



# 2015 Public Participation Annual Report



April 2016



## **Table of Contents**

[Introduction](#)

[2015 Public Participation Activities](#)

[Evaluation Indicators](#)

[Issues](#)

[Actions](#)

[Summary](#)

[Appendix A: Public Event Formula Documentation](#)

April 2016



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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 2015 Public Participation Report was completed in April 2016.

## **2015 Public Participation Activities**

Five projects were completed in 2015. The projects which were completed are shown in Figure 1.

April 2016



## Figure 1: Projects Completed by MAPA in 2015

### Heartland Connections Bicycle - Pedestrian Master Plan

As part of the Heartland 2050 efforts a bicycle -pedestrian master plan was developed to identify the current and future bike-pedestrian corridors in the region and to show the potential improvements to the system and the suggested infrastructure improvement types.

### Title VI Plan

Every 5 years the MAPA Title VI plan is updated to more accurately reflect the regions demographics and to update the special considerations that must be made for environmental justice areas, ADA compliance, and LEP populations in the region when MAPA does outreach. There were also updates to the Title VI and ADA complaint procedures to more closely align them with state and federal policy. The document was also revised to make it easier to use and more accessible to the public.

### 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Every five years the LRTP is updated and revised to include the new regionally significant projects, reevaluate the goals for the community, and update the strategies used to evaluate projects. The LRTP covers all modes of transportation in the region including, automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrians. The LRTP has 5 year groupings of projects which are all fiscally constrained within those groupings.

### 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.

### 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Amendment

Revised a fiscal constraint table to more accurately reflect project costs.

### Public Participation Plan (PPP) Amendment

Updated the public participation plan to more closely align with the Title VI plan on outreach to historically disadvantaged communities. Updated and improved on graphics showing the planning processes for MAPA's main public documents.

April 2016



Several projects had work started on them in 2016 and will be finished in the future (Figure 2). The Platteview Road Corridor will be completed in 2016; while implementation of the Heartland 2050 effort will continue for several decades, with key milestones every 5 and 10 years.

### 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan

The Plan will identify regional priority corridors and will recommend strategies for improving communities throughout the MAPA region. The final plan will identify recommendations for short, medium, and long-term investments in infrastructure to make important regional connections and improve the system. There was a series of stakeholder, interest group, and public meetings held and a survey determine prioritize the goals developed from previous planning efforts by MAPA.

### Platteview Road Corridor

The study is a long term planning study to identify potential alternative to the Platteview Corridor as Southern Sarpy County expands and requires additional connections thought the area. The preliminary Platteview Corridor Alignments were presented to the public and stakeholders for comment in a public meeting. A series of public meetings at city council meetings have also been held in communities which will be effected by any future changes to the Platteview Corridor.

### Heartland 2050

Heartland 2050 is an eight county, two-state collaborative and strategic planning process to create a long term regional vision in harmony with our people, places and resources. The vision is used to guide our leaders, create sustainable growth, provide expanded transportation alternatives, focus our philanthropic efforts, and maintain efficient use of tax dollars. By aligning our municipalities voluntarily throughout the region we can work together to compete among other regions throughout the country to attract and retain talent, and help maintain a high quality of life for all the region's residents. This past year (2014) contained a substantial amount of public outreach, which will continue throughout 2015 into the future.

April 2016



## 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.

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

Public Participation Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	2015 Indicator	Goal Achieved
<b>Public Participation Plan</b>	Required by law - No measure	Update at least every 3 years	Amended in January	Yes
<b>Newspaper Advertisements</b>	Required by law - No measure	Increase number of participants/ respondents indicating they saw the advertisement	Published public comment period and public meeting advertisements.  1 person indicated they heard about the meeting because of the advertisement.	Yes
<b>Website</b>	Number of website hits	Increase number of web hits over the course of each year	In December 2015 the new website had 5,528  In 2014 the numbers were Home page = 213,107 Transportation page = 20,494 Meeting Agendas page = 9,569	Due to the changes in the website we were unable to meaningfully collect this data for 2015.
<b>Newsletter</b>	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
<b>Brochures</b>	Number distributed during the year	Distribute throughout the MAPA Region, including key regional libraries in 1 <sup>st</sup> 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

April 2016



<b>Public Forums/ Open House/ Public Information Meeting/ Public Hearing</b>	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
<b>Planning Document Distribution</b>	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
<b>Citizens' Advisory Council</b>	Formula: Public Attendance + (Quorum or less [10 pts] or Greater than Quorum [20 pts])	Goal of 150 total annual points for the Citizens' Advisory Council	The CAC met monthly from January through August and again in November and December to restructure themselves for 2016.  Quorum was achieved at most of the meetings.  Total points = 132	No

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 began tracking this information in 2015. This is more fully explained in Table 2. .
- ❖ The Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) annual goal of 150 points was not achieved because the CAC did not meet several times this year. It was decided by the committee that they would become an as needed committee that would meet at least twice a year to review MAPA's public participation efforts but would otherwise meet as needed to review and provide feedback for MAPA staff on public participation efforts. Their future scoring will need to be reevaluated. The goal for the CAC for 2015 was calculated with the method listed in Table 1, the new goal is listed in Table 2.

April 2016



## 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.

**Table 2: Action to Achieve Goals**

<b>Public Participation Tool</b>	<b>Corrective Action Plan</b>
<b>Public Participation Plan</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to implement the Plan.</li> <li>2. Strengthen outreach to historically disadvantaged populations</li> </ol>
<b>Newspaper Advertisements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Will continue to track outreach efforts with 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".</i></li> <li>2. <i>Determine the circulation of the newspaper used by MAPA for advertisements.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Use more specific and relatable language in advertisements for public meetings</i></li> </ol>
<b>Website</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to put MAPA's website on all documentations and point people to the site to find information.</li> </ol>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to update any returned addresses in the database.</li> <li>2. Develop a "Sign up for our E-Newsletter" button on the MAPA website.</li> <li>3. Send the newsletter through electronic mail, as well as physical mail.</li> </ol>
<b>Brochures</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to develop/update brochures and flyers.</li> <li>2. Continue to distribute project brochures and flyers.</li> </ol>
<b>Public Forums/ Open House/ Public Information Meeting/ Public Hearing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. Use friendlier and highly trafficked alternative meeting locations to attract people to attend meetings.</li> <li>3. Have outreach during existing partner meetings to increase participation and not have redundant meetings in the are</li> <li>4. Use the contact information provided by citizens at public meetings to establish more comprehensive lists of citizens interested in transportation issues</li> <li>5. Expand EJ and translation services at meetings.</li> </ol>
<b>Planning Document Distribution</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to deliver documents and flyers about the opportunity to comment to necessary parties. Utilize flyers rather than full documents to save paper.</li> </ol>

April 2016





	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>3. Use language that better connects people to the issues being covered at public meetings</li> </ol>
<b>Citizens' Advisory Council</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold CAC meetings at key points during the planning process.</li> <li>2. Have strong meeting agendas with concrete action steps for the CAC to vote on and structured input methods for them to respond to staff questions with.</li> <li>3. The CAC goal will be calculated on having at least 3 meetings per year with quorum to discuss important planning processes for MAPA. The same formula will be used with a goal of 50 points.</li> </ol>

### Key Action Steps for 2016

- ❖ MAPA staff will work on holding meetings in conjunction with other agencies public meetings to help increase foot traffic at the meetings, decrease 'planning fatigue', and make public meetings more high impact and relevant to the region
- ❖ MAPA will continue to develop its social media presence and increase advertising for events and plans through social media and the website
- ❖ MAPA will strategically use the CAC to improve public outreach practices and methods

### Summary

This past year (2015) 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 2015 Public Participation Annual Report to recall participation goals and augment future public participation activities.

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.

April 2016



April 2016



## Appendix A: Public Event Formula Documentation

Formula: Public Attendance + (Quorum or less [10 pts] or Greater than Quorum [20 pts]) = N

2040 Long Range Transportation Plan				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
5/11/2015 – Douglas County Library	2	10	10	40
5/13/2015 – Drips Coffee Shop	4	10	10	80
5/14/2015- North Omaha Gallery	0	10	10	0
5/18/2015 – Bellevue College	0	10	10	0
5/19/2015 – Assc. Of the Midlands	5	10	5	75
3/25/2015 – MAPA	6	10	10	120
Total				315

LRTP Amendment				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
3/9/15	4	10	10	80
11/18/2015 - MAPA	0	10	10	0
Total				80

Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
3/3/2015	6	10	10	120
5/15/215	8	10	10	160

April 2016



Total 280

Platteview Road				
Event	Public Attendance	Transit Access	ADA Accessibility	Total
8/31/2015- La Vista High School	350	0	10	3500
Total				3,500

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,175</b>
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## Appendix B: Citizens Advisory Committee Formula Documentation

Formula: Public Attendance + (Quorum or less [10 pts] or Greater than Quorum [20 pts])
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CAC Attendance				
Event	Public Attendance	Quorum or less	Greater than Quorum	Total
1/15/2105		N/A	20	20
2/12/2015		N/A	20	20
3/12/2015		N/A	20	20
4/9/2015		N/A	20	20
6/11/2015		10	N/A	10
7/9/2015	1	10	N/A	10
8/13/2015	1	10	N/A	10
11/12/2015		N/A	20	20

April 2016



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Total 132

April 2016

