

April 5, 2004

**North 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan:  
Neighborhood Revitalization & Transportation Analysis**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
Urban Development Department and Public Works and Utilities Department	Generally between N. 46 <sup>th</sup> and N. 56 <sup>th</sup> Street from Francis Street north to Adams Street.	Adoption of North 48 <sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan: Neighborhood Revitalization & Transportation Analysis, 2004” as an approved subarea plan.
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approval		

Status/Description

The “North 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan” (referred to as the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan) is the result of a year long process. Beginning with the first meeting in March 2003, a task force of 35 representatives worked with the City on the proposed plan. Representatives from the University Place Community Organization (UPCO), University Place Business Association and Business Improvement District, Nebraska Wesleyan University (NWU), University of Nebraska -Lincoln (UNL), First United Methodist Church and other groups met to discuss issues and review proposals and alternatives.

Several design workshops and public meetings were held to get the opinions and thoughts of business owners, students, university staff and neighborhood residents. Additional focus group meetings were also held. A final open house was held on October 30<sup>th</sup> and was attended by 77 people who reviewed and commented on the draft plan. The final task force meeting was November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

The main recommendations of the Plan are found in the attached Executive Summary. Some highlights, in regards to the Comprehensive Plan, as stated in the summary are as follows:

**“Transportation Recommendations**

- ✓ N. 48th Street should maintain four through-lanes between Leighton Avenue and Adams Street.
- ✓ Left-turn lanes should be provided at the Huntington Avenue and Madison Avenue intersections, and prohibited at other intersections between Leighton Avenue and Adams Street.
- ✓ Provide full traffic signals at Huntington and Madison Avenue and a pedestrian signal at St. Paul Avenue. Initially, the existing pedestrian signal at Huntington should be replaced by full signalization. The Madison Avenue signal should be installed when warranted. Warrants will probably be achieved as part of major redevelopment on the Green’s redevelopment site on the southwest corner of 48<sup>th</sup> and Madison and/or the closing of vehicular access onto 48th Street from St. Paul Avenue. The pace and impact of area redevelopment and traffic redirection will influence the timing and sequencing of these traffic signal upgrades.

- ✓ St. Paul Avenue should be converted to a pedestrian plaza on both sides of 48<sup>th</sup> Street, to about one-half block east and west of the intersection.

#### **Redevelopment Recommendations**

- ✓ Madison Avenue, from 48th to 47th, should be developed as an extension of the traditional business district.
- ✓ Street-oriented commercial redevelopment should occur along the east side of 48th Street between Huntington and Walker Avenues.
- ✓ All redevelopment on opportunity sites should maintain a strong street orientation, typically orienting parking to the rear of the site.
- ✓ The City should assist redevelopment of strategic sites as the private market responds to improving neighborhood conditions.

#### **Local Circulation and Parking Recommendations**

- ✓ The City should consider traffic calming concepts along Leighton Avenue between 48th and 56th Streets, and implement measures found to be appropriate through this investigation.
- ✓ The City should monitor traffic and parking performance along 47th Street and 49th Street, the two local streets that parallel 48th Street.

#### **Neighborhood Development and Land Use Recommendations**

- ✓ The City and neighborhood should implement a surgical rezoning strategy, based on the character and preferred occupancy outcome of each blockface.
- ✓ Redevelopment of selected sites can create new housing resources for prospective homeowners, including members of the university community. One opportunity could be the east side of an improved 51st Street.
- ✓ NWU should establish a clear limit to its sphere of influence, creating a campus domain that is approximately one-half block north and south of the boundaries of the core campus. The purpose of the campus domain is to provide assurances to neighboring residents that future campus land acquisitions will not encroach into the residential fabric of the neighborhood. However, campus-related commercial and residential activities should be increasingly integrated into the 48th Street business district, and could be accommodated in the transitional area between 48th and 50th Streets from Madison to Huntington Avenues.”

The N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan is a concept plan for the overall redevelopment of the area. Many of the concepts will require additional study and discussion as the details are developed. In general, the plan recommends that new commercial development be pedestrian oriented with the buildings facing N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street with parking behind. This plan will also guide future public and private investments in the area.

Comprehensive Plan Implications

In the Comprehensive Plan in the section on “Community Form” it states:

*“The community continues its commitment to neighborhoods. Neighborhoods remain one of Lincoln’s great strengths and their conservation is fundamental to this plan. The health of Lincoln’s varied neighborhoods and districts depends on implementing appropriate and individualized policies. The Comprehensive Plan is the basis for zoning and land development decisions. It guides decisions that will maintain the quality and character of the community’s established neighborhoods.” (Page F 15)*

*“Existing businesses flourish and there are opportunities for new businesses within Lincoln and the incorporated communities. The Plan provides new employment locations and supports retention of existing businesses.” (Page F 16)*

*“Preservation and renewal of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes is encouraged. Development and redevelopment should respect historical patterns, precedents, and boundaries in towns, cities and existing neighborhoods.” (Page F 17)*

*“Construction and renovation within the existing urban area should be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.” (Page F 18)*

*“Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance. Neighborhoods should include homes, stores, workplaces, schools and places to recreate. Interconnected networks of streets, trails and sidewalks should be designed to encourage walking and bicycling, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, conserve energy and for the convenience of the residents. (Page F 18)*

*“Mixed use centers, with higher residential and commercial densities, should provide for transit stops - permitting public transit to become a viable alternative to the automobile.” (Page F 19)*

The Plan also states in the “Guiding Principles for Existing Commercial Centers” in the section on Business & Commerce :

*“Encourage renovation and reuse of existing commercial centers. Infill commercial development should be compatible with the character of the area and pedestrian oriented.*

*Maintain and encourage retail establishments and businesses that are convenient to, and serve, neighborhood residents, yet are compatible with, but not intrusive upon residential neighborhoods.*

*The priority in older areas should be on retaining areas for residential development. Prior to approving the removal of housing in order to provide for additional parking to support existing centers, alternatives such as shared parking, additional on-street parking or the removal of older commercial stores should be explored.*

*Encourage mixed use commercial centers, including residential uses on upper floors and at the rear of commercial buildings.” (Page F 49)*

The Comprehensive Plan encourages mixed use and pedestrian oriented development, which is one component supported in the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan. The transportation recommendations are also in conformance with the transportation and road improvement plans (page F 105) of the Comprehensive Plan. The recommended trail route and grade separated crossing is already in the Comprehensive Plan (page F 95). There are three main land use proposals:

- The N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan proposes a very specific rezoning plan for some of the blocks in area from N. 48<sup>th</sup> to 56<sup>th</sup> Street, from Adams to south of Leighton Avenue. This area is predominately zoned R-5 and R-6 Residential. The proposal is based on a lot by lot analysis of the residential uses. In general, there are many blocks and ½ blocks that are still predominately in single family use, that are zoned R-5 and R-6. The proposal is for many of these blocks to be rezoned to R-4 or R-2 depending on the character of the block. The rezoning proposal also leaves many blocks with their existing zoning, since they have predominately developed into multi-family blocks.
- The area from Cleveland to ½ block south of Baldwin Avenue, from 47<sup>th</sup> Street west 150 feet is currently zoned B-3 Commercial. This area generally includes the first three lots west of 47<sup>th</sup> Street. While the property is zoned B-3, it is predominately in single family residential use, except for one or two businesses. The N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan proposes that this area be zoned residentially at some point in the future.
- The N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan proposes a “campus domain” for the area ½ block north, west and south of the Nebraska Wesleyan campus. These blocks face the historic NWU campus. Many of the lots in these blocks are already owned or used by NWU or with affiliated uses, such as fraternities and sororities. The proposal is to allow NWU, or affiliated uses, to expand into these adjacent ½ block areas.

The residential zoning changes are further explained on pages 73- 80 of the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan:

“Because of the very mixed land use pattern in University Place, this plan does not recommend such a blanket downzoning. Instead, this plan recommends a more surgical zoning policy, again based on the preferred occupancy outcomes and characteristics of each blockface. While the policy must be designed and implemented carefully by the Planning Department and the University Place Community Organization (UPCO), the effort should follow these general rules.

- Blocks designated as “Ownership Focus” should be downzoned to R2 if currently zoned R4, R5, or R6. This applies to much of the Creighton Historic District.
- Blocks designated as “Mixed Use/Ownership Dominant” should be downzoned to R4 if currently zoned R5 or R6.
- Blocks designated as “Mixed Use/Rental Dominant” or “Rental Focus” should typically retain their current zoning.
- Blocks that are part of the likely expansion area of the university should generally be zoned R6.

The city may also consider creating design standards to ensure that new construction is compatible with the neighborhood.”

The potential rezoning proposals are in general conformance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan as shown above. In particular, these rezoning proposals would be in keeping with the goals encouraging retention of the neighborhood character and single family uses. In terms of process, this Comprehensive Plan amendment is the first step. The zoning would be unchanged until an application came forward from the property owners or neighborhood association.

### Conclusion

The N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street plan is the result of discussion and compromises among various interests in this area. The compromises involved finding middle ground between further road improvements to handle traffic, but would have impacted businesses further, and improvements to the commercial area which may have severely impacted traffic flow. The proposed N. 48<sup>th</sup> Plan is in keeping with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for revitalization of both business and neighborhood interests, while improving the transportation corridor. This plan will be a guide for future traffic improvements, public and private improvements, change in zoning and other actions.

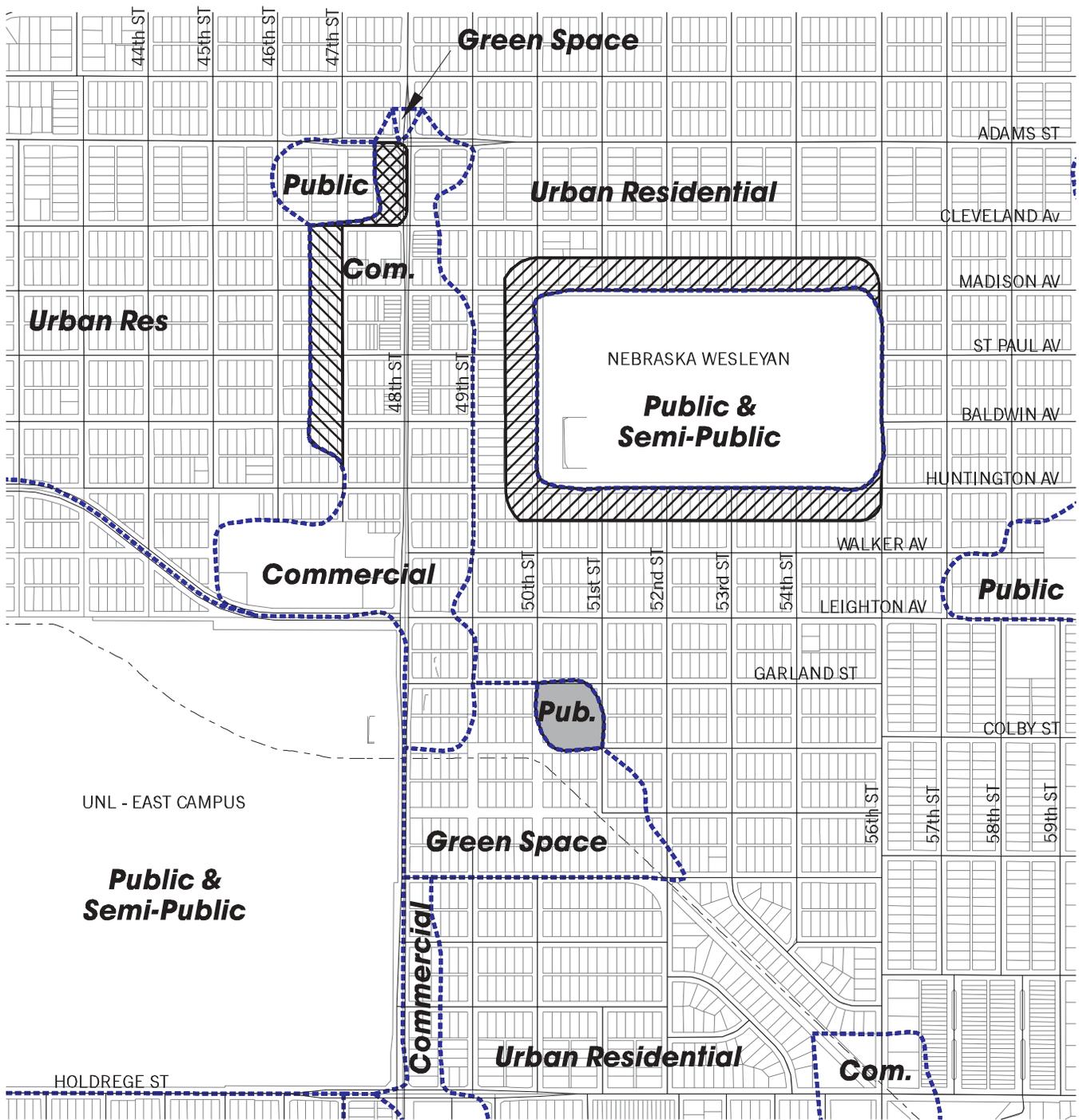
Amend the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

1. Amend the “Lincoln/Lancaster County Land Use Plan”, figure on pages F23 and F25, to designate the changes in land uses as shown on the map on the following page.
2. Amend the list of approved subarea plans on page F 156 to include the “North 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan: Neighborhood Revitalization & Transportation Analysis, 2004” as an adopted subarea plan.
3. Amend page F 156, the list of plans to update in the future, to delete the University Place Plan.

“As part of the first Annual Review Status Report of this Plan, some of the older studies that are not included as part of this Plan but for which updating consideration might be given include: 1989 Lincoln Area Trails Master Plan (w/1992 Supplement entitled State of the Trails Report); 1992 Mo-Pac East Recreational Trail Master Plan; ~~1987 University Place Neighborhood Plan~~; 1987 Woods Park Neighborhood Plan; 1990 Downtown Housing Plan with 1994 Update; and, 1996 Downtown 2001: Heart of the City Plan. “

Prepared by

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# N 48th Street Subarea

## Proposed Amendment 04001

- - - - - Land Use Boundary
- Res** Land Use Category
-  From Commercial to Urban Res
-  From Commercial to Public/Semi Public
-  From Urban Res to Public/Semi Public
-  From Public/Semi Public to Green Space



# M E M O R A N D U M

**To:** Steve Henrichsen, Special Projects Manager

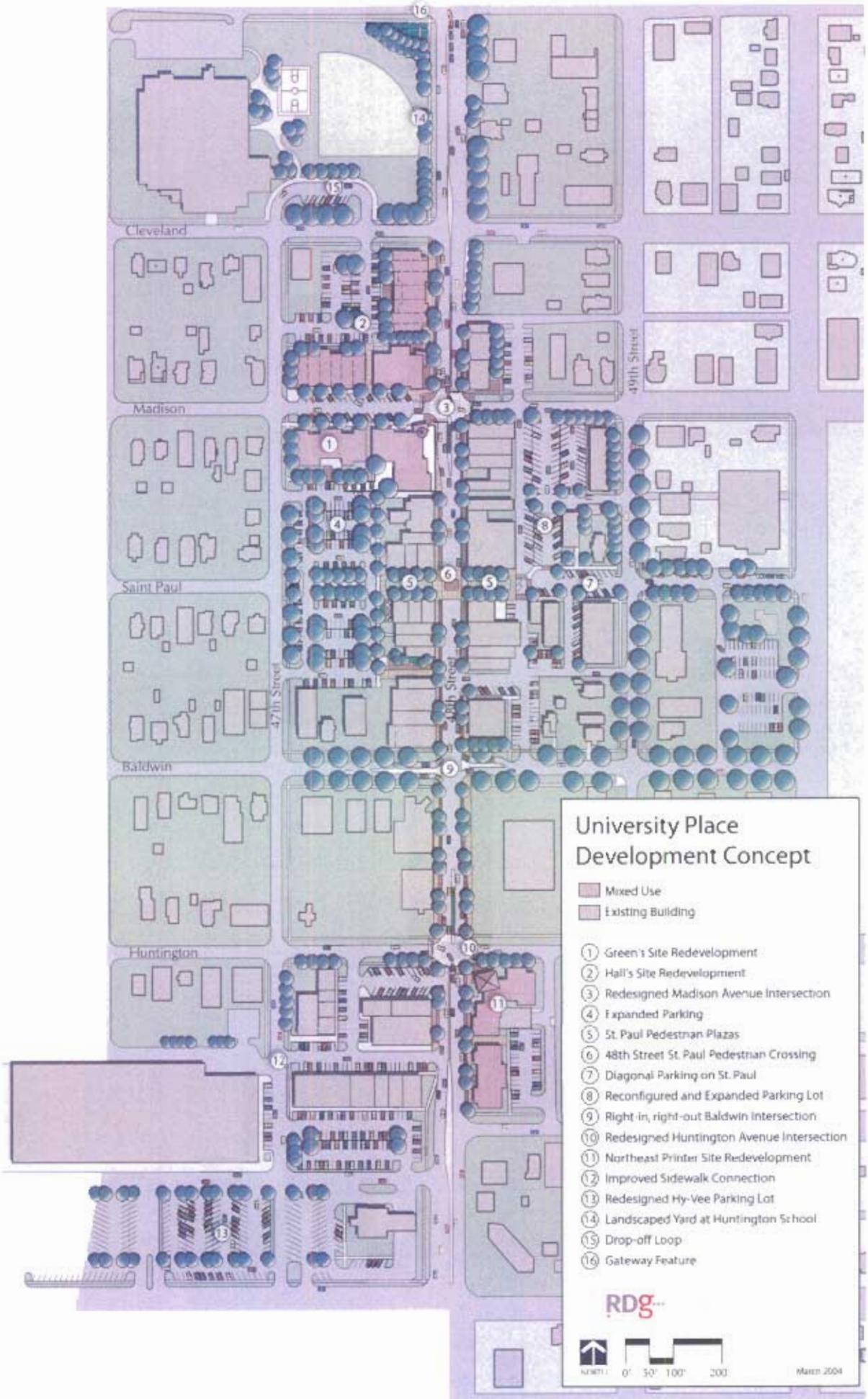
**From:** Kelly Sieckmeyer, Public Works and Utilities  
Wynn Hjermstad, Urban Development

**Date:** April 5, 2004

**Subject:** The North 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan

This memorandum is on behalf of the Public Works and Utilities and Urban Development Departments, to express our support of The North 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan. We worked with our consultants, The Schemmer Associates and RDG Planning and Design, and the Task Force comprised of representatives from University Place Community Organization (UPCO), the University Place Business Association and Business Improvement District (BID), Nebraska Wesleyan University, and other interested stakeholders in the area over about the last year to develop the plan. Many difficult issues were addressed by the Task Force including some of the conflicts inherent between traffic and community revitalization; yet, the Task Force was able to reach consensus on the plan and is eager to begin its implementation. We enjoyed working with our consultants and the Task Force and are pleased to write in support of the Plan. Please contact either of us if you have questions.

Thank you.



### University Place Development Concept

- Mixed Use
- Existing Building

- ① Green's Site Redevelopment
- ② Hall's Site Redevelopment
- ③ Redesigned Madison Avenue Intersection
- ④ Expanded Parking
- ⑤ St. Paul Pedestrian Plazas
- ⑥ 48th Street St. Paul Pedestrian Crossing
- ⑦ Diagonal Parking on St. Paul
- ⑧ Reconfigured and Expanded Parking Lot
- ⑨ Right-in, right-out Baldwin Intersection
- ⑩ Redesigned Huntington Avenue Intersection
- ⑪ Northeast Printer Site Redevelopment
- ⑫ Improved Sidewalk Connection
- ⑬ Redesigned Hy-Vee Parking Lot
- ⑭ Landscaped Yard at Huntington School
- ⑮ Drop-off Loop
- ⑯ Gateway Feature



March 2004



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**T**he North 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place Plan outlines a concept for the future development of the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place business district and neighborhood. The plan addresses the portion of N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street between Leighton Avenue and Adams Street and the business district and neighborhood defined by Adams Street to the north, Francis Street to the south, 46<sup>th</sup> Street to the west and 56<sup>th</sup> Street to the east.

The purpose of this study is to define deficiencies, opportunities and recommendations within the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street/University Place study area for the following six areas:

- Transportation,
- Streetscape and Business Environment,
- Redevelopment,
- Local Traffic Circulation and Parking,
- Linkages,
- Neighborhood Development and Land Use.

This plan was developed with the assistance of a Task Force, composed of the University Place Business Association, University Place Community Organization (UPCO), Nebraska Wesleyan University (NWU), University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), business and property owners, and the City of Lincoln; all with an interested stake in the future of this unique district.

## Transportation Recommendations

- N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street should maintain four through-lanes between Leighton Avenue and Adams Street.
- Left-turn lanes should be provided at the Huntington Avenue and Madison Avenue intersections, and prohibited at other intersections between Leighton Avenue and Adams Street.
- Provide full traffic signals at Huntington and Madison Avenue and a pedestrian signal at St. Paul Avenue. Initially, the existing pedestrian signal at Huntington should be replaced by full signalization. The Madison Avenue signal should be installed when warranted. Warrants will probably be achieved as part of major redevelopment on the Green's redevelopment site on the southwest corner of 48<sup>th</sup> and Madison and/or the closing of vehicular access onto 48<sup>th</sup> Street from St. Paul Avenue. The pace and impact of area redevelopment and traffic redirection will influence the timing and sequencing of these traffic signal upgrades.
- St. Paul Avenue should be converted to a pedestrian plaza on both sides of 48<sup>th</sup> Street, to about one-half block east and west of the intersection.

## **Streetscape Recommendations**

- The current planters should be replaced by boundary walls, providing a sense of greater sidewalk space adjacent to commercial buildings developed on the property line.
- St. Paul Avenue should be converted to a pedestrian plaza one-half block east and west of the N. 48th street intersection.
- The 48th Street frontage of Huntington School should be attractively landscaped. This landscaping and site improvement project should include acquisition of the auto dealership on the southwest corner of 48th and Adams.
- The 48th Street frontage of UNL's East Campus should be enhanced, including such features as a trail paralleling 48th Street, enhanced landscaping and/or an attractive edge wall, and a campus gateway feature at 48th and Leighton.

## **Redevelopment Recommendations**

- Madison Avenue, from 48<sup>th</sup> to 47<sup>th</sup>, should be developed as an extension of the traditional business district.
- The Green's site should be developed with a mixed-use project, providing strong street definition along Madison Avenue, with street level commercial and at least one upper level of residential or office use.
- The Hall's site should be developed with a mixed-use project, completing the Madison Avenue "main street" extension and continuing a clear street definition along 48<sup>th</sup> Street toward Huntington Elementary School.
- Street-oriented commercial redevelopment should occur along the east side of 48<sup>th</sup> Street between Huntington and Walker Avenues.
- All redevelopment on opportunity sites should maintain a strong street orientation, typically orienting parking to the rear of the site.
- City involvement in the redevelopment process should include evaluation criteria that encourage desirable businesses, with a focus on businesses that appeal to the university communities.
- The City should assist redevelopment of strategic sites as the private market responds to improving neighborhood conditions.

## **Local Circulation and Parking Recommendations**

- Public parking for the business district should be expanded west of 48<sup>th</sup> Street, with pedestrian connections to rear building entrances and to the residential areas to the west.
- Parking facilities and circulation on the east side of 48<sup>th</sup> Street between St. Paul and Madison should be reconfigured and expanded to provide more parking and greater convenience to customers of area businesses. St. Paul Avenue should be designed as an auto "court," providing convenient on-street parking and access to all existing lots and driveways.
- A signage system clearly directing customers to parking areas should be installed in the business district to supplement existing signing.
- Intersection or street design features should be installed to channel left turns and cross movements to improved intersections.
- Improvements should be considered at the Hy-Vee shopping center on the north side of Leighton Avenue to reduce functional conflicts, improve connections to the neighborhood, and reduce the visual and operating conflicts created by truck loading and service areas adjacent to the residential neighborhood.
- The City should consider traffic calming concepts along Leighton Avenue between 48<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> Streets, and implement measures found to be appropriate through this investigation.
- The City should monitor traffic and parking performance along 47<sup>th</sup> Street and 49<sup>th</sup> Street, the two local streets that parallel 48<sup>th</sup> Street.
- A drop-off loop drive should be provided off Cleveland Avenue for Huntington Elementary School.
- A new local street segment will improve access to commercial development on the east side of 48<sup>th</sup> Street south of Leighton Avenue and improve access to University Place Park.

## **Linkages Recommendations**

- The City should develop a trail along the west side of 48<sup>th</sup> Street, with a connection to University Place Park along Dead Man's Run under a new 48<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. This project should be fully integrated into an enhancement program for the 48<sup>th</sup> Street edge of the East Campus.

- A future East Campus entrance at Francis Street should be developed as a major gateway to University Place as well.
- A trail should be developed through the UNL East Campus, either along Dead Man's Run or the south side of Leighton Avenue, connecting to the John Dietrich Trail at 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fleming Fields Recreational Sports Park. This trail should cross under 48<sup>th</sup> Street through a redesigned system in University Place Park.
- 50<sup>th</sup> Street should be evaluated and adapted as a share-the-road bicycle route between University Place Park and the NWU campus. This route may continue north to connect with the John Dietrich/Murdock Trail system near 49<sup>th</sup> and Benton.
- St. Paul and Baldwin Avenues should be reinforced as promenades between 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Streets, forming a strong functional and visual connection between the NWU campus and the University Place business district.
- A north-south connection, linking NWU and the neighborhood, should be considered along the approximate alignment of 53<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- University Place Park north of Dead Man's Run should be master-planned as a neighborhood park.

## **Neighborhood Development and Land Use Recommendations**

- Lincoln should implement a neighborhood development strategy in University Place, with strategies designed to help bring about desirable outcomes on each blockface.
- The City and neighborhood should implement a surgical rezoning strategy, based on the character and preferred occupancy outcome of each blockface.
- Redevelopment of selected sites can create new housing resources for prospective homeowners, including members of the university community. One opportunity could be the east side of an improved 51<sup>st</sup> Street.
- NWU should establish a clear limit to its sphere of influence, creating a campus domain that is approximately one-half block north and south of the boundaries of the core campus. The purpose of the campus domain is to provide assurances to neighboring residents that future campus land acquisitions will not encroach into the residential fabric of the neighborhood. However, campus-related commercial and residential activities should be increasingly integrated into the 48<sup>th</sup> Street business district, and could be accommodated in the transitional area between 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Streets from Madison to Huntington Avenues.