

Land Use

Maintain High Number of Parks

Target(s):

Maintain ratios of 1.3 acres of Neighborhood Parks and 2.4 acres of Community Parks per 1,000 residents.

Lincoln Now:

Parks, trails, and recreational areas are an important part of the overall county's natural resource base. They include a diverse collection of sites and facilities owned, managed, and maintained by public entities and accessible to the general community. They accommodate a variety of recreational uses including passive and active recreation, hunting, fishing, and boating. With over 6,000 acres of parks and natural land, the City of Lincoln's goal is to have a park area within one-half mile walking distance of each residence in the community.

Neighborhood Parks are approximately four to six acre sites that are centrally located within areas of residential development. Community Parks are typically 30 to 50 acre sites that are readily accessible from arterial streets and the commuter/recreational trail system. Community Parks may include play fields and play courts for organized sports, a playground with an accessible fall surface, facilities for day use activities including a picnic shelter and restroom, seating, walking paths, and off-street parking. Community Parks may also include a swimming pool and/or a recreation center. Regional Parks and Tournament Sports Facilities are tracts of land that encompass special or unique facilities and features that are of interest to diverse groups throughout the community.

Each type of park has a level of service (LOS) goal, based on both the projected financial resources available for park development and programmatic objectives. This LOS is calculated by dividing the total acres in each type of park by the city's total population in thousands. There are currently 48 Neighborhood Parks encompassing roughly 353 acres, with an average size of 7.4 acres. The current citywide LOS is 1.4 acres of Neighborhood Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. LPlan 2040 establishes an LOS goal of one acre per 1,000 new Lincoln residents in new growth areas. Neighborhood Parks should generally be located within the center of each mile section with a service area radius of approximately one-half mile in the urban area. Given the new Neighborhood Parks developed in growth areas, the city-wide measure by the end of the plan period, 2040, is projected to be 1.3 acres of Neighborhood Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. There are currently 18 Community Parks encompassing roughly 746 acres, with an average size of 41 acres. The current citywide LOS is 2.9 acres of Community Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. LPlan 2040 establishes an LOS goal of 1.3 acres per 1,000 new Lincoln residents in new growth areas and a service area radius of approximately 2 miles in the urban area. Given the new Community Parks developed in growth areas, the city-wide measure by the end of the plan period is projected to be 2.4 acres of Community Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. The current citywide Level of Service (LOS) is 2.5 acres of Regional Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. No set LOS goal is stated in LPlan 2040 since the size may vary depending on the feature or facility.

Land Use

Promote Residential Infill and Redevelopment

Target(s):

Build at least 5,000 total new dwelling units by 2022, with a total of at least 8,000 by 2027, in the “Existing Lincoln City Limits (2011)” (excluding “Tier I”) area within the LPlan 2040’s “2040 Priority Growth Areas, Map 1.3: Growth Tiers with Priority Areas.”

Lincoln Now:

LPlan 2040 anticipates that Lancaster County will add 126,000 persons by 2040, with the need for about 52,100 new dwelling units to be added to support this growth. This is an average of about 1,655 dwelling units per year. The county’s fifteen year average is 1,571 dwelling units per year; the three year average from 2008-2011 has been 782 per year.

Within this expanding population base, changes are envisioned to occur in the community’s demographic mix. It is assumed that the city and county’s future population will mirror several recent local and national trends. These trends include further growth among existing racial and ethnic minority groups. A second demographic trend is the continuing growth in the area’s senior population. The large increase in households with a head of household over the age of 65 may create a demand for smaller dwellings with smaller yards, multi-family units such as apartments, condos and townhouses, or assisted living facilities. Generation Y, the children of the Baby Boomers (those born between 1977 and 1994) also express a desire for a more urban setting that includes access to public transit, proximity to amenities such as shopping and dining, and smaller dwellings that do not require a great deal of time spent on maintenance. An additional trend is a decrease in average household size. Since the 1940s household size in Lancaster County has been steadily falling, from over 3 persons per household in the 1940s, ‘50s and ‘60s to an estimated 2.40 in 2010. Projections indicate this trend will continue over the next 30 years. In addition, continuing socioeconomic challenges may cause a desire for more affordable housing with greater access to alternative transportation and services closer at hand.

Due to the changes suggested by these trends, LPlan 2040 assumes an increase in the amount of infill and redevelopment, as well as the proportion of dwellings that will be multi-family. LPlan 2040 anticipates that 16.5% of future dwelling units are expected to be built within the existing built environment, as opposed to 4% as shown in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Of the total new dwelling units, 40% are expected to be multi-family and 60% single family (including duplexes).

The City of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska have undertaken several major efforts in the West Haymarket, Antelope Valley and Innovation Campus areas over the past decade that include and encourage the development of residential infill and redevelopment projects. An increase in redevelopment of underperforming or failing commercial areas is also encouraged in

the Plan. The City's primary strategy for residential infill and redevelopment outside of the Greater Downtown is to encourage the redevelopment and reuse of sites and buildings in commercial areas in order to create new mixed use centers that are compatible and complementary to adjacent neighborhoods. This strategy encourages significant returns on public investment by developing high-quality properties with sustained value, supports new businesses in the mixed use center, makes public transportation more viable, and uses land and infrastructure more efficiently.

LPlan 2040 assumes that, of the new dwelling units built out before 2040, about 3,000 dwelling units will be in the Downtown and Antelope Valley areas, 1,000 in existing neighborhoods, and 4,000 in mixed use redevelopment nodes and corridors. These dwelling units are shown within the "Existing Lincoln City Limits and Approved Preliminary Plans (2011)" priority growth area per LPlan 2040 (Map 1.3, page 1.10).

Land Use

Maintain Green and Open Space

Target(s):

Maintain green and open space of at least 10% of property within city limits. Use the Greenprint Challenge as a guide in all land use planning processes.

Lincoln Now:

“Green and open space” in Lincoln comes in a wide variety of forms. Open space and greenway linkages are a system or network of areas preserved in an undeveloped state due to unique natural attributes, such as floodplains and associated riparian areas, saline and freshwater wetlands, and native prairies. The policies of LPlan 2040 strive to incorporate such uses in the full range of urban and rural landscapes.

Research has consistently shown that the urban heat-island effect, as it is known, can be reduced during the summer if enough green space is provided in urban environments. If 10% of high density urban areas is preserved or returned to green space, cities are projected to maintain current summer temperature levels (and thus current summer utility costs) for the next 70 years. The geography of Lincoln and Lancaster County presents unique opportunities for creating open space and greenway linkages that can connect neighborhoods as well as rural and urban areas, while creating buffers that provide relief from a wall-to-wall city. The Salt Valley drainage basin which dominates the county and wraps around the City of Lincoln, is fed by numerous tributaries that radiate out into the surrounding rolling hills. The effect is that of a large loop primarily made up of Salt Creek and Stevens Creek, with tributary tendrils both uniting and separating areas of urban, residential and agricultural development.

One approach to open space and greenway linkages is the coordination between the City’s watershed management program and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District to reduce flood damages, protect water quality and natural areas, while providing for recreational and educational opportunities so as to realize multiple benefits. In 2001 the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County Planning Department, in close cooperation with the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department and the LPSNRD, initiated the development of a “Greenprint” for Lancaster County: a vision and detailed model for how natural and cultural features can be effectively maintained and can exist harmoniously with economic vitality and community growth. Through extensive participation of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln faculty and staff from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the “Greenprint Challenge” was formed. The purpose of the “Greenprint Challenge” is to assure the long term health and integrity of the ecosystem upon which Lincoln and Lancaster County is superimposed, and to capture the community-wide quality of life and economic benefits that can be derived from the area’s environmental resource features. The “Greenprint Challenge” Report includes several implementation concepts to guide the completion of the challenge’s natural resource feature strategies, and reflects a broad community vision requiring marshaling of public and private resources.