



## 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, October 6, 2023 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

#### MEMBERS ATTENDING:

- **In-person (18 voting, 1 non-voting):** Ashley Rae Turner, Bruce Fountain, Carol Vinton, César Garcia, Chris Gibbons, Dr. Terry Haack, Jason Kubicek, Jeff Spiehs, Keith Station, Kent Holm, Kitty Amaya, Kristine Stokes, Laura Dietrich, Leland Jacobson, Manne Cook, Mark Norman, Michaela Valentin, Travis Gibbons, Vicki Quaites-Ferris
- **Virtual (2):** Chad Kruse, Krista Wassenaar

**GUESTS:** None

**MAPA STAFF:** Mike Helgerson, Laura Heilman, Sue Cutsforth, Saul Lopez, Charlie Harrington, Carlos Morales, Court Barber, Travis Halm, Josh Corrigan

**A. Welcome and Introductions** – Keith Station, Committee Chair

**B. Approval of Minutes** from August 4, 2023 Meeting - Keith Station, Committee Chair - **ACTION**

- a. Motion: Jacobson, second: Holm; no discussion - MOTION PASSED

**C. MAPA Updates** - Laura Heilman & Saul Lopez, MAPA

**a. Annual Meeting Wrap-Up**

- MAPA's Annual Meeting was held Wednesday, October 4th at Bellevue Berry Farm & Pumpkin Patch
- Keynote Speaker was Peter Mancauskas, Acting Director of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Center for Innovative Finance Support, speaking on FHWA technical assistance and finance tools to help communities utilize federal fund opportunities
  1. Find out more at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/>
  2. MAPA also held an Innovative Financing Workshop the afternoon before the Annual Meeting, with representatives from various FHWA groups; the materials from that meeting will be shared with the RPAC group; please reach out to MAPA staff with any questions!
- MAPA presents awards at each Annual Meeting; we were pleased to recognize the following for their contribution to the region:
  1. Regional Service Award: Malvern Area Betterment Association
  2. Regional Citizenship Award: Eric Williams, Papio-Missouri River NRD

**b. MAPA Annual Report**

- i. The annual report summarizes MAPA's work of the previous fiscal year and debuts at the annual meeting each year
- ii. You can pick up a copy at the MAPA office or view/download an electronic copy at [www.mapacog.org/about/annualreport](http://www.mapacog.org/about/annualreport)

**c. Member Survey**

- i. Annual member survey will be sent out via email soon

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- ii. Helps MAPA staff understand the needs of the communities we serve, and helps us develop programming and priorities for the upcoming fiscal year
  - iii. Please take a moment to share your thoughts with us!
- d. MAPA Newsletter Sign-up**
  - i. MAPA sends an electronic newsletter via email every other month
  - ii. If you'd like to receive the newsletter, you can contact any MAPA staff member or simply fill out the form at [www.heartland2050.org/contact/](http://www.heartland2050.org/contact/) and check the email newsletter box
- e. Equity Assessment**
  - i. In June 2020 the MAPA Board of Directors passed an equity resolution
    - 1. Includes eight Action Items, one of which calls for an annual equity assessment
  - ii. Each year we present an updated assessment at the July/August Board of Directors meeting
  - iii. Find the resolution and assessments at:  
[www.mapacog.org/projects/equity-assessment](http://www.mapacog.org/projects/equity-assessment)
- f. Livestreaming Discussion**
  - i. MAPA has decided to start livestreaming our public meetings to YouTube
    - 1. [www.youtube.com/@MAPA2222](http://www.youtube.com/@MAPA2222)
    - 2. Find recordings under the 'Live' category
  - ii. Intended for accessibility & transparency
  - iii. Started with the August 2023 Board meeting; potentially expanding to other committees like RPAC
  - iv. Staff asked the committee to share thoughts and concerns; responses were supportive of the increase in transparency and no concerns were raised
- g. Upcoming speakers & topics**
  - h. The committee was asked to share thoughts on what topics and/or speakers they'd like to hear at future meetings; responses included:
    - i. Stories of success and collaboration
    - ii. Work on the equity assessment and resources - how can that be shared with municipalities and other members? Interested in staff capacity to do the work, Board support, and the process of developing the report
    - iii. Comprehensive Plan updates - many communities are currently doing these, including Omaha, Papillion, Gretna, Mills County
      - 1. MAPA would like to hear what communities are trying to accomplish with their update, and whether there are resources we can provide to support and/or coordinate
    - iv. How is MAPA intentional about getting the word out about what we offer?
    - v. We often talk about problems, but don't see many examples of what is working and how those things were accomplished
    - vi. What are other MPOs doing?

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#### D. Transportation Improvement Program: Upcoming Call for Projects & Project Selection -

Court Barber, MAPA

- a. Each year, MAPA awards approximately \$20-25 million in federal transportation funding that has been designated for the area
  - i. [www.mapacog.org/projects/tip](http://www.mapacog.org/projects/tip)
  - ii. Funds are designated for the Transportation Management Area (TMA)
    1. Douglas County, Sarpy County and urban Pottawattamie County
    2. See the TMA boundaries at <https://mapacog.org/services/transportation/>
- b. Eligible parties can apply for funding under various programs; find more information at the bottom of this page: <https://mapacog.org/services/transportation/programs/>
  - i. Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
  - ii. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
  - iii. Carbon Reduction Program
  - iv. FTA Section 5310 Program
  - v. Heartland 2050 Mini-Grants
- c. MAPA will be scoring applications based on the following six categories; categories are weighted differently for each different funding program
  - i. Safety
  - ii. Demand
  - iii. Asset Condition
  - iv. Regional Considerations
  - v. GHG Emissions + Air Quality
  - vi. Leverage
  - vii. Staff previously considered a stand-alone Equity category, but it was determined that equity should be included in the scoring of each of the above categories
  - viii. Information on the categories and specific scoring criteria for each category will be published with the call for projects
- d. Project Selection Schedule
  - i. Call for Projects released: October 30, 2023
  - ii. Submittal Deadline for Applications: January 12, 2024
  - iii. Selection Committee Meetings: March-April 2024
  - iv. MAPA Board of Directors Approval of final TIP: June 2024
- e. The Project Selection Committee is a subset of TTAC
  - i. The TAP program has some additional members with expertise in active mobility
  - ii. Heartland 2050 Mini-grants selection committee includes RPAC members as well
- f. Please reach out to Court Barber or the Transportation team with any questions! They are happy to help you navigate the process and develop strong applications
  - i. Court Barber, Transportation Planner: [cbarber@mapacog.org](mailto:cbarber@mapacog.org)

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**E. Urbanized Area Boundary Update** - Josh Corrigan, MAPA

- a. As part of the Census, areas are determined either urban or rural
  - i. That designation filters down to a number of federal programs and guidelines
    - 1. This impacts MAPA's transportation planning process
    - 2. FTA programs have the most explicit connection between their funding and these boundaries, including MAPA's 5310 funding program
- b. MAPA works with local communities to finalize the urbanized area boundary, with the following concerns:
  - i. Should include full city boundaries
  - ii. Considering upcoming and anticipated growth and development
  - iii. Making the boundary more regular
  - iv. Incorporating transportation connections
- c. Check out the interactive map:  
<https://mapa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/media/index.html?appid=bc320b30cbba43ddb00010c5a99990ed>
- d. Both Nebraska and Iowa Departments of Transportation have given their comments on the MAPA proposed boundaries; this proposal will move to federal approval next

**F. Additional Business** - Keith Station, Committee Chair

**1. Committee Updates**

- a. **Equity and Engagement:** Ashley Rae Turner, Emspace + Lovgren
  - i. Scorecard presentation to Council Bluffs Planning Commission
    - 1. Have already seen impacts of that discussion
    - 2. We would love to come and do a presentation to your group!
    - 3. [www.heartland2050.org/scorecard](http://www.heartland2050.org/scorecard)
  - ii. Working to collaborate with the other H2050 Committees to include equity across all topic areas
  - iii. Next meeting Tuesday, October 10th, 2:30-4 pm
    - 1. Development in South Omaha
    - 2. Discussion of how to leverage scorecard with diverse groups
  - iv. Always looking for additional committee members
    - 1. Folks in planning or making development decisions would be helpful
- b. **Housing and Development:** Jeff Spiehs, Lamp Rynearson
  - i. Been working with City of Omaha Housing Affordability Action Plan
    - 1. Will try to support implementation of that plan
  - ii. Last meeting had a presentation on the Omaha by Design Affordable by Design Playbook: <https://omahabydesign.org/playbook>
  - iii. Looking at creating a regional Citizens Academy
    - 1. Was a previous effort by a number of partners to help citizens engage in government processes
  - iv. Also supporting the AARP ADU for U Design Competition
    - 1. Winning designs could be included in the City of Omaha fastrack program (pre-approved accessory dwelling unit designs that could move quickly through the approval process)
    - 2. Find out more at <https://www.betterlivingdesign.org/aduforomaha>

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c. **Infrastructure:** Saul Lopez, MAPA

- i. Next meeting is Wednesday, October 11th at 2:30
  1. MUD will be presenting on their master plan
  2. Committee has been working closely with the Kiewit Foundation and UNO engineering students
    - a. Will invite some of those students to committee meetings and work to connect them to mentors and companies
- ii. Thriving Communities working group
  1. Supported by a Thriving Communities grant that provides technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to teams of community partners that may lack the staffing or technical expertise to scope, fund, and develop infrastructure projects that advance broader community goals
  2. Developing a community group that will help determine ways to reconnect the North Omaha community that was separated by the construction of Highway 75 through the community
  3. MAPA also just submitted a Reconnecting Communities planning grant application to fund the next steps in this process

d. **Natural Resources:** Kent Holm, Douglas County

- i. Trails, Parks and Green Spaces working group
  1. Led by Eric Williams with the Papio-Missouri River NRD
  2. Lots of trail work currently underway across the region
  3. Several applications for Nebraska TAP funding were awarded to the MAPA region, including a pedestrian bridge over the Elkhorn River to connect major regional trail sections
- ii. Solid Waste Working Group
  1. Nebraska Legislature is currently doing a study on how to increase recycling in Nebraska
    - a. How can we get economic value from the things we currently throw away
    - b. There will be an upcoming survey related to this effort
    - c. There will not be a formal legislative hearing on this, so please engage in these processes as much as possible through the survey and the working group
  2. Will be working closely with the City of Omaha, the regional and the state of Nebraska's Climate Action and Resilience Plans
    - a. Other committee working groups have been in a holding pattern but are focused on contributing to the above plans

2. **Community Updates**

- a. Omaha Public Schools Superintendent search is underway and they are looking for input
  - i. <https://www.ops.org/superintendentsearch>
  - ii. Survey (due by Oct 10):  
<https://survey.k12insight.com/survey1.aspx?k=RQsWPTYTsSYsPsPsP&lang=0>
- b. People in Planning happy hour today at 4 pm at Lumen
- c. Canopy South is doing a master plan for areas of South Omaha

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- i. About a mile and a half radius from 36th & L
  - ii. Working with City of Omaha
  - iii. Looking for additional input and coordination
- d. Hispanic Heritage Month
  - i. Good information display at the City/County building in downtown Omaha

**G. Adjourn**

**Future Meetings & Events:**

H2050 Regional Planning Advisory Committee – December 1 2023