Celebrating 50 years of MAPA

As MAPA turns 50 years old this year, it seems important to look at where MAPA started, and all that has happened since the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency formed in 1967.
Speaking Officially

As we reflect on the accomplishments of this past year, we also celebrate MAPA’s 50th Anniversary as a Regional Council of Governments.

Since 1967, MAPA has worked to help secure funding for and provide support to its member communities through the services it offers.

Within the pages of this Annual Report you will find developments on several MAPA projects which occurred in 2017.

A few of the highlights include:

• Completion of the Sarpy County Transit Feasibility Study and the final report and recommendations on ways to increase access to employment and mobility for residents.

• The City of Walnut concluded revamping its storefront façades as part of its Downtown Revitalization project, funded in part by a Community Development Block Grant secured by MAPA, and began its streetscape portion of the project.

• Heartland 2050 announced the Close the Gap initiative, a clear plan to a more walkable, livable region. It released a white paper on enhanced transit options to improve connectivity, and, ultimately, economic vitality in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region.

Much has changed in the landscape of the MAPA region during the past 50 years and MAPA remains committed to connecting with our communities to help them plan for a prosperous, thriving future.

We are pleased to serve as president of MAPA’s Council of Officials and chair of MAPA’s Board of Directors and look forward to the future.
Heartland 2050 priorities for 2018

**Heartland 2050** is a community driven initiative pulling in stakeholders from across the region to think big and work toward a common vision for our eight-county region anchored by the Omaha-council Bluffs metro area.

**Close the Gap**, the signature initiative for Heartland 2050, is an ambitious vision for a robust transit system with an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning that concentrates growth based on existing development in our region.

### Heartland 2050 MINI-GRANTS

**City of Omaha**
- 13th Street Corridor Walkability Study
- **$100,000**

**Council Bluffs**
- Walkability Master Plan
- **$80,000**

**Sarpy County**
- Arterial & Collector Road Location Study
- **$30,000**

**Metro Transit**
- Transit Development Plan
- **$87,500**

### Regional Transportation Vision

MAPA is developing the inaugural Heartland 2050 Regional Transportation Vision. Stakeholder meetings were conducted in Washington, Saunders and Cass Counties in Nebraska and Mills and Harrison Counties in Iowa.

### Salt Lake City Learning Site Visit

A group of 25 leaders from the region received a firsthand view of how long-term investments in regional collaboration and public transportation can build a prosperous city. They met with community and business leaders, including Envision Utah, a regional plan started more than 20 years ago and known nationally for its culture of collaboration.

### Heartland 2050 Winter Summit

Joe Reardon, president of the Kansas City Area Chamber of Commerce, helped build support for the Ride KC Streetcar as head of the Kansas City Area Transit Authority. He was featured as a keynote at the Heartland 2050 Winter Summit.

### Regional Fair Housing Assessment

Heartland 2050 is convening regional partners in collaboration on the first joint regional fair housing assessment to be completed in 2018. The first rounds of extensive stakeholder engagement were conducted in the summer of 2017.
Sarpy County Transit Feasibility Study completed

MAPA presented the final report from its Sarpy County Transit Feasibility Study to the County Board of Commissioners in July 2017.

The study’s recommended alternative shows the best way to meet the future public transportation needs of Sarpy County is a Higher Density Network, which includes multiple transit components. Olsson Associates served as consultant for the study.

The recommendation includes short-term, medium-term and long-term enhancements.

Business leaders cite a lack of public transportation and the high costs of owning a vehicle as reasons why many jobs, particularly in the service industry, go unfilled.

One of the key businesses in Sarpy County dealing with transportation-related hiring issues is the Embassy Suites location in La Vista. “Public transportation is critical for the continued growth of Sarpy County,” said Tony Moody, General Manager of Embassy Suites La Vista, JQH Hotels and Resorts.

“The low unemployment and tremendous growth of our area causes many local businesses to operate with open positions most of the year. Mass transit would help solve our associate transportation issues while contributing to the local economy and environment.”

To address this issue, the Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce will begin operating a 20-seat van that will transport employees to the Embassy Suites and Oriental Trading Company locations in La Vista. The round trip is estimated to cost the employees less than five dollars.
MTIS moves to final phase to find implementation projects

In 2016, MAPA continued the Metro Travel Improvement Study (MTIS) in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT). This four-year study has identified potential improvements to the region’s major roadways, transit system, and the role that technology can play in addressing challenges we’ll face in the future.

The planning process has served as an opportunity to look at how the state and local investments can be coordinated best to improve the performance of our transportation system.

The final report for the second phase of the project will be available in late 2017 and will detail the many scenarios tested through the study and how projects were evaluated and prioritized.

The final phase of this study will begin in late 2017 and will identify the specific projects that NDOT will carry forward as part of MAPA’s Long Range Transportation Plan. HDR leads the consultant team for this project.

Goal Selection

Please choose your top 4 goals for the region out of the 6 listed below and put a coin in the corresponding jar:

1. Preserve the existing infrastructure: Roads, bridges, trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and buses
2. Improve safety across all modes of transportation to reduce fatalities and serious injuries
3. Maximize the mobility and accessibility of the transportation system in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region for all by providing a greater range of transportation options
4. Keep all costs reasonable and sustainable
5. Improve the ease of access to employment centers for all within the region
6. Improve the mobility and transportation access for the elderly and disabled in the region

Executive Director: Dave Schreiner

Regional Open Space Study 1978

Environmental Resource Analysis Program 1979

Milestones in MAPA history

1975 - 1985
Platte River Bridge Bicycle-Pedestrian Connection

MAPA has been working with representatives from Bellevue, Plattsmouth, Cass County, Sarpy County, Papio Missouri River NRD and the Lower Platte South NRD to discuss the addition of a trail alongside the Platte River bridge with the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT).

NDOT will fund phase one of the project, which is the construction of girders, costing approximately $1.4 million. MAPA, in turn, will contribute $700,000 in funding to another NDOT project in MAPA’s Transportation Management Area (TMA). The bridge connection provides a critical link in a network that will connect Plattsmouth to Bellevue and the rest of the metro area ultimately.

First phase begins for Pottawattamie County’s Railroad Trail

Work is underway on the new Railroad Highway Multi-Use Trail in Pottawattamie County. The trail begins at the Smith Wildlife Area in Council Bluffs and will continue to Underwood, eventually connecting to Neola.

The first segment of the trail will be nearly two miles long when completed. Funding for the project is a combination of grants, contributions and fundraising and includes $425,000 MAPA secured through the Iowa Department of Transportation (IowaDOT) for the $5.4 million project.
Gretna Downtown Revitalization

The City of Gretna will focus its downtown revitalization efforts on a streetscape concept. Approved by the City Council in August, the streetscape concept in the downtown revitalization plan includes curb bump-outs, pedestrian scale lighting, a splash pad, street trees and planting areas along with stairs and a bench proposed for the west side of McKenna Avenue, the City’s main downtown street.

MAPA provided the funding for the Main Street toolkit used to determine the preferred development concept, which was developed by project consultant and Heartland 2050 Consultant Steve Jensen. MAPA is working with the City of Gretna to secure Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the project in 2018.

Walnut Downtown Revitalization

Walnut, Iowa’s downtown received a facelift in 2017. Sixteen store fronts along main street in “Iowa’s Antique City” received façade upgrades. A streetscape project began during the summer. It includes upgrades and ADA accessibility improvements to sidewalks, upgrades to curbs and gutters and work to straighten and level the downtown road made of cobblestone.

MAPA helped secure a $300,000 revitalization grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, which funded part of the improvements.
Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

MAPA secured $315,000 in funding from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for its new housing rehabilitation program.

The program for low and moderate income individuals will begin initially in the communities of Valley and Waterloo, Nebraska.

$250,000 will fund the rehabilitation of 10 homes. The remaining funds will be used for lead based paint testing, housing administration and grant administration.

The Cities of Valley and Waterloo will provide 15 percent of the matching funds for the program. Both communities have a high percentage of homes greater than 75 years old, approximately 175 homes between both cities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FUNDING
(FY2012 - FY2017)

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Solid Waste Study 1990 - 1992
Council Bluffs Interstate Needs Study 1997
Metro Area Motorist Assist Program 1997 - Present
Nishnabotna Watershed

A collaborative program is underway to conserve and improve the East and West Nishnabotna Watershed Districts. The Nishnabotna River flows through Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska, and into the Missouri River. The soil in the area is susceptible to erosion in particular. The Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA) says $1.1 billion in damage has accumulated along the West Nishnabotna River Watershed from damaged bridges, utility lines, culverts, farmlands and sediment deposition from post-channelization stream bank erosion.

To mitigate these issues the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the State of Iowa a $96.9 million grant for the IWA, a program to improve watersheds across Iowa. MAPA is conducting grant administration and compliance for Mills County as part of this collaborative program. Projects in the program will aim to improve water quality and mitigate flooding.

**SOURCE OF FUNDS**

- Federal 56.3%
- MAPA Special Projects 15.3%
- Member Support 11.6%
- In-kind Revenue 9.8%
- State 4.6%
- Other 2.4%

**APPLICATION OF FUNDS**

- Program Expenses 86%
  - Studies & local sub-contracts 56.3%
  - Transportation 15.3%
  - Heartland 2050 9.8%
  - Regional assistance 4.6%
- Administrative Expenses 14%
  - Administration 11.6%
  - Forums 1.4%
  - Public Information 1%

*Executive Director: Paul Mullen*

*Milestones in MAPA history*

- 2003 - 2012: First NIROC Aerial Photography
- 2004: Iowa West C.I.T.I.E.S. program created
The preparation of this publication is financed through planning grants from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation through Iowa DOT and the Nebraska Dept. of Roads as Provided by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration and the Economic Development Administration and through local funds from member jurisdictions. The views and opinions MAPA expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U.S. Department of Transportation or the Economic Development Administration.
MEMBERSHIP
5 COUNTIES
38 CITIES & TOWNS
19 SPECIAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES
1 REGION

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Executive Director
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Community and Economic Development Planner
Court Barber
Transportation Planner
Natasha Barrett
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Christina Brownell
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Jeff Spiehs
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Owen Stuckey
GIS Technician
Megan Walker
Transportation Planner
Madi Woodrum
Intern
Gary Young
Transportation Planner

* Employee who contributed to FY2017 programs but is no longer employed at MAPA.