



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.

View the meeting livestream on the Regional Planning Advisory Committee playlist on MAPA's YouTube page at www.youtube.com/@MAPA2222

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, February 6, 2026 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS:

In-Person: Keith Station, Chris Gibbons, Ashley Rae Turner, Brian Lodes, Chris Meeks, Ernie Bless, Jeff Beiermann, Eva Roberts, Lindsay Neemann, Mark Norman, Terry Haack

Virtual: Kitty Amaya, Zach Fergus

GUESTS: Dessie Redmond

MAPA STAFF: Mike Helgerson, Sue Cutsforth, Saul Lopez, Andrew Kresin, Rachel Goettsch, Elise Emmanuel

A. Welcome and Introductions – Keith Station, Committee Chair

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

- a. December 5, 2026 - No vote; did not have a quorum

C. Council Bluffs Reliance Battery Factory Brownfield Clean-Up Project: Chris Gibbons and Dessie Redmond, City of Council Bluffs

- a. <https://www.councilbluffs-ia.gov/2459/Brownfields>
- b. City of Council Bluffs purchased the former Reliance Battery Factory property in 2020
 - i. SW corner of 22nd Avenue and S 8th Street
- c. \$500K EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant Awarded in 2022 with \$100K match requirement
 - i. Community Development Block Grant funds used for match
 - ii. CDBG funds used for site acquisition, demolition of building and contamination clean-up
- d. High levels of lead and arsenic in soil, 4,615 cu. ft. of contaminated soil removed
- e. Need to determine what to do with remaining contamination, may establish environmental covenants
- f. Closing out EPA Brownfields Clean-up grant soon
- g. RFP for development at site will be issued

D. Regional Affordable Housing Update: Eva Roberts, Front Porch Investments

- a. www.frontporchinvestments.org
- b. Front Porch Investments is addressing housing crisis by investing in solutions, engaging to identify and communicate community needs, and advocating for policy change
- c. Investments through Development & Preservation Fund, Urban Core Fund, and Greenlining Fund

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EQUITY | INCLUSIVITY | EFFICIENCY | LOCAL CONTROL/REGIONAL BENEFIT



- d. Next steps include Regional Homeowners Study and Community Advisory Committee recruitment - applications due Feb. 16, 2026
- e. Innovation Fund focuses on Research & Market insights, Housing Ecosystem Capacity Building and Innovation in Design, Construction & Housing Models
- f. Policy & Advocacy - Focused on expanding tools which pay for affordable housing, making it easier to build homes people can afford, and keeping families in their homes
- g. Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel public presentation in March, final report in May
- h. Save the Date! Reignite 2 Unite Omaha Development Symposium - June 4, 2026

E. Additional Business

a. Heartland 2050 Committee Updates

- i. **Engagement:** Ashley Rae Turner
 - 1. Successful December social, looking for more engagement opportunities
- ii. **Housing and Development:** Joe Flaxbeard - not present, no update
- iii. **Infrastructure:** Brittni Stephens
 - 1. Cordia Tours - 20 people attended the successful event on Feb. 4, which included UNO students. Will continue to find more field trip opportunities
- iv. **Natural Resources:** Zack Fergus
 - 1. Mercy Manzanares from the Monarch Joint Venture presented at most recent meeting

b. MAPA Updates

- 1. Learning Site Visit
 - a. www.heartland2050.org/lsv
 - b. Taking applications for a 2026 trip to Detroit - let us know if you're interested in attending!
- 2. March Council of Officials
 - a. March 11 at Iowa Western's Arts Center in Council Bluffs
 - b. Find upcoming events at www.mapacog.org/calendar/events
- 3. Transportation Project Updates
 - a. Comment periods opening soon for federal transportation funding applications
 - i. The Transportation Management Area (TMA) covers Douglas, Sarpy and the urbanized portion of Pottawattamie County
 - 1. www.mapacog.org/reports/fy2027-transportation-improvement-program-tip/
 - 2. Comment period February 17-March 14, 2026
 - 3. The Heartland 2050 Mini-Grant selection committee includes two RPAC members and two TTAC members
 - a. Committee will meet after comment period ends to recommend which projects to fund; MAPA Board will vote to determine funding

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- ii. Regional Planning Affiliation 18 (RPA-18) covers Harrison, Shelby, Mills, and the non-urban portion of Pottawattamie County
 - 1. www.mapacog.org/reports/rpa18callforprojects
 - 2. Comment period February 12-March 9, 2026
- b. MAPA Regional Freight Plan
 - i. <https://mapacog.org/projects/regional-freight-plan/>
 - ii. MAPA applied for a Heartland 2050 Mini-Grant and was awarded funding for the development of the first Regional Freight Plan
 - 1. Will develop a baseline understanding of current conditions and collect public and stakeholder input to identify current and future needs.
 - 2. The final plan will establish a regional vision for freight, and set regional priorities and associated performance measures to support local and state projects, programs, and policies which improve the safety and reliability of freight movement within the region.
 - iii. Partnering with both Iowa & Nebraska DOTs
 - iv. Mostly stakeholder level engagement with pertinent entities, but will also be two virtual public open houses
 - v. The project is expected to begin in early 2026 with a final plan tentatively completed in early 2027.
- c. Safe Streets and Roads for All
 - i. www.mapacog.org/projects/ss4a
 - ii. Final round of SS4A funding will be released in Spring 2026; MAPA will support communities looking to apply for funding
- d. Public Open House for Sarpy I-80 Interchange
 - i. www.ndot.info/22917
 - ii. Regarding the new interchange at 192nd Street
 - iii. Project informed by the Sarpy I-80 Interchange Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study led by MAPA
 - iv. Open House Information
 - 1. Thursday, February 12, 2026, 5 - 7 p.m.
 - 2. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 11204 S 204th St, Gretna, NE 68028
 - v. Comments accepted through February 27, 2026
- e. NDOT AASHTOWARE Safety Training
 - i. <https://dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/construction-systems/>
 - ii. March 24, 2-3:30 p.m.
- f. MAPA's Regional Market Value Analysis

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- i. Interactive baseline database of housing market conditions across the region
 - ii. mapacog.org/projects/mva
 - 4. MAPA Foundation Strategic Plan RFP
 - a. <https://mapacog.org/projects/rfpsrfqs/>
 - b. MAPA is issuing a Request for Proposals for the development of an Organizational Capacity Assessment and Strategic Plan for the MAPA Foundation.
 - c. Questions regarding this RFP are due by February 25, 2026.
 - d. Proposals must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. CDT on March 13, 2026.
 - c. **Community Updates**
 - i. Council Bluffs is hiring a consultant for its comprehensive plan update
 - ii. Blair is issuing an RFP for its comprehensive plan update
 - iii. Omaha's Exterior Repairs program is accepting applications until Feb. 27
 - iv. Greater Omaha Chamber & Mills Co. Economic Development Foundation getting former Glenwood Resource Center and mega-site ready for development by 2027
 - v. OPPD & MUD Heat the Streets Run & Walk for Warmth is March 7
- F. Public Comment
 - a. No members of public present
- G. Adjourn

Future Meetings & Events:

Council of Officials Quarterly Luncheon - March 11, 2026
Heartland 2050 Regional Planning Advisory Committee – April 3, 2026