

# Introduction

The passenger transportation network in the DMATS area is vital for connecting residents to work, school, and other important activities. The area is served by two primary transit agencies, The Jule and Regional Transit Authority 8 (RTA), and has commercial air service at the Dubuque Regional Airport through Denver Air Connection. The region is also served by several smaller agencies that provide services to specific groups such as the elderly or disabled. The following section looks at both the existing conditions and future projects related to passenger transportation system of the area.

## Existing Conditions

This section goes over the existing inventory and status of the passenger transportation network in the DMATS area.

### The Jule

The Jule is the public transportation service offered by the City of Dubuque Transit Division. The Jule operates 15 daytime fixed routes and a minibus service for disabled individuals and seniors. The fixed route transit system connects Dubuque's downtown, midtown, and west end regions. Fixed route transit provides transportation for Dubuque citizens so they can access services such as shopping, entertainment, community functions and employment opportunities within the City.

Table 5.1 Jule Service Hours

Fixed Route - Intermodal	
Monday - Friday	6:15am - 6:45pm
Saturday	8:15am - 5:45pm
Sunday	No service
Fixed Route - JFK Transfer	
Monday - Friday	6:30am - 7:15pm
Saturday	8:15am - 5:45pm
Sunday	No service
MiniBus (Paratransit)	
Monday - Friday	5:45am - 7:15pm
Saturday	8:15am - 5:45pm
Sunday	No service

Source: *The Jule*

Table 5.2 The Jule Fare Structure

Full Fare	\$1.50
Half-Fare	\$0.75
Youth (6-18 years)	FREE
Youth (5 years and under)	FREE, accompanied by an adult
College students with valid ID	FREE

Source: *The Jule*

Table 5.3 The Jule Passes

11 Ride Pass	Full Fare \$15 Half-Fare \$7.50
Monthly Unlimited Ride Pass	Full Fare \$45 Half-Fare \$22.50
Annual Student Pass (grades K-12) Valid Aug. 1 - July 31 each year	FREE

Source: *The Jule*

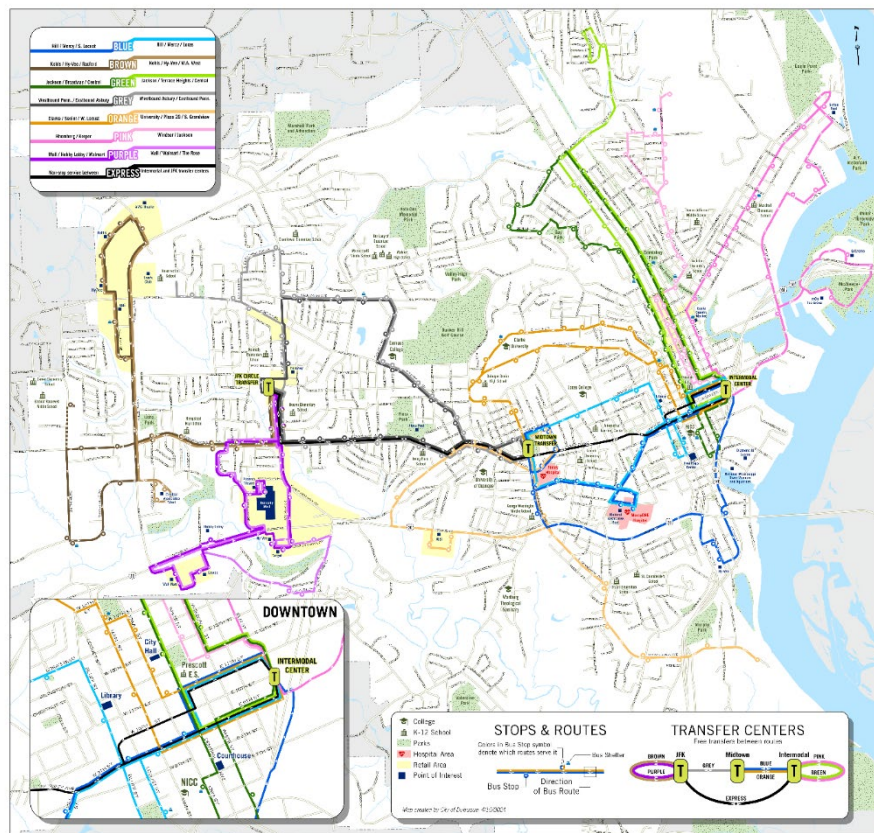


Figure 5.1 The Jule Stops and Routes

Source: *The Jule*

The mini-bus service transports disabled and elderly individuals to destinations within Dubuque and East Dubuque. The Jule also offers a free downtown business shuttle, which connects downtown parking locations with local employment hubs.

All Jule services, stops, and facilities are accessible in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All fixed route buses also support "Rack and Ride" and are equipped with bike racks on the front of each bus.

Table 5.4 The Jule Vehicle Fleet and

Number of vehicles	16- Heavy Duty for Fixed Route, 13 Light Duty for Paratransit
Number of vehicles with lifts or ramps	29
Number of vehicles to ADA standards	29
Number of Full-Time Employees	24
Number of Part-Time Employees	39
Number of Volunteers	0

*Source: The Jule*

## Population within a Transit Stop

For a transit system to be effective, it needs to be accessible to its potential ridership. One measure of accessibility is looking at the population that lives a quarter-mile of a transit stop. Below is the table containing the number and percentage of population within a quarter-mile of a transit stop, calculated by geospatial analysis and a map showing areas within a quarter-mile of a transit stop.

Table 5.5 Population within a Transit

Population within Transit Stop	44,941
DMATS Area Population	85,503
Population within Transit Stop%	52.6%
Housing Units within Transit Stop	20,805

*Source: ECIA*

## DMATS Metropolitan Planning Area

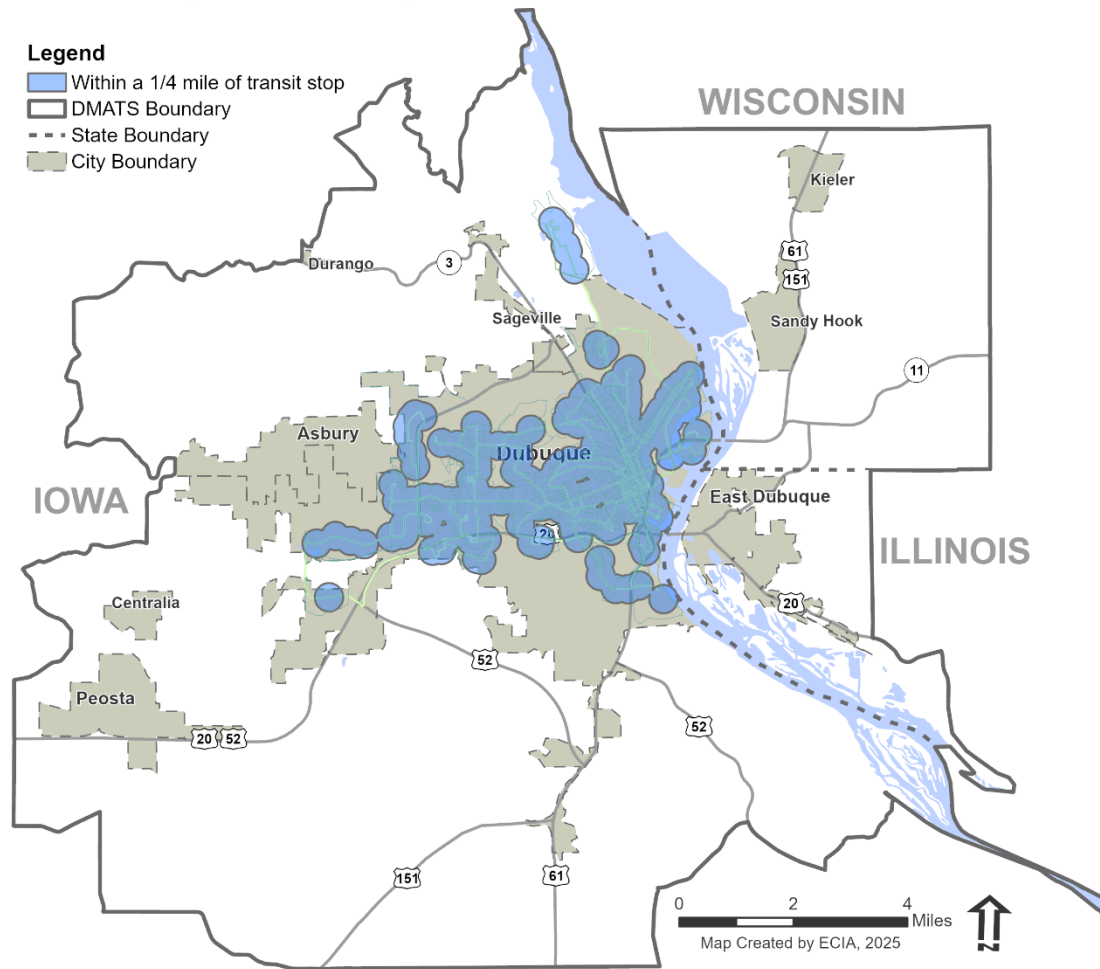


Figure 5.2 Areas Within a Transit Stop

Source: ECIA

## Regional Transit Authority 8

Regional Transit Authority 8 (RTA 8) provides accessible, safe, convenient, and efficient transportation for all citizens in the cities, communities and rural areas of Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson Counties to enhance their quality of life. RTA vehicles are equipped to accommodate the general public, including children, the elderly and people with disabilities. All RTA services are based on the demand of our clients and are open to the general public, including people with disabilities.

RTA 8 was formed in 1982 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for the purpose of connecting the elderly, disabled, youth and low-income citizens in Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson counties to critical services like healthcare, counseling, nutrition, childcare, education, employment, and social venues. The RTA Corporate Policy Board is comprised of all the County Supervisors from

Dubuque, Delaware, and Jackson Counties. The Board meets every month to review the RTA's budget and general operating policies. The Policy Board reviews and approves projects proposed by the Technical Committee. RTA 8 contracts with East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) for management services and office space.

RTA 8 provides 180,000 annual passenger trips serving over 2,500 individuals in the three-county region. To expedite customer service, RTA 8 maintains offices in Dubuque, Earlville and Maquoketa.

RTA 8 provides transportation to a variety of destinations in Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson counties. Most RTA services are door to door unless specified. All fares are contingent upon fitting into a

Table 5.6 RTA Vehicle Fleet and Staff

Number of vehicles	26 buses, 5 vans
Number of vehicles with Lifts or Ramps	31
Number of vehicles with ADA standards	31
Number of Full-Time Employees	2
Number of Part-Time Employees	23
Number of Volunteers	9

Source: RTA

Table 5.7 RTA Services

Services	Hours	Cost
Farley/Epworth to Dubuque	Monday - Friday. Departs Farley at 8:00am and arrives at JFK Transfer Station at 9:00am. Return transportation is provided at 2:30pm at the JFK Transfer Station	\$6.75 one way
Dubuque In-Town	Monday - Friday. 6:00am - 4:00pm	\$6.75 one way Children 15 and under \$3.25 one way
Dyersville to Dubuque	Monday - Friday. Departs Dyersville at 7:40am and leaves Dubuque at 2:30pm from the JFK Transfer Station	\$6.75 one way
Services to Iowa City	Varying - depending upon passenger appointment times	

Source: RTA

Reservations for service are requested 24 hours in advance. Same day service is subject to availability. Dispatch hours are 5am-5pm. If you are a Medicaid recipient, are a member of NEIAAA (60 years and older) or veteran, please provide that information when you make your reservation.

RTA is a contracted provider for the State of Iowa MCO's and in partnership with NEIAAA (Scenic Valley). RTA 8 services are available to persons of all income levels.

## RTA Vanpool Service

Since 2024 RTA in collaboration with Commute with Enterprise has operated a vanpool program to provide more flexibility in passenger transportation. Under the current agreement Enterprise operates the vanpool program and RTA provides \$600 per month in financial assistance per vanpool. Enterprise is responsible for managing, marketing and promoting the program and provides ride matching assistance to help form vanpool groups. Enterprise's local team provides the van and training. Drivers must meet minimum insurance and continuing eligibility requirements. RTA is in turn reimbursed with STA/FTA funds for vanpool rides and miles. Currently the service is focused on commuter trips and is operating one van with the University of Dubuque.

## DuRide

DuRide is a nonprofit organization that provides safe and personalized transportation for seniors over 65 that are unable to drive or do not want to drive any longer. Drivers are all volunteers, and their service is available every day including holidays. DuRide charges an annual fee and a pickup fee for trip. Their service area includes the cities of Asbury, Dubuque and East Dubuque.

## Grant County Aging and Disability Resource Center

The Grant County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) provides transit service to the residents of Grant County, Wisconsin. The ADRC operates two wheelchair accessible bus routes. The service is open to persons 60 and older, persons with disabilities of any age, and persons under 60 if there is room available. The bus leaves Lancaster at 8:30 a.m. and will leave the destination city between 1:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to return. The cost is \$3.00 round trip per person. Passengers will be able to stop at up to three places in the destination city at no additional cost.

ADRC also operates the TRIPS program which provides rides to medical and some business appointments for individuals who are not on Medical Assistance. TRIPS drivers are volunteers who drive their own vehicles. TRIPS charges a mileage-based fee.

## Jo Daviess County Transit

Jo Daviess County Transit is a federal and state-subsidized transit system primarily serving Jo Daviess County. Their primary service is demand-response and handicapped transit. Their service area reaches a 100-mile radius around Jo Daviess County, including Dubuque County, Cedar Rapids, Davenport and Iowa City. Services run Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

## Intercity Bus Service

Burlington Trailways offers an intercity bus service out of the Dubuque Intermodal Transportation Center. They have routes in multiple states including Iowa, Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. Riders must give 24-hour advance notice prior to pickup and purchase a ticket online.

## Commercial Air Service

Dubuque Regional Airport is located about seven miles south of downtown Dubuque on US Highway 61. The airport occupies 1,057 acres and has a field elevation of 1,076 feet. The airport opened at the present location in 1948.

American Airlines discontinued commercial air service in June 2022. They were replaced by Avelo Airlines in March 2023 who offered flights to Orlando and Las Vegas. They paused service in January 2024 followed by discontinuing service altogether in July 2024. In November 2024, Denver Air Connection began offering daily jet service to O'Hare International Airport in Chicago. Denver Air received a total of \$537,000 to subsidize the service through federal grants and local assistance.

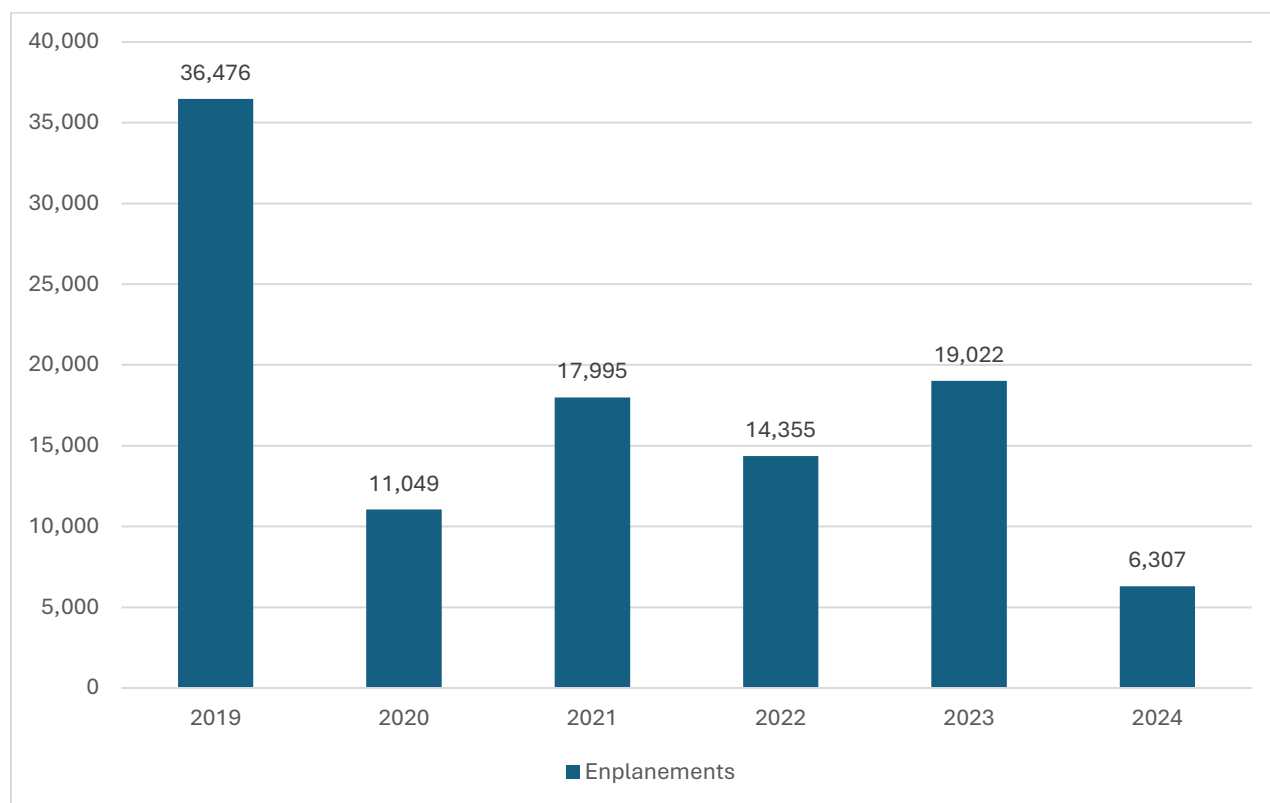


Figure 5.3 Dubuque Regional Airport Enplanements

Source: ECIA

## Future Projects

This section looks at the future outlook for the passenger transportation network, looking at both realized projects and potential opportunities.

### Passenger Transportation Plan

In the spring of 2025 DMATS updated their Passenger Transportation for fiscal years 2026-2030. The plan involved coordination between the transportation providers of the region and human service

agencies through the Transit Action Group (TAG). The TAG is a community group coordinated by RTA 8 that meets on a quarterly basis. The TAG is composed of human service providers, transit providers and transportation professionals to ensure that the transportation needs of community services are met. For the plan the TAG developed a list of goals and objectives to help guide the vision of the plan

- Provide more flexible transit options
  - Expand vanpool services
  - On-demand service for evening and weekend transit
- Increase awareness of public transit options
  - Increase social media presence
  - Volunteer and/or sponsor community events
  - Designate transit ambassadors within region
- Expand access to rural communities
  - Identify local volunteer organizations to help provide rides
  - Perform analyses to determine which areas need more frequent service
  - Develop initiatives to bring in new drivers to increase services
- Make services more accessible
  - Develop bus buddy system to make services less intimidating
  - Utilize different strategies to send reminders
  - Work with medical providers to coordinate rides for appointments
- Ensure that services have access to up-to-date, quality vehicles
  - Develop system for inventory management
  - Pursue multiple, differing funding strategies

The PTP also outlined a list of projects for the transit systems of the region, seen below.

Table 5.8 Jule 5310 Projects

Jule 5310 Projects				
No.	Project	Approximate Annual Funding	Years	Status
1	Preventative Maintenance	80,000	FY 2026 -2030	Annual Funding; Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

Source: 2026-2030 DMATS and RPA Passenger Transportation Plan, ECIA

Table 5.9 Jule Service Needs and Projects

Jule Service Needs and Projects					
No.	Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
1	Replace Jule Buses	The Jule	The Jule will replace one fixed route 35ft Gillig bus with one 35ft Electric Gillig bus	2023	Funding secured through FTA 5339 Buses and Bus Facilities LWNO Grant Program - Bus ordered with expected delivery date of December 2025, electric charging station to be installed at JOTC in fall of 2025.

Source: 2026-2030 DMATS and RPA Passenger Transportation Plan, ECIA



Jule Service Needs and Projects					
No.	Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
2	Replace Bus Shelters	The Jule	The Jule will replace four existing bus shelters in poor condition with four solar powered bus shelters	2023	Funding secured through 5339 Buses and Bus Facilities Grant Program. RFP will be release to public Spring of 2025.
3	Replace Jule Buses	The Jule	The Jule will replace two fixed route 35ft Gilligs with two electric buses.	2024	Funding secured through FTA 5339 LWNO Buses and Bus Facilities Program. Buses are expected to be ordered in the fall of 2025.
4	Replace Jule Buses	The Jule	The Jule will replace three 2011 light duty buses that are past their useful life.	2024	Three new light duty buses were purchased in January 2025. These buses were locally funded.
5	Planning Study	The Jule	The project will help Dubuque create a transit model that is reactive to today's demands. The Jule will be evaluated to account for changing demographics, growing business sectors, and new workplace models.	2024	RFP for consultant expected to be released in February 2025.

Table 5.10 RTA Service Needs and Projects

RTA Service Needs and Projects					
No.	Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
1	Provide affordable transit throughout the region.	Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson County Board of Supervisors, NEIAAA	Service Improvement Plan: all three counties agreed to subsidize the cost of rides, reducing the cost to the individual riders. All agreed to fund full cost for children age 15 and under, making those free, for as long as designated funding lasts.	2020	Ongoing. Currently funded through FTA funds. Will re-evaluate future funding to help sustain costs.
		RTA, United Way	Seek funding opportunities for seniors	2024	Status as of January 2025. NEIAAA has suspended volunteer program, funding for seniors decreased. Plan on seeking new grants to help keep costs low for senior ridership.
		United Way	Rides for Wellness Ride Vouchers - grant from United Way under Health Pillar	2016	Implemented in FY17, program funded through FY26.
		Area Residential Care, Hills & Dales, Sunny Crest, Imagine the Possibilities	Continue and grow collaboration with human service agencies, dialysis, medical centers, and MCOs for non-emergency medical services	2012	Continue partnership with MCOs for Title XIX medical and waiver trip requests and reimbursement. Educate public of services that are already available and same day trips for medical appointments. Implementation; ongoing
2	Improve attendance and action from the TAG. More accountability and influence as a group	RTA, TAG	Form a TAG Technical Group to identify gaps in transportation within each County, devising strategies to address the gaps, and obtaining funds to support creative transportation solutions.	2019	TAGs created in each county, meets on a quarterly basis.
3	Improve RTA's service	RTA	Conduct a gap analysis.	2024	Status as of January 2025. RTA is seeking funding for a gap analysis that can help identify service gaps, enhance accessibility,

RTA Service Needs and Projects					
No.	Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
					improve efficiency and increase ridership through data-driven decision making.
		RTA, TAG	Develop an app, a portal and re-designed website to improve coordination and reduce wait time, show (potentially improve) availability, and provide better communication	2019	Project completed in 2023, continuing to work on improvements.
4	Help provide transportation to community events.	Area farmer's markets, community foundations	Provide transportation to farmer's markets in the region.	2018	Rides to Maquoketa Farmer's Market implemented FY19; continue annually as funding exists. Grant from Maquoketa Community Foundation provided transportation for low-income residents. Program continued until grant funding expired in 2024, seeking alternative funding sources as of January 2025. Will seek similar programs for other area farmer's markets.
5	Enhance RTA's marketing efforts.	RTA	Marketing Plan	2019	Completed in FY21, will consider conducting updates periodically.
		Area businesses	Bus Wraps	2019	Dupaco CCU ended contract, will seek other partners to help fund services.
		Goodwill, ARC , Imagine the Possibilities, Hill & Dales, support groups	Continue Travel Training Program to increase knowledge of available services	2015	Continue with RTA Learn to Ride Courses. Implementation; ongoing
		TAG	Update Transportation Resource Guide	2015	Find local funding to update and print new Transportation Resource Guides. Update March 2020: Update the pertinent information and include on redesigned website
6	Provide more flexible transit options	RTA, area employers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car	Vanpool transportation for employers	2023	RTA partnered with Enterprise Rent-A-Car in 2024 to provide vanpool transportation to employers in the region. Partnership with University of Dubuque began in FY25, will seek more partnerships.
7	Expand access to rural communities	RTA	Identify potential routes	2018	Status as of January 2025. Currently exploring offering expanded services from Cascade.
8	Work with other	RTA, The Jule	Explore coordination opportunities between The Jule and RTA	2012	Determining need within the area and coordinating

RTA Service Needs and Projects					
No.	Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
	agencies within and adjacent to our region				with the Jule for city of Dubuque requests. Implementation; ongoing
		Community Action of Eastern Iowa (EARL Transit), MTA and River Bend	Transportation in Dubuque, Delaware, Jackson, Clinton and Clayton Counties	2011	RTA continues to partner with EARL Transit, MTA, and River Bend for transportation requests outside of our region. Implementation; ongoing
		Area economic development agencies	Coordinate with economic development agencies for employment transportation opportunities	2025	Working with Greater Dubuque Development Corporation on implementation of vanpool program.
9	Make services more accessible	Sunnycrest Manor, Senior/Assisted Living Facilities, general public	Provide services on an on call basis	2010	Continue to educate public on availability of services and same day trips Implementation RTA has a contract with Sunnycrest which allows them to use our services as needed. RTA continues to search for other such contracts, as well as explore the feasibility of creating an on-demand service for the general public; ongoing
		Public Input	Expand hours to include late afternoons, evenings, weekends and holidays for all three counties	2007	Project pending due to funding constraints and lack of vehicles. Implementation; pending until further funding for operations and vehicles is available. As of January 2025 many services run until 4pm on weekdays.
		Area Residential Care	Add to wheelchair accessible fleet	2009	Capital replacement ongoing; RTA continues to seek additional grant funding for new buses. As of January 2025 RTA has 26 buses and 5 vans, all of them with lifts and ramps and are up to ADA standards.
		Members of the TAG	Mobility Coordinator project targeting the elderly population, mentally and physically challenged individuals, low income adults and youth, and veterans. Assisting this group of individuals in coordinating with hospitals, clinics, senior centers, wellness agencies, dental offices and food programs	2011	Project Ongoing. Mobility Coordinator position funding expired in FYXX, responsibilities shared by Transit Managers.
		Developing Alternative Choices, Goodwill, Area Residential	Driver trainings	2009	Future trainings will be conducted with RTA and Jule drivers as time and funding for training permits. Trainings include CPR,

RTA Service Needs and Projects					
No.	Service Need	Agency(s)	Project	Year Identified	Status
		Care, Region 8 RTA			Implementation; ongoing.
10	Recruitment and retention of paid and volunteer drivers	RTA	Continue to recruit paid and volunteer drivers and retain current part time drivers and subs	2015	Project ongoing and efforts continue throughout three county region
11	Continuation funding of State Transit Assistance	Region 8 RTA	Operating Assistance for Day-To-Day Operation	2007	On going
12	Continuation funding of Federal Operating Assistance	Region 8 RTA	Operating Assistance for Day-To-Day Operation	2007	On going

## Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant

The Jule was awarded and Area of Persistent Poverty Planning grant which will allow the city to create a transit model reactive to today's demands. The Jule will be evaluated to account for changing demographics, growing business sectors and new workplace models. Spatial data and feedback from equity-focused community outreach will help Dubuque explore racial and economic disparities. FTA resources will provide the community with a roadmap to improve public transportation efficiency and ensure the system meets the needs of individuals who lack access to employment, education, healthcare and other destinations. The plan will improve transit by identifying where to provide more frequent and expanded service. The project will also support community connectivity, address generational poverty, and help promote environmental justice. The main beneficiaries of the plan are intended to be the disadvantaged residents within Census Tracts 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7.01.

## Potential Passenger Rail

No passenger trains currently serve the DMATS area, but from the time railroads first arrived in Dubuque in the 1850s until 1981 when the Dubuque to Chicago AMTRAK service was discontinued, passenger rail provided important connections to surrounding communities.

## Future Airport Projects

In 2021 the Dubuque Regional Airport updated their Airport Master Plan. The Federal Aviation Administration requires that airports update these documents every 7 to 10 years or as necessary to address local changes at the airport.

The Dubuque Regional Airport Master Plan guides future projects at the Dubuque Regional Airport. The current Master Plan was adopted in 2021. The Master Plan's recommended development concept presents a recommended configuration for the Dubuque Regional Airport that preserves

*Source: 2026-2030 DMATS and RPA Passenger Transportation Plan, ECIA*

its role while meeting FAA design and safety standards to the extent practicable. The concept establishes a vision and direction for facility needs for the next 20 years and beyond.

The Master Plan Concept includes development recommendations for both airside facilities and groundside facilities. The airside plan generally considers improvements related to the airport's runway and taxiway system and navigational aids. The Master Plan Concept also identifies upgrades to the airport's groundside facilities needed to accommodate future demand for terminal space, hanger space, parking areas, and taxiways due to anticipate increases in airport use. The tables below shows the capital projects planned for fiscal years 2026 to 2030 and the capital projects planned for fiscal years 2031 to 2040.

Table 5.11 Dubuque Regional Airport Capital Improvement Plan FY2026 – FY2030

Number	Project	Cost Estimate
18	Aircraft de-ice vehicle	\$600,000
19	Environmental study for Runway 18-36 extension	\$300,000
20	Close portion of Merlin Lane	\$87,220
21	Acquire approximately 41.9 acres of property	\$197,228
22	Construct Runway 18-36 extension	\$11,400,000
23	Extend ultimate Taxiway A and construct holding bay	\$2,345,000
24	Extend ultimate Taxiway H	\$4,567,000
25	Construct ultimate Taxiway C	\$1,624,420
26	Install MALSR on Runway 18	\$2,160,000
27	Construct car wash facility	\$1,889,760
28	Extend ultimate Taxiway D	\$4,354,020
29	Terminal expansion	\$1,771,200
30	Routine pavement maintenance	\$1,000,000

*Source: 2021 Master Plan, Dubuque Regional Airport*

Table 5.12 Dubuque Regional Airport Capital Improvement Plan FY2031 – FY2040

Number	Project	Cost Estimate
31	Construct cargo facility – option #1	\$20,465,334
32	Environmental study for west side property acquisition	\$300,000
33	Construct ultimate Taxiway J	\$17,305,800
34	Acquire approximately 30.7 acres	\$126,700
35	Construct new public roadways on west side	\$1,371,840
36	Expand utilities to west side for planned development	\$3,842,360
37	Construct west apron	\$40,243,565
38	Construct fuel farm	\$1,697,920
39	Routine pavement maintenance	\$2,000,000

*Source: 2021 Master Plan, Dubuque Regional Airport*