



Action Plan

OCTOBER 2016

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I. Introduction

Heartland 2050 is a long-range vision for the future of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area. In the coming years the region will experience dramatic demographic changes and face increased challenges related to workforce. The Heartland Vision addresses these issues through collaborative leadership, a quality growth strategy for transportation and housing, and an eye toward improved access to opportunities for all.

Guiding Values & Principles

Ensuring the Vision reflects the voice of our residents, now and into the future, is critical. The Core Values and Guiding Principles guide the Heartland 2050 Action Plan.

Core Values of Heartland Residents

Starting with the research and input compiled at the beginning of the planning process, the Steering Committee refined a list of core values to serve the vision and its implementation activities moving forward. These elements have been identified as the most important to our future happiness. Working together, we will strive to protect and preserve these values to make our communities stronger.

- Retain a high quality of life
- Maintain affordable and fair housing
- Use public resources efficiently for low taxes
- Enhance safety, reduce crime and eliminate poverty
- Attract good quality jobs
- Attract and retain young professionals
- Maintain excellent educational opportunities
- Ensure high quality health care
- Maintain our strong network of neighborhoods and communities
- Retain small town values that make our region inclusive, family-friendly, welcoming and accessible
- Expand and enhance transportation choices
- Plan for future which is sustainable and resilient economically

Guiding Principles for the Vision

Along with the core values, a set of guiding principles were created also through the work of the Steering and Stakeholder Committees, and the Equity and Engagement Committee. The Guiding Principles go beyond the core values and create overarching themes or principles used to guide the vision goals, and the strategies and actions included in the Heartland 2050 Action Plan.

Equity - All individuals, regardless of ability, and communities within the region will have full and equal access to the opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential.

Efficiency - Public infrastructure and services will be provided efficiently and cost-effectively.

Inclusivity - Decision making and the implementation of solutions in the region will be done in a way that ensures that all of the region's residents have an opportunity to participate in the process, implementation, and evaluation.

Local Control/Regional Benefit - It is critical that cities and counties within the region maintain local control over their communities while also working together collectively to ensure that local decisions enhance rather than affect other neighborhoods, communities or the region as a whole adversely.

How This Document was Developed

2014-2015: Initial Heartland 2050 Planning Process

In 2014 Visioning Committees occupied the middle ground between the organizational and content-generating elements of Heartland 2050. Committee members provided invaluable depth of knowledge and collective content and review of the outcomes, and strategies that are found in this Action Plan.

Committees were formed around the six goal themes (Transportation and Infrastructure, Housing and Development, Resources, Economic Development, Education, and Health and Safety) and were comprised of individuals and organizations representing the spectrum of expertise, community type, sector, and position on the value chain (e.g. producer, consumer).

Three rounds of meetings were held with more than 100 people participating in each session. The Vision Committee meetings served as forums for discussion, interpretation, and networking. Ultimately, the Vision Committees were responsible for crafting the outcomes and strategies (elements of the Heartland 2050 Action Plan). Their recommendations were the outcomes of thorough analysis and detailed discussions about the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Similar committees will continue as part of implementation.

2015-2016: Move to Implementation

From August 2015 to April 2016 Implementation Committees for each goal theme vetted the Outcomes, Strategies, and Action Steps. The Outcomes were presented to the Executive Committee for review and were approved with minor changes in January 2016. Strategies and Action Steps from the original document were vetted using the same process and approved by the Executive Committee in May of 2016. The Action Plan was presented to the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency Board of Directors and released for a 30 day public comment period July 1- August 1, 2016. The final draft was presented for approval at the Council of Officials annual meeting October 5, 2016.

How This Document is Structured

Goals, and Outcomes

The Heartland Vision and its six goals were created from the region's core values, discussions with the committees and research teams, and input from the thousands of people who participated in regional workshops and the "Shape Our Future" scenario survey. To transition into action, and to move the region towards the Heartland 2050 vision, the Visioning Committee met to finalize potential strategies to achieve these goals. In 2015-2016, Implementation Committees reviewed and revised the work, and the Action Plan was approved by the Executive Committee. The outcomes presented here are organized by the Vision goals. It is important to understand that the six Heartland goals are interrelated, resulting in connected and overlapping strategies in some areas.

The goals, and outcomes, are organized using the following format:

Heartland Goals provide a definition of the six main goal areas (Resources, Infrastructure, Development, Health, and Education and Economic Development)

Outcomes provide specific aspirations within each topical area

Strategies provide an overarching approach to achieving the outcomes

Action Steps tactical efforts to execute strategies and outcomes

Action Plan Timeline

This Action Plan includes both long-term projects with a long-term timeline in mind and short-term action items (or quick wins). The Heartland 2050 Action Plan represents the "continuous" component of the 3Cs Planning Process (continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative). This Action Plan will be revisited periodically and updated. As the next phase of the project advances, Action Plan projects will be prioritized and selected for implementation. This process will include the identification of partner agencies or champions, funding opportunities, and timelines.

2. Projects with Momentum

As the Implementation Committees vetted, reviewed, and revised the Action Plan certain projects surfaced as those with highest priority, interest, and energy. Those projects were designated as "*Projects with Momentum*" and will be scheduled first for implementation.

Close the Gap

Without a clear plan, we're growing by outward expansion and the gaps between neighborhoods widen. We're slowing down and spreading out. We'll end up walking less and driving more. We'll sit in bumper to bumper traffic and wait longer for the bus. We'll also face a serious budget shortfall to pay for the infrastructure needs in our sprawling metro area. Meanwhile, poverty rates will continue to climb and areas of the urban core will continue to lose population unless we close the opportunity gap.

By 2050, we'll have:

- Another Omaha in developed land area
- 500K more people in the region
- \$1.3B projected budget shortfall

But we have a choice, Close the Gap is an integrated approach to land use and transit that concentrates growth based on existing development in our region.

Nodes

Nodes are areas where lots of stuff is happening close together. Neighborhoods with residential, shopping, restaurants, and business like The Old Market, The 100 Block, and Blackstone are a few examples.

Our Goals

- Encourage regulatory flexibility for development in nodes
- Create best practices for infill development
- Create opportunities for public and private partnerships for infill development
- Encourage adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and restoration of existing structures

Corridors

Corridors are well traveled paths between nodes, connecting schools, hospitals, cultural centers, and businesses along the way.

Key Corridors Include:

- East/West: Dodge-Farnam-Broadway; Center, Maple, and Ames Street
- North/South: 24th Street, 72nd Street and Hwy 75

Our Goals

- Bus routes with fewer stops so you get where you're going quickly, direct routes that are easy to understand, and shorter waits so you can use public transit on your schedule

- Complete streets that take into account all modes of transportation: buses, cars, bikes, and pedestrians
- New technology like Bus Rapid Transit systems with dedicated bus lanes that will make public transit faster & more convenient

Implementation Committee Projects

Economic Development

Regional Market Analysis and Strategic Site Development
Workforce Shortage - Aligning with Chamber efforts

Education

Supporting Metro Omaha Education Consortium
Proposed Pipeline from Secondary to Post Secondary
Seek to Expand Early Childhood Effort to Entire Region

Equity and Engagement

Updating Equity Profile
Widespread Sharing of Equity Profile - Focus on Local Leadership Programs

Health and Safety

Trauma Informed Care Model - Through the Network of County Health Departments

Housing and Development

Regional Analysis of Impediments
Neighborhood Based Planning Process
Main Street Toolkit - Catalyst Project
Place-making in Targeted Locations

Infrastructure

Regional Long Range Transportation Vision
Education/Engagement for Ramping Up Walkability/Human Scale/Transit Options

Natural Resources

Natural Resources Inventory Expanded to H2050 Counties
Local Foods Efforts Coordinated Through Local Foods Coordinating Council

3. Action Plan

GOAL

Economic Development

Together, our region will strengthen its robust economy to encourage business expansion, job training and growth, and become a national magnet for a young and highly skilled workforce.

We want our children and grandchildren to have the opportunity to stay in the Heartland region and enjoy the same low cost of living, high quality of services, and strong economy that the majority of people enjoy today. Throughout the region, but especially in areas suffering from inequality and marginalization, we want to see quality skills training programs and incentives, employment growth and support for jobs that are either close to where people live or accessible by transit.

Addressing job inequality and attracting and retaining the next generation of skilled workers to the region is paramount to the long-term economic success of the place we call home. To meet this goal, advancing equity should be a driving force to strengthen the region's economic growth and competitiveness. This includes prioritizing regional investments in quality education and workforce development, housing, transit, and revitalization in key neighborhoods. Local governments should support emerging business sectors including infrastructure, transportation, health-care, medical research, agriculture and food processing, military, insurance, and finance.

Outcome 1.1: By 2050, we have strengthened and expanded businesses in existing clusters. Examples include the freight and logistics, finance, insurance, real estate, corporate headquarters, health care, creative industries, agriculture, food production, construction, advanced manufacturing and defense sectors.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) **public and private actions and investments to strengthen competitive advantages of the region, working with chambers of commerce, industry leaders and other stakeholders.**
 1. Coordinate efforts among governmental agencies, chambers of commerce, industry leaders and other community stakeholders.
 2. Identify and obtain innovative cross-jurisdictional financing mechanisms.
 3. Provide incentives to businesses that take into account paying a living wage. Reward companies that pay higher wages and increase economic activity with higher incentive benefits.
 4. Leverage the economic power of large employers and institutions for community economic development.
 - o develop strategies to hire jobseekers facing barriers to employment
 - o create on-the-job training opportunities
 - o purchase more goods and services from local and minority-owned businesses that provide local jobs
- b) **needed infrastructure critical to the identified industry.**
 5. Develop effective utilization of assets by taking advantage of land, physical infrastructure, transit assistance programs, and tools to help existing business clusters expand and cultivate the next generation of clusters.
 6. Convene public economic development agencies (local and state), foundations, industrial brokers/developers to explore various ways to purchase and prepare strategic sites in an intentional and consistent manner.
 7. Identify sources of development funding to purchase and control sites for future industrial developments.
 8. Explore convening a task force to investigate opportunities for existing organizations (such as the Omaha Land Bank and the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership) or interlocal agreements to expand regional entities to acquire and prepare land for industrial development.

Outcome 1.2: By 2050, we have a physical and cultural environment that attracts, retains, and develops a high skill, high paying workforce across business clusters.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support and/or facilitate:

- a) **education and training needed to reduce the skills gap for well-paying and high demand jobs for all individuals.**
- 9. Develop apprenticeships and other educational training opportunities for individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- 10. Implement sectoral workforce strategies that connect workers with low education levels and /or reentry workers to high-quality training programs that lead to gainful employment in growing sectors of the economy.
- b) **new ideas that make the region more successful in attracting and retaining a young, talented workforce.**
- 11. Create a welcoming culture and environment with amenities, diverse housing, educational opportunities, thriving arts community, and multi-modal transportation.

Outcome 1.3: By 2050, we will have improved our business environment that will be attractive to entrepreneurial development and attraction of new businesses to diversify and strengthen the regional economy.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) **flexible local regulatory and land use planning systems that establish needed controls while facilitating growth. Support infrastructure that allows for balanced multi-use development.**
- 12. Utilize committee representatives to promote the H2050 plan and how land use planning can coincide with the plan's desired outcomes.
- b) **strengthening the capacity of local entities to provide capital assistance to businesses/entrepreneurs to build economic activity throughout the region.**
- 13. Convene a task force of large regional entities in various sectors (including companies, higher education and area foundations) to explore best practices nation-wide.
 - o develop a series of actions for the next five years to cultivate more entrepreneurship within their companies
 - o cultivate greater innovation opportunities for startups in the region
- 14. Expand assistance programs for very small business start-ups (i.e. business planning, financing options, etc.).
- c) **building business capacity/knowledge in underserved areas.**
- 15. Promote the REACH program to underserved areas in the region as a way to increase the number of companies who have adequate business and the financial

- capacity to compete in the marketplace. Expand the REACH program or duplicate in other areas outside the City of Omaha.
- d) connections between various entrepreneurial efforts to strengthen its ecosystem to encourage innovation, creative financing, and mentorship.**
 - 16. Identify best practices such as the Oregon Entrepreneurs Network led by Linda Weston and analyzing what can be replicated or customized to Heartland 2050.
 - 17. Leverage and support existing efforts to establish a Heartland 2050 Region Entrepreneurs Network.
 - e) proactive marketing and branding efforts to promote the region as a profitable location for businesses/entrepreneurs.**

GOAL

Education

2

Together, our region will have the highest quality education system that educates the workforce of the future.

We want all residents living in the Heartland to have access to high-quality education that prepares individuals with the skills needed to participate in a growing and changing economy and attracts potential employers to a well-trained workforce. Expanding educational opportunities from a comprehensive 'cradle to career' strategy, including early childhood development, through higher education and career entry will not only boost our region's economic competitiveness, but it will also contribute to residents' capacity to participate in civic and political discourse as diversity increases.

Our region's shared future depends on reducing the achievement gap in educational attainment. Focusing on post-secondary education that grows the appropriate skills will ensure a wide variety of options for Heartland residents.

Outcome 2.1: By 2050, we have aligned education systems and community support that ensures all students throughout the region succeed regardless of race, class, ability, or geography.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) **quality comprehensive early childhood development services to ensure all children are ready for school.**
- b) **programs to enhance home environments and the ability for children to obtain educational support in and out of the classroom.**
 - 1. Provide high-quality after-school, youth development, and family activities which provide learning and positive social opportunities for children and families **outside of the school day.**
- c) **educational supports for vulnerable youth* from birth through career.**
 - 2. Coordinate alignment of the B-5 (Birth through 5 yrs of age) education programs that serve B-5 to ensure successful preparation to enter kindergarten.
 - 3. Advocate for equitable funding for public schools to ensure schools attended by at-risk students provide an education preparing for college and careers.
 - 4. Ensure access to a quality education that helps vulnerable youth achieve progress in skills and competencies, leading to sustained economic prosperity for all youth in the H2050 region.
 - 5. Acknowledge and address the disproportionately high levels of high school dropout and lack of high school degrees for vulnerable youth.
 - 6. Acknowledge and address disproportionate levels of opportunity youth.**
- d) **post-secondary education and training to develop regional workforce skills through partnerships between public, private and non-profit organizations.**
 - 7. Increase access to education and job training in existing and emerging sectors that lead to job opportunities providing a living wage (such as apprenticeships, boot camps, career academies, certifications).
 - 8. Increase the number of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) graduates within the region.
 - 9. Acknowledge and address the disproportionate levels of continued professional development and post secondary attainment to low and moderate income adults and families.

*<https://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/RL33975.pdf>

**<https://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf>

GOAL

Health and Safety

3

Together, our region has addressed the social determinants of health, including neighborhood and built environment, health and health care, social and community context, economic stability and education.

For residents in the Heartland region, our quality of life greatly depends on the places we live, whether we feel safe and secure, and having convenient options for a healthy lifestyle. We want to promote active lifestyles and have nearby options for quality health care services. In addition to accessible, quality primary healthcare, it is important that the region create exceptional healthcare facilities for research and advanced level of services and implement policies that address lingering health disparities among low-income residents and communities.

As our region grows, we must develop new neighborhoods and revitalize existing ones to create places that are safe, active, healthy and desirable for our residents.

Outcome 3.1: By 2050, we will have a healthier population reflected in the community, neighborhoods and built environments with improvement in physical and behavioral health.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) neighborhoods that encourage active living and healthy lifestyles by providing walking and biking access, as well as access to all, to parks, trails, public institutions and community services.**
 - 1. Establish guidelines to advance cities and towns so that active living is a natural part of their culture (i.e. conducting a health impact assessment).
 - 2. Establish model complete streets policies for local application where appropriate in coordination with communities. (see Infrastructure 5.1)
- b) partnerships with schools, community centers, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and the private sector to address and educate regarding physical, social, and emotional health and well-being that begins in early childhood and continue through the life span.**
 - 3. Educate regional partners on the concept of an Accountable Health Community.
 - 4. Support the development of Accountable Health Communities within each county.
 - 5. Coordinate the county efforts as a region.
 - 6. Disseminate and share best practices within the region and seek opportunity for partnership.
- c) development of quality neighborhoods and supporting infrastructure.**
 - 7. Through the Health Impact Assessment process, apply a health lens in the development and enhancement of housing, parks, trails, streets, and community services.

Outcome 3.2: By 2050, we have equity in access and availability to physical and behavioral health services and have eliminated disparities.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) a comprehensive strategy focused on preventative health care access that is evidence-based and coordinated across systems and communities.**
 - 8. Inventory providers and enlist their cooperation.
 - 9. Educate healthcare providers across the region on integrated care models (SAMSHA: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).
 - 10. Support development of these models.
- b) health services with locations, hours, delivery methods, etc. that are accessible for all, especially vulnerable and historically underserved populations.**
 - 11. Identify gaps in health services based on local data across the region.
 - support actions based on gap analysis.

c) **Adequate financial support (e.g. funding and affordable services) for all residents to receive care.**

12. Estimate financial support needed to close identified service gaps and inform policy makers.

Outcome 3.3: By 2050, we have a region where all neighborhoods benefit equitably from a prosperous economy.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

a) **development of a community that is resilient to overcome the traumatic effects of poverty.**

13. Utilizing existing coalitions, educate and train all sectors in the community, on trauma, the effects, and the concept of Trauma-Informed Care.

14. Support the development of a Trauma-Informed region.

15. Support existing businesses and recruit new businesses that pay a living wage (see Outcome 1.1 in Economic Development).

b) **integration of a community health worker workforce into the health system and community organizations.**

16. Educate the health provider community on the concept of the community health worker model.

17. Support the development of the community health worker model within healthcare systems across the region.

c) **equitable access to healthy, affordable food.**

18. See Outcome 6.5 in Natural Resources.

GOAL

Housing and
Development

4

Together, our region will be known for welcoming, connected and lively communities that offer residents a range of housing choices and locations.

Strong communities and neighborhoods are vital to people living in the Heartland and contribute to the quality of life we enjoy. People want a variety of housing options, both in the city as well as our suburban and rural communities, meeting the needs and preferences of the whole community. People want to be able to bike and walk to neighborhood stores, businesses and schools so they can be less dependent on cars and cultivate healthy lifestyles. Heartland residents are concerned about high taxes, environmental issues, housing segregation and areas of concentrated poverty, and want to see well-designed growth which makes the most efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure and public monies.

As our region grows, new homes, employment areas and places to shop should be encouraged to locate in areas that are already developed in both smaller towns and larger cities, while ensuring that new development on the edge of the region is contiguous, well-planned, efficient, and affordable. This can be accomplished by revitalizing existing and creating new “town center” developments or “main streets” that include a mix of housing sizes and types while providing amenities to accommodate families as well as our growing baby boomer population.

Outcome 4.1: By 2050, infill and adaptive reuse is prevalent throughout the region to supply a significant portion of new growth. By 2050, development in the region will center on nodes and corridors, which provide and facilitate connectivity, multimodal transportation, a mix of easily accessible housing, and economic, employment, civic, educational and recreational opportunities. Development within nodes and corridors should encourage sustainable infill development and reuse of existing resources within existing developed areas.

Heartland 2050 will identify needs and remove barriers to achieving the outcome through the following strategies:

a) Planning and Regulatory

a. Encourage regulatory flexibility for existing and new development

1. Advocate for zoning and building codes for local adoption in coordination with communities throughout the region that offer greater flexibility for the size of lots and housing by applying state legislative efforts.
2. Address rural code compliance enforcement.

b. Encourage development in existing nodes and corridors

3. Identify best practices for infill development that align with H2050 Vision.

c. Identify priority nodes and corridors for new development

4. Map areas that have infill opportunities, and that need stabilization and renewal through infill investment.
5. Gather existing data and help embrace and share. Rank, prioritize, and align with specific goals.

d. Public and private partnerships for infill development

6. Coordinate with existing efforts through areas plans such as Omaha by Design, chambers and regional cities.
7. Convene regional and for- and non- profit development entities and public agencies in a developer's forum to review best practices, identify barriers and ways to successfully implement infill development.
8. Identify partners and target sites for catalyst projects that can be initiated in the short term. Use private and public sector resources to implement prototype buildings and simplify infill development.
9. Meet with neighborhood associations or host town halls in different areas of the region to make sure that citizens are involved in the infill development process that impact their neighborhoods. Utilize foundations representing urban and rural, such as Harman County Foundation, Fremont Area Foundation, HCDC, etc.

e. Multimodal transportation options connecting nodes and corridors

f. Affirmatively further fair housing throughout the region

- g. Encourage rehabilitation, preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse of existing and historic structures

10. Create a toolkit of development resources such as guidelines for infill development; model codes that can be used throughout the region to incentivize infill development; and house plans for small lot residential infill.
11. Identify neighborhood resources, such as agencies or organizations, that can help neighborhood leaders and their teams with the use of the regional toolkit.
- b) Funding**
 - a. Expand use of existing redevelopment financing tools**
 12. Work with local officials to facilitate inventory of all pertinent public agencies in the region to procure an inventory of redevelopment financing tools and explore how these can be best leveraged to secure local and regional goals.
 - b. Leverage redevelopment financing tools with private investment**
 - c. Encourage incentives and related policies that further the broad goals (nodes and corridors)**
 - d. Seek new federal, state, and local funding sources**
 13. Research/Implement other hybrid metro development funding options. Review and advocate TIF policies and implementation.
 - e. Leverage private and philanthropic funding opportunities**
 14. Convene regional foundations and private funding resources to examine realistic steps they can take to enhance the tool kit.
 - f. Allocate existing funding towards infill and priority nodes and corridors**
 15. Identify/Utilize existing funding for infrastructure.
- c) Education**
 - a. Educate decision makers and other influencing forces regarding the Heartland 2050 Action Plan**
 16. Improve awareness of the true and long term costs and benefits of various types of development.
 17. Share the plan at community and neighborhood associations/alliance meetings to ensure that community members are aware and involved.
 - b. Broaden awareness of an interest in issues related to node and corridor center development**
 - c. Ensure awareness and understanding of available development finance tools**
 18. Develop a centralized data base.
 19. Connect funders with funding opportunities.
 - d. Educating lenders and real estate professionals about modern housing typologies**
 - e. Improve awareness of historical and cultural aspects of communities**
 - f. Promoting regional cooperation**
 - g. Achieve active and widespread community engagement**
 20. Educate real estate professionals, lenders, developers, foundations, political bodies, neighborhood associations and appraisers on the benefits and financial value of infill development and the public costs of greenfield.

d) Political and Civic

Outcome 4.2: By 2050, the region's nodes and corridors provide inclusive opportunities for active and meaningful engagement and participation without limitation.

Heartland 2050 will identify needs and remove barriers to achieving the outcome through the following strategies:

a) Housing affordability/ Fair Housing

a. A comprehensive mixed income and affordable housing program that assures coordinated delivery of services to address housing needs

21. Convene a coalition of public and private stakeholders in a task force to develop a preliminary comprehensive approach toward addressing housing affordability.
22. Establish an ongoing building and land use code coordinating committee among jurisdictions to examine best regional practices, and where and how various jurisdictions can agree on unified code provisions.
 - In areas of agreement, amend building land use codes to remove barriers and begin implementing affordable and workforce housing in targeted areas.
23. Evaluate review processes for all federal, state, and local financing programs, to include LIHTC, CDBG, HOME, and NAHTF.
24. Implement recommendations in the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA).
25. Encourage state and federal housing financing programs for the development of affordable housing with program requirements that uphold the goals of fair housing.
26. Identify whether impediments to fair housing goals exist in the statutory program requirements of state and federal financing resources for the development of affordable housing.

b) Neighborhood Assessment - Improvement

a. Convene stakeholders to create a regional toolkit and partnership program that stabilizes and strengthens neighborhoods currently in decline where incentives can have the greatest gains

27. Review and coordinate existing programs and partnerships.
 - b. Neighborhood revitalization programs including land banking, code enforcement, rehab and demolition
28. Expand and enhance effective neighborhood revitalization programs.
29. Expand multi-modal transportation options to better connect all neighborhoods.

GOAL

Infrastructure

5

Together, our region's investments will develop efficient infrastructure that supports economic development, provides more transportation choices, and reduces energy consumption.

We want our leaders to make fiscally sound investments in the transportation system, utilities, renewable energy and new technology to support prosperity for all residents. We want to ensure that existing roads, highways and transit systems are maintained properly, improved, and implemented in a fair and equitable manner. We also want more options for getting around the region, like expanded bike and pedestrian facilities and new forms of transit, coordinating with Metro's transit system improvements underway already.

The transportation sector (rail and truck logistics) is a major part of our region's economy and regional investments that balance new transportation options, advance workforce development for disadvantaged neighborhoods, and support existing networks are needed. New sites for industrial development will benefit from access to highway, railroad, freight, and air transportation. The US 34/Platteview Road corridor which opened a new \$100+ million bridge recently across the Missouri River is an example of how new industrial development can be linked to existing highways. Other investments in infrastructure, such as broadband, will also support our communities and workforce.

Outcome 5.1: By 2050, we have a transportation system that allows for efficient movement of people, goods and services throughout the region by all modes. We have developed an efficient and effective scale of infrastructure that meets the constant evolution of human needs. Development patterns will have a greater focus on walking, biking, and transit.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) **a regional transportation plan for the eight-county area that provides for regional coordination, with inclusive local representation in decision making. Modes in the transportation plan will include roads and auto, freight and logistics, biking and walking, and local and regional transit. Plan will consider emerging future technologies such as autonomous connected vehicles and drones.**
 1. Explore structures to address transportation issues regionally. Expand existing inter-local cooperation agreements to include members from MAPA, Nebraska, Iowa, the eight counties, and local governments - with representation from urban, suburban, and rural areas.
 2. Develop a coordinated staff team led by MAPA with executive and technical staff borrowed from other organizations, such as the states, counties, and private industries. Agencies and organizations will commit to an annual leadership-sharing program targeted to achieving specific programs.
 3. Review options for regional bond issues and a funding compact in each state; with close coordination between state funding packages. Coordinate timing and projects between states.
- b) **coordinated local and regional capital improvement programs highlighting regionally significant projects that are adopted and implemented by each of the eight counties and local jurisdictions.**
 4. Create a phased capital improvement plan and a coordinated capital improvement program that have multiple sources of funding to implement the regional vision.
 5. Fund the regional transportation effort through public and private sector funding.
- c) **in coordination with Heartland 2050 regional land use plan, transportation improvements (existing system and expansion) to complete physical links between town centers, employment centers and areas of concentrated poverty. Walking, biking and transit facilities integrated into all areas of the region so that they are safe, efficient and offer convenient connections. Aesthetics considered from a local and regional perspective.**
 6. Adopt a regional complete streets policy that addresses providing for all users and modes and considers the context of the land use when planning, improving, and maintaining the region's roadways. Monitor progress in achieving complete street

goals, and celebrate successes throughout the region to encourage implementation of complete streets.

7. Prepare model policies for local jurisdictions to adopt that provide for all users and modes in transportation projects. Prepare design guidelines for implementation throughout the region.
8. Coordinate transportation, housing and economic development investments to foster more equitable development patterns and healthy, opportunity-rich neighborhoods across the region.
9. Make transportation investments that increase mobility and access to jobs for low-income transit-dependent residents and expand employers' access to workers.

Outcome 5.2: By 2050, we have efficient, sustainable, and affordable utility systems that foster health and prosperity and incorporate advanced technologies to better serve residents and businesses.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) **infrastructure planning across political boundaries, based on land topography and natural areas, and managed growth so that new development is contiguous and directed to areas where adequate public infrastructure and services exist already or are planned.**
10. Conduct a regional market assessment in coordination with property inventory.
- b) **coordinated water and waste water strategies with strong local representation in decision making, recognizing geographic and political barriers.**
11. Joint services and tools across the region, enabling local jurisdictions to work together.
- c) **regional guidelines for water, waste water, storm water and solid waste management that are consistent with the Heartland 2050 regional land use plans.**
12. Develop a regional, consolidated service plan which enables shared resources with water and treatment facilities provided for multiple cities within the drainage service area.
- d) **regional energy strategies to provide efficient access to a diverse portfolio of reliable energy sources, including a larger portion of renewable energy sources, distributed energy generation and conservation practices.**

GOAL

Resources

6

Together, our region will value, protect and utilize our natural features and systems to provide access to open space and resiliency from natural disasters.

Our region benefits from its proximity to productive and valuable farmland, clean air and high-quality water sources, and good access to green space and parks. The Loess Hills region of Iowa is also significant geologically, featuring unusually deep deposits of glacial silt and home to many of the largest prairie remnants of the state. Maintaining these features, including access to fresh, locally grown foods and preservation of pristine landscapes for future generations is important. Taking advantage of new opportunities to invest in and expand our renewable energy sources, providing a new economic base for our region, is also highly desired.

In the future, the impact of natural disasters will be mitigated by limiting development in floodplains such as the Missouri and Platte River floodplains and careful storm-water management in other flood prone areas.

Expanding the wealth of existing recreational trails and green spaces will create a connected green network of recreational opportunities and provide places for healthy, active recreation. Just as important are the connections between these natural areas, which create a connected green network of recreational opportunities.

Outcome 6.1: By 2050, we have enhanced human and ecological benefits for our quality of life and preservation of our natural resources through a safe regional trail, park, and green space system. The system serves and connects all areas of the region, providing access to nature and transportation options. Natural areas, streams and rivers, and agricultural land are protected through a combination of parks, greenways, and development policies which respect property rights.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) **a coordinated regional green space master plan by a regional park and trail partnership.**
 1. Complete a coordinated regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.
 2. Complete a regional Natural Resources Inventory.
 3. Using an ongoing Natural Resources Inventory process, complete a regional green space and land use assessment to identify long-term needs for natural resource protection, recreation, agriculture, and industry; and to identify and improve integration.
 4. Create a Heartland 2050 regional park and trail partnership.
- b) **model ordinances and codes.**
 5. Research codes and ordinances.
 6. Implement code and ordinances that support Outcome 6.1.
- c) **policies and mechanisms to implement the green space master plan.**
 7. Provide support for local governments during implementation, including adapting the model ordinances(s) for local resources and conditions; identifying staffing needs for implementation; and initial administration and interpretation assistance.
 8. Draft enabling legislation for a regional organization or authority, and funding program; and lobby for passage in the Iowa and Nebraska legislative bodies.
 9. Shepherd the green space master plan through adoption at the county and city levels.
- d) **a financing program which includes public, private, and foundation funding.**
 10. Identify seed money from parks and recreation, environmental, transportation, and foundation funding; for initial analysis, planning, branding and policy development.
- e) **regional branding promotion and education to create one cohesive identity for all regional parks and trails.**
 11. Create a regional and integrated greenways and trails brand and marketing plan.
 12. Support re-signing major, existing regional trails.
 13. Through outreach and education, create a regional culture where people value natural resources, wellness and participate in outdoors activities.

Outcome 6.2: By 2050, we have implemented a regional strategy that manages and conserves water as a beneficial resource. The strategy

addresses water management including flood and drought risk, water quality and water supply-to both adapt to changing conditions and limit the impact of natural disasters.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

a) a regional organization or partnership to conserve water supplies, improve water quality, and consider rain fall and storm water management.

14. Create a Heartland 2050 Water Resources Coordinating Committee to convene existing water resource -related organization, evaluate existing roles and responsibilities, and formalize and strengthen regional cooperation in support of the Heartland 2050 outcomes and strategies.

15. Increase coordination on drinking water supply issues with surrounding regions and states.

b) reduce flooding and flood risks through existing organizations.

16. Facilitate and pilot cooperative storm water management projects including flood risk management, floodplain buyout, water quality protection, and drinking water supply protection and development; incorporate green Infrastructure, green space protection, and recreation.

c) model storm water management and green infrastructure codes and ordinances.

17. Assess current stormwater/green infrastructure codes in the region; identify areas where new codes should be adopted and how those that already exist can be improved.

d) policies and mechanisms.

18. Work with agencies in the region to identify current policies and mechanisms associated with this outcome; make recommendations on how they can be updated or improved.

19. Implement mechanisms to remove existing development from floodplains when opportunities arise.

20. Shepherd the regional water strategy through adoption at the county and city levels.

e) a financing program which includes public, private, and foundation funding.

21. Identify and compile a list of funding sources available for projects related to this outcome and agencies in the region that have applied for them.

22. Heartland 2050 Water Coordinating Committee develops and implements funding strategy.

f) protect undeveloped floodplains and stream or river corridors as natural areas.

23. Review existing studies regarding structural improvements for communities along the Missouri River.

24. Using the Natural Resources Inventory, identify those undeveloped floodplains, streams, and river corridors that will be protected from future development. Codify regulations/ordinances to ensure the protection of these areas.

Outcome 6.3: By 2050, we protect and enhance air quality as an essential resource for human health, economic development, natural environment, and quality of life.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

a) a Clean Air Action Plan.

25. Develop a Clean Air Action Plan that incorporates strategies and policies across multiple sectors to protect air quality; and prepares contingencies for Clean Air Act non-attainment.
26. Identify and incentivize installation of alternative fuel stations (ethanol, plug in vehicles, etc).
27. Create a Heartland 2050 clean air partnership.

b) prepare for changing conditions and regulatory requirements.

28. Clean Air Action Plan will identify opportunities to beta-test technologies, programs, and policies to meet changing regulatory requirements.
29. Shepherd the Clean Air Action Plan through adoption at the county and city levels.

c) regional air quality education campaign.

30. Incorporate Clean Air Action Plan policies and implementation strategies into sector plans, policies, capital improvement projects, permits, and educational programs. Work with business community on wellness programs and impacts of air quality.
31. Develop and implement an education and outreach program to promote regional air quality.
32. Use the Environmental Health objectives of the Healthy People 2020 plan as a guideline.

<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/environmental-health/objectives>

d) a financing program which includes public, private, and foundation funding.

33. Identify seed money from public health, environmental, transportation, public utility, and foundation funding; for initial analysis, planning, and policy development.
34. Define SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound) objectives for action, projects/interventions for achieving them, and teams to pursue them.

Outcome 6.4: By 2050, we are working together effectively as a region to reduce and manage solid waste and landfills.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

- a) regional policies and mechanisms for integrated solid waste management.

35. Consistent with the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act, maintain Waste Management areas that utilize regional landfills and minimize transportation impacts.
36. Develop policy(ies) that reduce/eliminate yard waste collection and disposal and incentivize better landscape management practices and soil improvement practices on residential properties.
37. Regional adoption of the integrated solid waste hierarchy in coordination with the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (ISWMP) Task Force as overriding policy. (reduce, reuse, rethink:
http://en.envirocitiesmag.com/articles/pdf/waste_management_eng_art2.pdf)
38. Identify and support a "Source Reduction Leader" as identified in the most current ISWMP.
http://www.sarpy.com/landfill/documents/MAPA_ISWMP_Update_June_2012.pdf
39. Develop policies that encourages waste reduction.
40. Use methane generated by solid waste treatment facilities for energy purposes.
- b) regional branding and education promoting waste reduction.**
41. Develop and implement an education and outreach program to promote a culture of solid waste hierarchy: reduce, reuse, rethink.
42. Develop and implement residential yard waste reduction diversion education and outreach program.
- c) a financing program which includes public, private, and foundation funding.**
43. Identify existing public funding sources.
44. Identify potential private and foundation funding sources.
45. Consistent with the funding sources, provide dedicated funding for waste reduction education and outreach.
46. Provide Increased access to recycling pick-up or drop-off centers.

Outcome 6.5: By 2050, the region has a sustainable system of local agriculture that provides food to the region. The system includes means to promote and protect agricultural land use.

Strategies:

Heartland 2050 will promote, support, and/or facilitate:

a) model ordinances and codes.

47. Research barriers that effect outcome 6.5.
48. Shepherd the local foods plan through adoption at the county and city levels.

b) regional branding and education.

49. Use of curriculum, more expansive and inclusive, for sustainable agriculture in the classroom.
50. Implement an education program on how to properly grow, use, prepare, and store fresh local foods.*
51. Develop a catalog of educational programs and distribute throughout the region.
52. Develop a Buy Local initiative to promote local food purchasing.
53. Seek PSA for food waste reduction.

c) equitable access to healthy, local foods.

54. Develop a local, self-reliant food economy that provides convenient and affordable farm to table system - in which local food production, distribution, and consumption is integrated.
55. Farm to institution procurement: working with food service staff
56. Conduct land use/land owner survey to identify land potentially available for local food production. Identify strategies to promote and implement local food/farmer/land owner partnerships bank to ensure equitable access to these lands.
57. Create a Heartland 2050 Local Food Coordinating Council to support collaboration of entities engaged in local food systems work.
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Regional%20Food%20Hub%20Resource%20Guide.pdf> (need to map existing foods hubs and their area of focus)
58. Expand local food access year-round (greenhouses, urban gardening, meat and dairy farms, etc.)

d) a financing program which includes public, private, and foundation funding.

59. Identify a centralized grant and funding facilitator (Heartland 2050 Local Food Coordinating Council).

e) biodiverse and sustainable agriculture and food systems.

60. Implement a plan to produce and provide equitable access to fresh local food.
61. Identify and support local examples of best practices for food systems.
62. Create a “closed loop” system by establishing and prioritizing the best use of food and promoting waste reduction.*
63. Identify and support best practices to enhance soil fertility and remove this waste stream from landfilling.*

*<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy>