

MOVING FORWARD



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<p>WE-STEP wins award from APA Nebraska</p> <p>READ ARTICLE >></p>	
<p>MAPA seeks feedback on projects submitted for federal funding</p> <p>READ ARTICLE >></p>	
<p>MAPA hosts Elected & Appointed Officials Training</p> <p>READ ARTICLE >></p>	
<p>MAPA staff and elected officials attend NARC conference</p> <p>READ ARTICLE >></p>	
<p>NDED asks communities to join CDBG funding support letter</p> <p>READ ARTICLE >></p>	
<p>Consultants visit region for Market Value Analysis</p> <p>READ ARTICLE >></p>	
<p>Staff Updates</p> <p>READ ARTICLE >></p>	

Safe Streets Safety Action Plan released for public comment

MAPA would like the public to weigh in on its draft Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, which includes safety recommendations and identifies projects aimed at improving safety for all roadway users.

The public comment period began Feb. 27 and runs until March 24, 2025. The plan was developed as part of MAPA’s Safe Streets for All project.

“Our Comprehensive Safety Action Plan identifies a high priority network of locations where projects can help improve road safety, and strategies to reduce fatal and serious traffic crashes,” said Mike Helgerson, MAPA Executive Director. “The plan was developed through detailed data analysis and builds on extensive community engagement throughout the process.”

MAPA hosted four public meetings in late February and early March to gather feedback on the plan from residents.

The goal of the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency’s draft Comprehensive Safety Action Plan is to reduce all traffic fatalities and serious injury crashes to zero by 2040.

Strategies and projects included in the plan will be eligible for future implementation funding.

View the draft Comprehensive Safety Action Plan at mapacog.org/projects/ss4a.

Submit written comments by March 24, 2025, to safestreets@mapacog.org or through the project website, mapacog.org/projects/ss4a.

continued on page 2



WE-STEP wins award from APA Nebraska

The American Planning Association (APA) Nebraska Chapter awarded the Western Sarpy Transportation Enhancement Plan (WE-STEP) its Planning Excellence Award at the annual APA Nebraska conference on March 6th in Kearney, Nebraska.



WE-STEP is an innovative, pro-active approach to planning future transportation networks and development by setting uniform design standards across local communities.

It is a strategic transportation plan for western Sarpy County, developed in collaboration with the Cities of Gretna, Papillion and Springfield, Sarpy County, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency.

WE-STEP provides a framework for changing communities to develop for future generations with proactive standards that are flexible and can fit with what develops around it.

The city councils of the Sarpy County cities involved in the Western Sarpy Transportation Enhancement Plan and the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners all approved the plan in recent months.

The Western Sarpy Transportation Enhancement Plan is available at mapacog.org/projects/we-step/.

Safe Streets Safety Action Plan released for public comment cont.

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) is a competitive grant program that will provide \$5 billion dollars over five years to improve traffic safety by supporting local communities in the development of safety action plans and the implementation of projects which reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on the local road network.

MAPA was awarded \$750,000 in planning funds during the FY22 grant application cycle.

The Comprehensive Safety Action Plan includes the areas of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in Nebraska, as well as the cities of Council Bluffs, Carter Lake, Crescent and McClelland in Iowa.

MAPA hosts Elected & Appointed Officials Training

In February and March MAPA hosted training sessions for elected and appointed officials in southeast Nebraska and southwest Iowa.

These training sessions were designed to equip attendees with the knowledge and skills necessary to uphold transparency, accountability, and effective governance in their roles.

Trainers from the University of Nebraska's Nebraska Extension and Iowa State University Education & Outreach led each respective session.

Participants had an opportunity to gain experience with open meetings and open records law requirements and executing effective meetings with parliamentary procedures.



MAPA seeks feedback on projects submitted for federal funding



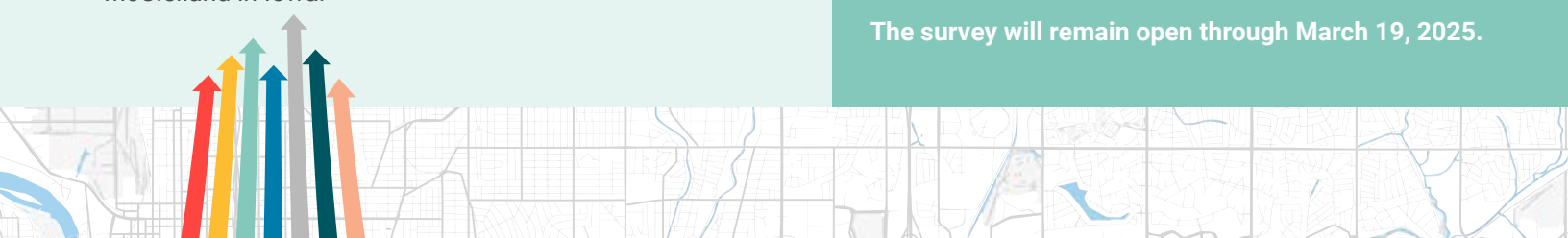
MAPA is asking residents to share their opinions on 13 projects being considered for nearly \$26 million in federal transportation funding allocated by the agency.

Trails, a plan to increase safety and access for bicyclists, pedestrians

and transit users and installation of traffic-slowing devices such as roundabouts are among the projects submitted for inclusion in MAPA's FY2026-FY2031 Transportation Improvement Program.

Residents can view the projects, their descriptions and submit their opinions through a survey at tinyurl.com/TIPProjectsMapFY26.

The survey will remain open through March 19, 2025.



MAPA staff and elected officials attend NARC conference

On Feb. 9th through Feb. 12th, several MAPA staff and Board of Directors' members, many of whom are elected officials from Douglas and Pottawattamie Counties, attended the National Conference of Regions hosted by National Association of Regional Councils in Washington, D.C.



Much of the conference focused on how to navigate changes in federal transportation and economic development policy under the new administration.

As part of the conference, staff and elected officials also traveled to Capitol Hill to meet with members of the Nebraska and Iowa congressional delegations and discuss legislative priorities for 2025.



Consultants visit region for Market Value Analysis

MAPA's Regional Market Value Analysis is underway. The Market Value Analysis is a data-driven tool which is used to understand current housing conditions and support local decision-making.

As part of the project, consultants from CommunityScale, an urban planning and data analysis firm, visited the Omaha-Council Bluffs region on Feb. 24-26.

They toured portions of Douglas, Sarpy and Pottawattamie Counties with MAPA staff to compare data inputs and assumptions made about regional housing conditions based on U.S. Census data with actual housing conditions on the ground.

The Regional Market Value Analysis is an excellent tool for policymakers and developers to help guide investment decisions.

MAPA's Regional Market Value Analysis is expected to be completed in Summer 2025.

NDED asks communities to join CDBG funding support letter

In the past five years, Nebraska communities have invested nearly \$60 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funding to support their locally driven community betterment projects.

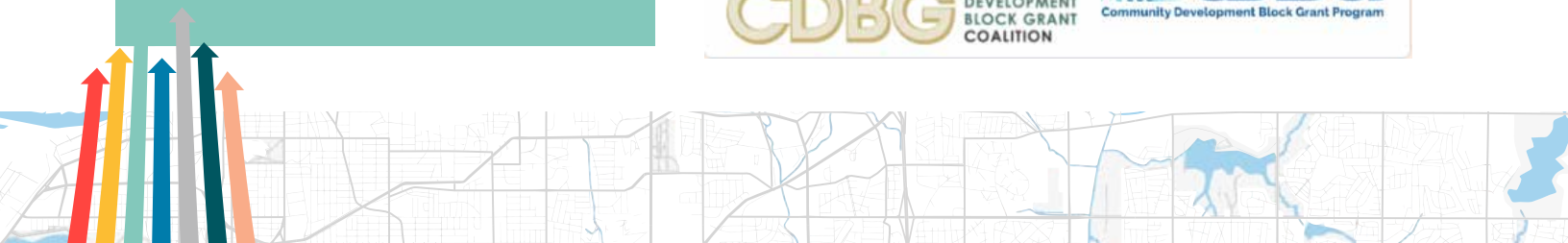
Across the country, CDBG often serves as critical gap financing for a wide array of projects and services that are essential to local economies, such as infrastructure and affordable housing.

Unfortunately, the program is not able to assist as many people as it did previously due to stagnant funding allocations and rising construction costs.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development asks any organizations that support the CDBG program to sign-on to a national letter from the CDBG Coalition to Congress asking for \$4.2 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program in Fiscal Year 26.

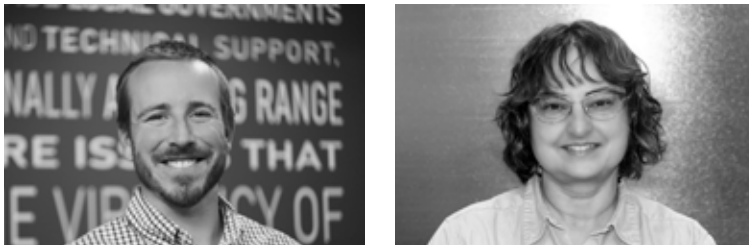
View the support letter: tinyurl.com/CDBGSupport

Figures from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development show that in FY24 alone, CDBG funding created or retained 11,754 jobs, benefitted more than 7.2 million people through public services and provided public improvements and infrastructure projects for more than 1.8 million people.



Staff Updates

We would like to thank **Ryan Ossell** and **Mia Haschenburger** for their time at MAPA. In December 2024, Ryan began a position in the City of Council Bluffs' Housing and Community Development Department. In January, Mia accepted a position with the City of Lincoln in Community Planning. We wish both of them the best in their new roles!



We are excited to welcome Elle Ward, Maggie Weigle, and Latifa Moro.

Elle Ward is a new Transportation Planner. She earned a Master's degree in Geographic Information Systems from the University of Nebraska Omaha. Prior to joining MAPA, Elle worked in a research position focused on human trafficking and counter-terrorism. In her free time, she enjoys reading and playing video games.



Maggie Weigle is a new Community & Economic Development Planner. She has a background in International Studies and Environmental Studies and is currently studying Economics at UNO. She worked previously with Gaston County Economic Development Commission in North Carolina. Outside of work, Maggie enjoys spending time with her family and exploring Omaha.



Latifa Moro is a new Transportation Planner. Latifa earned a Bachelor's degree in Development Planning from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology in Ghana, a Master's degree in Community & Regional Planning, and a certificate in Geographic Information Systems both from Iowa State University. She also taught ArcGIS at Iowa State. In her free time, Latifa loves crocheting and watching movies.

We look forward to the contributions each of them will make here at MAPA!

IAP2 Midwest Conference set for April 23-25 in Omaha

Don't miss an opportunity to boost your skills in public involvement practices! Registration is open for the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Midwest Conference on April 23-25 in Omaha.

The IAP2 Midwest Conference will take place at the Metro Community College Fort Omaha campus in the Institute for the Culinary Arts Building.

Check out the conference program and register today at iap2usa.org/Midwest-Conference.

CALENDAR

MARCH 2025

- 19** **Finance Committee**
8:30 a.m.
- Coordinated Transit Committee**
10:30 a.m.
- 21** **Transportation Technical Advisory Committee**
10:00 a.m.
- 27** **MAPA Board of Directors**
1:30 p.m.

APRIL 2025

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



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.

