



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, February 2, 2024 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS:

In-Person: Ashley Rae Turner, Carol Vinton, Chris Gibbons, Dr. Terry Haack, Eric Williams (Papio-Missouri River NRD alternate), Jeff Beiermann, Jeff Spiehs, Keith Station, Kent Holm, Kristine Stokes, Laura Dietrich, Leland Jacobson, Mark Norman, Matt Wyant, Meridith Dillon, Michael Jensen, Vicki Quaites-Ferris

Virtual: Bruce Fountain, Jason Kubicek, Krista Wassenaar, Robert Griffin (Nebraska Urban League alternate)

GUESTS: Lisa Olson and Brad Underwood (OPPD), Eva Roberts (Front Porch Investments), Tim Adams (WSP)

MAPA STAFF: Mike Helgerson, Laura Heilman, Sue Cutsforth, Saul Lopez, Charlie Harrington, Carlos Morales, Lindsey Button, Owen Stuckey, Court Barber, Michael Blank

A. Welcome and Introductions – Keith Station, Committee Chair

B. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes - Keith Station, Committee Chair - **ACTION**

- a. October 6, 2023: Motion to approve by Haack, second by Stokes; motion passed unanimously.
- b. December 1 2023: Motion to approve by Vinton, second by Jacobson; motion passed unanimously.

C. Climate Pollution Reduction Grant: Carlos Morales, MAPA

a. U.S. EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grants

- i. <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>
- ii. Awarded to states and local entities to design climate action plans that incorporate a variety of measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from across their economies in six key sectors (electricity generation, industry, transportation, buildings, agriculture/natural and working lands, and waste management)
- iii. Both the City of Omaha and the State of Nebraska received planning grant awards in 2023 and must submit the following deliverables to EPA:
 1. **Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP)** — due March 1, 2024
 - a. Projects or strategies must be listed in the PCAP to be eligible for implementation funding (see more info below)
 2. **Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP)** – due two years after planning grant award (approximately mid-2025)
 3. **Status Report** — due at the close of the grant period (approximately mid-2027)

b. Three current levels of planning:

- i. **State of Nebraska** Climate Pollution Reduction Planning
 1. <http://dee.ne.gov/ndeqprog.nsf/onweb/cprg>

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2. Led by Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy
- ii. **City of Omaha** Climate Action and Resilience Plan
 1. www.omacap.org
 2. Led by City of Omaha: Pale Blue Dot
 3. City of Omaha is planning several **upcoming open houses**, visit link above for more information
 - a. Monday 2/12, 6-7:30 pm, Virtual
 - b. Thursday 2/15, 5-7 pm, Kroc Center
 - c. Saturday 2/17, 9-11 am, MCC Fort Omaha Campus
 - d. Saturday 2/17, 1-3 pm, Common Ground Rec Center, Elkhorn
- iii. **Greater Omaha** Climate Action and Resilience Plan
 1. <https://mapacog.org/projects/cprg/>
 2. Led by City of Omaha / MAPA
 3. Geography is the eight-county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
 - a. Iowa: Harrison, Pottawattamie and Mills Counties
 - b. Nebraska: Washington, Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders and Cass Counties
 4. Webpage includes links to the recent webinar recording and materials, as well as surveys to provide your input
 5. Take our stakeholder input survey at www.tinyurl.com/CPRGStakeholderSurvey
- c. Committee reviewed potential strategies for greenhouse gas reduction that are currently being considered by the State of Nebraska and City of Omaha
- d. Goal is to support local Implementation Grant applications
 - i. <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/about-cprg-implementation-grants>
 - ii. Implementation Grants FAQ webinar on February 15 at 3 pm ([register](#))
 - iii. First round of funding applications are due April 1 2024
 1. Those grants will only fund projects identified in the PCAP
 2. Grant amounts range from \$2 to \$500 million
 3. Grants seem to be highly competitive; a good strategy is to build coalitions to accomplish projects (multiple jurisdictions, or public-private partnerships, etc.)
 4. Rather than taking best practices from other areas, we want to focus on current and upcoming local projects, and strategies that align with
 5. If you're thinking about applying, a SAM registration number is necessary and takes about a month to get (otherwise, you can partner with someone who already has a SAM number)
 - iv. Future rounds of implementation funding are not guaranteed
- e. MAPA staff would love to meet with any jurisdictions and partner organizations to discuss projects and strategies, as well as potential future implementation grant applications
- f. Committee Discussion
 - i. If we're talking about a region, we should think about strategies that impact the larger region, with the benefit spread throughout the region and not just in the City of Omaha
 - ii. We absolutely need a consistent message to elected officials

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- iii. We should be keeping the Justice 40 initiative in mind
- iv. City of Omaha did have Office of Sustainable Development in the past
 - 1. included LED streetlight updates
- v. Electrification
 - 1. OPPD has a Decarbonization Plan toward a net zero by 2050 goal
 - a. Electricity will grow in proportion of total power production but will lower GHG emissions overall
 - b. Renewables are cheapest source of power production
 - 2. Upcoming significant growth in the region
 - a. Best case is to think about electrification and other GHG reduction measures ahead of development
 - b. Communities will need to lead in policy changes
- vi. Billions in federal tax credits are available for energy upgrades in new development; we need to help developers be aware of and access this funding

D. Traffic Reports: Owen Stuckey, MAPA

- a. Every two years MAPA aggregates traffic count data from a number of sources and compiles it into a regional dataset
 - i. <https://mapacog.org/projects/traffic-reports/>
 - ii. Current reports show the traffic flows for the years of 2021-2022
 - 1. <https://mapacog.org/reports/2022-metro-area-traffic-reports/>
 - iii. MAPA publishes three reports from the data:
 - 1. Regional Traffic Patterns
 - 2. Top Traffic Intersections
 - 3. Top Traffic Interchanges
 - iv. MAPA also publishes an interactive map to explore the data
 - 1. www.mapacog.org/traffic
 - 2. Explore the data using the interactive map link above
 - v. Also a large format printable wall map
- b. MAPA only aggregates traffic counts from other jurisdictions or partners, we don't do any traffic counts ourselves
- c. Geography is the local Transportation Management Area (TMA)
 - i. Douglas and Sarpy Counties in Nebraska
 - ii. The urbanized portion of Pottawattamie County in Iowa (Council Bluffs)

E. MAPA Annual Member Survey: Mike Helgerson, MAPA

- a. MAPA sends a survey out every year to help us understand the needs of the communities we serve
 - i. 30 responses this year (much more than previous years)
- b. Helps MAPA staff develop programming, strategies and priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, and informs our budget and work plan
- c. Reviewed survey results with the committee:
 - i. About 80% of respondents said that Housing and Development and Transportation are important local priorities for the upcoming year
 - ii. Top Housing and Development priorities include Housing Choices and Housing Affordability

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- iii. Top Transportation priorities include Walking/Biking Trails and Sidewalk Connectivity
- d. Committee members thought it would be interesting to see how responses might differ by geography or rural/urban/suburban

F. RPAC Business: Laura Heilman, MAPA

a. Annual Membership Update

- i. MAPA reviews and updates the RPAC member list annually
 - 1. Membership runs from July through June
- ii. You'll receive an email in March asking whether you'll continue to serve for the upcoming fiscal year
 - 1. Please provide a new contact if you're unable to continue to serve
 - 2. You can also suggest any new at-large members!
- iii. MAPA Board approves the member list at the May Board Meeting
- iv. We provide any new members with a one-hour introduction to the committee (RPAC 101) before their first meeting in August

b. Heartland 2050 Mini-Grant Selection Committee

- i. Two volunteers from the RPAC Committee will serve on the Heartland 2050 Mini-Grant Selection Committee (Jeff Spiehs and Kristine Stokes volunteered)
 - 1. Meetings scheduled for March & April
- ii. Will select which projects are funded through the Heartland 2050 Mini-Grant Program
 - 1. Awards a portion of MAPA's Regional Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds to projects that serve to move the Heartland 2050 Vision forward
 - 2. Find more information at www.mapacog.org/projects/heartland-2050-mini-grant-program/

c. Bylaws Committee Update

- i. MAPA staff suggested an in-depth review of committee bylaws
- ii. It was decided to create a small working group of committee members who will work with MAPA staff on next steps
 - 1. Keith Station, Ashley Rae Turner and Bruce Fountain have volunteered
- iii. If you're interested in being in the bylaws review small group, let MAPA staff know; we're currently working to set a meeting for this group

G. Additional Business

a. Heartland 2050 Committee Updates

- i. **Equity and Engagement:** Ashley Rae Turner, Emspace + Lovgren
 - 1. Recently surveyed committee; will move meetings to every other month and push the start time back to 3 pm
 - 2. Will do some joint meetings with the Housing & Development Committee; potentially combine all committee meetings moving ahead
 - 3. Always looking for more opportunities to present on the Equitable Development Scorecard
 - 4. Next meeting Feb 13 at 3 pm; Metro and DEI, Equity with a Transpo lens
 - a. A day in the life exercise - choosing transpo options

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5. The committee will also host a Holiday get-together for all committees in December
 - ii. **Housing and Development:** Jeff Spiehs, Lamp Rynearson
 1. Working with Omaha by Design on the Missing Middle Housing Playbook
 2. Also working on a project with the Land Bank
 3. Would be interested in seeing how the committee can support MAPA's programming throughout the region, especially based on member survey results
 - iii. **Infrastructure:** Mike McIntosh, Lamp Rynearson
 1. At last meeting, got update on the final Digital Equity Plan and the status of regional data gathering and analysis being done by UNO students for the TIF working group
 2. At the upcoming meeting on February 7th, will hear about the OPPD Master Plan
 - iv. **Natural Resources:** Kent Holm, Douglas County
 1. Looking to reassess committee goals and strategies and update the H2050 Action Plan
 - a. Committee is very involved in the Climate Action Plans, will support development of the plan, then move to supporting implementation of the Climate Action plans
- b. MAPA Updates**
- i. **Public comment periods open for federal transportation funding**
 1. MAPA is currently reviewing requests submitted for federal transportation funding allocated to our region, and we want your input!
 - a. The Transportation Management Area (TMA) covers Douglas, Sarpy and the urbanized portion of Pottawattamie County
 - i. Review project applications and submit your thoughts at: www.tinyurl.com/mapaTIPprojects
 - b. Regional Planning Affiliation 18 (RPA-18) covers Harrison, Shelby, Mills and the non-urban portion of Pottawattamie County
 - i. Review project applications and submit your thoughts at: www.tinyurl.com/RPA18TIPprojects
 - ii. **Register now for the Council of Officials meeting**
 1. Registration link: <https://metro-area-planning-agency-mapa.ticketleap.com/march2024-council-of-officials/>
 2. Featuring legislative updates from both Iowa and Nebraska
 3. March 13th, 11 am - 1 pm
 4. At the Venue at the Highlander Accelerator
 5. \$15 Registration fee includes lunch by [Big Mama's Kitchen](#)
 - iii. **Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)**
 1. www.mapacog.org/projects/ss4a/
 2. MAPA will be supporting development of two Comprehensive Safety Action Plans

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- a. **Area 1:** Douglas and Sarpy Counties in Nebraska, and the cities of Council Bluffs, Carter Lake, Crescent and McClelland in Iowa
- b. **Area 2:** Seven communities within the RPA 13 & 18 regions: Atlantic, Clarinda, Glenwood, Harlan, Missouri Valley, Red Oak and Shenandoah
3. Purpose is to improve traffic safety through projects which reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on the local road network
4. Email us at safeststreets@mapacog.org and visit our website for more information, future updates, and opportunities to get involved
- c. **Community Updates**
 - i. Health Resources and Services Administration Grants 101 Workshop
 1. February 29, 8:30-4:30 at the Village Empowerment Center
 2. For more information, contact Myesha Kennedy at mkennedy@hrsa.gov
 - ii. AARP Community Challenge Grant
 1. This program funds quick-action projects to make communities more livable and jump-start long-term change.
 - a. Flagship Grants: Projects that improve public places; transportation; housing; digital connections; community resilience; and community health and economic empowerment.
 - b. Capacity-Building Microgrants: \$2,500 grants and additional valuable resources, for projects that support Walk Audits, Bike Audits and HomeFit® Modifications.
 - c. Demonstration Grants: For digital connectivity to prepare for and respond to disaster; equitable engagement to reconnect communities; and housing choice design competitions.
 2. Applications are being accepted now through March 6 at 4:00 p.m. CT
 3. Visit www.AARP.org/CommunityChallenge or email communitychallenge@aarp.org
 - iii. Upcoming MAPA Board Meeting
 1. <https://mapacog.org/projects/board/>
 2. February 22 at 1:30 pm
 3. Will share the schedule for upcoming work planning and budgeting
 - iv. National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) National Conference
 1. National Conference in Washington DC February 11-14
 2. MAPA Staff are attending and will also do legislative visits during that time to align work with federal partners
 3. Carol Vinton, Mills County Supervisor and member of the MAPA Council of Officials and Board of Directors, is the NARC Board of Directors President-Elect and will be attending the conference
 - v. Front Porch Investments
 1. Applications to their Development and Preservation fund are now open and due March 1
 - a. <https://frontporchinvestments.org/what-we-do/development-and-preservation-fund/>
 - b. Loans in this cycle will be available outside the City of Omaha
 - vi. Metro Transit is looking for individuals to run for the Metro Transit Board

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1. Open to residents of Omaha
2. Apply by March 1st
- vii. Midwest Chapter of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is holding a conference in Omaha
 1. April 17-19 2024 at the UNO Thompson Center
 2. Find out more at <https://iap2usa.org/Midwest-Conference>
- viii. Pottawattamie County is finalizing their wind and solar ordinance updates
 1. Fairly restrictive on the wind side due to community feedback, mostly on setbacks
 2. Three companies currently looking at large-scale wind projects in the county
- ix. Lutheran Family Services
 1. Will hold an open house on 2/9 for their Dana Village project in Blair
 2. Will be housing for youth transitioning out of foster care
 3. <https://www.onelfs.org/housing/dana-village/>
- x. City of Gretna
 1. Currently updating Comprehensive plan
 - a. Doing public outreach and looking for more feedback
 - b. <https://www.gretnane.org/>
- xi. Cass County
 1. Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association (NPZA) is holding their annual conference March 6-8 in Kearney
 - a. <https://npza.org/conference/>
 - b. There is a new scholarship program for first time attendees to NPZA conference
 - c. Number of good housing sessions on the agenda
 2. Construction has started on the Platte River Bridge Trail
 - a. A bicycle and pedestrian trail along the east side of the US-34/75 bridge across the Platte River
 - b. <https://www.papionrd.org/recreation-wildlife/parks-and-trails/platteriverbridgetrail/>
 3. Solar power
 - a. Possible permit application coming soon
 - b. Need to be looking at neighborhood solar
 - c. Farmers are really embracing solar (electric fencing, keeping water thawed, etc.)
- xii. City of Bellevue
 1. Also currently updating comprehensive plan
 2. Have a February 21 visioning meeting with City Council and Planning Commission
 3. Public outreach starting soon after
- xiii. OPPD is starting a feasibility study to add solar to closed landfill at 126th & State
- xiv. Greater Omaha Chamber and Urban Core Committee
 1. Housing Committee put forth some aggressive housing recommendations to meet anticipated growth in the urban core

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2. There is a proposal to create an affordable/workforce housing fund, potentially using excess TIF funds; could potentially work with Front porch to distribute those funds
- xv. Happy Black History Month!
 1. Lots of upcoming programming & education
 2. Take the opportunity to support Black-owned businesses
- xvi. Bruce Fountain/City of LaVista
 1. There is a group trying to start a Nebraska Urban Land Institute chapter; look for information about upcoming events related to that

H. Adjourn

Future Meetings & Events:

Council of Officials Quarterly Meeting - March 13, 2024
H2050 Regional Planning Advisory Committee – April 5, 2024