

MOVING FORWARD



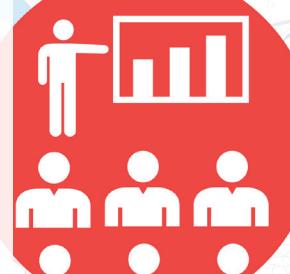
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NREDA Summit
on May 10 & 11



[READ ARTICLE >>](#)

Hwy 75 Corridor
& Freight Study
Open House



[READ ARTICLE >>](#)

Recast Your City
Workshop highlights
small town needs



[READ ARTICLE >>](#)

Bicycling projects
highlight May as
National Bike Month



[READ ARTICLE >>](#)

New Employee
Spotlight



[READ ARTICLE >>](#)

Indianapolis Learning Site Visit provides insights for attendees

Through footsteps, bike rides and bus trips, a cross-section of community leaders from the Omaha-Council Bluffs region explored Indianapolis and met its leaders to gain insight into transportation, affordable housing and equity initiatives as part of a Heartland 2050 Learning Site Visit April 25-27.

MAPA chose Indianapolis for the site visit because, similar to Omaha, it is a Midwestern city which launched Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines and implemented a comprehensive transit plan to better align its investments with community needs. Indianapolis also is grappling with how to tackle an affordable housing shortage and create a more equitable city for all residents.

City leaders said their work began with frank conversations about what was and was not working. "We're a logistics hub, so the conversation with business people was that we're really good at moving things, but not good at moving people," said Sean Northup, Deputy Director of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization.



They found the answer in enhanced transit, and built support for a referendum to improve IndyGO bus service with new BRT lines and increased frequency of service.

The creation of a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zoning Overlay District helped spur future development along BRT lines. "It makes it really easy to build good things, and also makes it hard to build bad things," said Austin Gible, Long Range Transportation Planner for the Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development.

continued on page 4



NREDA Summit on May 10 & 11

Rural America faces significant challenges in our world today. The rural housing crisis, lack of effective workforce technology, forgotten downtowns and inadequate internet connectivity are a few of the issues. Are you interested in learning about ways to solve these problems?

The National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) is hosting a two-day summit to discuss tackling these issues. Hear from subject matter experts on the following topics: unique initiatives for solving the housing crisis including 3-D printed homes, effective workforce and ecosystem initiatives connecting youth and adults to innovation, downtown revitalization success results and why broadband initiatives are crucial to thriving rural communities.



Summit Details:

The face-to-face conference will take place on **May 10 and 11, 2022 in Red Oak and Stanton, Iowa**. Register here to collaborate and network with rural economic development experts and peers on these core issues.

[View the agenda here.](#)

Cost of attendance is \$75 for both days. A block of rooms for lodging will be available at the Red Coach Inn & Suites at 1200 Senate Avenue, Red Oak, IA.

Attendance is not limited to those who live and work in Iowa.

For more information visit:
tinyurl.com/NREDA-Summit-Flyer.

Hwy 75 Corridor & Freight Study Open House Strategy

Preliminary improvement alternatives being considered for public review during an in-person open house for the Highway 75 Corridor and Freight Strategy Study on May 19.

The U.S. Highway 75 Corridor study area is between the North Freeway, the Storz Expressway and I-680. In addition, the study may identify a potential new Missouri River Bridge crossing in the study area. The goals of the study are to find alternatives which improve the connections between these interstates and mitigate the community impacts of the current Highway 75 alignment along 30th Street.

The in-person open house will take place from 4-6 p.m. May 19 at the Florence City Hall located at 2864 State Street in Omaha.



For more information about the Highway 75 Corridor & Freight Strategy Study, go to: mapacog.org/highway75/

Recast Your City Workshop highlights small town needs

"Invest in the people who live there." Those words from Ilana Preuss, author of "Recast Your City," are some of the advice she provided participants in the "Recast Your City" workshop on March 9.

Preuss's book and company of the same name focus on how to revive downtowns and Main Street areas with small-scale manufacturing. Preuss's examples of small-scale manufacturing include shops where local artisans sell their works, breweries and the like.

She said towns and cities should begin by engaging their residents in conversations about what they would like to see in their communities.

Preuss suggested local leaders look to their local entrepreneurs and artisans who exhibit their wares at local events as candidates for businesses to fill storefronts and help rebuild Main Streets and downtowns.



Bicycling projects highlight May as National Bike Month

May is National Bike Month. Established in 1956, National Bike Month is a chance to showcase the many benefits of bicycling and encourage more people to give biking a try. At its April 28th meeting, the MAPA Board of Directors passed a proclamation observing May 1-31, 2022, as Bike Month. MAPA staff members support Bike Month and have participated in Bike Month activities throughout the years. Here are some fun facts about projects rolling along in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region to increase biking and access.

MoPac Trail

Construction will move forward to build the gap in the MoPac trail between Lincoln and Omaha after senators in the Nebraska Legislature voted to restore \$8.3 million in funding for the project following a gubernatorial veto.



Market to Midtown Bikeway

Data from the Market-to-Midtown Bikeway show a 140% increase in bicycling and increased feelings of safety among riders during the first six months since its installation.



Photo captured by MAPA's drone program.



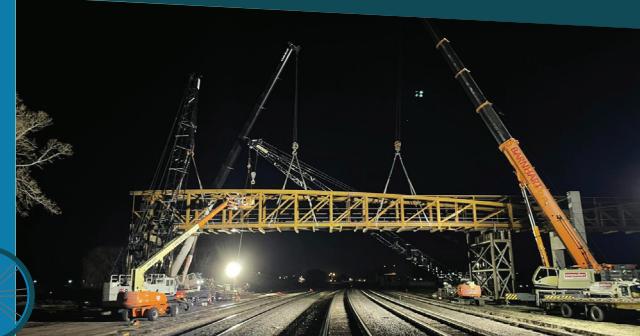
Omaha Bike-Pedestrian Plan

Work is beginning on a bike and pedestrian plan for the City of Omaha. The plan will include recommendations for improvements surrounding trails, on-street bicycling and ebikes and e-scooters as well as sidewalk and streetscape improvements and enhancements.

1st Ave Trail

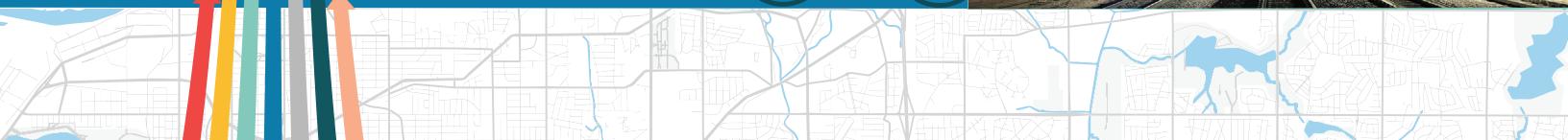
Phase II of Council Bluffs' 1st Avenue multi-use trail along a former railroad corridor is expected to begin this spring. The first phase of the trail opened in January. When finished, the trail will run from 16th to 35th Street, about 1.8 miles, and will connect with other trails within Council Bluffs.

Photo courtesy of the Daily Nonpareil.



Western Douglas County Trail

Phase II of the Western Douglas County Trail is underway, which included recent installation of a bridge over active Union Pacific tracks. The bike and pedestrian trail, expected to be completed by the end of the year, will connect Valley and Waterloo.



New Employee Spotlight

Lindsey Button

Lindsey Button joined the MAPA team on April 18 as a Transportation Planner. She comes to MAPA from the City of Omaha. Lindsey has also previously worked at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Public Policy Center. Prior to that, she resided in California where she worked with bumble bees.

Lindsey has a Master of Science in Biology from Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. She also earned a GIS Certificate.

In her free time, Lindsey enjoys gardening and hanging out with her 65-pound sheepadoodle named Pippin. Welcome to MAPA, Lindsey!



Julie Smith

MAPA welcomed Julie Smith on April 18 as a Community & Economic Development Planner. Julie has a Master of Science in Urban Studies from the University of Nebraska Omaha. She will graduate this month from Creighton University with a law degree.

Previously, Julie worked in the Office of Civic and Social Responsibility at UNO. She also ran the local nonprofit, ONE Omaha, where she "wore a lot of hats" and found her niche in community development work.

Julie enjoys long road trips with family and volunteering with the Sarpy County Teen Court. Welcome to MAPA, Julie!



continued from Indianapolis Site Learning Visit

Another catalyst for economic development in Indianapolis is the Cultural Trail, which Learning Site Visit participants toured on foot or on ebikes. The eight-mile-long urban bike and pedestrian path, which opened in May 2013, is the result of a public-private partnership. It connects neighborhoods, cultural districts and entertainment opportunities and serves as the city's downtown hub for central Indiana's greenway system.

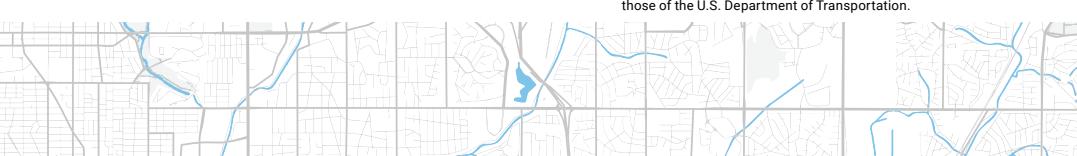


The link between infrastructure and economic development resonated with trip participants. "The trail follows along bus transit routes. That makes a lot of sense to me, and enables the ability to build alongside other infrastructure developments - where costs can be shared rather than strenuously borne by each individual entity," said Jewel Rodgers, Noddle Companies Development Manager.



Indianapolis leaders are now shifting their transit and economic development work from inclusion to making investments more equitable for all residents. "I think we're moving there with what's happening with the Equitable Transportation Development Fund and we've continued to navigate," said Michael Kaufman, who served as the ConnectIndy Project Manager. "Let's have a trail-oriented development fund for affordable housing in those corridors as well."

Indianapolis is MAPA's first learning site visit since 2019.



CALENDAR

MAY 2022

- 11** RPA-18* 11:00 a.m.
- 18** Finance Committee 8:30 a.m.
- 20** Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.
- 26** MAPA Board of Directors 1:30 p.m.
- 30** Memorial Day MAPA Offices Closed

JUNE 2022

- 03** Regional Planning (Heartland 2050 RPAC) 10:00 a.m.
- 08** RPA-18* 11:00 a.m.
- 15** Finance Committee 8:30 a.m.
- 17** Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.
- 20** Juneteenth Observance MAPA Offices Closed
- 28** MAPA Board of Directors 1:30 p.m.

* meeting may be virtual
Meetings at MAPA unless otherwise noted

SAVE THE DATE

BABY STEPS GIANT LEAPS

Heartland 2050 In-Person Summit
Wednesday, June 29, 2022
More details to come



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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 Transportation as provided by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit 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.