



## **Background**

### **About Environment Omaha**

In November 2008, the City of Omaha partnered with Omaha by Design to launch Environment Omaha, a new multi-year policy development initiative that called for the creation of a comprehensive environmental section for the city's master plan. The initiative addresses five major content areas – the natural environment, urban form and transportation, building construction, resource conservation and community health.

The Environment Omaha leadership team consisted of Mike McMeekin (Lamp, Rynearson & Associates) and Steve Jensen (Jensen Consulting), Environment Omaha co-chairs; Rick Cunningham, director of the City of Omaha Department of Planning; and Connie Spellman (director of Omaha by Design), project manager.

Prior to the 2008 launch, the Environment Omaha leadership team met for six months to create a framework for the initiative and select a diverse group of core committee and advisory committee members to guide its development.

The initiative's work plan mirrored the process employed by the City of Omaha and Omaha by Design to help create the city's Urban Design Element (UDE). The UDE, designed to improve the quality of development in Omaha while protecting and enhancing the city's natural environment, was adopted as part of Omaha's master plan in 2004. In August 2007, the Omaha City Council approved a groundbreaking package of zoning code revisions and additions designed to implement the UDE's recommendations.

The city's planning department, with help from the public works and parks departments, was responsible for preparing the Environment Omaha document based on the work of the various committees and input from the general public. Michael Kinsley, an environmental expert with the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) of Snowmass, Colo., served as a project consultant.

The Environment Omaha planning process, which has received significant city staff and resource support, was funded by grants from the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District, the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency and the City of Omaha's Stormwater Management Plan Program Grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality.

### **Environment Omaha Core Committee**

*John Bartle*  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

*Tom Bragg*  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

*Bruce Carpenter*  
HDR Inc.

*Dave Ciaccio*, Natural Environment Chair  
Community ReDesigned

*Pete Festersen*  
Omaha City Council

*Mikki Frost*, Community Health Chair  
Alegent Health

*Kent Holm*  
Douglas County Environmental Services

*Scott Keep*  
Metropolitan Utilities District

*Joe Lempke*  
Kiewit Building Group

*Craig Moody*  
Verdis Group

*Paul Mullen*  
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

*R.J. Neary*  
City of Omaha Planning Board

*Marc Nichols*  
Omaha Public Power District (retired)

*Jay Noddle*, Building Construction Chair  
Noddle Companies

*Marty Shukert*, Urban Form & Transportation Chair  
RDG Planning and Design

*Tim Stuart*  
Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce

*Marcella Thompson*, Resource Conservation Chair  
ConAgra Foods Inc.

*Jerry Torczon*  
BHI Development

*John Winkler*  
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District