

# What's Happening

## for Community Leaders

May/June 2017

## Gretna seeks input while planning Downtown Revitalization project

Sidewalk design, lighting, public spaces, building design and materials and parking. These are just some of the options the City of Gretna is asking residents to evaluate as its downtown revitalization project gets underway.

The City hosted the first of two open houses June 14 to show residents elements to consider as it begins to form a downtown redevelopment plan.

The Downtown Revitalization Plan Study Area includes a stretch of McKenna Avenue in the City's central business district just north of Burns Place and south to the Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church approximately.



Consultant Steve Jensen explains options for Gretna's Downtown Revitalization plan to residents at an open house.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) awarded Gretna \$26,550 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to develop a downtown redevelopment plan; one that would preserve the city's historic buildings and generate new businesses.

JEO Consulting is developing a design for the street and sidewalk areas looking at things like downtown attractions, pedestrian improvements, green infrastructure, lighting, active sidewalks and streetscape amenities.

Gretna's project serves as the pilot for the Main Street toolkit for determining a preferred development concept. Project Consultant and Heartland 2050 Consultant Steve Jensen adapted the toolkit for Gretna's use.

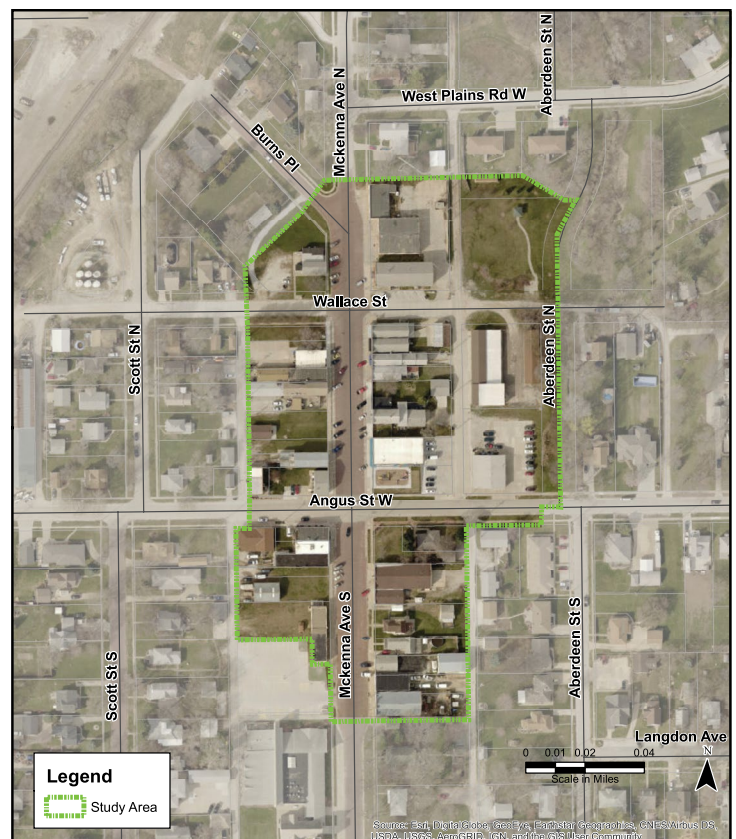
"It's a prototype of guidelines which can go into the city code," said Jensen. The guiding principles provide standards for neighborhoods and guidelines for city developers. Funding for

the toolkit is being provided by MAPA. "It is a form-based code tailored to Midwestern cities. It helps keep costs down and is easy to replicate," said Jensen. These are aspects that can be helpful to smaller communities with limited funding to spend on a downtown redevelopment plan.

Feedback from residents who attended the open house on June 14 will be compiled and presented at the next open house for the project, which is scheduled for 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on July 26. A location has not been determined.

A stakeholder group is providing input on the development plan as well. The preferred concept will be presented to the Gretna City Council for approval on August 15.

Future steps include applying to the NDED for additional funds to support redevelopment projects once the City has raised all necessary local match.



## Enterprise introduces vanpool service as rideshare option for Nebraska commuters

For those looking to save money and time on their commute, there's a new option in Nebraska: Rideshare by Enterprise.

Enterprise is now offering a rideshare service for vanpools of five or more riders. This service works for those who have a group of coworkers wanting to commute together or a person who is looking to join a group. A designated coordinator will choose a start date, a meeting time, and how many sites will be determined for pick up.

Riders will pay a monthly rate for the vanpooling and the following benefits:

- A reliable Enterprise provided vehicle (van, crossover, or SUV)
- Scheduled service and maintenance for the vanpool vehicle
- 24-hour roadside assistance
- Primary auto liability insurance
- Enterprise administrative support and customer service
- Monthly scheduling flexibility
- A guaranteed ride home

Not only can Enterprise Rideshare save commuters money by not using their own personal cars, but it can also help relieve

the stress of a busy commute and provide time to focus on something else, such as reading, catching up on emails, or just taking a quick nap before work. Vanpooling also helps relieve congestion on our roadways and reduces pollutants which cause ground-level ozone, a form of air pollution.

If you or your coworkers are interested in starting or joining a vanpool with Enterprise Rideshare, contact Cynthia Kinning at [Cynthia.e.kinning@ehi.com](mailto:Cynthia.e.kinning@ehi.com) or visit [EnterpriseRideshare.com](http://EnterpriseRideshare.com).



**Rideshare**  
by Enterprise

### Improve your commute

With 5 or more people, you can start a rideshare group with Enterprise

Save time and money and make your commute less stressful

Reduce congestions on our roads and help improve our ground-level ozone

## Work begins on first phase of Pottawattamie County's Railroad Highway Multi-Use Trail

Trails in Pottawattamie County will have a new connection in the coming years. Community, philanthropic and conservation leaders broke ground June 10 on the new Railroad Highway Multi-Use Trail.

The trail begins at the Smith Wildlife Area in Council Bluffs near the intersection of Railroad Highway and Husker Lane and will continue to Underwood, eventually connecting to Neola. Work is underway on the first segment of the trail, which will be nearly two miles long.

The 17-mile concrete trail to Neola will be part of the Frontier Regional Trails System (FIT). Mark Shoemaker with the Pottawattamie County Trails Association (PCTA) says the plan for this section of the trail is to continue north and connect with the efforts Shelby County is pursuing but also continue east through Pottawattamie County and reach the communities of Minden, Avoca and Walnut. Other trails that have been identified by the PCTA are from Council Bluffs to Crescent/Hitchcock and north to Missouri Valley.

The Pottawattamie County Trails Association expects the first

portion of construction to be completed this year. The estimated cost of the total project is \$5.4 million.



The Iowa West Foundation awarded a \$1.1 million grant toward trail construction with more funds expected. MAPA secured \$425,000 through Iowa DOT. Federal and state recreation grants, funds from the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors along with additional philanthropic contributions are other funding sources. The Pottawattamie County Trails Association is working on additional fundraising. The PCTA says biking in Iowa generates nearly \$364,000,000 annually to the state's economy.

## MAPA releases its FY2018-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to public

MAPA released the Draft FY2018-FY2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for public comment on May 25. A link to the TIP is available at <http://mapacog.org/projects/tip>.

Each year, MAPA develops the TIP in cooperation with state and local governments and public transit operators. The TIP document lists all transportation projects programmed for four fiscal years which are funded federally and are significant

regionally. The TIP includes projects for roadways and trails, public transit and aviation projects throughout the Omaha-Council Bluffs region.

The public comment period for this draft document ends June 26, 2017. Comments submitted will be included with the final version of the TIP which will be presented to the MAPA Board of Directors for approval at its monthly meeting on June 29, 2017.



## MAPA assists City of Omaha with Fair Housing Assessment

MAPA in assisting the City of Omaha with its efforts to assess and improve access to fair housing for all residents. MAPA staff facilitated a series of meetings in June with multiple community groups for the City's fair housing assessment.

All communities receiving federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development must first complete an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) in order to continue receiving assistance. The AFH is a planning process through which communities use data, maps, and local knowledge to identify fair housing issues and develop local strategies to address them. By way of rigorous stakeholder and engaged community dialogue, the AFH helps both community leaders and residents share in the process.

During a meeting on June 16, participants from the development community identified several recurring themes in the struggle to provide and secure access to fair housing. These issues include: concentrated poverty, lack of investment in some areas, inadequate access to quality transportation and gentrification causing economic displacement that is not balanced by the development of affordable housing. The group also addressed more uncomfortable issues such as the lack of political will, misperceptions of affordable housing, NIMBYism or the "Not In My Backyard" attitude, inadequate regard toward communities with disabilities and ADA compliance and

discrimination.

"Nobody wants to talk about these things but now we have to," said Rhonda Uher of the City of Omaha Human Rights and Relations Department.

In 2015, Heartland 2050 completed the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA) that analyzed segregation, racial and ethnic concentration of poverty in Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Saunders and Washington Counties in Nebraska; Pottawattamie, Harrison and Mills Counties in Iowa. The FHEA provides a framework for the Assessment of Fair Housing. The Assessment of Fair Housing will provide relevant guidance on public investment and policies that can help alleviate or lessen the concentration of poverty and reduce racial and ethnic segregation.

For more information on other meetings in July, visit [www.affh.cityofomaha.org](http://www.affh.cityofomaha.org).



MAPA Community Relations Manager Jeff Spiehs leads a meeting at MAPA offices about the City of Omaha's Assessment of Fair Housing on June 16, 2017.

## MAPA board members elected to NARC leadership

The National Association of Regional Councils elects its 2017-2018 leadership at its recent 51st Annual Conference in Monterey, California and two MAPA board members are on the NARC Board of Directors.

MAPA Board Chair and Bellevue Mayor Rita Sanders returns to the NARC Board as Region VII Director. Supervisor Carol Vinton from Mills

County, Iowa, who began serving on the MAPA Board of Directors in January, is a newly-elected NARC Board member. Supervisor Vinton will serve as a director for Region XI.

MAPA Executive Director Greg Youell continues to serve on NARC's Executive Director Council.



MAPA board members, Carol Vinton (2nd) and Rita Sanders (3rd), take oath for NARC Board of Directors.

## CALENDAR

### July 2017

- July 4th – Independence Day  
MAPA Offices Closed
- July 12th – Heartland 2050 Executive Committee  
8 a.m.  
RPA Policy/Tech Committee  
11 a.m.
- July 19th – Finance Committee  
8:30 a.m.  
Coordinated Transit  
10:30 a.m.
- July 21st – Transportation Technical Advisory Committee  
10 a.m.
- July 27th – MAPA Board of Directors  
1:30 p.m.

### August 2017

- Aug. 9th – RPA Policy/Tech Committee  
11 a.m.
- Aug. 16th – Coordinated Transit  
10:30 a.m.
- Aug. 23rd – Finance Committee  
8:30 a.m.  
ISAC Annual Conference  
Des Moines, IA  
Aug. 23-25
- Aug. 25th – Transportation Technical Advisory Committee  
10 a.m.
- Aug. 31st – MAPA Board of Directors  
1:30 p.m.

## Travis Halm joins MAPA's Transportation Department in late May as Associate Planner

MAPA adds a new planner to its staff. Travis Halm began working at MAPA on May 30, 2017 as an Associate Transportation Planner.

Travis is from Haverhill, Iowa, in Marshall County. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Community and Regional Planning from Iowa State University.

Travis is no stranger to regional Councils of Governments. Prior to arriving at MAPA, Travis worked for the Brazos Valley Council of Governments in Bryan/College Station, Texas where he focused his efforts on coordinated transportation planning.

Travis will be assisting MAPA with its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Coordinated Transit Plan (CTP). He will also be assisting with Heartland 2050 mini-grant projects and will be the staff lead on the future Transit Return on Investment study.



**TRAVIS HALM**  
Transportation Planner

### **Metropolitan Area Planning Agency**

2222 Cuming St., Omaha, NE 68102-4328

P: 402.444.6866 F: 402.951.6517

Email: [mapa@mapacog.org](mailto:mapa@mapacog.org)

MAPA is an EOE/DBE employer