

# What's Happening

for Community Leaders

July/August 2016

## Heartland 2050 launches new initiative at August Summer Summit

Heartland 2050, MAPA's long-term regional visioning project, is focusing on a new initiative known as "Close the Gap." The initiative debuted at the Heartland 2050 Summer Summit in August. "Close the Gap" will focus on coordinating land use and transit to create a more walkable, livable region. It will emphasize projects which create a robust transportation network linking educational institutions and connecting areas of concentrated poverty to employment centers in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area, benefiting the region's economy.

"Close the Gap" aims to fill the gaps which exist currently between vibrant neighborhoods by using transit to close the gap between those neighborhoods to create a more walkable region, said Greg Youell, MAPA Executive Director. Creating best practices for infill development, encouraging regulatory flexibility for development within neighborhoods, generating opportunities for public and private partnerships and identifying key corridors in the region are among the goals of the plan.

The Heartland 2050 Executive Committee prioritized improving transit in the region. "Close the Gap" links the goals of Heartland 2050 and the Action Plan compiled by the six Implementation Committees.



A clear plan for a more walkable, livable region.

Creating a more walkable, livable region is at the heart of the message delivered by Jeff Speck, the keynote speaker for the Summer

Summit. Speck is a renowned city planner and author of "Walkable City: How Downtown can save America, One Step at a Time." Speck highlighted how making cities and communities more walkable improves their economic vibrancy and sustainability as well as the health of their residents.

Speck cited figures which show in 1970 Americans spent 10 percent of their income on transportation. In 2010, that number increased to 20 percent and is as high as 40 percent among low-income Americans. Speck said that percentage drops and allows people to retain a greater amount of their income when they live in communities which are more walkable and provide adequate access to transit. He outlined four elements which need to



Jeff Speck toured areas of the region to see some of the neighborhoods, including the Blackstone District where he met with Jay Lund and Matt Dwyer of Greenslate Development.

be present to increase the number of people walking in the region. They include: development which provides venues and activities all within walking distance of each other and creates a reason to walk, infrastructure design which promotes a safe walk, a comfortable walk which provides a sense of enclosure and protection for pedestrians and places to walk which provide interesting streetscapes along the way.

Speck toured parts of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area to view vibrant neighborhoods. During his presentation at the summit, he outlined recommendations on how to increase walkability in the region. One recommendation includes changing 12 foot wide lanes in Omaha to 10 feet in width and using the extra space to create bike lanes in targeted areas. This would require a change in state roads regulations. Speck says such a change helps improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. "A wider lane is a faster lane. A 12-foot lane is a highway lane according to The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)," said Speck. Another recommendation: examining one-way streets to determine if some can be changed into two-way streets.

Speck also shared his message of walkability during a luncheon meeting with Omaha City Council members, Omaha Public Works Department staff and Douglas County Commissioners.

For more information about Heartland 2050 and the "Close the Gap" initiative, contact Karna Loewenstein, Heartland 2050 Coordinator at [kloewenstein@mapacog.org](mailto:kloewenstein@mapacog.org) or 402-444-6866, ext. 225.

## Gretna and Ralston become Nebraska Economic Development Leadership Certified Communities

Congratulations to both the Cities of Gretna and Ralston for becoming a designated Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) Leadership Certified Community! The purpose of the Leadership Certified Community Program is to provide a solid framework for communities to identify capacity, stimulate focused planning, and utilize technology to provide a strong foundation to meet the challenges of the future.

Being a Leadership Certified Community provides a distinct advantage when applying for Community Development Block Grants that are offered through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Those communities that are certified show the Nebraska Department of Economic Development a commitment to investment and continual community development. Currently, the City of Gretna is utilizing this advantage as it applies for a Downtown Revitalization grant through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

MAPA aided both these communities during the application process in partnership with Brook Aken, OPPD Economic Development Coordinator, and Lynn Kohout, Business Development Consultant with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. With strong community-wide coordination the City of Gretna became a designated Nebraska

Department of Economic Development (NDED) Leadership Certified Community on May 17, 2016. The City of Ralston received its designation on August 16, 2016.



The City of Gretna has been designated as a Nebraska Economic Development Leadership Certified Community. From left to right: Gretna City Administrator Jeff Kooistra, Lynn Kohout, Gretna Mayor Jim Timmerman, and MAPA Planner Matt Roth. Photo courtesy of The Gretna Breeze.

## MAPA partners with OHA on initial redevelopment discussions for Southside Terrace Homes



As part of the South Omaha Brownfields project, MAPA partnered with the Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) to assist in the redevelopment discussion at Southside Terrace Homes.

They are located from South 30th Street on the west to 28th Avenue on the east and from R Street on the north to W Street on the south.

Funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant allowed MAPA to complete a Phase I assessment and create a conceptual redevelopment framework for the site.

Southside Terrace is 76 years old. The housing units are worn out and have become too costly to repair and maintain. OHA is looking at the next step of replacement and is exploring innovative redevelopment opportunities for this site, and how it can tie into the larger neighborhood and its existing resources.

Led by Benesch and HDR, input gathering interviews took place with key stakeholders on July 11th and 12th to gather thoughts on the following:

- Aspirations, strengths, and

opportunities related to the site;

- Key issues and concerns about redevelopment options;
- Ideal types of land use, development, amenities, and other improvements;
- Community character, both existing and desired;
- Potential impacts of site redevelopment.

Input from these meetings was used for the basis of a design workshop on July 25th through July 27th.

The team produced conceptual plans for the study area. These plans consisted of recommendations relating to land use, building types and placement, street configurations, parking, open space, site amenities, and other features, and were developed with OHA, MAPA, and key stakeholders during a three-day interactive workshop.

The result is a conceptual redevelopment framework for the site that will act as a guide for the Master Developer of the site that OHA is hiring.



## MAPA Board of Directors elects new chair

With the start of a new fiscal year, MAPA ushered in a new chair for its Board of Directors. Fellow board members nominated and elected Bellevue Mayor Rita Sanders to serve as Chair of MAPA's Board of Directors.

Mayor Sanders assumed her role as Chair at the July 28, 2016 board meeting. She succeeds Mills County Supervisor Ron Kohn who served as Board of Directors Chairman for 5 years. Supervisor Kohn was nominated and elected to serve as Board Vice-Chairman. He will continue in that role through the end of his term as a county supervisor in December 2016.

Prior to her election as board chair, Mayor Sanders served as Board Vice-Chair for 3 years. She is serving her second term as mayor of the City of Bellevue, Nebraska.



RITA SANDERS



RON KOHN

## Citizenship and Service award nominations due Sept. 2nd

Time is running out to submit nominations for MAPA's 2016 Regional Service and Citizenship Awards.

These awards recognize an individual and a group in Douglas, Sarpy, Washington, Mills or Pottawattamie Counties for their regional efforts.

To qualify for the Regional Citizenship Award, an individual must reside in one of the mentioned counties and must have recognized regional problems, initiated and supported policies that require shared regional effort and contributed to the region's quality of life by efforts on its behalf. Private citizens as well as elected or appointed officials may be nominated.

To qualify for the Regional Service Award,

an organization, agency or department, either public or private, must have recognized that regional problem solving transcends county boundaries and made a contribution to the region that helped it improve or grow.

The deadline for all nominations is September 2, 2016. Nominations are available online at [mapacog.org/calendar/news/regional-service-and-citizenship-awards/](http://mapacog.org/calendar/news/regional-service-and-citizenship-awards/). Send electronic submissions to [mapa@mapacog.org](mailto:mapa@mapacog.org).

Nomination forms may be mailed to MAPA, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68102 or dropped off at MAPA offices between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## Grant funding opportunity deadlines in fourth quarter of 2016

Be sure to monitor upcoming deadlines for grant opportunities.

Grant application deadlines in the fourth quarter of 2016 for both the States of Nebraska and Iowa are listed to the right.

For questions regarding grant opportunities, please contact Lynn Dittmer, Community and Economic Development Manager at 402-444-6866, ext. 230 for more information.

Iowa Grants	Application Deadline
Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program	October 1, 2016
Federal Recreational Trails Vision Iowa (CAT)	October 1, 2016
Iowa West Foundation	October 15, 2016
Peter Kiewit Foundation	October 15, 2016
REAP - Conservation Education	November 1, 2016
Nebraska Grants	Application Deadline
Land and Water Conservation Fund	October 1, 2016
Peter Kiewit Foundation	October 15, 2016
Brownfields Assessment	Fall / Winter

## CALENDAR

### September 2016

- Sept. 5th – MAPA Offices Closed Labor Day
- Sept. 9th – RPA/Tech Committee 11 a.m.
- Sept. 14th – Iowa League of Cities  
Sept. 16th – Des Moines, IA
- Sept. 21st – Finance Committee 8:30 a.m.  
Coordinated Transit Committee 10:30 a.m.  
League of Nebraska Municipalities (Sept. 21 - 23) Kearney, NE
- Sept. 23rd – Transportation Technical Advisory Committee 10 a.m.
- Sept. 29th – MAPA Board of Directors 1:30 p.m.

### October 2016

- Oct. 5th – MAPA Annual Meeting Beardmore Event Center 6 p.m.
- Oct. 10th – MAPA Offices Closed Columbus Day
- Oct. 12th – Heartland 2050 Executive Committee 8 a.m.
- Oct. 15th – 2016 NADO Annual Training  
Oct. 18th – Conference San Antonio, TX
- Oct. 19th – Finance Committee 8:30 a.m.  
Coordinated Transit Committee 10:30 a.m.
- Oct. 21st – Transportation Technical Advisory Committee 10 a.m.
- Oct. 27th – MAPA Board of Directors 1:30 p.m.



**Metropolitan Area Planning Agency**

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## Heartland 2050 kicks off “Broadly Speaking” speaker series in September

Don't miss out on the excitement. “Broadly Speaking,” a series of speaker events presented by Heartland 2050, kicks off in September with a presentation by Zach Mannheimer. Mannheimer is the founder of the Des Moines Social Club who now serves as the Vice President of Creative Placemaking for Iowa Business Growth.

Mannheimer will share an inspiring message on how millennials can become the region's future leaders. “Broadly Speaking” with Zach Mannheimer starts Thursday, September 15, 2016 at 6 p.m. at No More Empty Cups at 1502 South 10th Street in Omaha. He will lead a walk down 10th Street to the Bancroft Market at 10th and Bancroft Streets where his talk will take place. Guests will experience an interactive performance art exhibit on the sidewalk during the trip to the Bancroft Market.

The Broadly Speaking series is made possible by funds from Iowa West Foundation and the Peter Kiewit Foundation.

For more information, go to [heartland2050.org](http://heartland2050.org) or contact Karna Loewenstein, Heartland 2050 Coordinator at [kloewenstein@mapacog.org](mailto:kloewenstein@mapacog.org) or 402-444-6866, ext. 225.

### Broadly Speaking

Zach Mannheimer

Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

Founder of Des Moines Social Club

Vice President of Creative Placemaking  
Iowa Business Growth

Kick off at No More Empty Cups at 1502 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street and experience an interactive performance art exhibit on the sidewalk down South 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Bancroft Market. Hear a challenging message from Zach on how millennials can take ownership of our collective future.



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PETER KIEWIT  
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