

MOVING FORWARD



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Assessment spotlights affordable housing need

\$18 per hour - that's the wage someone living in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area must earn in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment that is safe and of decent quality.

That initial finding is among several in a Comprehensive Housing Assessment funded by local philanthropic organizations.

The assessment shines a **spotlight on the growing disparity** between the number of affordable housing units available in Douglas, Sarpy and Pottawattamie Counties and the number needed.

"We saw over the last year how COVID-19 really exposed the housing instability in our community and how many families were potentially one paycheck away from losing their homes."

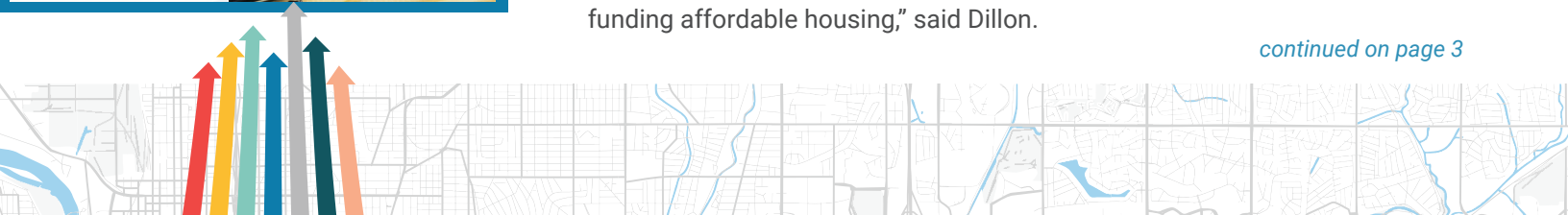
Meridith Dillon

"We saw over the last year how COVID-19 really exposed the housing instability in our community and how many families were potentially one paycheck away from losing their homes," said Meridith Dillon, Program Associate for the Sherwood Foundation, in a presentation to the Heartland 2050 Housing and Development Committee on March 18.

The foundations commissioned the study initially to better inform their own investments.

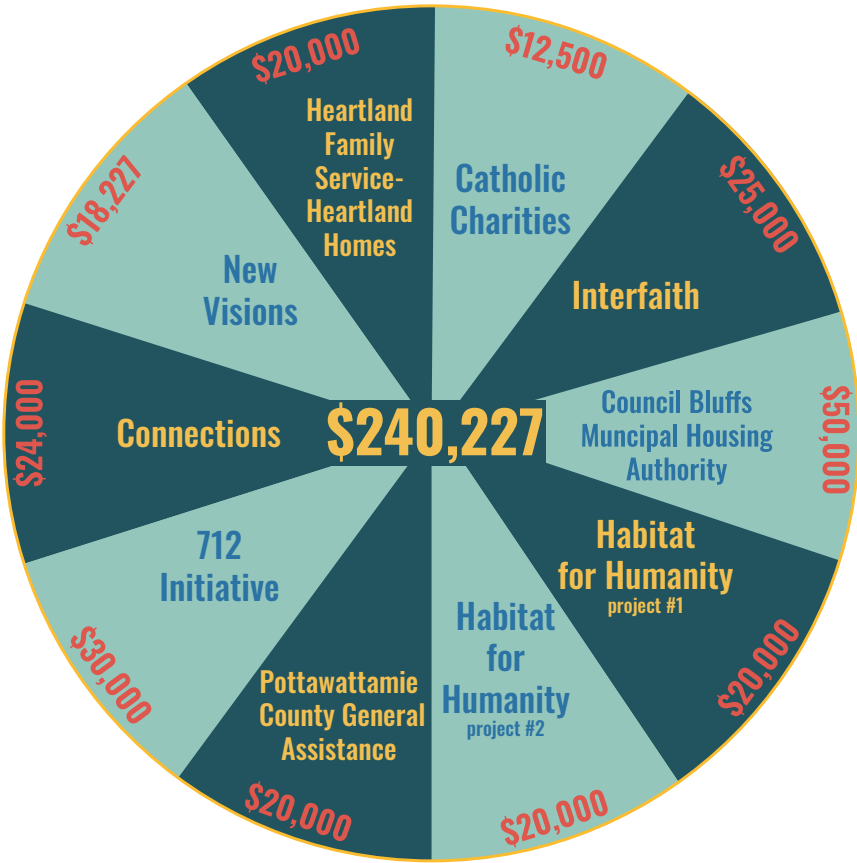
"We really set out to initially **better understand what currently exists in terms of affordable housing and what might be needed** over the next 20 years, and who the players in the game are in terms of providing affordable housing and funding affordable housing," said Dillon.

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The Pottawattamie County Housing Trust Fund just awarded its grant funding for 2021.

Nine projects received a total of \$240,227 for housing-related projects to serve residents of Pottawattamie County, Iowa.



All projects will benefit those below 80% of the federal family median income limit.
Find out more about each project: bit.ly/PottCoHTFAwards

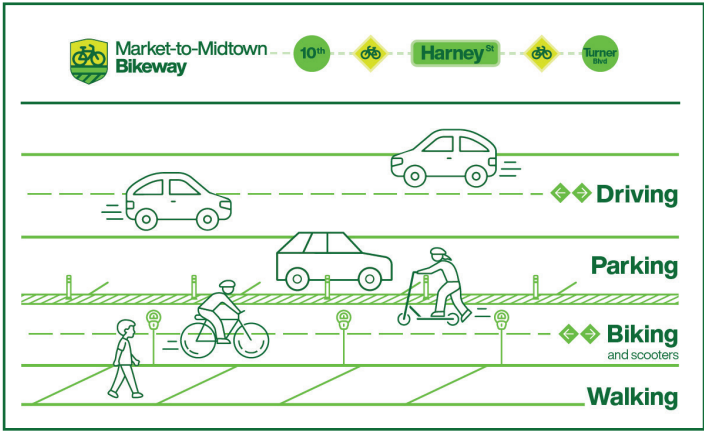
Protected bikeway pilot project approved

Construction is expected to start yet this spring on the Omaha-Council Bluff metro area’s first protected bike lane known as the Market to Midtown Bikeway, after the Omaha City Council approved the pilot project unanimously on April 13.

The Market to Midtown Bikeway project is a partnership between the City of Omaha, Bike Walk Nebraska and Metro Smart Cities of which MAPA is a partner.

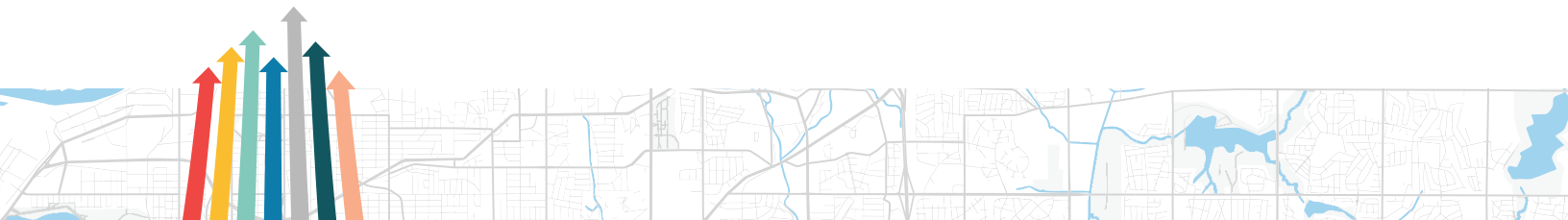
The bikeway will be installed on Harney Street from 10th Street to Dewey Avenue. It will contain flexible barriers to separate bicyclists from vehicle traffic. It is anticipated to open during the summer.

Metro Smart Cities will be responsible for maintaining the bikeway until September 2022 and will monitor data from it



to see how many people are using it, how it impacts traffic and affects local businesses.

After September 2022 the City of Omaha will have an option to make the bikeway permanent and it would then be responsible for the maintenance of the bike lane.



Broadband Speed Test: help bridge digital divide

Help us bridge the digital divide between rural and urban areas in Nebraska and Iowa that the pandemic exposed. Take the Nebraska Broadband Speed Test at speedtestne.org/ or nebraskaspeedtest.org/. We're working to improve

broadband accessibility by providing data to help guide decision making **for broadband infrastructure expansion or enhancement projects**. Mills and Pottawattamie County residents can participate as part of the MAPA region.



continued from Comprehensive Housing Assessment

The results are startling. **The assessment found in 2020, there were only 19,730 subsidized housing units available when 98,500 dedicated affordable housing units are needed.** If current trends continue unabated, the gap is forecast to grow to 104,000 units by 2040.

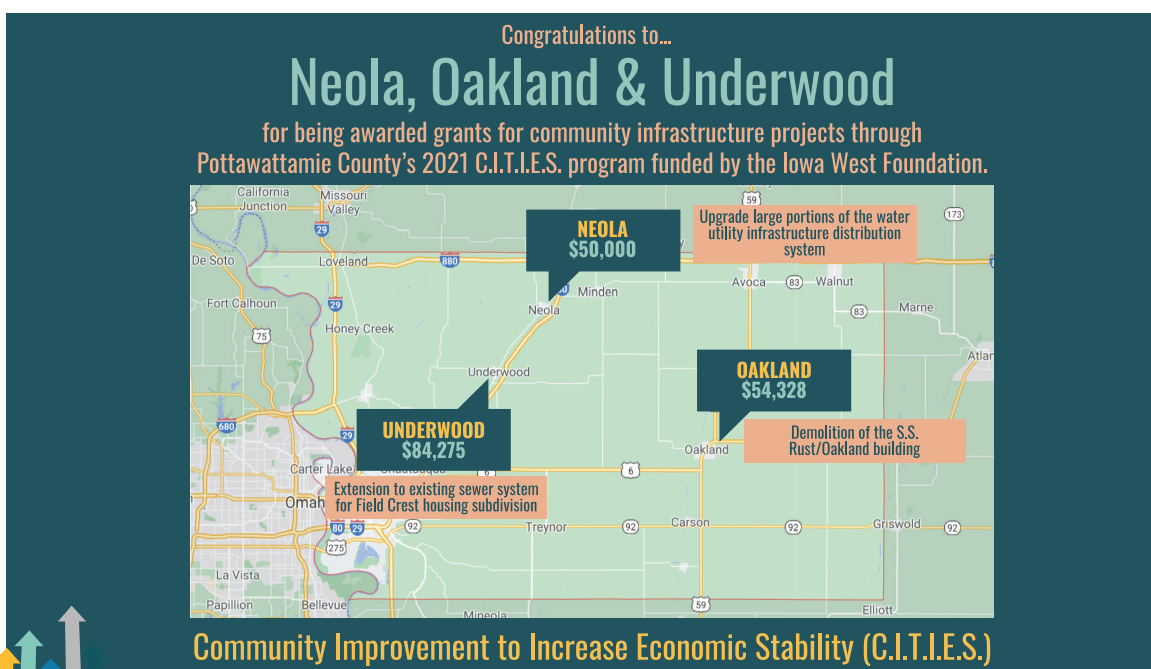
Investing in additional affordable housing units has broader impacts too as Dillon points out. Figures from the National Association of Home Builders show 2700 units built in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region from 2009 to 2018 through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program have added an additional \$5.5 million in tax revenue each year, and resulted in 375 new jobs in the new units alone.

Affordable housing investments have links to improved

health and educational performance also. National statistics confirm that children whose families have secure housing are less likely to be underweight, visit the ER or fall behind in school and perform poorly on standardized tests because they change residences less frequently.

The Comprehensive Housing Assessment recommends steps which can help the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area meet the growing need for affordable housing and help prevent homelessness.

For the recommendations and more information on the local affordable housing situation, view the full presentation at: heartland2050.org/resources/comprehensive-housing-assessment-presentation/.



New Employee Spotlights

MATT EASH

MAPA welcomed two new employees to the agency staff in early Spring.

Matt Eash is MAPA’s new Director of Finance. While leading the finance department, Matt’s primary tasks are maintaining financial records and processing all financial transactions.



Matt has a Bachelor’s degree in Economics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Before moving over to finance and accounting several years ago, he was an infantryman in the U.S. Army.

Most recently, Matt worked as the financial operations director for the Nebraska State College System.

Matt lives with his partner, Heidi, and her two sons. Although his musical career came to an end recently, Matt was a professional musician for 12 years, playing the piano, singing and managing bands.

Welcome to MAPA, Matt!

BRIDGETTE SMITH

Bridgette Smith is MAPA’s new Accounting Assistant. Bridgette’s main work responsibilities include processing payroll and working with accounts payable.



Most recently, Bridgette worked as the library clerk at Abraham Lincoln High School. She also worked at the Council Bluffs Public Library as a teen central library assistant.

After studying business administration at Iowa Western Community College, Bridgette was employed as the foundation accounting processor at the college.

When Bridgette isn’t busy with her two daughters and the weather permits, she likes to spend time fishing, camping and being on the water. When it’s cold out, you can find her binge watching TV shows.

Welcome to MAPA, Bridgette!

CALENDAR

MAY 2021

- 12** **RPA-18***
11:00 a.m.
- 19** **Finance Committee**
8:30 a.m.
- 21** **Transportation Committee**
10:00 a.m.
- 27** **MAPA Board of Directors**
1:30 p.m.
- 31** **Memorial Day**
MAPA Offices Closed

JUNE 2021

- 04** **Regional Planning (Heartland 2050 RPAC)**
10:00 a.m.
- 09** **RPA-18***
11:00 a.m.
- 16** **Finance Committee**
8:30 a.m.
Council of Officials
- 18** **Transportation Committee**
10:00 a.m.
- 24** **MAPA Board of Directors**
1:30 p.m.

** meeting may be virtual*



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