



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