

2014 Public Participation Annual Report



MAPA Omaha - Council Bluffs
Metropolitan Area
Planning Agency

April 2015

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Introduction

The Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) Public Participation Plan outlines how MAPA will work to achieve public participation in all planning activities. The plan specifies how MAPA conducts public outreach and how the public can be involved throughout the planning process.

The 2014 Public Participation Plan (PPP) committed MAPA to completing an annual status report on the public participation activities of the prior year. The PPP stated successful evaluation of the effectiveness of the Plan requires incorporating public input and an annual evaluation process. Therefore, this 2014 Public Participation Report was completed in April 2015.

2014 Public Participation Activities

Five projects were completed in 2014. The projects which were completed are shown in Figure 1.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

- Details how MAPA plans to conduct public outreach for all planning activities and how the public can be involved throughout the planning process. Completed the public outreach process for the plan including sending flyers to local governments and libraries detailing the opportunity to comment on the plan. Also, the documentation for this annual report was completed.

Coordinated Transit Plan (CTP)

- Serves as the guiding document for human service transit providers. The plan was developed locally and will be used when making transportation funding decisions. It includes the goals, needs/gaps, existing conditions, strategies to address barriers, a financial analysis, and an implementation process. Completed the public outreach process enabling the public to attend open house meetings, submit comments, and review the plan.

Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment (LRTP)

- Amended the LRTP to include the results of the first phase of the City of Omaha and Metro's Central Omaha Alternatives Needs Analysis Project. The study identified the need for better, more frequent transit service between Downtown and Westroads. The Locally Preferred Alternative will enhance transit connections between important districts and destinations along the Dodge/Farnam corridor in Omaha. Completed the public outreach process enabling the public to review the amendment, submit comments, and attend open house meetings.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Every year the TIP is developed. It lists all federally funded and "regionally significant" transportation projects programmed for four fiscal years. The TIP includes federally funded projects for roadways and trails, public transit and aviation projects throughout the Omaha-Council Bluffs region. Completed the public outreach process encouraging public review of the document and submission of comments.

Federal Certification Review

- Every four years MAPA undertakes a Federal Certification Review by the US Department of Transportation including the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and the Nebraska Department of Roads. A public meeting was held enabling the public to communicate with the DOT about MAPA's planning process.

Figure 1: Projects Completed by MAPA in 2014

Several projects had work started on them in 2014 and will be finished in the future (Figure 2). The Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan will be completed in early 2015. The Platteview Road Corridor will be completed in 2015; while implementation of the Heartland 2050 effort will continue for several decades.

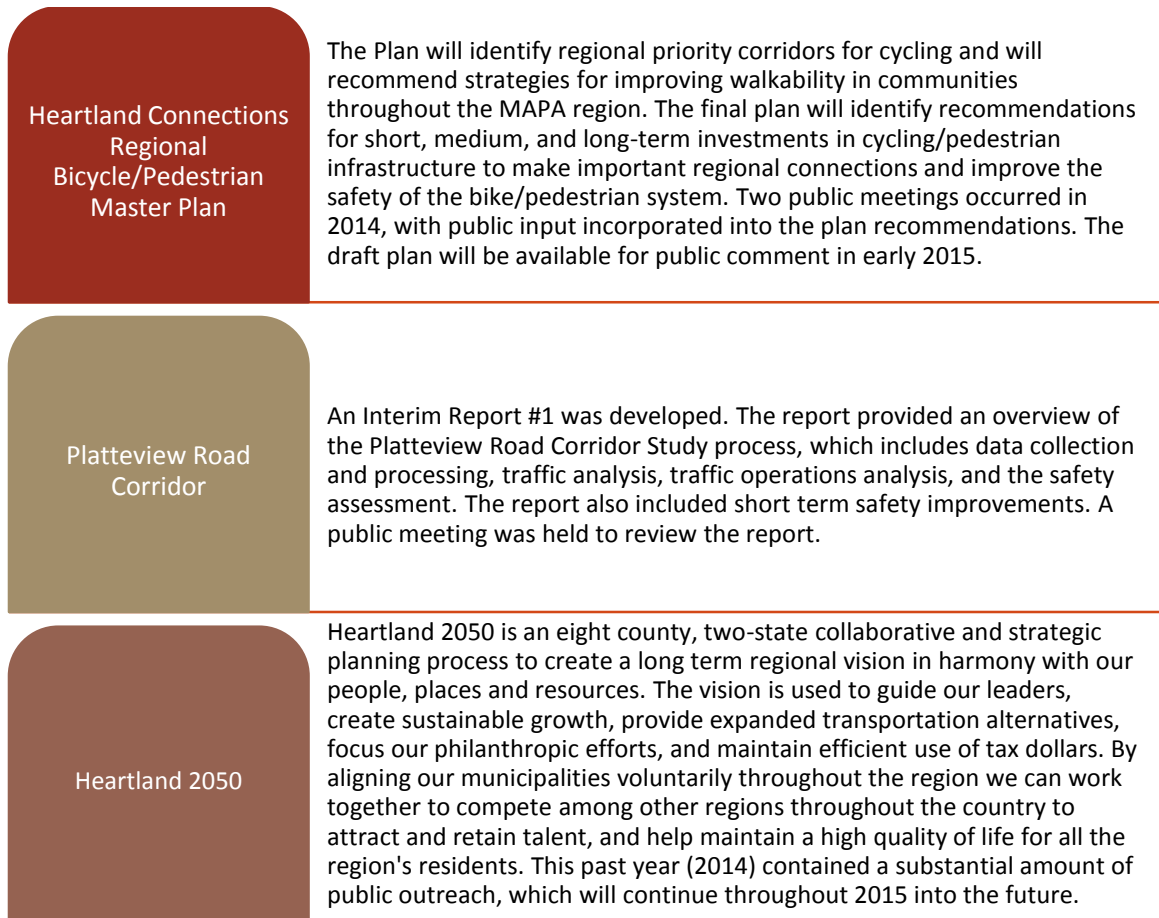


Figure 2: Projects in Progress

MAPA also completed a new branding brief, which reimagined MAPA's logo and other branding materials. These are shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: A Portion of MAPA's New Branding Brief

Evaluation Indicators

The following eight evaluation methods were included in the 2014 Public Participation Plan. They shall be used in each year's annual report to evaluate the public participation process. This will facilitate the discovery of trends.

Public Participation Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	2014 Indicator	Goal Achieved
Public Participation Plan	Required by law - No measure	Update at least every 3 years	Approved in February 2014	Yes
Newspaper Advertisements	Required by law - No measure	Increase number of participants/ respondents indicating they saw the advertisement	Published public comment period and public meeting advertisements. 0 people indicated they heard about the meeting because of the advertisement.	No
Website	Number of website hits	Increase number of web hits over the course of each year	Website hits are an all-time number as of 1/2/15 at 11:15 am Home page = 213,107 Transportation page = 20,494 Meeting Agendas page = 9,569	Base year developed. Did not have starting data to determine if the goal was achieved.
Newsletter	Feedback from public; number of returns	Maximum of 2% return rate per mailing	Currently there are 487 addresses on the newsletter list. On average there are 2-4 returned newsletters each time, which are promptly corrected for the next mailing. This is a .004% return rate.	Yes
Brochures	Number distributed during the year	Distribute throughout the MAPA Region, including key regional libraries in 1 st year; increase by 2-4 locations annually	Distributed Heartland 2050 brochures and flyers describing public workshops, surveys, and the vision document to public libraries, post offices, and various coffee shops.	Yes
Public Forums/ Open House/ Public Information Meeting/ Public Hearing	Public Attendance*[Transit Access (10 pts) + ADA Accessibility (10 pts)] = N	Goal of 1,000 annual points for public forums/ open house/ public information meeting/ public hearing	Held public meetings/open houses for several projects. See Appendix A for the supporting mathematics. 2,290 total point	Yes
Planning Document Distribution	Number of distribution sites	100% distribution of vital documents to necessary parties	Distributed documents and flyers to fourteen local governments and twenty-one local libraries.	Yes
Citizens' Advisory Council	Public Attendance + (Quorum or less [10 pts] or Greater than Quorum [20 pts]) = N	Goal of 150 total annual points for the Citizens' Advisory Council	The CAC was instituted in August with bylaws established in October. Quorum was achieved at the October 15 th meeting. Total points = 20	No

Table 1: Public Participation Evaluation Methods (Table 7.1 from the PPP)

As shown in Table 1, not all of the indicators were achieved. A discussion of each unachieved indicator is listed below with the action taken to complete the goals in subsequent years described in Table 2.

Issues

- ❖ Newspaper Advertisement goal of increasing the number of participates/respondents indicating they saw the advisement. MAPA does not currently track this information on our sign in sheets, so the only information we have is anecdotal. However, this will be remedied in the future by capturing this information on sign-in sheets. This is more fully explained in Table 2. .
- ❖ The Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) annual goal of 150 points was not achieved because the CAC was not formalized until October 2014, which was the last meeting of the year. Next year the CAC is planned to meet eleven times, which should allow the MAPA to achieve this goal.

Actions

MAPA will complete the actions listed in Table 2 to improve the public participation process and the likelihood of meeting the goals in future years.

Public Participation Tool	Action
Public Participation Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the Plan. 2. Create individual checklist of necessary public participation steps for each planning process. 3. Develop graphics detailing the public comment process and put these graphics on the website.
Newspaper Advertisements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will add a check box to public meeting sign in sheets that states, "How did you hear about the meeting? Email, Newspaper Article, Newspaper Ad, Facebook/ Twitter, Website, Friend, Other". 2. Determine the circulation of the newspaper used by MAPA for advertisements.
Website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to put MAPA's website on all documentations and point people to the site to find information. 2. Revise MAPA's website to make it easier to navigate.
Newsletter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to update any returned addresses in the database. 2. Develop a "Sign up for our E-Newsletter" button on the MAPA website. 3. Send the newsletter through electronic mail, as well as physical mail.
Brochures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to develop/update brochures and flyers. 2. Continue to distribute project brochures and flyers.
Public Forums/ Open House/ Public Information Meeting/ Public Hearing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to hold public meetings in transit and ADA accessible locations. Implement the Public Participation Plan to ensure people are aware of meetings and have the opportunity to attend. 2. Look for alternative meeting locations to attract people to attend meetings. 3. Establish methods for following up with citizens who submit public comments on planning documents. 4. Look for opportunities to partner with existing community meetings. 5. Expand EJ and translation services at meetings.

Planning Document Distribution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to deliver documents and flyers about the opportunity to comment to necessary parties. Utilize flyers rather than full documents to save paper. 2. Include document distribution on the checklist for each planning process that MAPA will create to implement the Public Participation Plan (the first row of this table).
Citizens' Advisory Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold monthly CAC meetings throughout 2015. 2. Invite interested parties to attend monthly CAC meetings. This would increase the public's knowledge of the planning process and encourage more participation in future events.

Table 2: Action to Achieve Goals

Summary

This past year (2014) was an extremely busy year for MAPA and many of the Public Participation Plan evaluation methods were achieved. It is MAPA's goal to continue to improve the public participation process and implement the Public Participation Plan successfully. MAPA staff will use this 2014 Public Participation Annual Report to recall participation goals and augment future public participation activities. For example, future public meeting sheets will include a checkbox area for "how did you hear about the meeting?", so MAPA can determine if public notices are effective.

MAPA staff will review the applicable Public Participation Annual Reports prior to the development of the new Public Participation Plan in January of 2018. The review will evaluate goal accomplishment, which will be used to alter the goals in the subsequent Public Participation Plans.

Appendix A: Public Event Formula Documentation

Formula: Public Attendance*[Transit Access (10 pts) + ADA Accessibility (10 pts)] = N

Coordinated Transit Plan				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
4/8/14- HWS Afternoon	3	10	10	60
4/8/14- MAPA Evening	14	10	10	280
4/10/14- Salvation Army Afternoon	9	10	10	180
Total				520

LRTP Amendment				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
5/8/14- Library	6	10	10	120
5/8/14- MAPA	4	10	10	80
Total				200

Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
1/22/14- Kroc Center	22	10	10	440
10/28/14- UNO	41	10	10	820
Total				1,260

Platteview Road				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
5/29/15- Sarpy County Court House	25	0	10	250
Total				250

Certification Review Public Meeting				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
3/11/2014	3	10	10	60
Total				60

Grand Total	2,290			
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