages; and others.
- Regional quality of life placemaking projects, often through federal grants for public funding.
- Funding for programs to support planning efforts, support for digital arts and creative programs that connect culture and the community through programs such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) – State Arts Agency Partnership Grant, the National Park Service – Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Save America's Treasures grants and the National Science Foundation (NSF).
- Continued funding for Iowa's Rural Heritage Revitalization Grant and competitive grants offered to the state and local level through federal funding. Specific grant applications currently submitted include:
 - A NEA \$20,000 Art Works grant request to fund the commission of a piece to be played by the Des Moines Symphony and the Des Moines Symphony Academy Youth Orchestra at the 2025 Youth Concerts.

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2024 MPO/Greater Des Moines Partnership Priority Transportation Projects

SPONSOR	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL PROJECT COST	FUNDING PROGRAM	FUNDING REQUEST
City of Altoona	8th St. SW Reconstruction – Phase 2	US 65 to Venbury Drive	\$10,250,000	Community Project Funding	\$4,500,000
City of Altoona, City of Bondurant	New East Polk County Interchange	New Interchange on Interstate 80 between Exit 143 and 149.		Community Project Funding	
City of Bondurant	Land Acquisition and Phase I Construction for Grant Street South Realignment / Central District Stormwater Improvements	Acquisition of land and construction of the proposed Grant Street South Realignment/Central District Stormwater Improvements Phase 1 project, which will include the realignment of Grant Street South as it approaches Highway 65, intersection safety enhancements at the intersection of Highway 65 and Grant Street South, and creation of a regional stormwater detention facility.	\$28,000,000	RAISE	\$25,000,000
City of Bondurant	10th Street SW Bridge Replacement and NE 64th Street Upgrade	This project will extend 10th Street SW to the east and Garfield Street SW to the south, including replacing the bridge that was formerly on 15th Street SW and widening NE 64th Street from Highway 65 to NE 78th Avenue.	\$17,975,000	Community Project Funding	\$5,000,000
City of Clive, City of Urbandale, Iowa DOT	Hickman Road Interchange at I-35/80	Widen I-35/80 and construct auxiliary lanes from Douglas Ave. to University Ave.; Reconfigure US 6/Hickman Rd Interchange, which is one of the metro's busiest intersections. It is over capacity for the volume of traffic, presenting safety and efficiency concerns. A project to reconstruct the interchange is slated for 2024-2028.	\$118,223,792	Various	
DART	New Operations and Maintenance Facility	DART's current facility at 1100 DART Way is beyond its useful life. Built in the 1970s and requiring more than \$65 million in infrastructure enhancements by 2040, the FTA in Region VII does not support major renovations to the facility due to it being in the floodplain and having a past history of water intrusion. A proposed new facility would include a maintenance building, bus storage and an office building, and would alleviate flooding concerns, allow for expanded use of electric vehicles and improve overall safety and operational efficiency. DART received a \$17.275 million Buses and Bus Facilities grant from the FTA in 2019 for Phase I of the project and has completed environmental review. This current grant request is for Phase II, which DART hopes to complete simultaneously for cost efficiency.	\$111,000,000	FTA Bus and Bus Facilities	\$45,000,000

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SPONSOR	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL PROJECT COST	FUNDING PROGRAM	FUNDING REQUEST
City of Des Moines	Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grant	Submitted an application for FY23 SS4A, and will be resubmitting again for FY24 for safety improvements to multiple, major corridors identified on the High Injury Network, including SE 14th Street (US 69) at Maury Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and 19th Street, Forest Avenue, and Douglas Avenue (US 6).	\$27,000,000	Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation Grant	\$17,000,000
Des Moines Airport	New Terminal	The development of a new 14-gate terminal at the existing airport.	\$500,000,000	Various	
City of Johnston, Polk County, Iowa DOT	Highway 141 improvements	Improvements to Highway 141, specifically a new interchange at a relocated NW Towner Drive and an interchange modification at Hwy 415.	\$44,501,000	RAISE	\$25,000,000
City of Polk City, Polk County Conservation	Trail Connection — Neal Smith to High Trestle	Connecting the Neal Smith Trail to the High Trestle Trail in Polk City	\$5,192,500	Community Project Funding	\$831,000
Polk County, City of Des Moines, City of Pleasant Hill	NE 23rd Street/ Easton Blvd. Reconstruction	Reconstruction of NE 23rd Avenue / Easton Boulevard between Fourmile Creek and east of NE 56th Street on NE Oak Hill Drive. The project will improve traffic safety by reducing delays with a continuous center turn lane, turn lanes, and signals at two unsignaled intersection.	\$11,000,000	Community Project Funding	\$2,500,000
City of Waukee	University Avenue Area Transportation Improvements	The RAISE Grant will fund construction and reconstruction of portions of University Avenue, Warrior Lane, 3rd Street, 6th Street, and 10th Street in Waukee to fill the existing gap in the transportation network and bring the roads up to modern urban standards. Also included is 6.3 miles of trail construction along the roads and within the nearby greenway, six pedestrian underpasses beneath the roadways, and adjacent water quality improvements.	\$58,000,000	RAISE	\$25,000,000
City of West Des Moines	Ashworth Road Reconstruction and Reconfiguration	Multi-phase project to reconfigure lanes (4-to-3 lanes for most of the project) and replace deteriorating pavement on a 3.5-mile section of road. Also included are improvements to traffic signals, sidewalks, and one railroad crossing.	\$10,000,000	Various	
City of Windsor Heights	73rd Street Reconstruction	Reconstruction of 73rd Street from from Hickman Road to I-235 with improved connections to West Des Moines via 8th Street.	\$20,000,000	RAISE	\$14,148,600
Various	Future 435	Re-designate US 65/Iowa 5 as an interstate.	\$3,000,000	NA	NA