

FIRST EDITION!

Welcome to the first edition of the City's 168th Street Project e-newsletter! 168th Street from West Dodge Road to West Maple Road is an important corridor serving the City of Omaha, Douglas County, and the increasingly rapid growth in the northwest areas of the metropolitan region. To learn more about the project or others around the City visit www.KeepOmahaMoving.com.

Please forward this newsletter along to anyone who might have interest in this project.



MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR



We've been working to move through the preliminary design phase of this project and have moved on to the next phase – final design. Last winter we held a public meeting and were excited to see over 250 community members attend. We collected your feedback and have considered this in our design efforts. As you know, there are quite a few projects happening around the metro, and we know that it is important to keep Omaha moving. We also understand the importance of this major corridor in the northwest. We have prioritized this project and are moving construction up to 2018. Please

stay informed by visiting www.KeepOmahaMoving.com and tuning in to our quarterly e-newsletter. We'll use the website and this newsletter to keep you updated as the project and construction progress.

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

In December, we presented preliminary designs for the 168th Street project at a public open house and online meeting. We shared news of planned signal changes, turn lanes, walls, and that 168th Street was getting a complete make-over from two lanes to four, divided with a median. Our design process was informed by your input and through studies of traffic, safety, and



the environment along the corridor. We have balanced your requested changes with the technical design guidance and study recommendations. Over the next couple of months, we will continue to fine tune the design and work with local residents, businesses and utilities to determine the most suitable and economical final design.

CONSTRUCTION COMING IN 2018!



At the public meeting, we announced that construction would occur in 2018 and 2019 and would be coordinated with the adjacent projects (156th Street and 180th Street). Our goal is to minimize the overall traffic impacts in this region due to construction over the next five years. Since the public meeting, we have analyzed multiple construction scenarios and the resulting traffic. The results of this analysis, along with many other factors, have led us to prioritize the 168th Street project. With this prioritization, we are planning for all construction on 168th Street to occur in 2018. A widened 168th Street from Dodge to Maple would then be available for traffic during the construction of the adjacent projects. Look for more details in our next newsletter.

A LOCAL TREASURE WITH AN INCREDIBLE HISTORY

Ever travel down 168th Street near West Dodge Road and wondered about the prairie located there? With the growth and expansion happening in the metro’s northwest, it’s a unique find to have 21 acres of native grasses and wildflowers. This special place is called Stolley Prairie. It is located within the 147 acre Bluestem Prairie Preserve and is named after it’s original owner, homesteader William Stolley (1918-2014). William’s legacy and love for the natural environment was most appropriately captured in his sentiment that “a prairie is only a prairie once.” Once plowed, it is no longer a prairie. In 1996, the City acquired the Prairie with a grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation and funding from the Pacific Springs subdivision. The purchase agreement stipulated that it would remain a prairie in perpetuity.



168th Street Improvement Project

West Dodge Road to West Maple Road

May 2017



Conversion of the agricultural fields in Bluestem Prairie and the integration of Stolley Prairie is helping the prairie ecosystem flourish within this park. Historically, the Central Tallgrass Prairie region, in which Bluestem Prairie Preserve is located, covered over 60 million acres extending from southern Minnesota through eastern South Dakota, Iowa and eastern Nebraska and Kansas. Today, only 1% of this prairie type remains, making it one of the rarest and most endangered ecosystems. While construction on 168th Street will occur around the prairie, it will continue to remain intact – preserving

William Stolley's legacy. We invite you to go explore. Talk a walk through the Prairie along the mowed paths and read the signs near the pedestrian bridge crossing the Papio from Bent Creek. Go enjoy the beauty located right in your backyard!

