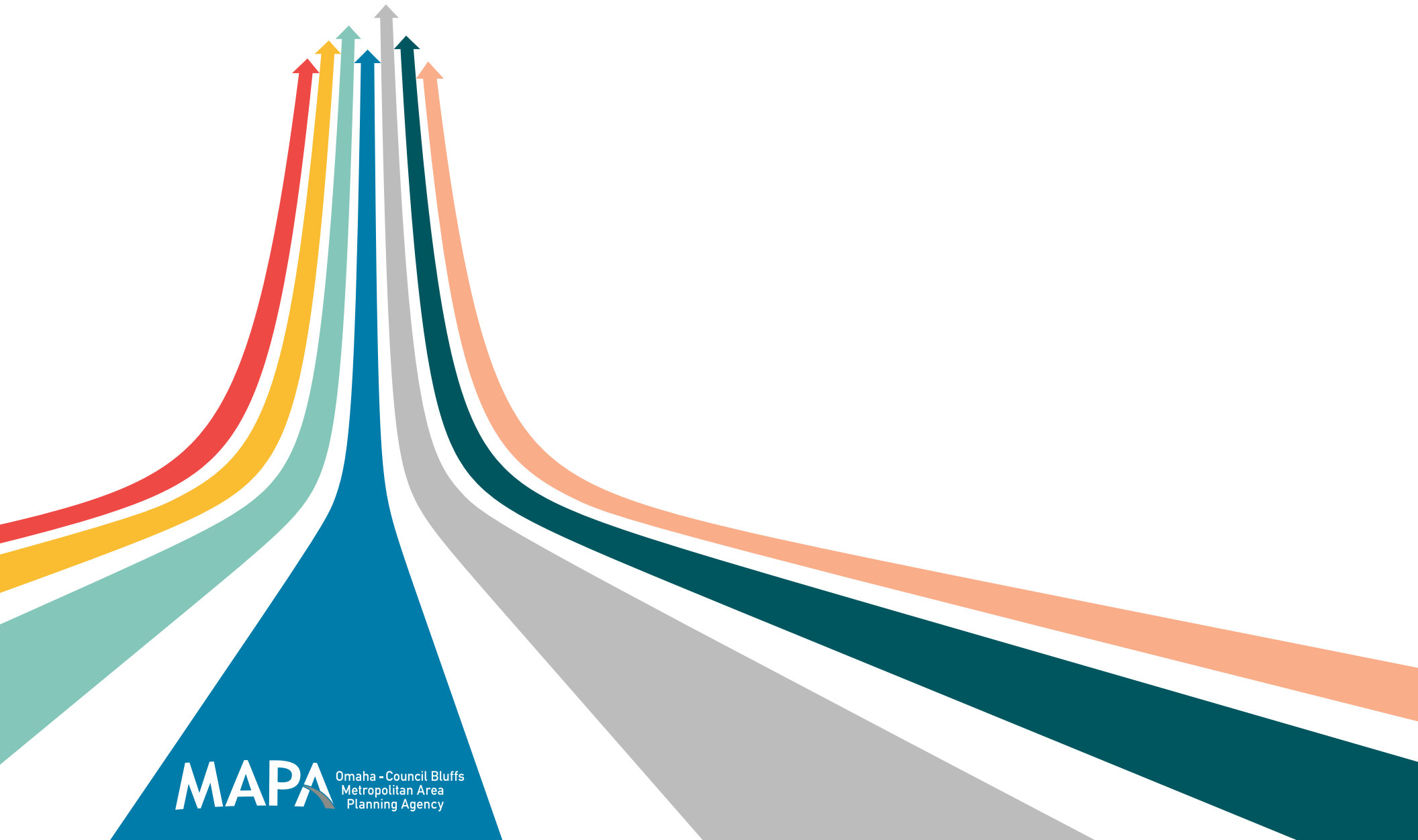


2020 **COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**



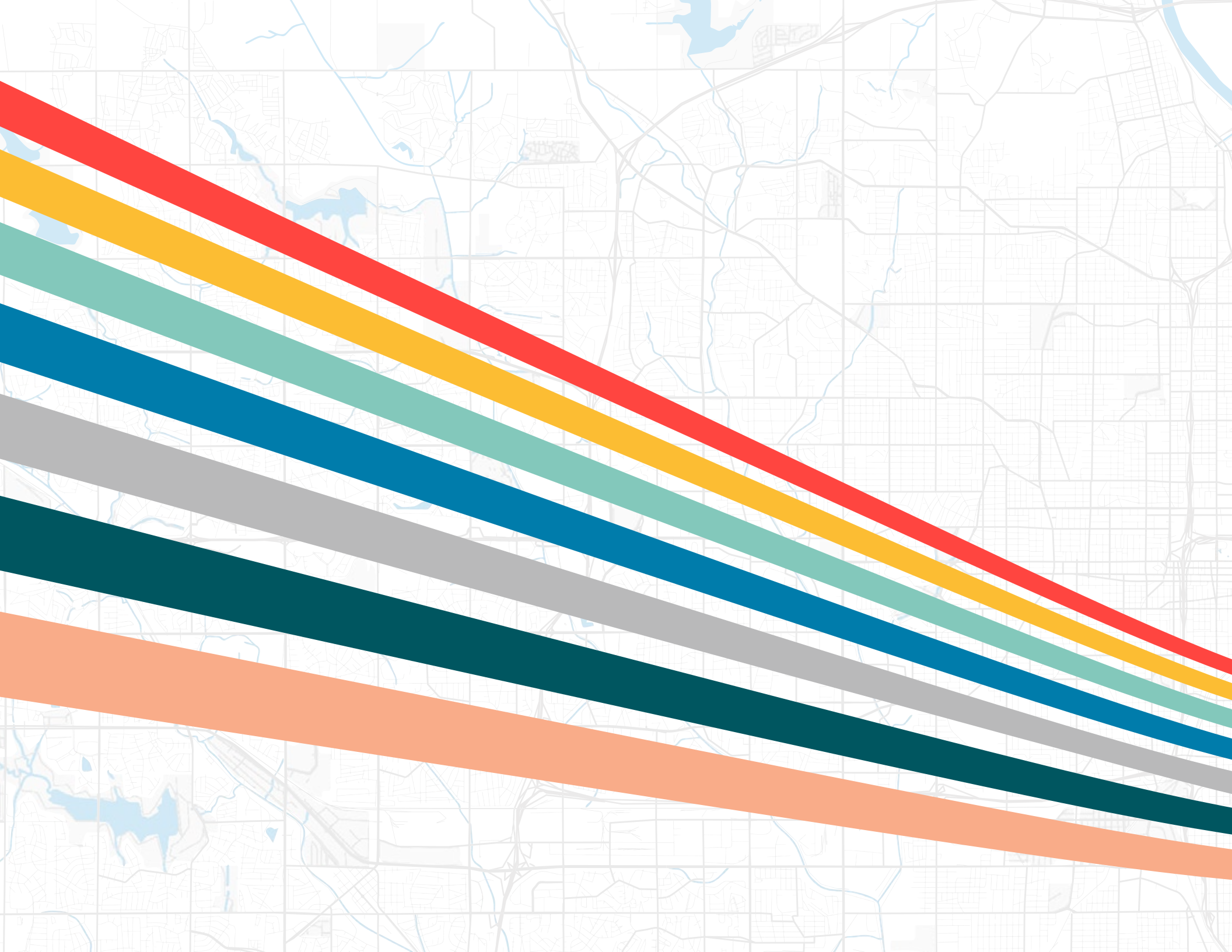


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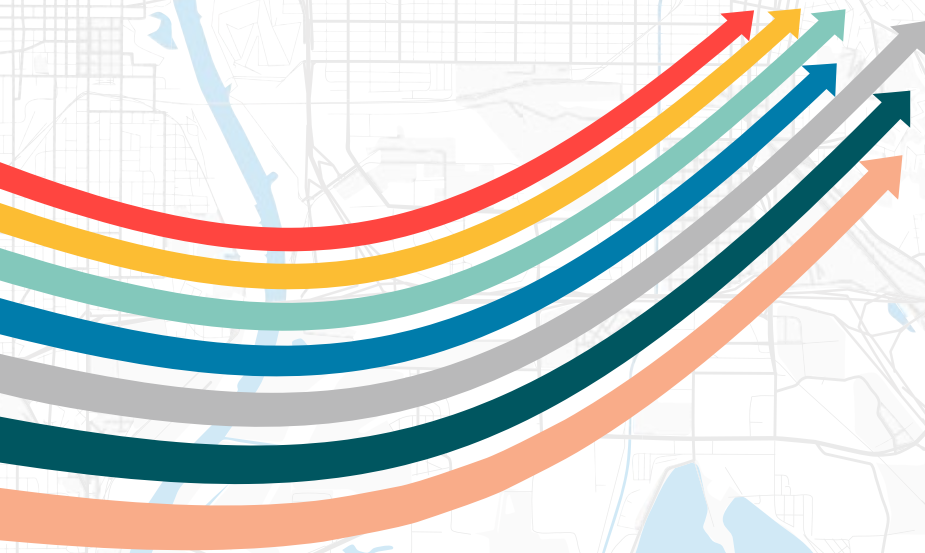
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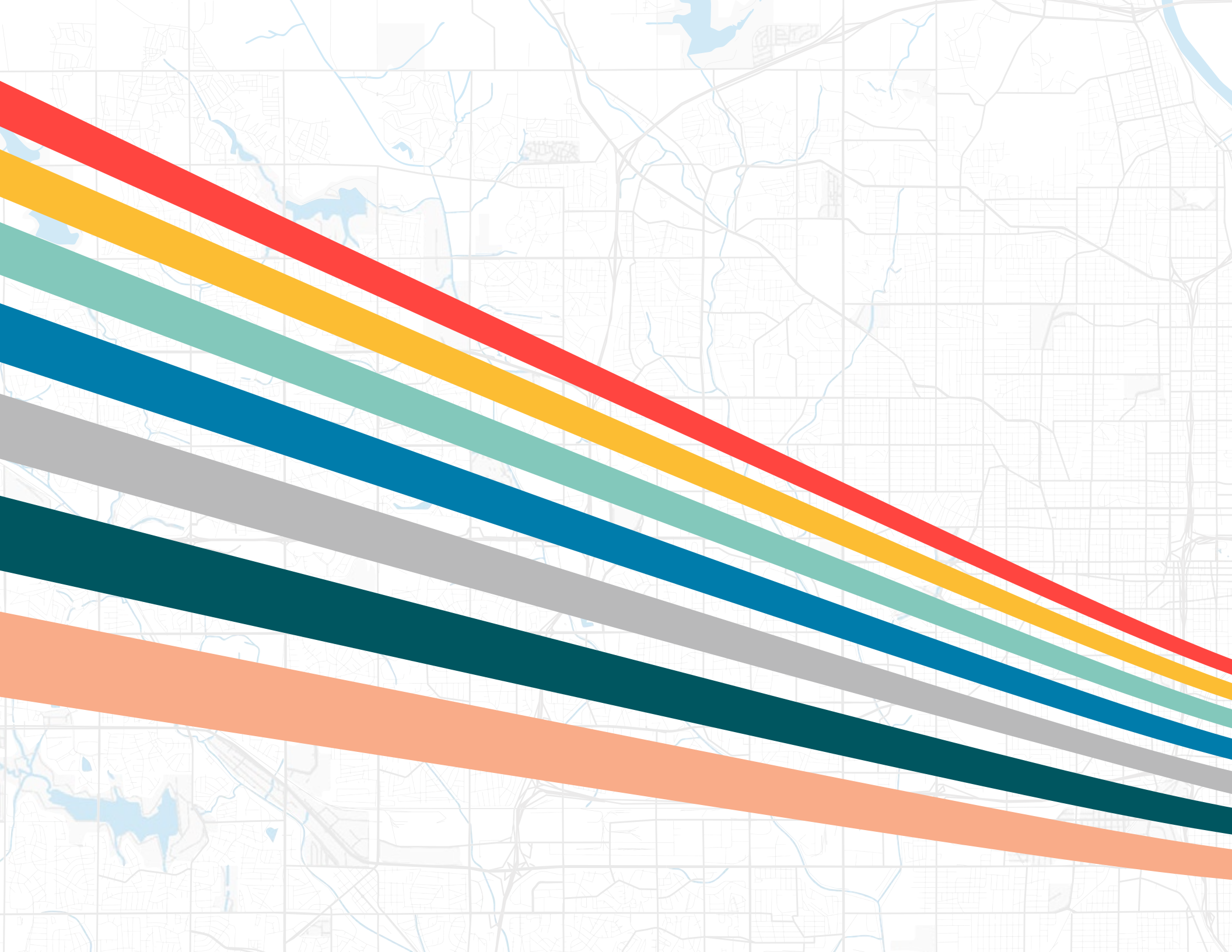
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The background is a light gray map of a city, likely St. Louis, showing a grid of streets and a prominent river (the Mississippi) winding through it. In the bottom left corner, there are seven thick, curved arrows pointing towards the center of the map. The arrows are colored in a rainbow-like sequence: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, dark blue, and gray.

1

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

MAPA CEDS

The MAPA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to create an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies through the collaboration of public and private sectors. The purpose of this CEDS is to establish a process that will help to create jobs, foster a more stable and diversified economy, and improve living conditions within the MAPA region. In addition, this CEDS should provide useful benchmarks by which the regional economy can evaluate opportunities with other regions in the national economy.

This CEDS document:

- Describes the challenges, opportunities, and resources of the MAPA region;
- Presents the MAPA region's goals and strategies; and
- Establishes priority programs and projects for implementation.

The Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1998 identifies a CEDS as a requirement to apply for assistance under the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Public Works and Economic Adjustment programs. In 2007, EDA designated MAPA as an Economic Development District (EDD). With this designation, MAPA is the principal planning organization for the greater Oma-

ha-Council Bluffs region and is eligible for EDA planning investment assistance. MAPA is responsible for submitting a new CEDS to EDA at least every five years.

EDDs play a key role in local economic development. In order to foster collaboration and streamlining with the nation's more than 2,000 county economic development organizations, EDDs assist EDA in establishing regional priorities for projects and investments. Boards composed of local elected officials and private sector representatives from cities and counties govern these multi-county or other regional planning organizations.

As part of the engagement process, this CEDS document will be accessible readily to the economic development stakeholders in the MAPA region. A continuing program of communication and outreach, which encourages broad-based public engagement, participation, and commitment of partners, will be conducted. The general public, government decision makers, and business investors should be able to use this document as a guide to understanding the regional economy and to take action to improve it. The strategy should take into account and, where appropriate, incorporate other planning efforts in the MAPA region. The aim is to create a useful tool for local decision-making.

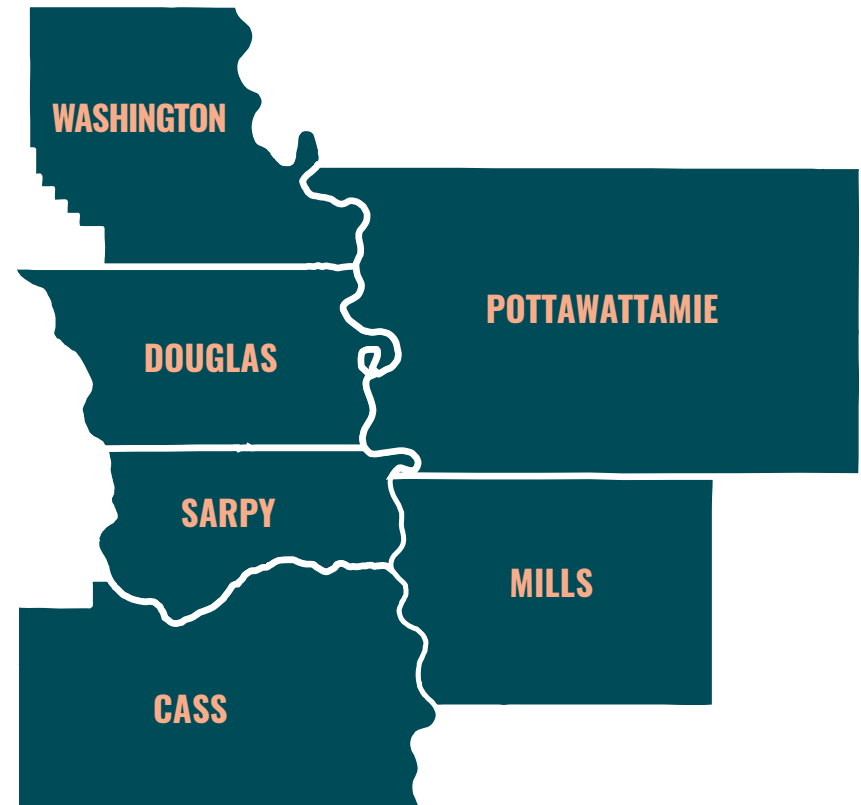


Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA)

MAPA exists to provide local governments with planning and technical support, and to think regionally and long range on the core issues that impact the Greater Omaha-Council Bluffs area.

These are issues of mutual benefit such as transportation, infrastructure, housing and natural resources. We work with communities to identify opportunities, secure funding and other resources for critical projects, and build consensus. Our purpose is to promote and preserve the quality of life for a more happy, healthy and vibrant region. As a forum for inter-governmental cooperation, we are uniquely positioned to fill in the gaps as connectors, facilitators, advisors, implementers, with a big picture vision and an everyday attention to detail. Data and process-driven, we strive to be a trusted, objective resource to local government and public and private stakeholders. MAPA was created by local governments in 1967 to serve as the regional planning agency. We serve a six-county region, including Cass, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington Counties in Nebraska, and Mills and Pottawattamie Counties in Iowa. MAPA is led by a 79-member Council of Officials, all of whom are appointed by local governments, which meets quarterly and sets policy for the agency. A 9-member Board of Directors is comprised of elected officials and meets monthly to carry out those policies and oversee agency activities.

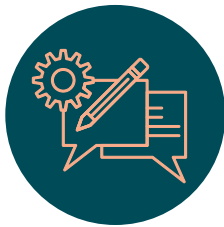
Any governmental entity within MAPA's six-county area can become a member. Current membership consists of six counties, 53 towns, 19 special purpose governmental entities, and one city council. MAPA is governed by a 79-member Council of Officials and a nine-member Board of Directors. All activities established in the agency's work program are carried out by professional and support staff, led by an executive director.



See Appendix E for Organizational Charts.



Functions of MAPA



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MAPA has two principal planning functions: transportation and community development. Community development assistance includes activities such as grant writing and project administration for various state and federal programs, comprehensive planning, strategic planning and capital needs assessments, professional facilitation, hazard mitigation, and review or updates to local codes. MAPA also assists member communities with a variety of economic development tools such as tax-increment financing, tax abatement, and revolving loan funds in an effort to improve local economies.



TRANSPORTATION

MAPA serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), or Transportation Management Area (TMA) for Douglas, Sarpy and a small portion of northeastern Cass Counties in Nebraska as well as the western-most portion of Pottawattamie County in Iowa. An MPO is an organization which forms policy and allocates funding for transportation, which is mandated and funded by the federal government. The formation of an MPO is required for any urbanized area in the United States with a population greater than 50,000. As an MPO, MAPA produces these primary work items regularly:

- Long-Range Transportation Plan (25-year transportation plan for the MPO area)
- Transportation Improvement Program (six-year program)
- Unified Planning Work Program (annual description of work activities)
- Public Participation Plan (public outreach strategy and document guides)
- Civil Rights Plan (special outreach and considerations for high minority areas, limited English proficiency, and Americans with Disabilities Act)

MAPA also serves as the facilitator for Regional Planning Affiliation-18 (RPA-18), which is one of 18 RPAs throughout Iowa that provide transportation planning on a regional level outside of urbanized areas. MAPA RPA-18 is composed of Harrison, Mills, Pottawattamie (excluding Council Bluffs), and Shelby counties in southwest Iowa.





HEARTLAND 2050

The Heartland 2050 plan is a vision for the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. It involves gathering community members and key stakeholders from throughout the region to help grow and unite the region in the decades to come. Heartland 2050 incorporates a variety of topics, such as economic development, education, health and safety, housing, infrastructure, and natural resources. The signature initiative of Heartland 2050 is Close the Gap, which focuses on transportation and land use as a way of creating a positive impact on the future of the region. Some of the ways the Heartland 2050 looks to “close the gap” is to increase transportation access to jobs and education, attract and retain more local talent, decrease the disparities in income and educational attainment between races and ethnicities, and increase the options for multi-modal transportation.



OTHER MAPA SERVICES

MAPA also offers services that do not fall under community development or transportation but can be used in either function. These services are data and information based primarily, and include community profiles, data and information distribution, and geographic information systems (GIS).



Collaborative Planning in the MAPA Region

The MAPA CEDS builds upon the work of several major planning initiatives that have been conducted in recent years. **Heartland 2050** serves as the regional vision adopted by the MAPA Council of Officials. This long-term regional vision provides the overarching goals and emphasis of the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. The 2050 project was unveiled initially in December 2014, following two years of extensive public engagement and committee work. Since 2015, the project has moved to an implementation phase, focused on promoting best practices through events, speakers, site visits, demonstration projects, and other activities. Federal transportation funding available through MAPA has been allocated to conduct local and corridor-level planning that advance the Heartland 2050 vision goals.

The **2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** is a vision which guides future infrastructure projects in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area. This planning initiative creates a vision for a stronger, safer, more vibrant region moving into the future. Long range plans cover the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), or Transportation Management Area (TMA). The Omaha-Council Bluffs



TMA consists of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and a small portion of Cass County in Nebraska, and urbanized portions of Pottawattamie County in Iowa. The MAPA CEDS was updated in close coordination with the LRTP in an effort to better complement transportation and economic development investments in a strategic manner to implement the regional vision.

The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce counts more than 3,100 member businesses and serves as the region's leading economic development organization. The Chamber's overarching economic development campaign is **Prosper Omaha 2.0**. This plan aims to grow the Greater Omaha-Council Bluffs region, with a focus on economic competitiveness, which includes a strong emphasis on place-making and infrastructure.

Metro Smart Cities is a collaborative that is focused on developing and implementing pilot projects to see whether ideas that solve mobility and accessibility challenges do in fact work in real life. The Advisory Committee is co-chaired by Omaha Mayor Jean Stoth-

ert and Werner Trucking CEO Derek Leathers. MAPA is a key member in this partnership.

Momentum from these planning efforts led to **ConnectGO**, a cooperative effort led by the Greater Omaha Chamber in coordination with MAPA, Metro Smart Cities, as well as key stakeholders and the public. The initiative was developed as the region faces a key juncture with regard to infrastructure and community planning. Technological advances like autonomous vehicles appear to be on the verge of widespread adoption, while demographic changes and shifting lifestyle preferences in recent years have been driving greater demand for urban, walkable development. Much of the nation's infrastructure, built decades ago, is deteriorating and in need of rehabilitation or replacement. In light of these ever-changing conditions, ConnectGO aims to reexamine the current transportation system and reassess the planned infrastructure projects, programs, and policies to ensure the future that meets the needs of all residents.

The CEDS Process

MAPA's initial CEDS was developed in 2002. Subsequent updates followed in 2004, 2008, 2014, and 2020. This current MAPA CEDS was completed by MAPA Community and Economic Development staff throughout the summer and fall of 2020.

Prior to formal adoption, the MAPA CEDS was made available for public comment and review for 30 days beginning on November 4, 2020. Public notices were posted outside MAPA's offices and on the agency's website and social media accounts. The finalized CEDS was approved by the MAPA Board of Directors on December 10, 2020.

In fulfillment of the agency's Partnership Planning agreement, MAPA will submit an updated CEDS performance report to EDA on or before September 30 of each year, highlighting accomplishments and reflecting changes to regional economic development priorities. MAPA will initiate a new comprehensive update per federal requirements within five years of EDA's approval of this CEDS.

