

What's Happening

For Community Leaders

May/June 2020

Dear Members, Project Partners and Friends:

In the wake of the protests in the MAPA region and throughout the United States following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MAPA invited Tom Warren, President/CEO of the Urban League of Nebraska and former Omaha Police Chief, to address the Council of Officials. Mr. Warren highlighted the systemic issues of racial and ethnic disparities in our communities. In addition, as the former Omaha Police Chief, he shared his perspective on the importance of proper training and accreditation.

We take these issues very seriously. As such, **MAPA and our Board of Directors adopted a resolution at the June 25 board meeting reaffirming our commitment to ensuring that the issues of disparities, justice and racism are at the forefront as we work in the region.** To name a few of the specifics, **MAPA is committed to:**

- **Listening to affected and marginalized communities**
- **Including robust representation from communities of color in boards, committees and stakeholder groups**
- **Recruiting a diverse staff that reflects the region we serve**
- **Reviewing policies and programs to ensure equitable funding toward disinvested communities**
- **Conducting an organizational equity assessment annually to review MAPA's work in these areas**

Find the full resolution here: <https://bit.ly/3g6tffY>

At MAPA we are fortunate to partner with cities, counties and other units of government as we plan and build the region's infrastructure: roads, bridges, public transit, water and sewer systems, housing, flood recovery and more. As we do this work, MAPA is positioned to look at the big-picture view and see the metropolitan area as a whole.

Without question, the persistent disparities between the majority population and communities of color is one of the greatest threats to our region's future prosperity. **The Heartland 2050 Equitable Growth Profile released in 2018 showed that not only is this a compelling social issue but it affects our economy. The analysis showed that, based on 2015 data, the region missed out on nearly \$5 Billion — or eight percent — of gross domestic product (GDP) due to racial gaps in income.**

I would like to share a quote with you, which may sound like a headline or statement from leaders in recent weeks, but is actually the words from the very first chapter of the Heartland 2050 Vision, which was released in *December 2014!*

"[T]he Heartland needs a growth model that is driven by equity - just and fair inclusion into a society in which everyone has access to participate and prosper in the region."

At MAPA we remain committed to work driven by the principles of equity, justice, and inclusion.

These challenges are large and may take generations to overcome fully, but if each one of us decides that the status quo is not acceptable and works a little harder within our own spheres of influence, it will add up to a world of difference.

Take Care and Stay Hopeful,



MAPA creates interactive Regional Development Report



The report shows how compact growth and redevelopment opportunities will slow land consumption, preserve valuable farmland and increase regional flood resiliency. MAPA's future land use scenarios provide targets for regional growth to balance forecasted growth with the need to provide infrastructure including transportation options and sewers.

In the Heartland 2050 scenario one-fifth of future development needs to be in redevelopment areas and in a Transit-Oriented Development scenario one-third of future development needs to be in redevelopment areas to achieve these goals.

"How we accommodate our region's steady population growth has a major impact on the transportation options available to residents

and the fiscal health of our communities," said Mike Helgersen, MAPA Transportation and Data Manager. "The tools we developed in the Regional Development Report help us understand local development trends and track our progress towards our regional goals."

The Regional Development Report is innovative in both the data collected and in the presentation of that data through visual story maps which the user can interact with and explore. MAPA staff geocoded and mapped this data to better understand where development is happening and what it says about future infrastructure needs.

View MAPA's Regional Development Report at: development.mapacog.org/

In a first of its kind for the agency, MAPA released its interactive Regional Development Report on June 9, which explores the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area's development patterns since 1980 and provides critical insight into the decisions which influenced those patterns. The report also reveals the interconnected relationship between land use decisions and transportation investments.

The Regional Development Report utilizes local government building permit data for new houses and businesses to understand changes to development over time. A series of maps, charts and diagrams illustrate various trends in the region in a dynamic manner.

Transit ROI Study shows investment yields double benefits

MAPA's Transit Return on Investment (ROI) Study shows every dollar invested in transit yields double the benefits, and when accompanied by supportive land use such as walkable neighborhoods along transit routes, every dollar yields up to nine dollars in benefits. MAPA released the findings May 26.

The study, completed in partnership with the Greater Omaha Chamber's ConnectGO initiative, also found the regional economy could add as many as 8,000 jobs and have an economic impact of \$1.8 billion annually in business revenues by 2050 if the region chooses to invest in an enhanced Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network.

The study was completed just before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Once the pandemic passes, a metro area with a robust transportation system will be more important than ever to help economic resilience.

Examining the Business Case for Transit in Omaha

Every Dollar Invested In Transit Turns Into \$2

Then gets **multiplied by 4.5** with supportive land use

The Transit ROI Study included economic modeling of transit investment and qualitative research through interviews. Employers interviewed as well as those employers who participated in the study's focus groups sent a strong message that transit is needed for three main reasons:

- Access to their workforce and customers
- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Cost reduction and business competitiveness

Read the Transit ROI Study: <https://bit.ly/3gs7HLK>



REPRESENTATION MATTERS

The 2020 Census will bring investment to our communities for essential needs and community development. Ensure a complete count by responding at my2020census.gov

Over a 10 year span:



Each year MAPA takes applications from its member communities for projects to be considered for Surface Transportation Block Grant funding through the Heartland 2050 Mini-Grant program. Projects selected for 2020 include:

- **City of Omaha Southside Terrace-Indian Hills Neighborhood Multi-Modal Transportation Study** (\$96,000) – Analysis of transportation elements and prioritization of neighborhood connections as part of a revitalization project.
- **Metro Transit Free Fares for the Omaha Rapid Bus Transit (ORBT) Launch** (\$146,307) – No fares on ORBT for its first four months of operation.
- **Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Neighborhood Expanded Access to Trails** (\$120,000) – Work to determine feasibility of moving ahead with design and construction on previously identified trail connections.

These projects are part of MAPA's FY2021-FY2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).



CALENDAR

July 2020

- July 3rd – MAPA Offices Closed
- July 4th – Independence Day
- July 8th – RPA-18*
11:00 a.m.
- July 15th – Finance Committee*
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit*
10:30 a.m.
- July 17th – NACo Annual Conference (July 17-20)
Transportation Committee*
10 a.m.
- July 23rd – MAPA Board of Directors*
1:30 p.m.

August 2020

- Aug. 7th – Regional Planning* (Heartland 2050 RPAC)
10:00 a.m.
- Aug. 12th – RPA-18*
11:00 a.m.
- Aug. 19th – Finance Committee*
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit*
10:30 a.m.
- Aug. 21st – Transportation Committee*
10 a.m.
- Aug. 26th – ISAC Annual Conference (Aug. 26-28)
- Aug. 27th – MAPA Board of Directors*
1:30 p.m.

**meeting may be virtual*