NODES AND CORRIDORS

Heartland 2050

DRAFT
Nodes and Corridors Framework

1. N&C Goal Statement – Need to Create based upon the Priorities Below
2. What are Nodes and Corridors – N&C
3. Growth Trends (Local)
4. Changing Market (Local & National)
5. Omaha Metropolitan Area Development Patterns
6. Guiding Principals
7. Desired Outcomes
8. Composite Map of H2050 N&C
9. Nodes – Existing and Future
10. Corridors – Existing and Future
11. Implementation

Action Plan for 2018

1. Revise framework with input from the executive committee
2. Identify dedicated staff time from MAPA / partners to develop “base” information
3. Decide if the effort requires a dedicated consultant team to complete the project
1. **Nodes & Corridors Goal Statement**

The Heartland 2050 Vision focuses on six goals in the areas of Economic Development, Education, Health and Safety, Housing and Development, Infrastructure and Resources, to improve the quality of life in the five-county region and create a long-term, regional vision in harmony with our people, places and resources.

The question of how and where we grow is a driving force behind the Heartland 2050 Vision. As part of the Heartland 2050 effort, the Nodes & Corridors Committee will identify nodes (current and future mixed-use, high density areas) throughout the region, and the corridors (multi-modal connections) between these areas, in order to focus and coordinate the transportation, housing and economic development investments of regional partners. These investments are intended to increase mobility and access to jobs and strengthen the investments of individual partners through coordination and collaboration. Partners will be able to make effective and strategic decisions about investments with an understanding of broad, regional goals and inter-agency commitments.

2. **What are Nodes and Corridors**

   **Nodes**
   Nodes are defined areas of development that have a variety of land uses, with concentrations of density, and a concrete sense of place that people can identify.

   **Corridors**
   Corridors are major connections between nodes facilitating multiple modes of transportation, often with more intensive transit investment along them.

3. **Growth Trends (Local)**

   **Local Growth Trends**

While slow to adopt national trends, the Omaha-Council Bluffs area is starting to see many of the trends and demographic shifts noted above. This can be seen through new trends in suburban growth, and public and philanthropic interest in urban redevelopment and redevelopment patterns.

Younger generations in the Omaha area are not following national trends as closely as many areas but there are definite shifts in what people under 40 are expecting from housing and what they want access to. Websites like walk score which caters to people looking for housing close to amenities rates Omaha's top neighborhoods as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Walk Score</th>
<th>Transit Score</th>
<th>Bike Score</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Market West</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Old Market</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Park East</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dodge Street Corridor</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Walk Score notes that while Omaha is still a car centric city there are options for transit, and that many of the houses in transit friendly areas feature perks like hardwood floors and built in cabinets. Retiring babyboomers are switching how they live and are seeking out more walkable entertainment oriented areas, like Old Market, where have housing values are out of reach for younger people looking for an apartment or first home. These areas provide people of all ages with a more active healthy lifestyle and options beyond driving.

The trend for more walkable inclusive communities can also be seen in the outer suburban developments that are being proposed like Legacy, Avenue One and 84th St La Vista. There has also been considerable grassroots and developer interest in areas like Blackstone, Benson, Midtown Crossings, and Aksarben Village creating both inner suburban renewal, and outer suburban densification. Downtown areas in smaller cities, Gretna and Springfield, are attracting young families who are looking for a community feel with amenities without the hassle of living within a larger city. The MTIS preferences survey done in 2013 shows a trend to prefer multifamily housing units both in suburban and urban areas in the metro area.

### 4. Changing Market (Local and National)

#### National Growth Trends

The importance of Transit Oriented Development and the creation of land use coordination regarding nodes and corridors has hit a forefront in development across the United States, modeled after many early-American and European cities. These cities and neighborhoods in early America were designed to handle streetcars, more pedestrian commutes and other forms of transportation. As new populations of Americans, commonly known as the “millennial” generation, have reached the workforce, their desired living situations and access to work, resources and entertainment have changed drastically from the latter half of the 20th century. This willingness for closer proximity to work and entertainment, coupled with efficiency for municipalities to promote this type of growth, makes nodes and corridors planning a smart investment for the future.

As mentioned above, new generations have left home for college and the workforce in the 2000s and 2010s decade largely refraining from locating in suburban, auto-centric areas of cities within the United States.¹ These populations have cited proximity to work, social and entertainment options, and a lessened desire to commute long times or distances each day.

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¹ [https://www.forbes.com/sites/petesaunders1/2017/01/12/where-educated-millennials-are-moving/#1e8d5607d3cc](https://www.forbes.com/sites/petesaunders1/2017/01/12/where-educated-millennials-are-moving/#1e8d5607d3cc)
between home and work as the main driving force behind this phenomena. As a result, the demand for mixed-use development, which largely began along the east and west coast, has become a national practice in redeveloping many urban streets into new corridors featuring higher land uses (mixed use) and transportation facilities geared at handling more mass-transit and alternative transit transportation options. This development of new nodes and corridors has not only provided new and innovative land use solutions for these new populations in the workforce, but has served as a catalyst for urban redevelopment in cities across the country.

Another population expressing demand and a desire for more urban neighborhoods are from a quickly-growing demographic of senior citizens who will be required to “age in place” during retirement years. According to the Washington Post, the population of Americans in this age group will rise from 35 million people in 2000 to more than 73 million in 2030\(^2\). Demand and supply for nursing facilities in the United States has become very competitive as baby-boomer generations are reaching ages requiring these services. Providing dense, mixed-use neighborhoods (fully ADA compliant) for persons less able or less willing to use their own vehicle to perform daily life functions allows them to maintain a high quality of life without needing their own automobile. These communities feature grocery, pharmacy, healthcare and other amenities within walking distance or along transit routes. These communities not only maintain health and vitality late into life for these populations, but also provide a high quality of life socially and recreationally.

Mixed-use development and the creation of new urban neighborhoods within the existing footprint of cities has provided a renaissance of many underutilized or blighted neighborhoods in cities. This renaissance comes following years of decay for urban areas which experienced “white flight” following racial tension in the United States between the 1960s and 1980s. Creating these new areas have provided increased tax revenue for cities which have burdened by this population loss, which had been lost by residents now paying taxes in suburban communities outside of the main city limits. Added revenue from these sources not only allows infrastructure surrounding new development to be greatly improved, but has provided revenue to improve infrastructure throughout a jurisdiction’s entirety. Many

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of these infrastructure improvements have come during an era when large amounts of a city’s infrastructure reach poor or dangerous conditions. These nodes and corridors of mixed-use and transit-oriented development are not only good for their particular areas, but for jurisdictions as a cohesive unit.

Nationally, the market continues to change in favor of mixed-use, higher density and transit-oriented development, commonly located closer to urban centers of American cities. As the number of Americans entering the workforce from the “millennial” generation continue to grow, and as the “baby boomer” generation age in place, the importance of fostering these new nodes and corridors is of utmost significance. Changes within the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area have created new opportunities for business and commerce, and has begun a shift in the patterns and trends of development within the communities that comprise the metro area. Although these shifts may not fully be transit-oriented or mixed-use in their initial conception, the ability to adapt and grow these areas as trends change nationally and locally are very feasible.

**Regional Growth Trends**

Within the upper-midwest and heartland region, various initiatives have been made in similarly-sized cities which can be of use as Omaha/Council Bluffs derives its new vision for nodes and corridors within the metropolitan area and surrounding area. These cities, ranging in sizes larger to smaller than Omaha/Council Bluffs, including similarly-sized cities, have all developed plans and initiatives for corridors and nodes within their jurisdictions or metropolitan areas to stimulate sustainable growth and foster new economic opportunities.
Fort Dodge Corridor of Commerce

In 2008, the city of Fort Dodge, Iowa, in collaboration with numerous community stakeholders, released the Business Highway 20/5th Avenue Corridors of Commerce Action Plan. This plan was designed to address a wide array of issues along the main commercial corridor within the City of Fort Dodge, which at both ends connected the city with new US Highway 20. The plan addressed numerous issues related to connectivity with educational and health institutions, urban revitalization along older sections of the corridor, along with proper land use practices in newer low-density commercial settings.

Similar to many corridors within the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area, the 5th Avenue/Kenyon Road corridor feature many adjacent properties which have experienced significant amounts of disinvestment or blight for numerous decades. Other areas of the corridor were developed during periods where roads and neighborhoods were designed only for vehicle-centric mobility. This project not only provided cohesion between multiple areas, but enhanced connectivity of multiple modes within the corridor, while also creating an economically viable corridor for commerce into the future through preservation, infill development and walkability.

Oklahoma City Revitalization

Oklahoma City has seen massive revitalization efforts within its urban core in the previous decade. The city has seen a revitalization of existing downtown and midtown districts, in addition to the creation of the new Bricktown district surrounding new sports venues for
basketball and baseball. The construction of the Devon Energy Tower in Downtown Oklahoma City provided a funding revenue source through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to completely reconstruct the downtown streetscape into a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly and transit-friendly environment for commuters and residents downtown. Downtown and nearby neighborhoods have seen the direct benefit of this streetscape improvement as many neighborhoods have seen increased numbers of pedestrians, persons using alternative transportation, and overall increases in business and vibrancy across the area.

**Kansas City Streetcar**

The Kansas City Streetcar opened in 2015 along the Main Street corridor of Kansas City, connecting the River Market, Downtown, Crossroads and Crown Center nodes. The connection of these various nodes and districts have sparked additional movement and development in the region as four distinct areas have become more cohesive and complimentary of their individual characteristics. All four districts feature tourist destinations for the city while downtown remains a major hub for commerce within the region. Residential land use components have been added within the area over the previous decade and have seen higher property values as a direct result of the streetcar along the corridor.
5. Omaha Metropolitan Area Development Patterns
   a. Outcomes
   b. Societal Costs
   c. Financial Costs
   d. Future Result

6. Guiding Principles
7. Desired Outcomes
8. Composite Map of H2050 N&C
9. Nodes – Existing and Future
   a. Old market
   b. North Downtown
   c. 24th and Vinton
   d. Dundee
   e. Blackstone
   f. Benson
   g. UNMC
   h. Midtown
   i. Legacy
   j. Downtown La Vista
   k. Avenue One
   l. Rivers Edge
   m. Aksarben
   n. 24th and Lake
   o. 75 North/Fair Deal Village
10. **Corridors Existing and Future**

- **Dodge Street Corridor**
  - Upcoming BRT line
  - Major thoroughfare
  - Redevelopment along portions

- **Center Street Corridor**
  - Road diets
  - Bike infrastructure
  - Infill development around Aksarben village
  - Potential future BRT route

- **370 Corridor**
  - Major development in Sarpy County
  - Infill development potential

- **24th Street Corridor**
  - Major N-S corridor connecting North Omaha and South Omaha as well as Bellevue
  - Bike infrastructure coming
  - Potential future BRT route
  - 24th and Lake developments
  - MCC South Campus

- **13th Street Corridor**
  - Connections to North Downtown, Old Market, Bellevue
  - Road diet
  - Bike infrastructure

- **30th Street Corridor**
  - Connections between Florence, North Omaha, Midtown
  - North Omaha Transit Center, 75 North, Fair Deal Village, Midtown Crossing
  - MCC North Campus
  - Potential future BRT route

- **72nd Street Corridor**
  - Potential for redevelopment and infill
  - Major East-West divider for the city of Omaha

- **84th Street Corridor**
  - Connector between Omaha, Ralston, La Vista, and Papillion
  - Downtown districts for Ralston La Vista and Papillion

- **144th Street Corridor**
  - Suburban infill potential
  - Provides North-South connections between Omaha and Western Sarpy County

- **168th Street Corridor**
  - Suburban infill potential
  - Provides North-South connections between Omaha and Western Sarpy County

**II. Implementation:**

**a. Partnerships**

As the Heartland 2050 Vision states, we must work together to grow responsibly. A diverse, inclusive group of partners is necessary for successfully creating and implementing regional plans for growth that address the entire spectrum of...
community needs. Partners needed for the implementation of Nodes & Corridors recommendations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Heartland 2050 Executive and Implementation Committees and associated members
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
- Elected Officials (City, County, etc.)
- Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development entities
- Community development organizations
- State Departments of Transportation
- For-Profit Developers (large and small)
- Non-Profit Developers
- Local business associations
- Infrastructure partners (utility companies, SID leadership, etc.)
- National Resource Districts
- Funding Sources (banks, foundations, government entities, etc.)
- Community and Neighborhood Groups
- School districts
- Youth Leadership organizations
- Social justice organizations (for equity and inclusion)
- Housing-related agencies
- Transportation-related agencies
- Health-related agencies
- Consultants (for special needs)

b. Funding
c. Studies
d. Case Studies
e. Existing Examples – Blackstone / Rivers Edge
   i. Success Stories
   ii. Hurdles
f. Great Places Tool Kit
   i. Parking Tools
g. Great Places Evaluation Matrix
   Older, Smaller Better

https://savingplaces.org/stories/preservation-tips-tools-older-smaller-better-new-findings-preservation-green-lab#.WV6Gw4jyvcs

Atlas for ReUrbanism (they will be coming to Omaha to add us to the list of cities with character scores)

http://forum.savingplaces.org/act/pgl/atlas?_ga=2.208213650.1271994232.1499367108-349786686.1481203137

h. Barriers