



Lincoln-Lancaster County  
Planning Commission

**2014**  
ANNUAL REPORT



*On the cover:*

*Front row from left, Ken Weber, Cathy Beecham, Chair Jeanelle Lust, Tracy Corr, Maja V. Harris. Back row from left, Michael Cornelius, Dennis Scheer, Lynn Sunderman, Vice-Chair Chris Hove.*

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**2014**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

*This report summarizes the major activities of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission during the past calendar year. The nine Commissioners are appointed for staggered six-year terms by Lincoln's Mayor, with the concurrence of the City Council and the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. The Planning Commission is charged by state and local law with advising the two elected boards on a variety of planning and development matters. It operates under an interlocal agreement dating back to 1958.*

**APPLICATIONS**

The summary below provides an indication of the volume and trends in recent applications submitted to the Planning Department over the past seven fiscal years. The Planning Commission directly reviewed about half of the applications. The volumes of the past two fiscal years reflect the continued rebound of development activity toward pre-recession levels.

<b>PLANNING DEPT. APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>07-08</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>	<b>13-14</b>
Annexations	10	25	3	3	7	6	6
Preliminary plats*	6	0	3	1	1	2	4
Final plats	84	69	88	100	102	139	112
Community Unit Plan amendments (CUP)	9	3	4	12	11	12	15
Use permits	8	9	2	6	5	4	13
Special permits and amendments	56	39	38	31	40	46	40
Change of zone - Map	38	22	13	25	24	16	23
Change of zone - Historic Preservation (HP)***						5	2
Change of zone - Sign district***						2	1
Change of zone - Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)	8	8	1	5	11	8	8
Board of Zoning Appeals	7	4	0	0	4	3	4
Street name changes	1	2	5	3	2	2	1
Street and alley vacations	11	10	15	13	9	9	10
Administrative amendments	84	68	69	62	65	106	83
Comp Plan conformity	34	15	11	11	15	18	35
Comp Plan amendments	1	6	2	0	9	2	7
Waiver of design standards	7	7	21	34	23	7	11
Text amendments	28	21	14	21	13	13	15
Miscellaneous / other	3	8	6	5	9	2	2
Urban design review**					42	57	42
<b>TOTAL PER FISCAL YEAR</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>434</b>

\*Preliminary plats rolled into CUPs and use permits on 4/25/2005    \*\*Urban design review added in 2012  
 \*\*\* Change of Zone HP and Sign District not tracked separately in previous years

**APPLICATIONS OF NOTE**

Some of the more notable development applications reviewed by the Planning Commission included the following:

Speedway Sporting Village is a soccer complex at Van Dorn Street and Park Boulevard.

The Great American Sports Park is a softball complex at 1st and Charleston streets.

The project at 1100 "Y" Street is a significant student housing complex incorporating a buffer along the rail line.

The Aspen Heights project at 18th and "P" streets is a multi-building student housing complex.

*Aspen Height Student Housing Project at 18th and "P" streets.*



An initial housing proposal on City-owned land at 84th and South streets was replaced by a self-storage project that was recently approved by City Council.

The Grandview Estates/Rokeby Coalition project is a new subdivision northeast of South 70th Street and Rokeby Road. It is the initial piece of a revised large development agreement recently approved by the City Council for over 800 acres of land.

The Gable Pines community unit plan (CUP) recently approved by the City Council is an independent living and memory care facility at Anthony Lane and "O" Street.

A new apartment complex under construction at 91st and Pine Lake Road.

A wind energy text amendment to the County Code and related Volkswind applications in southern area of Lancaster County are on hold. The applicant recently withdrew the text amendment application, and Planning staff is developing a new public discussion on wind energy.

The downtown senior housing project at 7th and O streets is a liner building project related to the Lumberworks Garage.

The Planning Commission also reviewed applications for historic landmarks, blight designations and redevelopment plans. These

*Senior Housing Project at Lumberworks Garage*



applications included a landmark designation for the former municipal pool house and a blight study for the Van Dorn redevelopment area (Speedway Sporting Village) as well as the following redevelopment plans:

- Case, Case & Case project
- Hartley Flats project
- Piedmont Center
- Airport Entryway Corridor
- Great American Sports Park
- Speedway Sporting Village
- Kiechel Gallery
- 1100 “Y” Street student housing project
- “P” Street East

Because this past year included a budget cycle, the Planning Commission was involved in the Comprehensive Plan Conformity review of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). For the first time, the latest version of the CIP included a process that prioritized the use of available capital improvement funding from the Public Works and Utilities Water and Wastewater programs to advance qualified development projects. One result of the new process is the timing and format of funding for aspects of the infrastructure program for the Rokeby Coalition development project.

## CODE AMENDMENTS

The Planning Department initiated several amendments to the City and County zoning codes this past year including the following:

The Capitol Environs parking requirement was amended to match the parking requirement in the underlying zoning district.

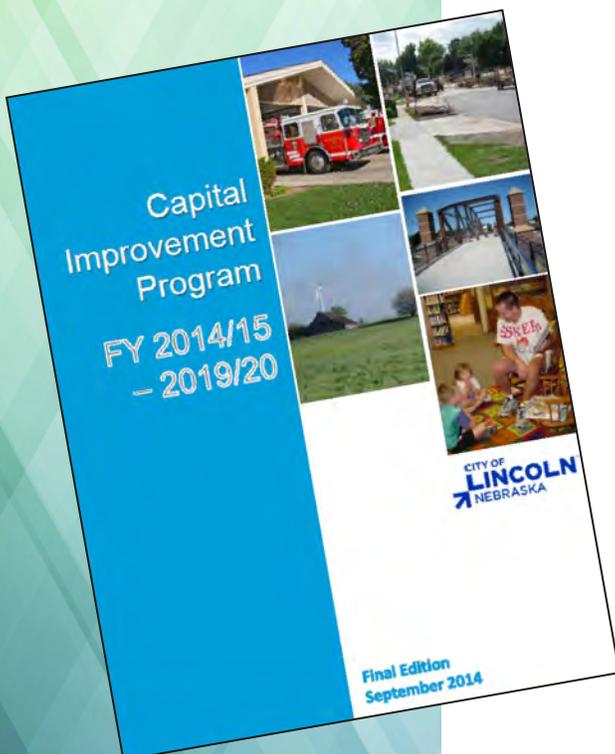
Amendments were made to adjust block length and pedestrian easement provisions.

The City Code was changed to allow “mini-warehouse” as a conditional use in the B-5 district.

An amendment allows veterinary facilities as a conditional use in the O-1, O-2, O-3 and R-T zoning districts; removes “outdoor exercise area” associated with a veterinary facility or kennel; and clarifies that veterinary facilities are allowed as a permitted use in the AG and AGR districts.

The Use Group chapter was corrected and clarifies that dwellings for nonrelated persons are not permitted in the AG, AGR, and R-6 zoning districts.

The zoning ordinance related to special permits was changed to allow community unit plans (CUPs) in the R-7 and R-8 districts, to provide for the calculation of the maximum permitted density, and to allow the Planning Commission to make modifications to the parking requirements.



Capital Improvement Program

The City and County Codes related to wireless facility abandonment and partial abandonment were amended, and sections regarding the initial term and renewal of special permits and administrative permits were deleted. The County and City Codes regarding excavation special permits were changed to define “stone milling,” to allow this as an accessory use to an excavation operation and to clarify the requirements for pre-existing mining operations. The City Code was amended to increase the maximum building height in the AG district by special permit. The special permit for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises was modified to include the O-3 zoning district to the list of those zoning districts eligible for a special permit for a restaurant. This includes cases where the separation from the licensed premises can be reduced from 100 feet to 25 feet, provided that a list of additional requirements contained in the permit are satisfied. The special permit for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises was modified to include an outdoor recreation facility, such as a golf course or country club among the other uses where the sale of alcohol could be approved as part of the special permit for that facility.

The Planning Commission was scheduled to review a text amendment to the wind energy portion of the County Code. This text amendment application was withdrawn by the applicant, and the Planning Department is organizing a public discussion of wind energy in Lancaster County.

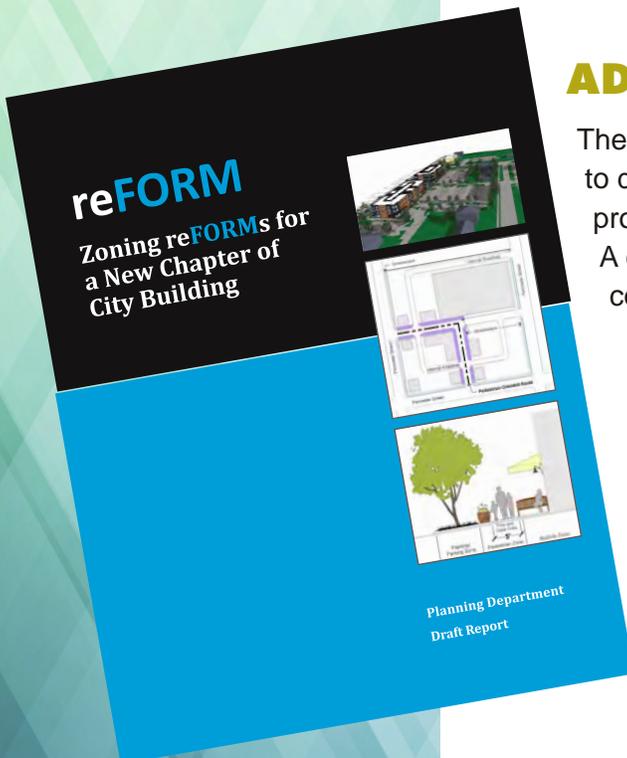
## ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS

The Planning Department developed an online GIS application to display and provide information for the various related projects in southeast Lincoln for project tracking purposes. A citywide application of this tool is being developed in coordination with other departments.

An update and improvement to the Project Dox digital application review system was completed this past year and will allow for continued maintenance and use of this system for years to come.

## WORKSHOPS

Planning Commissioners continued to participate in discussions with a broad-based special advisory committee on “reFORM,” a package of proposed changes to the City zoning code and design standards.



Draft reFORM Design Standards

The latest version of the reFORM package was updated to reflect the results of committee work conducted in late 2013 along with staff work during the spring of 2014. Planning Commission committee meetings in September were followed by public meetings with affected property owners and stakeholders in October. Discussions on the reFORM package are expected to resume in summer 2015.

Planning Commission workshops included the following:

- reFORM – review of proposals, process update, discussion of proposals with committee, discussion of proposals with Planning Commission

- Discussion of liquor and theater policies

- Access management, local streets built with the subdivision process, and local streets built by the petition process

- Stormwater quality management

  - Midblock pedestrian ways and block lengths

  - Special briefing on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP),

  - the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long

  - Range Transportation Plan

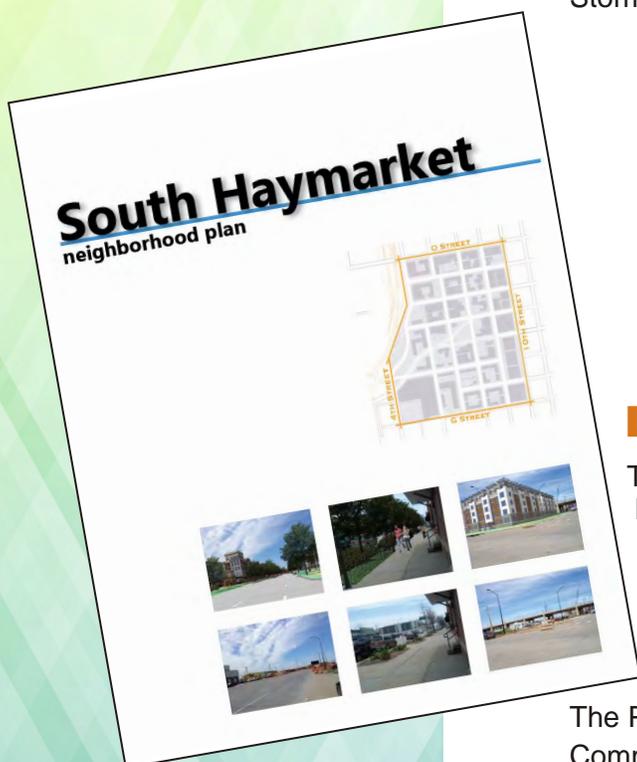
  - Community Indicators Report

  - Wind Energy

  - South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan

  - Rezoning for apartments

  - Watershed master plans.



*South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan*

## **LOSS OF OUR DIRECTOR**

The Planning Commission lost its Planning Director, Marvin Krout, in November 2014 after a brief illness. Marvin served the Planning Commission and Planning Department for over 12 years. He will be missed.

## **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2015**

The Planning Department will continue to engage the Planning Commission and stakeholder groups on the “reFORM” proposals. The department also expects to work with stakeholders and possibly bring the following projects forward for Planning Commission review:

- Development of a bike share program for downtown Lincoln (An application for federal funding has been submitted to the Nebraska Department of Roads.)

- Consultant work and briefings on the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan

- Results of the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) workshop with the small villages and towns of Lancaster County

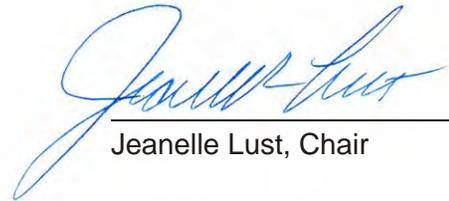
- Staff work on public stakeholder discussions of wind energy in Lancaster County

- Development of prioritization of potential entryway corridor improvement projects

Completion of the South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan  
Project prioritization of infrastructure improvements related to the  
CIP development  
Work on ways to reduce the number of special permits in the code  
and simplify others  
Begin process to update the 2040 Comprehensive Plan in 2016  
Completion of work on outdoor lighting design standards

## **CONCLUSION**

The Planning Commission continued to play an important role in the development of Lincoln and Lancaster County over the past year. Commissioners deliberated numerous and sometimes contentious development applications and worked on various improvements to local codes and administrative procedures. We appreciate the opportunity to serve our community in this role and hope that our local elected officials have found our efforts to be helpful.



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Jeanelle Lust, Chair