

MEMORANDUM

TO: City-County Planning Commission
FROM: Marvin S. Krout, Director
CC: Mayor Beutler, City Council, County Board
DATE: April 24, 2014
RE: Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

Commissioners:

This memo provides summaries of specific achievements and work in progress efforts of the past year that relate to important goals and recommendations adopted into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The information below is broken out according to the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan beginning with Environmental Resources and concluding with Energy & Utilities. We are also providing you with a companion document, the latest "Community Indicators Report," which contains additional details on how trends in growth, the local economy, environmental concerns, housing, transportation, and recreation are corresponding to key goals and recommendations in the Plan.

Some of these efforts will be familiar to you as they have involved your action on specific projects brought before the Planning Commission. This may be the first time you have heard of others. Our hope is for you to see the important relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and work efforts conducted by the Planning Department and other City and County departments. If you have any questions regarding this information please contact the Planning Department at any time.

Chapter: Environmental Resources

The Prairie Corridor – The Comprehensive Plan includes a vision for the Salt Valley Greenway, a ribbon of open space and greenway links within the Salt Valley drainage basin in Lincoln and Lancaster County. One of the key links is the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch, linking Pioneers Park and Spring Creek Prairie, important resources for tallgrass prairie and environmental education. Several efforts that support enhancement of this greenway have taken place in the past year, including:

- Replacement of the Bison Trail Bridge in December 2013.
- Habitat improvements at the north end of Wilderness Park and planned bridge improvements in the park to allow hikers to hike from one end of the park to the other. Funding has been received for the bicycle bridge at the north end of Wilderness Park this year and is being sought to replace a second bridge.

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- The purchase of a 63-acre parcel within the Salt Valley Greenway at 98th and Adams Streets along Stevens Creek adjacent to Burns Park, offering opportunities to protect flood storage and conveyance, riparian corridors and other environmental resources while providing outdoor recreational facilities and trail connections for the community in the future.
- Continued development of a public-private partnership and progress in implementing the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch connection to the Salt Valley Greenway, including coordination with key partners to implement conservation strategies, refining partner responsibilities and goals, consultation with experts on prairie restoration and land management strategies, and the initiation of a partnership with UNL to pursue research and education opportunities.

Chapter: Placemaking

- Wayfinding System Design and Development – The 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies as a strategy in the Placemaking chapter the completion of a wayfinding system of related, attractive signs guiding and orienting motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians throughout the community. With the development of the West Haymarket area including the new Pinnacle Bank Arena, a highway wayfinding package of signs was developed and installed with the West Haymarket package of projects. A second phase of highway wayfinding signs that will continue the design features of the first phase is being finalized for installation in 2014. A pedestrian wayfinding system of signs and kiosks were also designed and installed this past year. The first phase of this system was completed with the West Haymarket projects with additional signs to be developed in a later phase. Wayfinding signs on Lincoln’s trail system were designed and installed this past year as well through the Parks & Recreation Department using private donations.
- The Planning Department continues to refine proposals that emphasize placemaking and encourage infill & redevelopment, new urban design standards, more flexible height, lot, and parking standards, and an expedited review process for some development and redevelopment projects within the reFORM effort. This past year committees representing stakeholders from the community and Planning Commission Members met to discuss and help develop these proposals. Staff currently is working on formalizing the draft standards and needed zoning amendments that would receive another round of public discussion prior to an approval process.
- Entryway Corridors – The 2040 Comprehensive plan identifies the importance of key entryways into the City, including the entry into Downtown from the Lincoln Municipal Airport via Cornhusker Highway and I-180, and includes strategies for enhancing their character through landscaping and public art and seeking public-private partnerships to implement projects. The City has successfully implemented such a partnership and has begun construction of paving and streetscape improvements along these two critical corridors with the support of generous business leaders and grant funds. The project includes significant roadway improvements, as well as irrigated street trees, evergreens and stylized prairie landscaping that will direct views, provide shade and contribute to the overall visual appeal of the corridor. A series of unique, illuminated district markers

and banners and donated public art will create a distinct identity and welcome visitors to our community. The project will be completed in early 2015.

- Centennial Mall reconstruction – Phase I (M to P Street blocks) is complete and Phase II (Mall intersections) will begin this summer. Over the last year, the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission has worked to infuse Agriculture and Native American features into the Mall design. They have been regularly reviewing inscribed plaques for the Spirit of Nebraska Pathway, including the addition of QR code tiles from which users will be linked to more information online. The Commission also advocated for two crosswalks at K Street in order to maintain the design concept of two parallel pathways along both sides of the Mall.
- Designation as a local historic landmark of the former municipal pool house, former air force base remote facility, residential buildings in Near South, fraternity on North 16th Street, and special permit for student housing to encourage preservation of the Lewis-Syford house.

Chapter: Business & Economy

- The Arena and West Haymarket projects (retail, restaurants, housing, hotel, garages) all opened in the past year, and a new office building and other garages began construction.
- Farmer’s Mutual building expansion along 13th Street north of Lincoln Mall was completed, and updates and improvements to the old Farmer’s Mutual building are slated for this year.
- Landmark Center 3, also along Lincoln Mall, is under construction.
- The Innovation Campus first phase is under construction. A Travel Demand Management strategy is part of this significant project.
- The P Street and 14th Street “retail T” as recommended in the adopted update to the Downtown Master Plan is underway. The Urban Development Department has led this effort.
- The City annexed and rezoned over 400 acres of land owned by the Lincoln Airport Authority for rail-oriented industrial uses.

Chapter: Mixed Use Redevelopment

- The new LPS site on East “O” Street was completed and is now open, and the Valentino’s site on East Holdrege is under construction.
- The Exchange redevelopment plan was approved and is under construction at 21st and N Street.
- Student housing above and lining a UNL parking garage is under construction at Q Street and Antelope Valley Parkway.
- Work on proposed zoning reforms to eliminate zoning barriers to mixed use development is in progress.
- Work continued on development of a specific plan for South Haymarket, as recommended in the Downtown Master Plan.

- The Block 68/Gold's Parking Lot redevelopment plan was approved and is now under construction for student housing above parking and ground floor retail.

Chapter: Neighborhoods & Housing

- A new B-1 zoning district with neighborhood compatible uses is under development as part of the reFORM effort.
- The City zoning code was amended to add flexibility on setback requirements for outdoor decks and building additions in rear yards.

Chapter: Parks, Recreation & Open Space

- The Parks & Recreation 10-Year Facilities Plan was developed this past year and adopted by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

Chapter: Transportation

- The N Street protected bikeway completed its final design as recommended in the adopted update to the Downtown Master Plan.
- Bike lanes along the 11th Street streetscape beautification project running from Lincoln Mall to C Street were completed.
- The Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Plan was accepted by the MPO Officials Committee in May 2013.
- A Travel Demand Management (TDM) study was completed which establishes a strategy for Lincoln on ways to encourage travel options to the single occupancy vehicle trip.
- The update to the design and environmental impact report for the South Beltway facility is underway through NDOR and its consultants. With funding for the South Beltway and other similar projects throughout the state beginning to accrue from the Build Nebraska Act (LB 84) in 2013, the state has now submitted a Long Range Transportation Plan amendment to make the South Beltway a funded project instead of unfunded in the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- An Administrative Regulation directing City departments to implement of a Complete Streets policy was executed by the Mayor this past year.

Chapter: Energy & Utilities

- Draft recommendations for the Water System Master Plan update were developed this past year.
- Draft recommendations for the Solid Waste Master Plan update were developed this past year.
- City Council approved new Stormwater Quality Management regulations for new development and redevelopment that will go into effect in 2016.
- Ongoing program to fund and implement a coordinated system of broadband infrastructure designed for use by public and private broadband service providers is under consideration.
- County Zoning Code amended to provide a special permit process for commercial composting operations.