



PLANNING DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

## Code amendments adopted by City Council

After nearly two years of discussions and hearings, the City Council on March 20 adopted an extensive package of amendments to the zoning and subdivision ordinances and the City's design standards. The package includes:

- ▶ New provisions for screening and landscaping along major streets
- ▶ New standards for pedestrian circulation in commercial and industrial developments
- ▶ Reduction in front yard setback requirements for a number of commercial and industrial zoning districts to 20 feet. The former requirement was 25 to 50 feet.
- ▶ Allowing waivers to the design standards to be approved administratively by department directors



Changes were made in response to comments from the business community that resulted in no formal opposition to the final proposal. They include:

- ▶ The density of low screening along the street edge of parking lots was made variable from 30 to 90 percent, depending on the distance of the parking lot to the street.

- ▶ The six-foot landscape strip along the street side of new parking lots in the older business districts was made applicable only to lots which are over 150 feet in depth.
- ▶ Staff dropped the proposal for a financial guarantee when site landscaping was not installed by the time of occupancy.



A summary of the new provisions can be found on the Planning Department's web site, under Proposed Code Amendments. If you have questions about the new pedestrian circulation standards, contact David Cary at 441-6364 or at [dcary@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:dcary@lincoln.ne.gov). For questions about all the other amendments, contact Tom Cajka at 441-5662 or [tcajka@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:tcajka@lincoln.ne.gov).



# IS TDR4U?

**T**ransfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a term for a special kind of zoning tool that is used in many parts of the country, but not yet in Nebraska. Citizens are generally familiar with the “cluster” zoning technique, in which residential units are designed to occupy only a limited portion of a development tract, with the remainder of the tract preserved for one or another kind of open space use. TDR is a way to allow this kind of clustering and open space preservation to occur on two tracts of land that are not contiguous to each other.

For example, a developer may own an 80-acre tract which he is entitled to subdivide today, under the County’s agricultural zoning regulations, into four 20-acre lots. A mile or more away, another property owner has the same right to subdivide his 80 acres of saline wetlands, but would prefer to see that land preserved as open space. TDR allows the developer to negotiate a price with the owner of the wetlands, purchase that owner’s rights to subdivide his land into four lots, and “transfer” those development

rights from the wetlands to his tract, increasing the allowable density on his 80 acres from four lots to eight lots.

Planning discussed this concept with the County Board last year, and the County Board expressed interest in amending its zoning code to allow for this option. But the County Attorney’s office advised us that because this idea of transferring development rights from one tract to another over long distances was unusual, it would be best to seek specific State legislation to clearly enable the County or City to use this zoning device. A bill (LB 797) was submitted to the legislature in January, and the Government,

Military and Veterans’ Affairs Committee held a hearing on the proposed legislation. Some lobbyists suggested that the terms and process be more narrowly defined than provided for in the bill that was drafted. The Committee decided to send it to legislative study this summer for further discussion. If you have more questions about this concept, contact Mike Dekalb at 441-6370 or [mdekalb@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:mdekalb@lincoln.ne.gov).



## Corndogs and Huskers and Mares, OH, MY!

**T**he Mayor’s Event Facilities Task Force is continuing to study how to most effectively coordinate the planning for new and improved event facilities now housed at State Fair Park, the Lancaster Event Center and Pershing Auditorium. The task force is focusing on more detailed plans for a new arena/convention center complex north and west of the Haymarket and examining the opportunity to consolidate the events of the State Fair Board and the Lancaster County Agricultural Society at one of the current sites. The task force is expected to conclude its work this summer. If you have questions about this project, contact Kent Morgan in Planning at 441-7491 or [kmorgan@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:kmorgan@lincoln.ne.gov), or Ann Harrell in the Mayor’s Office at 441-8044 or [aharrell@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:aharrell@lincoln.ne.gov).

# Got Maps?

Let's face it – planners love maps. We live for maps. We couldn't function without them. Now, you too can enjoy the excitement of a well-crafted planning map – a cartographic masterpiece to call your own! The Planning Department has added dozens of new maps on GIS Map Shop web site that you can print out for your own use, with more to come. You can use them to help with your work, decorate your walls, or to keep your family and friends entertained for hours. You will see old familiar favorites such as future land use plans and zoning, along with new information on such exotic information as locations of all the County's grain elevators!

## Zucker Report

Last December, the Mayor released a consultant report that evaluated the potential for improving the City's development review process. Shortly after that, the Mayor appointed a citizen advisory committee to review the report's recommendations in detail and help the departments set priorities and lay out an implementation plan. The committee has been meeting for a month now and anticipates another two months or more of work. In the meantime, the Planning, Public Works and Building and Safety Departments have all begun implementing a number of suggestions in the report. For more information, you can view the Zucker Report on the City's web site at [lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: media; see December 2005) or contact Darl Naumann in the Mayor's Office at 441-7511 or [dnaumann@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:dnaumann@lincoln.ne.gov).

## CP/LRTP Marches On



The Planning Commission has been reviewing the text of different chapters of the Comprehensive Plan not involving transportation, while work continues on developing an updated Long Range Transportation Plan:

- ◆ The Commission has begun discussing whether a more precise definition of “neighborhood centers” is needed in the plan, and how big box retail stores may or may not fit into these centers.
- ◆ A special focus group is reviewing economic development and will make recommendations that will be incorporated into the Comp Plan update.
- ◆ Public Works has developed a new transportation model which predicts future traffic demands based on expected growth in the community. The Department is testing the performance of certain traffic improvements which the Planning Commission thought may be needed to meet those demands. The Commission will review the results of eight different networks with a variety of road improvements at its April 26 meeting. A public open house to discuss the results is scheduled for May 3 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Public Works' Engineering Services Office, 531 Westgate Boulevard. The Planning Commission will seek input at a public forum set for Wednesday, May 17 at 1 p.m. in the Council Chambers. See the latest newsletter on our web page at [lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: cplrtp) for more information about these events.



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