

What's Happening

for Community Leaders

November/December 2016

West Broadway reconstruction in Council Bluffs to begin in Spring 2017

One of Council Bluffs' main corridors will undergo significant changes beginning in 2017. The West Broadway Reconstruction Project gets underway in March with work on Segment 1, the area from 36th Street to near 33rd Street. During this phase, water main improvements will also be made from 34th to 36th Streets.

The City of Council Bluffs hosted a public meeting December 6 to inform residents and business owners about the work which will be taking place during Segment 1 of the project. The West Broadway Reconstruction Project will be completed in five stages across five years. It encompasses West Broadway from 36th Street to 15th Street and will start at the west end and continue east.

The goal is to preserve and enhance the economic vitality of Council Bluffs by improving the first impression people receive when traveling into the city on West Broadway. Handling traffic needs through improved future traffic operations and improving pedestrian and traffic safety are top priorities within the project.

Figures shared at the public meeting show there were 369 crashes on West Broadway from 2010 to 2014, more than twice the statewide average crash rate for similar corridors. City officials also point to deteriorating pavement and

improving pedestrian accommodations, including meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as other needs that will be met by the reconstruction project.

There are multiple access points along West Broadway including seven signal intersections, 12 intersections without signals and approximately 100 private driveways. Planned improvements include eliminating and consolidating access where possible and reducing left turn lanes from West Broadway through improvements such as raised medians.

During the Segment 1 reconstruction, local West Broadway traffic can access businesses through existing driveways or by using designated alternate routes. The public is urged to take advantage of two detours which will be established. Westbound travelers should use Avenue A, while those traveling eastbound should take 2nd Avenue.

Throughout the reconstruction there will be enhancements to drainage infrastructure, removal and replacement of pavement and sidewalks and aesthetic improvements. These include LED street lights and pedestrian lights, planters, brick paving and ornamental fencing, special intersection paving at five key locations, special two-way left turn pavement type, planted medians and bus stops.



Complete Streets Omaha hosts open house to assess community needs on city streets

The City of Omaha is working to implement the Complete Streets Policy passed by the City Council in August 2015. In late October, city planners hosted an open house to assess the needs of the community when traveling on city streets. They asked those in attendance to provide information on what they enjoy about using other modes of transportation on city streets such as walking, biking and taking the bus, what concerns they have and what prevents them from traveling by other modes.

Complete Streets is a transportation policy and approach to design that requires streets be planned, designed, operated and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

The City and its stakeholders committee are starting high level discussions on the themes and topics to include as part of the creation of a Complete Streets Omaha Design Guide. An informal rough draft of the design guide is expected in early 2017.



Metro Transit planner Evan Schweitz talks with a member of the public about the City of Omaha's Complete Streets Policy at the open house event.

Heartland 2050 meets with outer counties for input on region's transportation priorities

MAPA took its Heartland 2050 project on the road in mid-November to five of the counties in the project boundary area to gather feedback for developing a regional transportation vision.

The Heartland 2050 project is creating a Regional Transportation Vision for the eight county region. This is a larger area than the MAPA Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that covers Douglas, Sarpy and western Pottawattamie Counties.

MAPA received valuable feedback during workshops for the public and stakeholders. Five common areas of focus emerged. Representatives from each county want to identify significant regional transportation corridors that connect the counties in the project boundary area and identify funding opportunities for bypass systems to handle heavy truck traffic which is preventing further development along each community's "main street." Attendees also voiced a desire to move forward with trail connections north to south along the Missouri River to build bike infrastructure which connects the commute to the metro area,

develop land bank legislation for future housing and expand wireless and broadband utility coordination throughout the counties.

Additional meetings in each of the five counties are anticipated in 2017.



MAPA Interim Transportation Manager Michael Helgerson works with community members in the Heartland 2050 region to prioritize transportation corridors in all counties.

Harvard Economics professor emphasizes investment in education and entrepreneurs

Investing in education is key to keeping a city's economy growing and so are economic diversity and inclusiveness. Those were among the messages Harvard Economics professor and Urban Economist Edward Glaeser imparted to the region's leaders at the Greater Omaha Chamber's Economic Outlook Luncheon in November.



Glaeser said it's critical for cities to focus on early-education programs, reward good teachers with good pay and emphasize science and math education.

"Formal schooling is part of the picture," said Glaeser. He pointed to attracting talented people and making investments in entrepreneurship as

other ways to build Omaha's economy. "Attract and train smart people and then get out of their way."

Glaeser emphasized how cities play a key role in the prosperity of the country. "There's a relationship between income and population density," said Glaeser. "Density and productivity go hand in hand. Cities connect people. Cities are becoming more important."

Glaeser said transportation helps drive connections between people and economic opportunities. Infrastructure and economic development are important he said but redeveloping an existing project is a better use of resources than building new facilities only. "Returns on maintaining old projects are much higher than the cost of building new projects. Do smaller projects which make sense. Infrastructure is vital but it's only as good as the humanity which meets the needs of the people."

Federal government designates Alternative Fuel Corridors

Interstate 80 and portions of US-6 running through the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area are among those designated as Alternative Fuel Corridors by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This provides formal corridor designation now and in the future to build out a national network to support infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles. It is also the first step to placing signage along these routes directing motorists with alternative fuel vehicles to locations where they can access electrical vehicle charging stations as well as natural gas (CNG) and propane (LPG) filling stations.

MAPA nominated US-6 for consideration as an Alternative Fuel Corridor while the Nebraska Energy Office nominated Interstate 80. Iowa was a part of a larger coalition, stretching from New Jersey to the MAPA region, which also nominated Interstate 80.

Two categories exist for the designations. One is for those roadways which have sufficient alternative fuel facilities to

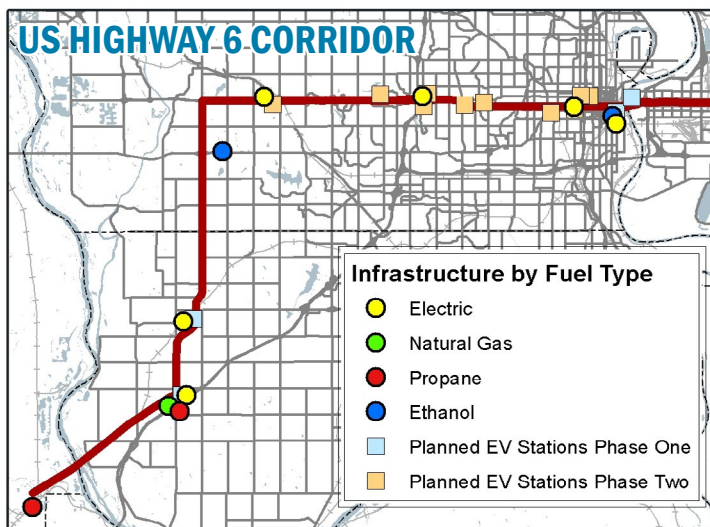
merit highway signs, while the other is for roadways, which may add signs once they add more infrastructure for alternative fuels.

The FHWA determined I-80 from Omaha to Lincoln has sufficient alternative fuel facilities now for natural gas to warrant highway signs. For electric vehicles, I-80 from the Iowa border

to Lincoln, Kearney to Lexington and North Platte to Ogallala received a similar designation.

The entire length of US-6 from the intersection with Route 31 in Gretna to the intersection with I-80 in Council Bluffs is designated for possible future highway signage for electric charging stations and natural gas and propane filling stations if additional facilities are added. The same status applies to I-80 from Lincoln to Kearney, Lexington to North Platte and Ogallala to the Nebraska/Wyoming border.

"Improving public access to alternative fuels benefits the environment by improving air quality and reducing emissions which create ground-level ozone," said Greg Youell, MAPA Executive Director. "In addition alternative fuel vehicles save motorists money and make the region more competitive as several major auto manufacturers are planning to launch electric vehicle models in 2017 and 2018."



We'd like to extend our many thanks to two dedicated members of MAPA's Board of Directors, Sarpy County Commissioner Tom Richards (left) and Mills County Supervisor Ron Kohn (right).

Tom and Ron's terms in office end in December 2016. We will miss their dedicated service to MAPA and our member communities. Thank you both for your hard work all of these years!

CALENDAR

January 2017

- Jan. 2nd – New Year's Day Observed
MAPA Offices closed
- Jan. 4th – Nebraska Legislature
Convenes
- Jan. 9th – Iowa Legislature Convenes
- Jan. 11th – Heartland 2050 Executive
Committee
8 a.m.
RPA Policy/Tech Committee
11 a.m.
Council of Officials
- Jan. 16th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
MAPA Offices closed
- Jan. 18th – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- Jan. 20th – Transportation Technical
Advisory Committee
10 a.m.
- Jan. 26th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

February 2017

- Feb. 8th – RPA Policy/Tech Committee
11 a.m.
- Feb. 12th – National Conference of Regions
Feb. 15th (NARC)
Washington D.C.
- Feb. 15th – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- Feb. 17th – Transportation Technical
Advisory Committee
10 a.m.
- Feb. 20th – Presidents' Day
MAPA Offices closed
- Feb. 23rd – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.
- Feb. 27th – League of Nebraska
Feb. 28th Municipalities



Back row: Grant Anderson, Greg Youell, Gary Young, Josh Corrigan, Michael Helgerson, Chuck Karpf, Court Barber, Owen Stuckey
Middle row: Madi Woodrum, Fabiola Alikpokou, Sue Cutsforth, Amanda Morales, Karna Loewenstein
Front row: Annie Pigaga, Jeff Spiehs, Megan Walker, Patti McCoy, Melissa Engel, Matt Roth
Not Pictured: Natasha Barrett, Christina Brownell

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