



## HEARTLAND 2050 REGIONAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (H2050 RPAC)

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

### MEETING MINUTES

Friday, August 5, 2022 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**ATTENDEES:** Keith Station, Lynn Dittmer, Ashley Rae Turner, Chris Shewchuk, Lauren Cencic, Mark Stursma, Fred Conley, Jeff Spiehs, Chris Gibbons, Bruce Fountain, Derek Miller, Meridith Dillon, Robert Franco, Lindsay Neeman, Krista Wassenaar, Jeff Beiermann

**GUESTS:** Deana Walocha

**MAPA STAFF:** Mike Helgerson, Laura Heilman, Sue Cutsforth, Grant Anderson, Isabelle Fleming, Lindsey Button, James Boerner, Shawna Silvius, Carlos Morales

- A. Welcome and Introductions – Chair Keith Station, City of Omaha
- B. Introduce new RPAC Vice Chair - Lynn Dittmer, The 712 Initiative
  - a. Welcome to Lynn Dittmer, new RPAC Vice Chair!
    - i. Lynn is the Director of Redevelopment at The 712 Initiative
    - ii. Lynn was formerly the Community & Economic Development Manager with MAPA and a Senior Planner with JEO
- C. Approval of Minutes from June 3 2022 Meeting - Chair Keith Station, City of Omaha
  - a. Minutes approved
- D. Safe Streets for All (SS4A) - Jim Boerner, MAPA - Recommendation to the Board
  - a. MAPA will be applying for a Safe Streets for All planning grant
    - i. Once a regional plan is in place, we can apply for additional funds for implementation
    - ii. Most federal transportation funding flows through the states; this is a unique opportunity for funding to more local jurisdictions, including MPOs
  - b. USDOT has provided guidance that applications with overlapping jurisdictions will not be considered, so it is very important that we coordinate our application with our local partners
    - i. Please contact us if you'd like to coordinate
    - ii. We are asking for letters of support for our planning grant application; there is a template on our website (see link below) if you'd like to use it - please submit by August 19
  - c. MAPA is applying for Douglas and Sarpy counties in Nebraska and our TMA areas in Pottawattamie County Iowa (local roads in Council Bluffs, McClelland and Crescent)
    - i. We are working closely with the City of Omaha and coordinating with their Vision Zero work
    - ii. We are also coordinating with a statewide Iowa application to ensure applications don't conflict
    - iii. Looking for low-cost systemic projects that can be applied broadly across our region
  - d. Find more information at [www.mapacog.org/projects/ss4a/](http://www.mapacog.org/projects/ss4a/) or email [safeststreets@mapacog.org](mailto:safeststreets@mapacog.org)
  - e. Motion passed to recommend that the MAPA Board adopt the resolution

### HEARTLAND 2050 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- E. Regional Transit Authority (RTA) - Lauren Cencic, Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha
  - a. Metro Board of Directors voted in June to become a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and the change took effect on August 1 2022
  - b. New name is Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha (but will still go by Metro)
  - c. Will now have an elected Board of Directors
  - d. Two ways to grow from here
    - i. Expanding and improving service within the City of Omaha city limits
    - ii. Other jurisdictions can voluntarily join the RMTA by voting to join with approval by the Metro Board
      - 1. Those jurisdictions would be subject to the same tax levy
      - 2. Those jurisdictions would also have a voice on the Board
  - e. Several priority projects identified through extensive MetroNEXT public outreach
    - i. Additional projects proposed for possible future expansion into other jurisdictions
  - f. Will continue to work through service contracts as well to serve outside the City of Omaha
  - g. Metro is very interested in partnering with anyone who is interested in service expansion, connectivity or other projects
  - h. Find out more at [www.ometro.com](http://www.ometro.com)
  
- F. Equitable Development Scorecard - Ashley Rae Turner, Heartland 2050 Equity & Engagement Committee
  - a. Ashley is the new chair of the Heartland 2050 Equity & Engagement Committee
  - b. The committee is working to finalize an Equitable Development Scorecard that can be used by any member of the community to score an actual or proposed development project on various equity-related criteria.
    - i. They hope the scorecard will facilitate conversations between community members and project developers and help guide our community toward more equitable development practices
    - ii. Use of the scorecard is not mandated or required, but it could be adopted into project approval or funding decision-making processes
  - c. After extensive stakeholder input, the committee has just completed a round of public input on the draft version of the scorecard
    - i. Held five public meetings, both virtual and in-person, as well as provided online opportunities for engagement
    - ii. The committee will incorporate the comments from public feedback into the final version and publish the scorecard with a guide for usage & scoring
    - iii. The committee will then work to integrate scorecard into planning processes and potentially track regional usage of the scorecard
  - d. Visit <https://heartland2050.org/equity-engagement/> for more information.
  
- G. Heartland 2050 Summit & Reception Recap - Laura Heilman, MAPA
  - a. ½ Day Summit was held Wednesday, June 29 from 8-12:30
    - i. UNO Thompson Alumni Center
    - ii. Baby Steps Giant Leaps Theme
    - iii. 100 attendees
      - 1. at least 30% had never attended a Summit before
      - 2. 86% satisfaction with Keynote Presentation by Tamika Butler
    - iv. Premiered the Heartland 2050 Babies Video
      - 1. Find the video on the MAPA YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/WbAmYZLeCDM>

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2. Video highlights babies born in our region in 2020, and how the decisions we make today will impact their lives as they grow
3. Baby Steps Giant Leaps Video Toolkit Coming Soon
  - a. Toolkit includes a meeting facilitation guide for viewing and discussing the video with your group
  - b. Look for the toolkit on the Heartland 2050 website
- b. Invitation-only Reception held Tuesday, June 28
  - i. PACE Center in Council Bluffs
  - ii. Invited Equity Learning Capsule & Indy Learning Site Visit Attendees

#### H. Additional Business

- a. Committee Updates - Committee Chairs
  - i. Natural Resources - Kyle Madsen
    1. At the last committee meeting the group heard from Chris Gibbons about Council Bluffs' SolSmart Gold designation & related zoning changes to support and promote solar and other renewable energy
      - a. Find more information about this work at <https://www.councilbluffs-ia.gov/2460/Renewable-Energy>
  - ii. Equity & Engagement - Ashley Rae Turner
    1. Ashley is the new chair of the Equity & Engagement Committee
    2. As noted in the presentation, the committee is working to finalize the equitable development scorecard and plans to follow that up with outreach to communities throughout the region
    3. Heard a presentation from Marisa Hattab, Douglas County's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, at the last meeting
  - iii. Housing & Development - Jeff Spiehs
    1. Attended Bike Walk Nebraska's Trail Oriented Development event instead of holding the July meeting
      - a. Well attended successful event
      - b. Idea came out of the Indy Learning Site Visit trip
      - c. Committee will further support trail-oriented development work
    2. Affordable housing
      - a. Wanting to learn about the Affordable by Design work by OBD
      - b. Committee will continue to support the affordable housing work of Front Porch Investments
    3. LB 1024 funding stakeholder & public meetings coming up on August 15th & 16th
      - a. RPAC committee could support this
  - iv. Infrastructure - Derek Miller
    1. Committee strategic planning work is coming to a close, met earlier this week to prioritize top projects and re-establish working groups
    2. Had a presentation about the Omaha Natural Surface Trails Feasibility Study from Jason Brummels, Executive Director of Trails Have Our Respect
      - a. <https://www.thortrails.org/blog/omaha-natural-surface-trails-feasibility-study>

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- b. Community Updates
  - i. Omaha City Council approved funding to get DEI training for all City employees through National League of Cities
  - ii. Open Omaha event this weekend though Omaha by Design; check out the app!
    - 1. <https://omahabydesign.org/openomaha>
  - iii. Papillion facilitated joint a City Council and Planning Commission meeting about affordable housing
    - 1. Intent was to get on same page with common language, especially on affordability and housing typologies
    - 2. Also had discussion of city's role and obligations around affordability and diversity in housing
    - 3. Will help staff do their work and develop policies
    - 4. Reach out to Mark Stursma with any questions
- c. Strategic Goals on Website
  - i. RPAC participated in Heartland 2050 Strategic Planning
    - 1. Results from the strategic planning session will be posted on the Heartland 2050 website
    - 2. Will inform MAPA strategic planning efforts happening later this year
- d. Staff Update - Karna Loewenstein Retirement - Replacement Status
  - i. Karna Loewenstein retire as Communications & Outreach Manager with MAPA as of August 1st
  - ii. Her position is now listed and interviews should start in the next couple of weeks
    - 1. Find position openings at <https://mapacog.org/about/join-our-team/>
- e. Broadband Coalition
  - i. Shawna Silvius, Economic Development Planner with MAPA, is supporting a broadband coalition
    - 1. Currently a number of stakeholder partners are meeting to discuss the best approach to promote and help fund regional broadband expansion
    - 2. Goals should be a statewide plans and/or a regional infrastructure build-out plan
    - 3. Digital equity should be a major component of this work
      - a. Learn about the Digital Equity Act here: <https://www.digitalequityact.org/>
    - 4. Next meeting for the group is September 23 from 10-11 am; please email Shawna Silvius [ssilvius@mapacog.org](mailto:ssilvius@mapacog.org) if you'd like to join
  - ii. One current opportunity in Iowa is to challenge the statewide broadband availability map that will be used to make broadband infrastructure funding decisions in Iowa
    - 1. This is the only opportunity to correct information on the map
    - 2. <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-5>

## I. Adjourn

**Next Meeting:** October 7, 2022