We're moving forward.

The need for more equitable access to opportunity, continued economic growth and enhanced quality of life requires a change in how we approach transportation in Greater Omaha – which is why the Greater Omaha Chamber partnered with Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA), Metro Smart Cities and Metro Transit to develop a new regional transportation strategy.

The partnership, known as ConnectGO, has been gathering perspectives from people throughout the region since January 2019 to better understand our greatest needs and to prioritize strategies to address them. We aim to make our metro area more vibrant, equitable and accessible for everyone.

Based on community input, the coalition developed an actionable strategy including 10 priorities for policy, programs and specific transportation projects for the next 10 years, plus an added focus on maintenance:

ORBT
Starting two additional bus rapid transit lines (like the Dodge Street ORBT), with the next line running north and south.

Local Bus Improvements
Running buses more frequently, improving bus stops and expanding the bus system into areas currently lacking service.

Urban Core Mobility System
Creating a coherent transportation system for Greater Omaha's urban center in downtown and midtown with an urban circulator, more two-way streets, shared parking districts and new bikeways.

Streetscapes
Improving the streets and sidewalks in five historic commercial districts.

Sidewalks
Filling in 100 miles of sidewalk gaps near elementary schools and along transit routes.

On-Street Bike Lanes and Trails
Constructing 100 miles of new bike lanes throughout the region and adding 50 additional miles of trails.

Multimodal Missouri River Bridge
Building a new bridge between Omaha and Council Bluffs south of the current Interstate 480 bridge for a trail and public transit.

Traffic Signal System
Accelerating smart traffic signal installation in Omaha and surrounding communities, in which the street signals actively respond to traffic demand.

Major Roadways
Strategically widening roads and refining truck routes.

Transportation Demand Management
Working with employers on transportation plans and commuting options for their employees.

Maintenance
Continuing Omaha's new street rehabilitation program and supporting other jurisdictions in maintenance efforts.

ConnectGO will continue to elevate local conversations on transportation needs while working with our community partners to turn these ideas into reality.

Contact: Stephen Osberg, Director, Transportation Development | Greater Omaha Chamber | sosberg@omahachamber.org

It's go time.

Guided by a shared vision, ConnectGO's partners and other local transportation organizations are currently spearheading multiple projects and planning efforts to improve our roads, buses, bike lanes, sidewalks, neighborhoods and more.

Here are some of our big wins to date:

- **K-12 Rides Free pilot program**
  In partnership with Metro Transit, students in grades kindergarten through 12 ride free on all buses, MOBY and ORBT. So far, more than 11,000 students have participated. The program will run through June 1, 2022.
- **Market-to-Midtown Bikeway pilot**
  Omaha's first protected bikeway launched in July 2021, a partnership between Bike Walk Nebraska and Metro Smart Cities, among other partners. The bikeway, on Harney Street from 10th Street to Dewey Avenue, will continue for the next 18 months. Metro Smart Cities will collect feedback from users to determine the ideal design of a permanent bikeway and how to meet anticipated demand for more, and longer, protected bikeways around the region.
- **Regional Transit Authority authorization**
  In 2019, the Nebraska legislature passed the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority Act, which allows for the creation of a regional transit authority, so the transit authority can more seamlessly provide service across the metropolitan area.
- **Employer-based transportation report and solutions**
  The ConnectGO "Getting to Work" report, created in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA), Verdis Group and the Greater Omaha Chamber, shares data on how employees got to work before the pandemic, during 2020 and how they would prefer to get to work in the future, if they had options including transit, bicycling, carpooling and walking. The study is based on surveys that targeted employees at more than 20 organizations in the metro. This fall, the team will begin the process of designing and implementing employer-based transportation solutions.

We're far from done. Here are the next steps:

- The City of Omaha will develop a **bicycle and pedestrian master plan** to identify specific projects that support biking and walking throughout the city.
- The **Park Omaha Parking & Mobility Strategic Plan**, developed in partnership with Walker Consultants, presents a strategic, unified parking plan for Omaha's urban core that supports downtown development, better utilizes existing parking assets and minimizes the number and cost of new parking stalls.
- Thanks to the leadership of the city of Council Bluffs, 1st Avenue, a former railroad corridor, will link Council Bluffs with downtown Omaha. A new trail will run along 1st Avenue from 16th Street to 35th Street. The project is known as **FIRST AVE**, an acronym that stands for: Furthering Interconnections, Revitalization, Streetscapes, Transportation, and Aesthetics for a Vibrant Economy.
- **Metro Transit's MetroNEXT initiative** will develop an implementation plan for regional transit, set to be completed in early 2022. Based on public input, this plan will identify short- and long-term improvements to guide the transportation agency for the coming years. 24th Street has already been identified as the next priority corridor.
- Finalize a funding strategy and complete engineering for the **urban core mobility system**.
- Prepare to use federal dollars from the anticipated **infrastructure package and budget**. ConnectGO has already partnered with Congressman Don Bacon, the City of Omaha, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA), the North 24th Street business district and Metro Transit to pursue six federal earmarks and a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant.

Contact: Stephen Osberg, Director, Transportation Development | Greater Omaha Chamber | sosberg@omahachamber.org