

What's Happening

for Community Leaders

January/February 2017

MAPA hosts autonomous vehicle technology forum with HDR expert

Smarter vehicle technology is not just in the works, an industry expert projects some aspects of this technology will be in passenger vehicles by 2023 as the result of a proposed federal rule.

Ben Pierce, the Autonomous Vehicle/Connected Vehicle Program Manager for HDR, Inc., said under a proposed rule of the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), automakers must include vehicle-to-vehicle communication technology in all light-duty vehicles by 2023. This technology, known in the industry as "Connected Vehicles," allows these automobiles and trucks to communicate with each other through a special wireless protocol.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) said the vehicle-to-vehicle technology has the potential to improve safety on the nation's roadways by preventing hundreds of thousands of crashes every year.

Pierce said connected vehicles are one of the main types of driver-assisted technology and partial automation that exists currently or will be available in the next five to six years.

Autonomous vehicles, another emerging technology, use video cameras or a special radar known as LiDAR, which picks up signals through sensors to help vehicles determine their path and place in the roadway.

And that technology is where one of the greatest challenges may exist; how autonomous vehicles read or sense the roadway and

what is in it. "What optical cameras need to sense items in the roadway is different than what LiDAR cameras need," said Pierce. "We may have to change our thought processes about where we put vehicles and in which lanes."

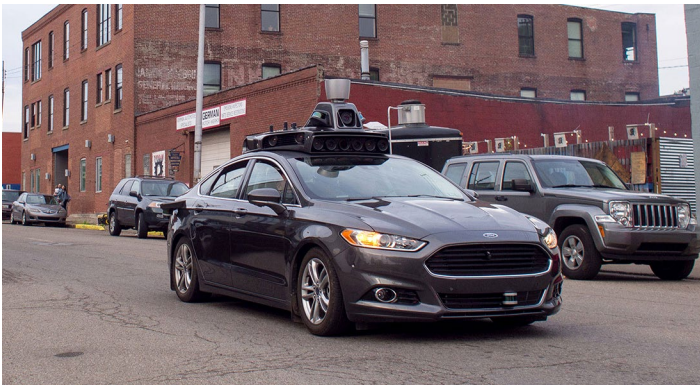


Ben Pierce, HDR, Inc., prepares to show a video that demonstrates how connected vehicles communicate, which could help improve safety for drivers and pedestrians.

Pierce and the City of Columbus, Ohio are part of a project that is changing the way cities and planners view transportation and its role in American society. Columbus, Ohio won the U.S. DOT Smart City Challenge beating 77 other applicants and secured a \$40 million grant from the U.S. DOT along with a \$10 million grant from Vulcan, Inc.

It will use the program to focus on reducing infant mortality in one of the Columbus's poorest neighborhoods. Under the Smart City Challenge, Pierce said Columbus started looking at "transportation as a means to solve societal issues, not the problem to solve." He pointed to extensive partnerships between the public and private sectors and community collaboration as two key elements behind the City's successful application. The project in several ways mirrors elements and goals of MAPA's Heartland 2050 regional visioning project.

Pierce made his presentation at an event sponsored jointly by MAPA and Heartland 2050, with support from HDR, Inc. The event was attended by MAPA staff, members, and project partners from non-profits and local businesses.



In Pittsburgh, Uber is currently testing autonomous vehicles with LiDAR, a type of radar that uses sensors to determine where the vehicle should be in the road.

Heartland 2050 to host Winter Summit March 23rd at Salvation Army Kroc Center

With Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) slated to be up and running in Omaha in late 2018, the metro area looks to the future for a more unified transportation system but how do we make the dream become a reality?

Join Heartland 2050 at its 2017 Winter Summit featuring keynote speaker Joe Reardon of Kansas City, Kansas for ideas on how to make it possible.

Reardon knows what it takes to build metro-wide consensus for a more unified transportation system because he's done it.

He has been able to pull together diverse interests for unified causes during his time as Mayor of Kansas City, Kansas and as the head of the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, and now as leader of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce.

Learn more about the approach that put the plans in place for a more unified transportation system at the 2017 Winter Summit from 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Thursday, March 23 at the Salvation Army Omaha Kroc Center located at 2825 Y Street in Omaha.

To register for the Winter Summit, visit H2050.eventbrite.com.



Sarpy County Transit Study recommendations call for multiple transit components

Faced with the fastest-growing population in the state of Nebraska, Sarpy County joined MAPA one year ago in conducting a study to assess additional transit services that would be beneficial in dealing with traffic congestion and increasing mobility of residents and access to jobs.

The study's recommended alternative, released by MAPA in January, shows the best way to meet the future public transportation needs of Sarpy County is a Higher Density Network, which includes multiple transit components.

The recommendation includes short-term, medium-term and long-term enhancements. Short-term improvements are those which could occur within one to 10 years while medium-term changes would likely take 11 to 20 years and long-term enhancements would take from 20 to 30 years to be put in place.

Short-term changes include expanding the existing express transit routes which serve Bellevue and Papillion currently and county-wide demand response transit, implementing specific fixed routes in higher density areas, and developing infrastructure such as intelligent technology along primary roadways and park and ride lots. Creating partnerships with Uber-type services and the statewide Vanpool program and coordinating lead dispatch with all Sarpy County providers and Metro are among the near-term enhancements also.

The recommendation for creating new express routes includes the North Omaha Express Route and the Gretna/Bellevue Express Route. The North Omaha Express Route would link North Omaha to the primary employment corridor along L Street and to the employment base south of Interstate 80 near Harrison. The Gretna/Bellevue Express Route would operate along Highway 370 connecting the County from east to west. The estimated cost for capital and operating expenses for short-term enhancements is more than \$58 million.

Medium-term enhancements include expanding express routes

and fixed transit routes and developing additional infrastructure to support future high-capacity roadways and park and ride lots.

Long-term enhancements include expanding infrastructure for high-capacity transit routes and adjusting fixed route service to complete a high-capacity roadway.

The recommendations from all three technical reports produced during the study will be compiled into one report and presented to the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners.

MAPA recommends more studies be conducted including a regional park and ride study and a high-capacity corridor study to assess additional needs.

Any decisions on implementing any recommendations from the Sarpy County Transit Study rest with the County and the municipalities within its boundaries.

Access the Technical Memorandum 3 on the MAPA website at <http://mapacog.org/data-maps/sarpy-county-transit-study-recommendation/>



Residents of Sarpy County review MAPA's recommendations for public transit after a year-long study on additional transit services in the area.

MAPA offers grant services through EfficientGov partnership

Looking for a single source where your community can find information about multiple grants? MAPA may have the answer. We are pleased to announce our partnership with **EfficientGov**, an information service that tracks innovative solutions to fiscal and operational challenges facing cities and towns across the country.



EfficientGov provides local government leaders with unlimited access to information and tools that help reduce the cost and improve the efficiency of government. With this partnership, MAPA members will each receive a single

license to access **GrantFinder**, the largest searchable database of private, state, and federal grants available to municipalities and local non-profits.

If you are interested in receiving access, please contact MAPA with the following information: MAPA community name, name of person who will have access, title, email, and phone number.

If you are new to **GrantFinder**, a five-minute tour with MAPA's Account Manager can be scheduled for MAPA members at a time convenient for your schedule.

Efficientgov offers a free newsletter so do not forget to subscribe. Back copies can be found here: <http://efficientgov.com/newsletter/>

For more information about **EfficientGov** and **GrantFinder**, visit www.efficientgov.com.

MAPA participates in JumpStart Challenge problem solving

How do we encourage residents to move about the community without a car? That's the problem MAPA presented recently to teams of young business and information technology professionals at the JumpStart Challenge hosted by the Startup Collaborative.

In addition to MAPA, the City of Omaha and Metro Community College also presented problems to the teams.

In the JumpStart Challenge, teams develop a concept for solving one of the challenges presented and put it into a business model which can be expanded to launch a startup business. The teams will showcase their solutions at an event on February 21.

Presentations are judged on scalability of concept, presentation and sales skills and methods, rigor of customer validation and creative innovation. Judges will select three winning teams who will each receive a \$2,500 prize provided by the three

organizations presenting the problems to be solved along with \$1,200 toward a year-long fellowship with the Startup Collaborative. Representatives from the participating organizations will mentor the winning teams by helping guide the concepts into companies.

The Startup Collaborative focuses on company and community building with the overall goal of improving the odds of startup success dramatically. Check back to MAPA's next edition of the newsletter for the JumpStart Challenge results.



Community Relations Manager Jeff Spiehs (left) and Transportation and Data Manager Mike Helgersen answer questions from participants in the JumpStart Challenge on February 7th.

CALENDAR

March 2017

March 8th – RPA Policy/Tech Committee
11 a.m.

March 12th – Daylight Saving Time begins
Set clocks ahead one hour

March 15th – Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.

March 20th – NADO Washington Policy
March 22nd Conference
Arlington, VA

March 22nd – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.

March 23rd – Heartland 2050 Winter Summit

March 24th – Transportation Technical
Advisory Committee
10 a.m.

March 30th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

April 2017

April 12th – RPA Policy/Tech Committee
11 a.m.

April 19th – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.

April 21st – Transportation Technical
Advisory Committee
10 a.m.

April 22nd – Earth Day

April 27th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

April 28th – Arbor Day (Nebraska)

MAPA hires two new managers for Community & Economic Development and Transportation

We're excited to announce two new managers at the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA).

Don Gross, the former Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Council Bluffs, is MAPA's new Community and Economic Development Manager. Mike Helgerson is now the Transportation and Data Manager.

Our members may recognize Don from his previous career with the City of Council Bluffs. He retired in December 2016 after playing a key role in securing Council Bluffs development projects during the past three decades.

Mike, a Transportation Planner with MAPA since 2013, has managed many of the agency's transportation projects during this time. Prior to his work at MAPA, Mike spent five years at other public agencies in community development and grant administration.

Both of them bring a great amount of knowledge and experience to their positions and are here to serve you and the MAPA region.



DON GROSS
Community and Economic
Development Manager



MIKE HELGERSON
Transportation and Data
Manager

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MAPA is an EOE/DBE employer