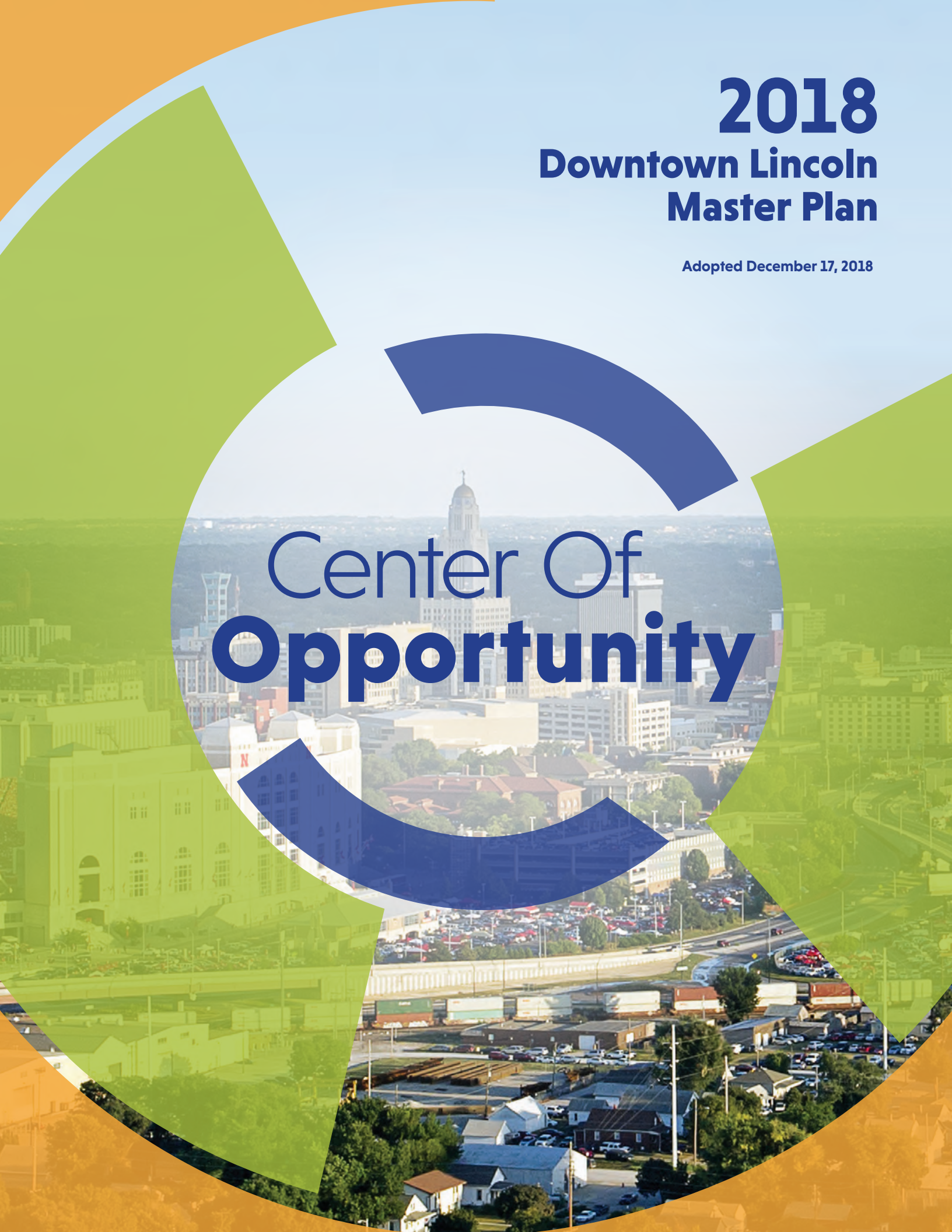
2018
Downtown Lincoln Master Plan

Adopted December 17, 2018



LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

An amendment to the Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan

Recommended for Approval by the Planning Commission (9-0) on
November 28, 2018

and

Adopted by the City Council (6-0) on
December 17, 2018

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DOWN TOWN LINCOLN

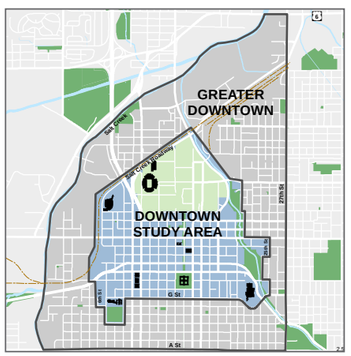
CITY OF LINCOLN NEBRASKA

P.U.M.A.

CIVITAS

FELSBURG HOLT & ULLEVIG connecting & enhancing communities

Executive Summary



The 2018 Downtown Master Plan identifies priorities for downtown physical improvements, catalyst developments, and policies to guide the City of Lincoln, the Downtown Lincoln Association, the development community, and Downtown stakeholders for the next ten-year investment cycle. The previous 2005 Lincoln Downtown Master Plan and 2012 Update have both served their purpose to guide the evolution of Downtown Lincoln guiding over $1 billion dollars' worth of investment. The 2018 Downtown Master Plan is not an update to previous plans but is a standalone document that will guide public and private investments to elevate Downtown Lincoln as the Center of Opportunity.

Based on national trends, Lincoln is considered an Opportunity City that has a strong connection to education, high quality of life, and relatively affordable housing. The goal of this plan is for Downtown to become the Center of Opportunity that is livable for everybody. This plan includes recommendations to achieve this goal by supporting the right services, housing types, price points, family-friendly spaces, and job opportunities.

Both public and private agencies will use this 2018 Downtown Lincoln Master Plan to guide decisions and actions that affect the form and function of Downtown. The plan provides a basis for citywide decision-making and strengthening Downtown's role as the heart of the region. It also educates the general public about Downtown's importance to the Lincoln community and the people of Nebraska.

A Market Assessment and Development Forecast were completed in spring 2018 to inform the Downtown Lincoln Master Plan. The forecast found the non-student residential segment to be the strongest investment opportunity, the office segment to be a moderate opportunity, the retail segment to be limited to unique and experiential opportunities, and the hospitality segment to be a niche opportunity for boutique additions to the market.

Propelled by national demographic and lifestyle trends, and evidenced by local market data, residential is the strongest market opportunity in Downtown. Downtown housing enhances the region's competitive edge by helping to retain and recruit both young and highly skilled labor. In addition, more residents will make Downtown more vital and support other sectors, including retail and employment. Market trends are supporting housing development in downtowns throughout the nation, and Lincoln has an opportunity to capture its share. Housing with diverse price points that include affordable and market rate will invite a wide variety of skill sets, including both professionals and service workers that can support the city's economic growth.

As part of the Downtown Lincoln Master Plan planning process, the City of Lincoln, DLA, and the P.U.M.A. team undertook a robust community engagement effort. Outreach efforts attracted more than 2,200 business, resident and community stakeholders and included 5 working groups, three community open houses, and an online survey with over 1,700 responses. The themes and priorities obtained from outreach form the basis for the Downtown Master Plan and the subsequent opportunities described and illustrated throughout the plan. These common themes include:

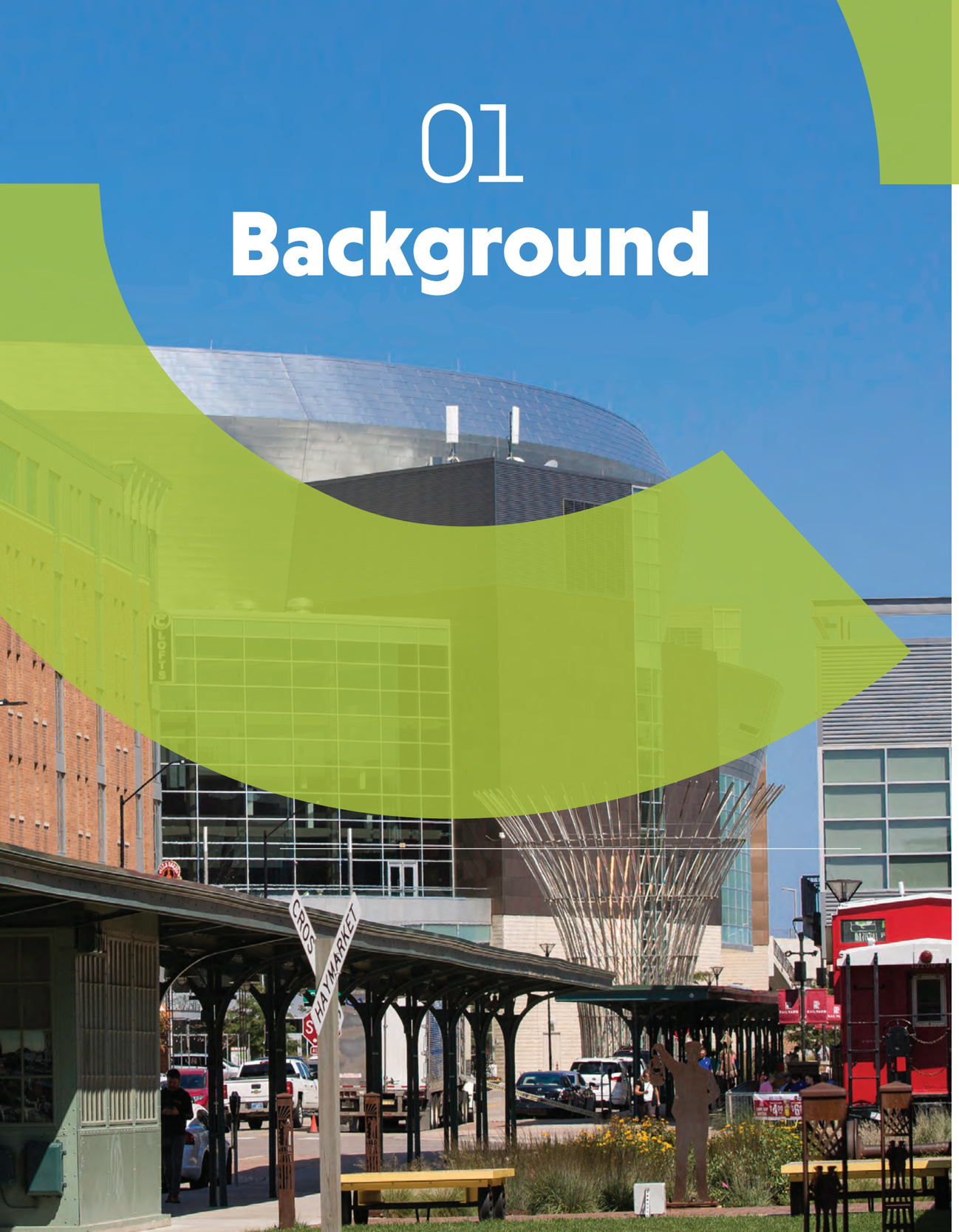
- Vibrant, Livable, Kid Friendly
- Wider range of housing options
- More greenspace: shaded, seating, accessible
- New Central Library
- Revitalize O Street
- Designate an area for music and art
- Activate Pershing site
- Diversity of businesses

The Catalyst section illustrates six projects that embody the common themes of the community. As these projects are developed over the next 10 years, they will continue to contribute to the desirable urban environment and enhance Downtown's livability. The catalyst projects are:

- Create a Community Commons: Redevelop the Pershing Site and Surrounding Blocks
- Enhance the Front Door to Downtown: O Street Corridor Enhancements
- Create Greenways the Connect Districts and Neighborhoods: 11th & M Street Greenways
- Celebrate the Local Music Scene
- Create a Signature Urban Park: Develop West Park in South Haymarket
- Complete Projects from the 2005 Downtown Master Plan

This plan encompasses the Lincoln Community's vision for Downtown's next phase of growth and transformation and aims to support Downtown Lincoln as the Center of Opportunity. Bottom line, never in our lifetimes have converging trends favored downtowns like they do today.

01 Background



Project Purpose

In December 2017, the City of Lincoln and Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA) initiated the Downtown Lincoln Master Plan. The previous 2005 Lincoln Downtown Master Plan and 2012 Update have both served their purpose to guide the evolution of Downtown Lincoln. The City has completed numerous projects as recommended in the previous plans including the 16,500 seat Pinnacle Bank Arena and adjacent West Haymarket development, N Street Protected Bikeway, P Street Primary Retail Streetscape, and Lincoln Community Foundation Tower Square. New residential reuse, infill, and redevelopment has been and continues to be a major focus within the Greater Downtown area. Approximately 1,500 new dwelling units were added Downtown from 2014 to 2016 with many of these units targeted at university students. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan envisions an additional 3,000 dwelling units in this core area by the year 2040. In order to capitalize on these collective investments, further development in the Downtown should be realized and guided by an overall plan.

To complete the plan, the City engaged Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), a Denver-based consulting firm specializing in downtown organizational and strategic planning, and community outreach. Additionally, Civitas, a Denver-based urban design and landscape-architecture firm was part of the team to provide design expertise, mapping, and graphic illustration. The Lincoln-based FHU provided multimodal transportation planning expertise.

The 2018 Downtown Master Plan identifies priorities for downtown physical improvements, catalyst developments, and policies to guide the City of Lincoln, the Downtown Lincoln Association, the development community, and Downtown stakeholders for the next ten-year investment cycle.

The Purpose of this Plan is to:

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC VISION and investment plan to help guide Downtown Lincoln's evolution toward shared goals through the next ten-year investment cycle.

This is not an update to previous plans but is a standalone document that will guide public and private investments to elevate Downtown Lincoln as the Center of Opportunity. Based on national trends, Lincoln is considered an Opportunity City that has a strong connection to education, high quality of life, and relatively affordable housing. Bottom line, never in our lifetimes have converging trends favored downtowns like they do today.

The primary methods to accomplish this goal that are described throughout the document are to:

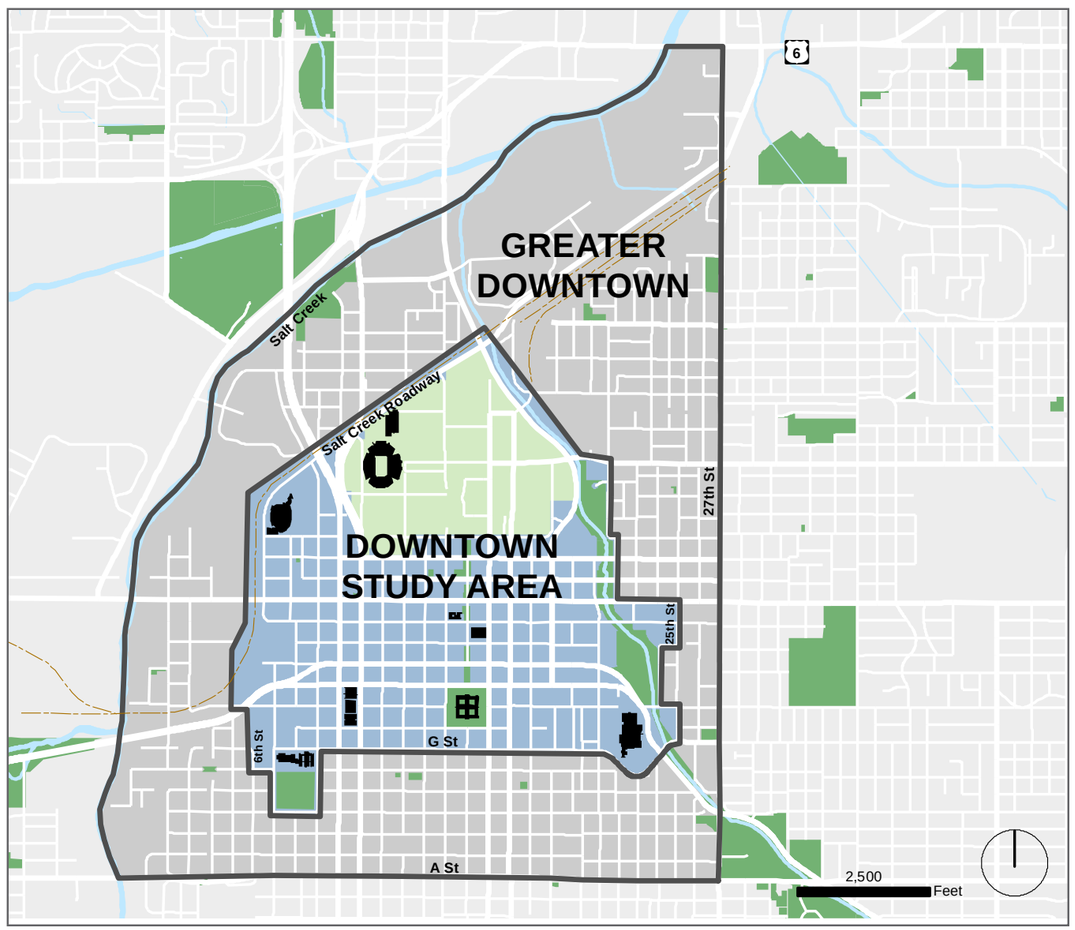
PROMOTE increased synergy between the Downtown Core, surrounding neighborhoods, and nearby activity centers such as Haymarket, Antelope Valley, and UNL.

BUILD ON prior planning efforts, engage the City's and DLA's leadership, civic and neighborhood partners and other downtown stakeholders in a participatory process to develop a Downtown Master plan.

ALIGN the City's and DLA's resources, programs and structure with the priorities of the master plan to advance implementation.

Study Area

The study area as illustrated below is generally bounded by the railroad tracks/5th Street to the west, railroad tracks to the north (including UNL), Antelope Creek to the east, and G Street to the south and covers approximately 1,100 acres of land. The Master Plan study area is also within Greater Downtown which is roughly bounded by Salt Creek on the west and north, A Street on the south, and 27th Street on the east. The study area and its context and relationship with adjacent neighborhoods within Greater Downtown is also acknowledged with this new plan. The University of Nebraska – City campus is included in the study boundary as well. Although this plan does not recommend changes to the land use or infrastructure on campus, the Plan acknowledges the important interrelationship between the flagship campus and Downtown Lincoln.



Process

The P.U.M.A. Team, the City of Lincoln staff and DLA staff worked collaboratively to chart and complete a master planning process with the following major components:

REVIEW PRIOR PLANS

The City of Lincoln provided the consultant team with a background report that summarized the 2005 Downtown Master Plan and the subsequent 2012 Update. This document can be found in the appendix.

In addition, the consultant team reviewed all prior and evolving planning efforts made available by the City of Lincoln in order to ensure that this process would build upon such efforts. A brief summary of prior plans and planning projects is included on the following pages, and expanded summaries are included in the appendix.

MARKET ASSESSMENT & DEVELOPMENT FORECAST

P.U.M.A. conducted a broad-reaching market assessment with a wide range of data inputs, including primary and secondary sources. Conditions and trends in Lincoln were compared to P.U.M.A.'s global trends research. Key findings of the market assessment determined the direction and order-of-magnitude opportunities, as well as niche opportunities, within various market sectors. Forecasts for the next ten years are included for residential, office, hospitality, and retail development. A summary of the market assessment and development forecast is included in this plan in the Market Assessment Summary section, while the full document is located in the appendix.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A robust outreach process engaged the community to ensure understanding of shared values and aspirations related to downtown. Efforts, which attracted more than 2,100 business, resident and community voices, included establishing Working Groups made up of a variety of downtown stakeholders, meetings with focus groups convened by interest area, an online survey, and community open houses. A summary of the community engagement, including key themes that emerged, is included in this document in the Community Engagement Summary section.

DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Drawing on the above inputs, the consultant team developed a physical planning framework for investments in the public realm that support and enhance market opportunities in downtown and deliver a downtown environment that is in sync with community values. The development framework maps and strategies are a key component of this Plan. Suggested physical framework enhancements are closely tied to the core values: Livable, Innovative, Destination, Welcoming, and Connected. The core values are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Community Engagement Summary.

IMPLEMENTATION

Finally, P.U.M.A. worked with Lincoln and the DLA to consider the organizational implications for both entities, such as how to align staffing, resources and committees to fit with the plan priorities. Financing options and leadership priorities are also identified. Implementation is the final section of this plan.

How to Use This Plan

Both public and private agencies will use the 2018 Downtown Lincoln Master Plan to guide decisions and actions that affect the form and function of Downtown. The plan provides a basis for citywide decision-making and strengthening Downtown's role as the heart of the region. It also educates the general public about Downtown's importance to the Lincoln community and the people of Nebraska.

The **Downtown Action Plan and Development Opportunities** section provides an overall framework for the entire downtown that describes opportunities for the urban neighborhood, urban design and public realm, mobility, economic development, arts and culture, and catalyst projects.

The **Catalyst Projects and Sites** section prioritizes and illustrates the top six catalyst recommendations to focus on over the next 10 years. Recommendations include responsible parties and next steps to implement these projects. In addition, several supporting projects are identified and described in detail.

The final section, **Implementation**, includes a variety of funding sources to advance the initiatives and supporting projects outlined in the Catalyst Projects and Sites section.

At the back of this document, several appendices are provided consisting of the full market assessment & development forecast document, community survey results, peer city case studies, and open house/ charrette drawings.

1991
Lincoln Center Redevelopment Plan

2004
Antelope Valley Redevelopment Plan

2005
Lincoln Downtown Master Plan

2006
Lincoln Vision 2015

2012
Lincoln Downtown Master Plan Update

2013
Plan Big: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Campus & Landscape Master Plan

2015
South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan

2016
Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan Update: LPlan 2040

Past Downtown Planning Studies

The 2018 Downtown Lincoln Master Plan was informed by many previous planning studies. The following are brief summaries of those studies.

LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE: LPLAN 2040 (2016)

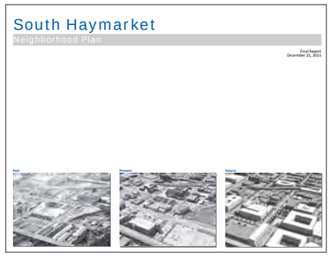
The update to the Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan (LPlan 2040) was adopted in 2016. The Plan includes a vision statement for Downtown Lincoln:

The Downtown Lincoln vision statement is: *Downtown Lincoln is the heart of our community, a unique common ground for all Lincoln and Lancaster County residents. It is also emerging as an attractive place to live, becoming an increasingly vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. At the same time, Downtown Lincoln belongs to all residents of Nebraska because "downtown" is synonymous with the University of Nebraska, state government, and the State Capitol building. This state-wide ownership has strong economic implications. LPlan 2040 will ensure that downtown remains a special place.*

The following goals are based on this Downtown Lincoln statement:

- Downtown Lincoln continues to serve as the heart of the community and is an asset for all Nebraska residents.
- Downtown Lincoln continues to serve its role as the central location for commerce, government, entertainment and the arts.
- Downtown Lincoln is promoted as a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood, offering choices for residential lifestyles and daily needs commerce in a walkable and bicycle-friendly environment.

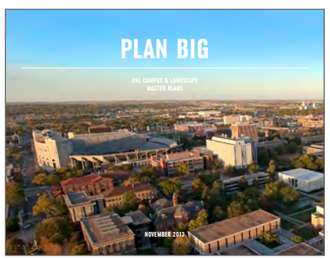
The Comprehensive Plan includes various strategies for meeting these goals. The strategies are summarized in the appendix.



SOUTH HAYMARKET NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN (2015)

The South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan was adopted in 2015 to encourage and guide redevelopment, and to build off the 2005 Downtown Master Plan's suggested future land uses, redevelopment projects, and transportation improvements. Overall, this Plan presents a redevelopment strategy to create an additional 1,000-2,000 residential units, well-defined streetscapes that connect to trails, an urban plaza, open spaces, expanded commercial and office space, adequate parking for the new uses, and other amenities within Greater Downtown. Goals and recommendations defined in the Plan include:

- Create an urban neighborhood
- Consolidate the government footprint
- Transition from heavy industrial uses
- Organize the streets, sidewalks, and trails
- Develop adequate open space
- Preserve Historic Resources
- Implement site and building design
- Develop a parking program



PLAN BIG: UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN CAMPUS & LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN (2013)

Plan Big: The 2013 UNL Campus and Landscape Master Plan was developed to guide the University's growth over the next fifteen years and beyond.

The Plan recognizes the importance of UNL's connection to downtown, both programmatically and physically. The vision for the City Campus is as "an urban campus that capitalizes on connections beyond its edges, has increased density within the core to provide space for new development, and creates a welcoming, vibrant landscape."

Plan Big's approach to the UNL Zipper Zone—the region on City Campus between R and Q Streets—is a key example of opportunities to strengthen city-campus connections. Four north-south corridors stand out as significant connections: the 12th Street arts and cultural corridor, 14th Street student life spine, Centennial Mall's historic and civic corridor, and the potential for 17th Street's closure to create a strong student living corridor. The plan identifies future development sites within the zipper zone on each of these corridors, which should follow and reinforce these programmatic relationships. Plan Big also examined the role of Q Street as a transition corridor between university and city uses, and recommends ongoing coordination between the city, university, and private property owners as this area develops further.

LINCOLN DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN UPDATE (2012)

The 2012 Downtown Master Plan Update modified several projects and concepts from the 2005 plan in order to reflect the changes that had happened in downtown since 2005.

Updated concepts in the 2012 plan included:

- Primary Retail Corridor refined to focus on P Street from 11th Street to Centennial Mall, and to also include 14th Street from O to Q Streets, forming a Retail "T" at 14th and P Streets.
- Promenade layout revised to include 14th Street instead of Centennial Mall and N Street instead of M Street. In addition, the protected north-south bikeways on 11th and 14th Streets were extended south to K Street.
- Proposed streetcar route simplified to focus on P and Q Streets between 7th Street and the future Antelope Valley Parkway.

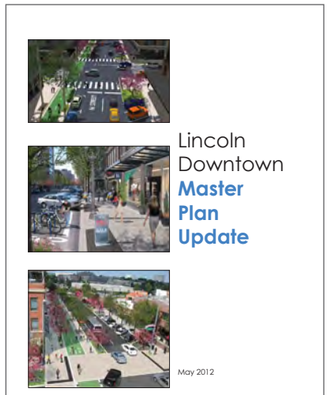
The 2012 plan identified two "priority" projects, listed below. The plan also identified three "key" projects, which represent subsequent phases. The priority and key projects are discussed and illustrated in the appendix:

Identified priority projects:

- N Street Bicycle Facility
- P Street Streetscape

Identified key projects:

- 14th Street Streetscape
- 11th Street Streetscape
- Secondary retail Streetscape

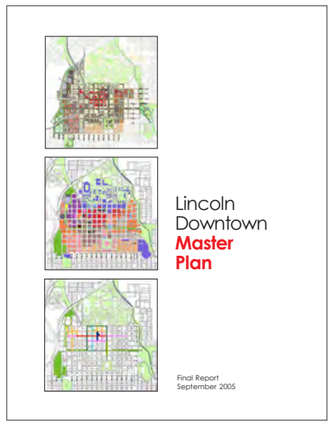


LINCOLN VISION 2015 (2006)

This vision, identified in 2006, was developed by a group of local business leaders (the 2015 Visioning Group) interested in helping build Lincoln's future. The group identified ten priority projects (referred to as "pillars"), many of which were located downtown. The projects were promoted and in some cases partially financed by the group. Although not an official City project, the vision's recommendations were often cited by City leaders, and several of the identified projects received significant public investment.

The ten community pillars are listed below, along with an update of their current status.

- West Haymarket arena (completed)
- Convention center and hotel (three new hotels were constructed in West Haymarket, convention center not currently a priority)
- Haymarket Park sports facility expansion (partially completed)
- Nebraska sports triangle (Pinnacle Bank Arena completed the triangle with Memorial Stadium and Haymarket Park, Breslow Ice Hockey Center completed in 2016)
- Arts, humanities center in Haymarket (partially completed)
- Downtown plaza, garage (the completed Larson Building and Tower Square)
- P and Q retail corridor (continuing work in progress, significant P Street streetscape enhancements were completed)
- Antelope Valley (completed)
- UNL research, development corridor (several research buildings on or near campus have been completed, Innovation Campus is developing)
- High-amenity Ag expo center (the intention was for the State Fair to co-locate at the Lancaster County Fairgrounds, which did not occur)



LINCOLN DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN (2005)

The 2005 Downtown Master Plan offered a vision for Downtown Lincoln's future. The plan included a short-term implementation plan consisting of priority "catalyst" projects, as well as a long-term vision to shape downtown over the subsequent 20 to 30 years. The plan was organized into three frameworks: land use, transportation, and public realm. Plan elements included a "retail corridor" at P Street, a civic square, streetscape enhancements, and circulation improvements for all modes of transportation including a "promenade" loop that connected the downtown core. The plan included seven catalyst projects intended to stimulate new downtown development and private investment.

Identified catalyst projects and their current status:

A: Civic Square (completed)
B: Parking / Mixed Use at 13th & Q (completed)
C: Civic Square Office (partially completed)
D: P Street Infill Development (mostly completed)
E: Arbor Day Foundation (completed)
F: K Street Power Station (not completed)
G: West Haymarket (partially completed)

The catalyst projects and their current status are discussed in the summary document in the appendix. Four of the projects have been fully implemented, while the remaining have been partially implemented or not started. All of the completed projects have used a mix of public and private financing, with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) being the key public financing element.

In addition to the catalyst projects, the 2005 plan included dozens of other projects and concepts. These ideas were part of the broader long-term redevelopment plan of downtown, and many have been implemented over the past several years. Several of these projects and concepts are discussed in this background report located in the appendix.

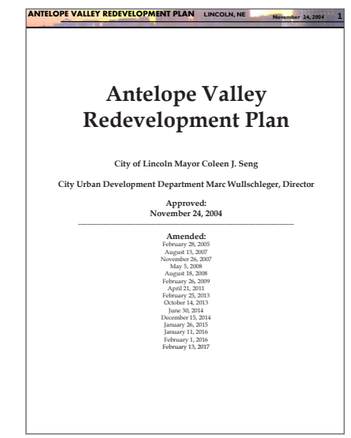
Two redevelopment plans have been created for Downtown and allow for the use of tax increment financing (TIF) as a funding mechanism to help pay for public improvements associated with redeveloped projects in blighted and substandard areas. Summaries of those two plans are provided here.

ANTELOPE VALLEY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (2004)

The Antelope Valley Redevelopment Plan was approved in 2004 and has been amended regularly since adoption. The most recent amendment was in 2017. The Redevelopment Plan is guided by four purposes:

- Support the development and conservation of livable neighborhoods;
- Strengthen Downtown Lincoln and the University of Nebraska;
- Provide direction for shaping infill development in East Downtown and the surrounding residential Neighborhoods; and
- Leverage the public's large investment in the flood control and transportation improvements of the Antelope Valley Projects.

Since 2004, this process has resulted in significant drainage improvements and redevelopment along the creek.


ANTELOPE VALLEY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN LINCOLN, NE November 24, 2004 1

Antelope Valley
Redevelopment Plan

City of Lincoln Mayor Coleen J. Seng

City Urban Development Department Marc Wullschleger, Director

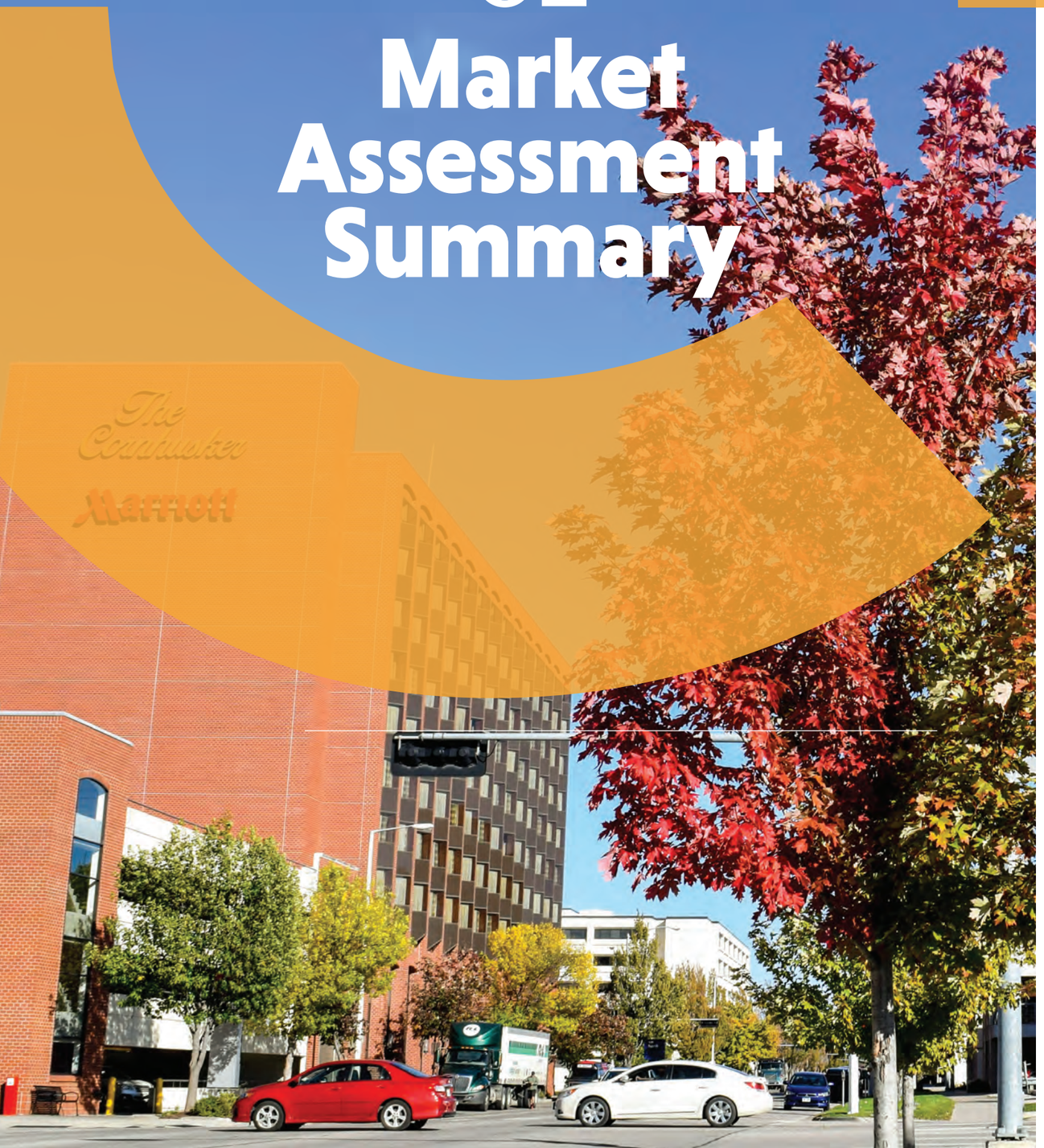
Approved:
November 24, 2004

Amended:
February 28, 2005
August 13, 2007
November 26, 2007
May 5, 2008
August 18, 2008
February 26, 2009
April 21, 2011
February 25, 2013
October 14, 2013
June 30, 2014
December 15, 2014
January 26, 2015
January 11, 2016
February 1, 2016
February 13, 2017

LINCOLN CENTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (1991)

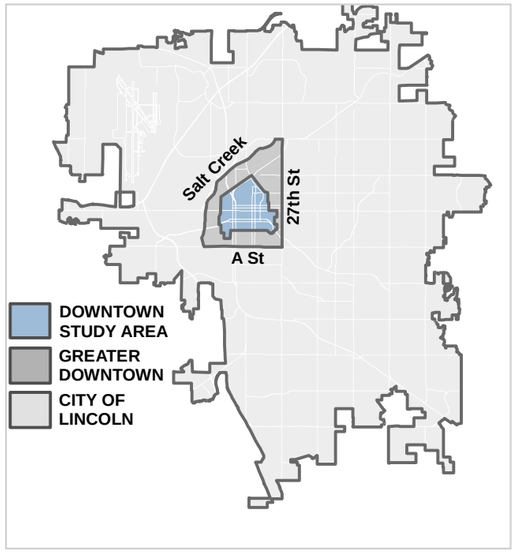
The Lincoln Center Redevelopment Plan was approved in 1991 and has been amended regularly since adoption. The most recent amendment was in 2018. The goal of the plan is to enhance downtown Lincoln as the dominant mixed-use/multi-use center of activity within the Lincoln region. To encourage private investment in the area, the plan includes redevelopment projects that are considered to be of the highest priority in accomplishing the goal of revitalizing and strengthening the area. Since 1991, the plan has been amended as part of the development process for nearly 50 redevelopment projects in the downtown area.

02 Market Assessment Summary



Market Assessment Purpose

A Market Assessment was completed in spring 2018 to inform the Downtown Lincoln Master Plan. The Market Assessment analyzes data and existing conditions in Downtown Lincoln to help inform the recommendations and tactics in the Master Plan. Data was compiled using primary and secondary sources, including City of Lincoln documents and studies, economic agency strategies, real estate reports, Esri's Business Analyst, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other available sources.



Market Assessment Map

Key Market Findings

The Market Assessment research was organized into three primary sections – Live, Work, and Play & Visit. The Live section includes an assessment of demographics, psychographics, mobility, and housing. The Work section includes an assessment of the regional economy, the Downtown economy, and the Downtown office market. The Play & Visit section includes an assessment of the retail sector, arts and culture, athletics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), and visitor and convention conditions in Downtown.

Additionally, a Downtown Development Forecast was conducted which offers a set of reasonable expectations for potential development in each real estate segment over the next ten years.

The full Market Assessment can be found in the appendix.

LIVE

City Centre

Existing Conditions:

HOUSING RESURGENCE: Downtown experienced a housing resurgence over the last five to seven years that was mostly student-oriented housing. Momentum is expected to continue projecting forward; however, there is a shift going on currently, from student-oriented housing developments (completed between 2012 and 2016) to market-rate housing that is underway and proposed.

Given Downtown's current imbalance between student and non-student housing (approximately two-thirds of residents are students), moving forward, policies and incentives should support ways to diversify Downtown's housing stock, and create opportunities for young professionals, empty nesters, State employees, and UNL graduate students, faculty and staff. (See Section 4.1 Neighborhood Opportunity for more details on housing policies and incentives.)

ACTIVITY CONCENTRATED IN SMALL AREAS: Housing development activity is concentrated in Haymarket (including South Haymarket) and along the P Street corridor. Very little redevelopment activity is happening south of O and east of 9th, a very large proportion of Downtown. The concentration of housing development in small areas is what makes the Telegraph District on the southeastern edge of Downtown an important project – drawing activity to the opposite side of Downtown. Additionally, City Centre is an important project to bridge the 9th-to-10th Street divide between Haymarket and the core of Downtown.

11th Street Residential

RISING COSTS: While low housing costs has been a long-term key asset of Lincoln, housing costs are rising, particularly in Downtown. Rising costs are especially the case in the greater Haymarket area, where the median sales price over the last two years is north of $500,000. Lincoln's median home value ($172,000) and rent ($1,300), according to Zillow, rank middle-of-the-road amongst peer cities. Downtown's price points, especially for ownership units, are indicators of pent-up demand for Downtown housing.

FAMILIES: Lincoln as a whole is widely considered "family friendly" given cost of living, quality schools, etc.; however, at the moment, Downtown does not contain many of the family-friendly amenities that are found elsewhere in the city. Downtown has a lot of ground to make up to "compete" with other parts of the City to attract families. Suburban housing will continue to be a draw for residents as they age and grow their families. While there is market-rate housing coming on line in Downtown, the expectation is that these developments will primarily attract young, single professionals and retirees, rather than families.

The southern portion of Downtown (south of L Street to G Street) has potential to serve as an attractive location for families. It is lower-density, more affordable, further removed from UNL apartments and Downtown nightlife, while still being very connected to Downtown. South Downtown is right-sized for different unit types such as townhomes, courtyard multi-family, duplexes and triplexes, and compact single-family homes. However, any reinvestment needs to be balanced with efforts to maintain current residents and affordability. Price points in South Downtown are currently much lower than the core of Downtown and the Haymarket, and current residents are most vulnerable to displacement.

An example of Urban Townhomes

Superstar cities are synonymous with economic growth and opportunity during the past decades and are being overtaken in popularity by smaller, less flashy but more affordable, urban areas.

Future Possibilities:

Overall, development forecasting finds the non-student residential segment to be a strong investment opportunity driven by demographic and lifestyle trends that are poised to converge in Downtown Lincoln. Development of approximately 900 to 1,900 non-student-oriented units is achievable over the next ten years. Based on results of the community survey, the most desired unit types include ownership condominiums and townhouses.

Development of approximately 900 to 1,900 non-student-oriented units is achievable over the next ten years.

Nationally, Baby Boomer and Millennial markets are expected to continue to fuel population growth in urban environments. Furthermore, a nascent trend shows increasing numbers of young professionals moving from top-tier "superstar" cities, such as New York and San Francisco, to smaller markets in search of affordable living, quality of life, and civic involvement.

Downtown Lincoln has the opportunity to capitalize on these trends as an "opportunity city." The Millennial, Gen Z, and Boomer markets are robust enough to support the above projections alone. New development must provide diverse price points and unit types to accommodate a multi-skilled workforce and culturally-mixed demographics.

Turbine Flats

Existing Conditions:

THE CITY'S ECONOMIC ENGINE: Downtown is the most economically productive area of Lincoln acre-for-acre, with nearly 40 workers per acre, compared to 3 per acre citywide. In addition, Downtown contains 29% of the City's office space but only 2% of the City's land area. UNL and the State government are the two major anchors – for Downtown and the region – together employing over 15,000 workers. Downtown's economic makeup is dominated by the public sector – more than one-in-three Downtown workers are employed in public administration, thanks to a mix of federal, state, and local government jobs.

Downtown also has a growing startup, tech, and innovation cluster. In Downtown, 16% of workers are employed in professional, scientific, technical services, and information. The tech and innovation cluster is a developing asset that should be (and is, according to local economic development strategies) prioritized moving forward. Currently, the main components of the startup ecosystem are the Haymarket (where many tech businesses are located), UNL (where talent is produced), and the area's coworking and incubator spaces such as Fuse, Foundry, and Turbine Flats (where ideas are generated).

STABLE AND STEADY: Lincoln's economy can be characterized as stable and steady, but with slow growth. There are rarely booms or busts. During the Recession, the bottom did not fall out as it did in some of Lincoln's peer cities (unemployment only reached 4.3%); however, since then Lincoln's economy hasn't boomed either (job growth has been lagging behind peer cities at only 6.6% over the last decade vs. an average of 11% growth in peer cities).

The community should be wary of hanging its hat on nation-leading low unemployment rates – while no doubt good for current residents, unemployment rates can be a barometer of access to talent and ability to grow for companies looking to locate or expand in Lincoln. Talent attraction and retention has regularly been identified as a chief economic challenge for the region. Lincoln and Nebraska as a whole have a "brain drain" problem, losing too many highly-trained and well-educated people to other cities and states. On a local level, the "brain drain" can be quantified through an evaluation of where UNL alumni currently live – 79% live somewhere besides the Lincoln metro.

OFFICE SPACE: Nearly one-third of the city's office space is located in Downtown. Since 2013, the amount of rentable space has increased 9% with the addition of over 300,000 square feet to the Downtown submarket. Overall, vacancies Downtown have been higher than citywide over the last five years. While citywide vacancy has been sub-10% over the last two years, Downtown's has bumped up from 12% to 13.3%. Some of Downtown's rising vacancy is due to space that was left to backfill as a result of Hudl's move into its new, 140,000-square-foot headquarters in the Haymarket.

Class A space has been tight relative to B and C space in Downtown. The Class A vacancy rate as of June 2018 was 8.6%, compared to 14% and 28% for B and C, respectively. This pattern is also in place throughout the whole Lincoln market.

According to NAI FMA Realty's Market Report, Class A is office/retail space of quality construction with quality tenants, excellent amenities, prime location and premium rates. Class B is office/retail space of average construction, fair to good finishes and wide range of tenants. Class C has poor finishes, outdated appearance, and/or functional obsolescence.

Companies looking for large amounts of Class A space may be required to find it via new construction, according to NAI FMA Realty's Second Half 2017 Market Report. Asking rates have been slowly increasing in Downtown for the last five years, and have more or less, mirrored citywide rates.

The Downtown office market is important to the success and growth of the startup, tech, and innovation cluster. As the NAI FMA Second Half 2017 Market Report notes, "companies increasingly want to locate in areas in which employees can experience the conveniences of an urban setting or have access to amenities such as restaurants, bars, shops, and entertainment options."

Existing Traditional Office Aerial

The anticipated range of absorption for the office market, based on both recent job growth and projections, is 382,000 to 682,000 square feet over the next ten years.

Future Possibilities:

Overall, development forecasting finds the office segment to be a moderate opportunity for new investment. The anticipated range of absorption, based on both recent job growth and projections, is 382,000 to 682,000 square feet over the next ten years. For illustrative purposes, Downtown's existing inventory of vacant office space is 522,691 square feet out of a total available 3.9 million square feet. The projected absorption will come from both existing unused office space and new construction.

Nationally, companies are moving to where young skilled workers prefer to live and work. Downtowns are poised to be centers of creativity and innovation if they can offer a business climate and space conducive to the incubation and growth of small dynamic enterprises. Entrepreneurship and tech will be key to job growth in Downtown Lincoln moving forward, becoming even more important as Gen Z continues to enter the workforce – a tech-savvy population preferring entrepreneurial pursuits over more traditional collegiate pathways.

An opportunity for Downtown Lincoln will be capturing new entrepreneurial, innovative, and tech businesses that are looking for non-traditional office formats in urban settings, such as co-working, incubators, maker spaces, and other creative forms of open floor plan office designs.

In Downtown Lincoln, there is an opportunity to reimagine underutilized Class B and C spaces that have the highest vacancy rates, at 14% and 28%, respectively. There is an opportunity for owners of these underutilized spaces to rethink the designs of their internal spaces to these new formats in an effort to be more appealing to modern office users or other uses, such as housing. An evaluation of the vacant office space has not been completed to determine the existing conditions and percentage of the space that is move-in ready versus that which would require substantial rehabilitation.

An Example of a Co-Working Office

PLAY & VISIT

P Street Businesses

Existing Conditions:

Multi-faceted entertainment options:
Downtown's "play and visit" market is driven by a strong food and drink sector, a wide array of art and cultural destinations, a burgeoning live music scene, and Husker athletics.

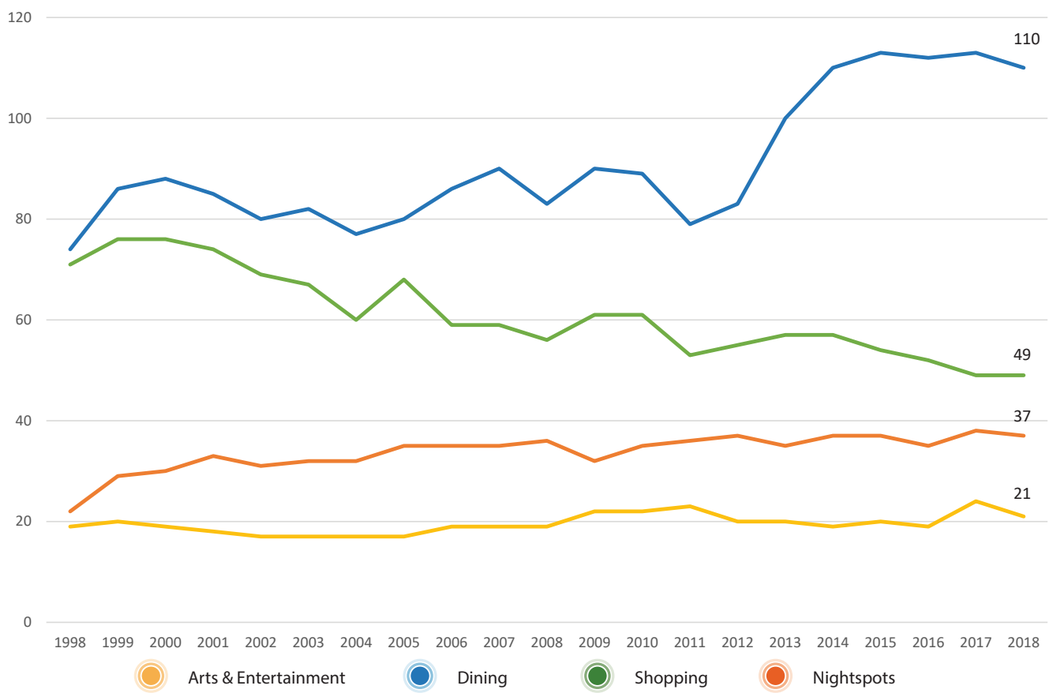
The food and drink sector: Downtown's retail environment is more driven by food and drink than ever. Currently 147 out of 217 retail establishments (68%) are in the food and drink sector, which includes restaurants, coffee/tea shops, bars, and nightclubs.

Existing Outdoor Dining

Currently 147 out of 217 retail establishments (68%) are in the food and drink sector.

Twenty years ago, only 52% of all establishments were food and drink. Overall trends in the four major retail categories over the last two decades in Lincoln include: the steady growth of dining, especially between 2011 and 2014; soft-goods retail steadily falling to its lowest number of establishments over the last two decades; nightlife increasing by 73% since 1998; and, art and entertainment remaining virtually flat for the last two decades.

FIG 13: DOWNTOWN RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS, OVER TIME



RETAIL SPACE: The retail real estate market in Lincoln has remained positive despite macro trends and national brand store closings disrupting retail nationally. Citywide vacancies are a tight, 4.8%. Downtown has a softer market, with a vacancy rate of 12% (consistent with where vacancy has stood over the last four years). The biggest trend in Downtown retail is food replacing food, with a number of restaurant closings in 2017 that were quickly replaced by new restaurant concepts, as observed by NAI FMA Realty in its Second Half 2017 Market Report.

Additionally, there are a number of recently completed and in-progress developments that are incorporating retail into their projects. These include ground-floor retail in projects such as Hudl's new headquarters, the Schwarz condominiums, the 1222 P Street redevelopment, Canopy Row (including the 8,000 square foot Canopy Street Market), and the Telegraph District redevelopment.

Telegraph District

ARTS, CULTURE, AND MUSIC: Arts and culture provide a major economic benefit citywide, generating $99 million in total annual economic activity, according to the Lincoln Arts Council's 2015 Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 Report, and Downtown is the centerpiece of the arts and culture sector. Varied Downtown destinations include the Lied Center, the Sheldon Museum of Art, the University State Museum, the Children's Museum, and the Bennett Martin Public Library. The live music scene is also a growing part of the arts and culture sector in Downtown.

Lincoln Children's Museum

The cluster of venues around 14th and O Streets offer regular shows, the arena is a newer addition offering major national acts, annual multi-day festivals include Lincoln Exposed and Lincoln Calling which attract thousands for varied indie performances, and semi-regular events such as Jazz in June and Tower Jazz offer regular entertainment throughout the summer.

ATHLETICS: Nebraska athletics also plays a critical role in the Downtown economy and visitor market. In 2016-17, nearly 1.3 million people attended home Husker events. Football accounts for more than half of these visitors, but men's and women's basketball, volleyball, and baseball also have strong attendance numbers. Downtown looks and functions completely different on home Husker football weekends. Nearly 90,000 people attend each home game, and another large amount come Downtown to take part in festivities. These fans have a major economic impact on Downtown – spending on average $69 per person (non-Lincoln residents) or $40 per person (local residents) off-site on gamedays.

Pinnacle Bank Arena

CONVENTION SPACE: Downtown does not have a main convention center, and instead relies on a variety of smaller venues including hotels, the arena, and on the UNL campus. Amongst Lincoln's peer cities, Champaign, IL is the only one that also does not have a downtown convention center. Pinnacle Bank Arena and Marriott Cornhusker are the largest convention spaces in Downtown, however, both are still smaller than any of the dedicated centers in peer cities.

Downtown has seven hotels with a total of approximately 1,200 rooms. Downtown's number of rooms increased 45% between 2012 and 2014 with the opening of three new hotels (the Hilton Garden Inn, Hyatt Place, and Courtyard by Marriott). Although resulting in no net increase in rooms, The Graduate Hotel completed a significant remodel in 2017. The near-complete, Kindler Hotel will add another 45 rooms, in a high-end boutique format that currently doesn't exist in Downtown.

Kindler Hotel

Future Possibilities:

Overall, development forecasting finds the retail segment to be limited to a continuation of unique and independent concepts. A demand for 112,000 to 190,000 square feet of new retail is anticipated in Downtown over the next ten years. Downtown's existing inventory of vacant retail space is approximately 193,000 square feet out of total available 1.6 million square feet.

Projected growth in residents and employees over the next ten years will not create the fundamentals or "critical mass" sought by most formula-driven national retailers. However, the unique and local-independent strategy builds off of Downtown Lincoln's existing retail strength and differential market advantage, as well as taking advantage of global trends in the retail sector.

A demand for 112,000 to 190,000 square feet of new retail is anticipated in Downtown over the next ten years.

While the retail industry nationally is being disrupted and challenged by e-commerce and consumer behaviors, stores are adapting with success in urban environments. Retailers that have been most impacted by e-commerce are larger-format, national chains that typically aren't found in downtowns. Some of these brands, such as Target, have been pivoting to smaller-format stores as a response.

Method Cycles & Craft House

Retail that offers a unique experience has proven successful in urban environments. Examples of newer retail trends include multi-tenant shared spaces (e.g., a coffee shop/bike shop) and retail incubators. Also, food and drink continue to drive the retail sector in urban markets. Downtown Lincoln will continue to be a niche retail market, anchored by food and drink, and made up of local-independent and "experiential" stores.

GROCERY: Regarding specific retail categories, a full-service grocery store is far and away the most desired new amenity for Downtown amongst stakeholders. The Canopy Street Market is a recently opened 8,000-square-foot grocery store on Canopy Street between N and O Streets in South Haymarket. While this grocery intends to serve residents throughout Downtown as a whole, it is located on the far western edge of Downtown.

Given the footprint of Downtown Lincoln, a second small- or mid-sized grocery, located to serve the eastern portion of Downtown and its surroundings, remains a possibility. However, market fundamentals will likely need to change in order to attract a second grocer to Downtown.

An Example of an Urban Target Store

Site requirements for small- to mid-sized grocers (those approximately 8,000 to 15,000 square feet) vary depending on the business model. However, all regional and national grocers generally consider population, income, and education levels. First and foremost, a large population is required within the primary trade area. In the case of a grocery in eastern Downtown Lincoln, the primary trade area will be relatively small, due to the presence of several groceries within two to three miles in all directions.

In addition to population, most grocers locate in areas with above average household income and education levels. Currently, income and education levels in Downtown fall below citywide averages. The Canopy Street Market in South Haymarket is a significant addition to Downtown, and one that will help shed light on shopping patterns and Downtown's market potential for additional grocery space.

Downtowns, such as Lincoln's, that don't have the market fundamentals to support a large-scale grocery store are successful by providing a range of smaller groceries. Downtown Lincoln is on this track with its new Canopy Street market. While a second small- to mid-sized market is likely not feasible in the near-term, there are other opportunities to capture demand for grocery shopping in Downtown through unconventional formats. Existing specialty markets exist in and adjacent to Downtown, which could expand their offerings and variety as Downtown's population grows.

A Downtown public market that features locally grown and produced fresh food year-round could capture some of this demand as well. A public market would have multiple community benefits – it would serve everyday shopping needs while also showcasing Lincoln's unique character and agricultural heritage. In comparable downtowns, public markets are often in the 10,000 to 12,000 square foot range, which presents opportunities for several Downtown locations.

Canopy Street Market

HOSPITALITY & CONVENTION SPACE: Overall, the hotel market in Downtown is soft, with occupancies averaging 66%. Anecdotal evidence indicates that Downtown's hospitality market has been soft for the last five to ten years, with mostly flat occupancy and daily rates. In addition, analysis of peer cities found that Lincoln already has a higher than average number of Downtown hotel rooms.

Downtown's short-term opportunity (0-5 years) is to attract small, boutique additions to the market. One example of this is the new 45-room, Kindler Hotel, which will provide rooms in a different setting than Downtown's other hotels, broadening Downtown's options.

Nationally, the lodging industry is diversifying, with an unprecedented number of hotel brands launching in recent years designed to attract an increasingly fragmented consumer base. Downtown's short-term opportunity – to attract additional unique, small-scale hotels – is aligned with this national trend.

Downtown Lincoln's mid-term hotel and convention opportunities (6-10 years) are dependent on the growth of Downtown employees and residents. Hospitality is likely to be a byproduct of these other sectors, and growth in residential and office sectors will elevate the demand in hospitality over time.

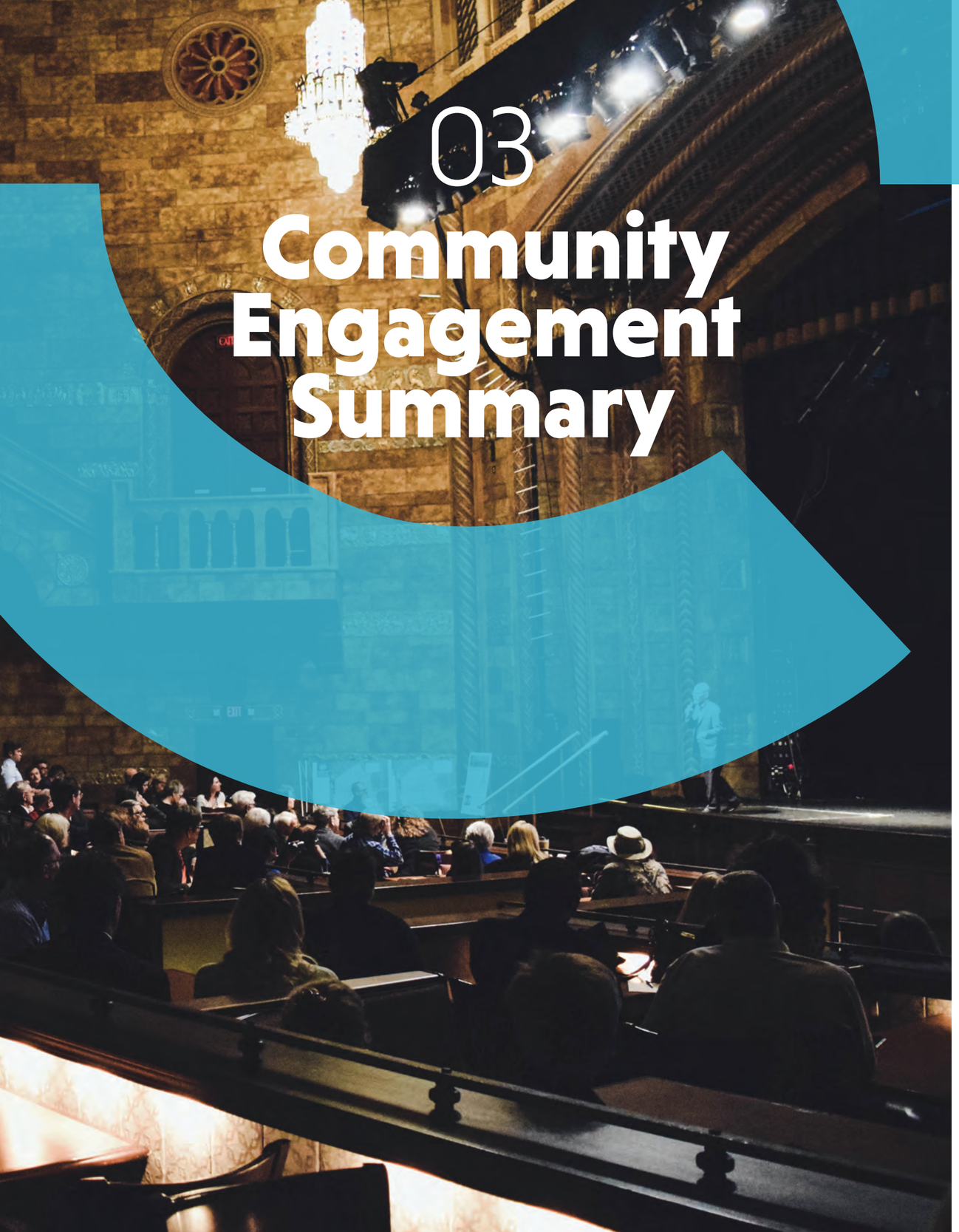
An Example of an Urban Market

Initial research indicates that given the 1,197 rooms in Downtown Lincoln and a median of 132 square feet of convention space per hotel room in peer cities, Lincoln could support a convention center size up to 150,000 square feet depending on amenities and building configuration. In the mid-term, Downtown should conduct a detailed study that looks at hotel demand and convention center feasibility.

As Downtown evolves, a convention facility to attract regional events could help support the hotel market; however, Lincoln's upside in the convention market is limited in part by its close proximity to Omaha which has much stronger fundamentals such as a larger metropolitan population, easier access for air travelers, and more hotel rooms. A look at peer city downtown convention centers is included in the table below.

Peer City Downtown Convention Centers

	MSA Population	Annual Airport Passengers	Convention Center Facility	Total Conv. Center SF	# of Downtown Hotel Rooms	SF of DT Hotel Event Space	SF of Conv. Space per Hotel Room
Raleigh	1,234,720	11.6 million	Raleigh Convention Center	500,000	1,312	27,660	381
Omaha	782,460	4.6 million	CHI Health Center Omaha	346,000	3,181	122,066	109
Madison	634, 269	1.9 million	Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center	250,000	1,894	71,542	132
Des Moines	644,755	2.6 million	Iowa Events Center	226,000	2,127	65,091	106
Lansing	470,348	373,000	Lansing Center	124,000	256	10,000	484
Lexington	495,193	1.3 million	Lexington Convention Center	106,000	861	65,020	123
Sioux Falls	247,315	1.1 million	Sioux Falls Convention Center	71,000	497	22,700	143
Median	611,755	1.9 million		226,000	1,312	65,020	132
Lincoln	318,820	300,000			1,197	88,100	



03 Community Engagement Summary

The Community's Top Priorities

As part of the Downtown Lincoln Master Plan planning process, the City of Lincoln, DLA, and the P.U.M.A. team undertook a significant community engagement effort. This section summarizes the main activities and outcomes of that process.

The list below is a compilation of the feedback from all community and stakeholder engagement efforts. Understanding community priorities can help the City of Lincoln align their efforts and select actions that fit both the community-wide values and the City's capacity. These themes and priorities form the basis for the Downtown Master Plan and the subsequent opportunities described and illustrated in the following chapter. The common themes and highest rated priorities for improving Downtown Lincoln are outlined below:

VIBRANT, LIVABLE, KID FRIENDLY

- Provide downtown play areas and more activities oriented to children and families, including green space.
- Attract more boutique retail.
- Attract additional daycare options.

HOUSING AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

- Attract a variety of new housing types and price points (particularly for families and working class), including affordable, market rate, senior, for sale, high end/luxury, townhomes, and condos.
- Protect affordability of adjacent neighborhoods.
- Increase Downtown residential density to drive improvements to retail, restaurants (more options/longer hours). and create a more vibrant Downtown.
- Provide additional neighborhood services: retail, grocery store, medical/dental, sit-down restaurants.
- Encourage and incentivize core office building owners to renovate/update offices.

CATALYST REDEVELOPMENT

- Redevelop blighted and/or vacant properties and preserve historic buildings.
- Focus on the core of Downtown.
- Build a 21st-century library.
- Focus on catalyst sites– Pershing Center, Post Office, Police property in South Haymarket, West Haymarket Development Blocks, Federal Parking structure, Bennett Martin Library site, and the K Street Building.

CONNECTIONS

- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to UNL, Haymarket, Antelope Valley, Multi-use trails and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Improve key streets for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users (shade, crossings, green space, streetscape etc.) particularly 11th, 12th, 13th, M and O Streets.
- Improve pedestrian crossings – particularly along 9th and 10th to and from the Haymarket.

EMPLOYMENT

- Create and promote new jobs and innovation.
- Attract jobs and provide additional innovative office types.
- Attract and retain people to fill job vacancies.

SAFETY

- Improve the cleanliness, safety, and the perception of safety in Downtown.
- Improve lighting throughout Downtown.

PARKING

- Address parking management and supply, including new parking facilities.
- Create more user-friendly parking restrictions in downtown so it is more conducive for residential uses.
- Work with the State to provide additional parking for State Employees.
- Build a new multi-use Federal parking structure wrapped with a mix of uses.

Outreach efforts which attracted more than 2,100 business, resident, and community voices, included establishing Working Groups composed of a variety of Downtown stakeholders, meeting with focus groups convened by interest area, an online survey, a charrette, and community open houses.

Below is a summary of the participants for the various engagement opportunities that took place.

Community On-line Survey (1,746 respondents)

Working Groups for five topics (100+ attendees)

- Vibrant Economy
- Public Realm & Urban Design
- Housing and Livability
- Transportation
- Downtown Experience

Community Meetings/Open Houses (500+ attendees)

- Rococo Theater – April 10th
- Telegraph District – May 23rd
- The Railyard – October 30th

Committees

The City of Lincoln assembled three committees to oversee the project that met with the consultant team during each visit to Downtown Lincoln as well as met regularly on their own throughout the project.

The **Core Staff Team** is comprised of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department, the Downtown Lincoln Association, the Urban Development Department, and the Chairperson of the Project Committee.

The **Project Committee** was comprised of a range of 23 stakeholders to serve as public representation that ensures findings and direction of the Downtown Master Plan are meeting the needs of the Downtown community and the Lincoln community at large. Three City Council members and one County Commissioner were also on the Project Committee.

The **Steering Committee** was comprised of 19 members of the Core Staff Team from the Downtown Lincoln Association, Urban Development Department, Planning Department, along with representatives from the Lincoln Public Works & Utilities Department, the Parks & Recreation Department, the Mayor's Office, the Lincoln Police Department, and the Chair of the Project Committee. The Planning Director served as chair of the Steering Committee.

These three committees met approximately monthly for the initial portion of the study process, and their vision was consistent with the other stakeholder groups and the community at large.

Outreach Event Timeline

02-26-18
Project Kick-Off

04-10-18
Community Open House and Global Trends Presentation at The Rococo Theater

05-23-18
Charette and Community Open House in Telegraph District

08-22-18
Steering and Project Committee Work Session

10-30-18
Draft Concepts Reveal and Community Open House in The Railyard

Planning Commission Briefings

FEBRUARY 28, 2018: Staff presented a summary of the recent meetings with the consultant team and asked for input from each Commissioner. The input from the Planning Commission is summarized below:

- Don't let the plan sit on a shelf and be forgotten.
- Reach out to difference sectors for input.
- Make sure Downtown is a desirable place for everyone.
- Be bold with our plan.
- Continue to support a vibrant Downtown.
- Downtown serves the entire state so everyone should be addressed.
- Incorporate ride sharing, driverless technologies and ways to alleviate parking congestion.
- Add a big playground that will attract people and children.
- Have places for kids.
- Address and respect O Street establishments.
- Improve traffic movement.
- Downtown St. Petersburg, Florida is a good model.
- Tie in public transit.
- Have conversations with developers who don't already develop Downtown.
- Address homelessness.
- Consider a better shuttle service.
- Increase housing options, including affordable units.
- Consider retention programs to keep people Downtown.
- Encourage mixed-use.
- Alternate uses for parking lots and garages.
- Develop active public squares surrounded by multiple uses.

MAY 23, 2018: The consultant team presented to the Planning Commission on May 23. The Commissioners' comments and questions are summarized below:

- Can the library be seen as a potential anchor east of the Capitol?
- Does it make sense to makes the most sense to convert 11th, 12th, or 13th to two-way streets?
- If a bike route was installed on 11th or 12th streets, would the route on 14th street be removed?
- Can the 120-foot right-of-way on 11th Street be taken advantage of? 11th Street also has historical significance as the gateway to the university.
- Concern was expressed about maintaining the affordability of the neighborhoods south and southeast of downtown.
- There is a disconnect between the density of student housing and the other goals of downtown. The plan must address a downtown that has been catering to 19 and 20-year olds which is not necessarily family friendly. Transient students don't have the same commitment to downtown as someone who lives there permanently, therefore more housing variety should be provided downtown.
- A convention center can be catalyst but then it has spurts of no activity and whatever it draws in, has to be supported when the center is not buzzing with people. What is the success rate of convention centers?

AUGUST 29, 2018: Staff provided an update on the Downtown Master Plan outreach process and presented the initial concepts for the catalyst projects. The presentation included a briefing on the On-Street Bicycle Facilities Plan. The comments on the briefing are summarized below:

- Is the recommendation on the size of Convention Center based on what exists now?
- How many lanes would 11th & M Streets have with the greenways implemented?
- Would a bike lane be included in the 11th & M Street greenways?
- The level of engagement for both plans is impressive.
- How do we keep Downtown attractive for Baby Boomers and families while also accommodating the student population?
- The walkway shown for the future Federal Parking Garage is concerning.
- The Downtown Master Plan should be adopted soon to communicate the plans to potential investors.
- Available tracts of land for redevelopment in Downtown are so large that it's difficult for smaller investors to do projects.

NOVEMBER 14, 2018: Staff provided a summary of the draft plan. The Commissioners' comments and questions are below:

- Is it anticipated that 11th Street and M Street will be maintained by the Parks Department or possibly the DLA?
- Are any conflicts or constraints along O Street, given that it is a highway?
- Are there any environmental concerns for the land identified as West Park?
-
- We should consider design standards that encourage outdoor seating.
- It was noted that 20 years ago two-way street conversions were not well received.

City Council Briefing (Oct 29)

The Downtown Master Plan Core Team and P.U.M.A. consultants presented a summary of the draft Downtown Master Plan`. Comments from the City Council members and staff are summarized below:

- More information was requested about the conversion of one-way streets to two-way. This was looked at in the past and wasn't a popular idea. This concept needs to be analyzed and pursued with caution.
- The City of Sioux Falls has a nice trail with artwork. The L.I.N.C. could be something similar.
- More information was requested about moving the Federal Garage. The purpose would be to develop active uses adjacent to Centennial Mall and O Street.
- Funding for all of these proposals is key.
- Timing of improvements was discussed. The phasing of short-term, mid-term, and long-term projects was discussed.
- Noting strategies for affordable housing in the plan is good.
- Rental housing is a trend in Lincoln.
- It was mentioned that the New York Times published an article on the five places to go in Lincoln.
- Millennials and transportation were discussed. Millennials may not have their own vehicle which may impact parking needs.
- Parking used to be the number one issue for downtowns. Now it's further down the list.

Downtown Lincoln Association Board (Feb 27, May 22, Aug 28, Oct 30, Nov 27)

The top priorities of the DLA Board for improving Downtown Lincoln include:

- A kid-friendly downtown that includes parks/playgrounds/green space; places for youth sports; activation of Centennial/Lincoln Malls; more daycare options
- Additional Housing options and price points
- Explore the need for a downtown convention center
- Attracting new corporate headquarters

DLA Board

Stakeholder and Focus Group Meetings & Interviews

P.U.M.A. held numerous stakeholder and focus group interviews and discussions. More than 100 stakeholders participated, representing the following downtown groups and interests:

- Business owners/Start-ups
- Developers/Builders
- State of Nebraska Staff
- UNL Staff
- City Staff
- Lincoln City Council
- Residents in and surrounding downtown
- DLA Maintenance Staff
- Federal Government
- SPARKLY (Schools, Parks, Library, YMCA)
- Planning Commission
- South of Downtown Community Development Organization
- SE Community College
- Mayor Beutler
- Bike Plan Project Team
- Library Board and Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries
- Public Art Lincoln Committee

Common themes for improving Downtown Lincoln expressed by the stakeholder and focus groups can be broken down into the categories of Social, Physical, and Organizational. These included:

SOCIAL

- Creating an innovation culture by working with UNL and creative industries to attract and retain talent
- Build on the Arts & Culture scene which is a major asset that attracts people downtown, particularly live music
- Making downtown more family friendly
- Additional activation of public open spaces such as Centennial Mall, Tower Square, and Lincoln Mall.
- Create a welcoming environment for diverse races, ethnicities, and cultures

PHYSICAL

- Leverage (and partner with) City and State-owned land for catalytic development
- Better connect UNL with Downtown physically and economically
- Create a strong downtown presence for Southeast Community College
- Improve the street level activity – make downtown more walkable and bikeable
- Attract a small/mid-sized grocery store in the core (in addition to the new market in Haymarket District) potential for multicultural market
- Need for Class A office space as well as additional need for technology/innovation space
- Potential for dog park downtown
- Opportunity for major mixed-use developments in several vacant and/or underutilized lots

ORGANIZATIONAL

- Attract stronger private sector partnerships
- Attract new private investment in the core of downtown
- Potential tools to encourage redevelopment: code enforcement, penalty tax/assessment on vacant/ blighted properties
- Improve development permitting process
- Encourage the City to be more business friendly

Working Groups

Working Group meetings with a total of 125 participants were held on February 26-28 and April 10-11. Group topics included: 1) Vibrant Economy 2) Public Realm & Urban Design 3) Housing & Livability 4) Transportation 5) Downtown Experience. The highest rated improvements of each of the groups are listed below.

VIBRANT ECONOMY: office, retail, education and other investment sectors.

- New central library – a family center, community center, with meeting, gathering, and maker spaces
- Parking management and connectivity between public parking lots/structures
- Activation of ground floors – more artisanal spaces/small spaces and service providers
- A diversity of housing downtown for all ages and all types

PUBLIC REALM/URBAN DESIGN: parks and open space, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, historic preservation and urban design.

- Amenities and services – grocery, medical, hardware, daycare
- Green space – family- and pet-friendly
- New central library
- Greater general density

HOUSING & LIVABILITY: market rate, student, workforce, affordable housing and amenities that create a livable downtown.

- A variety of housing types and price points, particularly for middle class families
- Catalyst projects – Pershing Center, Post Office, Police property in Haymarket, West Haymarket blocks 2 and 3 redevelopments, Federal Parking structure, Old Library
- More parking options and better management
- Transit loop
- Additional active green space and a year-round market

TRANSPORTATION: balanced mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles and transit, autonomous vehicles and parking management.

- Intersection treatments for pedestrians – particularly improved connections across 9th and 10th
- Temporary car-free zones in Haymarket
- New and improved bus terminal hub
- North-south bike lane improvements

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE: marketing, branding, events, arts and culture, safety and social services.

- Activating outdoor spaces – more flexible and programmable outdoor spaces; rethink the wide rights-of-way with more green space
- New and enhanced Library with activated outdoor space
- Kid-friendly downtown – festivals and cultural events; outdoor play areas; unique schooling options such as magnet schools; daycare options

Community Survey

As part of the Downtown Plan, an online survey was available from March 2018 through July 2018 to collect broad stakeholder and community input about their experience and desires for Downtown Lincoln as well as priorities and improvements to over the next 5 to 10 years. The following presents the survey's key findings and results. Over 1,700 responses were recorded.

KEY FINDINGS:

The largest age group among respondents was 25-34 (32%). 39% of survey respondents are Downtown visitors, and 34% are Downtown employees. Respondents represent a broad income distribution, and 56% of survey respondents identify as women.

14% of respondents visit Downtown daily, or live Downtown, while 47% visit once a week or more. When visiting Downtown, 67% of respondents walk, while 26% drive. Outside of work, respondents primarily visit Downtown for:

- Restaurants and bars (83%)
- Concerts and movies (57%)
- UNL sporting events (31%)

When given one choice from a list of 16 options, the top three elements that were selected as most important for improving the overall Downtown experience are:

1. Redevelop underused and vacant sites, such as Pershing Center, Post Office, etc. (17%)
2. More neighborhood retail and services, such as grocery, daycare, doctors' offices, veterinarian, etc. (12%)
3. More events and entertainment options to draw people on weekends and evenings (10%)
4. A new, modern headquarter library (8%)
5. Improve the parking experience (8%)

IMPORTANT DOWNTOWN ELEMENTS

Redevelop Unused Sites
17%

More Neighborhood Retail
12%

More Event Options
10%

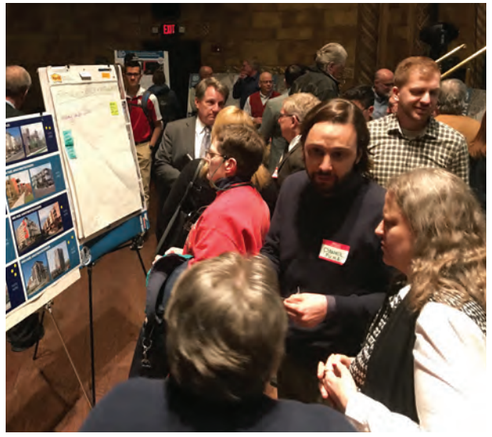
New amenities that would make Downtown Lincoln a more attractive neighborhood to live in include:

1. Full-service grocery store (83%)
2. Parks and playgrounds (43%)
3. Additional parking (43%)

The five most common words used to describe respondents' vision for Downtown Lincoln in the next ten years were: **vibrant, accessible, safe, walkable, and parking.**

Respondents chose the following **five actions as very important steps** for achieving their vision for Downtown:

1. Redevelop underused and vacant sites, such as Pershing Center, Post Office, etc. (69%)
2. Make Downtown more walkable (56%)
3. More events and entertainment options to draw people on weekends and evenings (48%)
4. Improve the safety of Downtown, including better lighting, shorter crosswalks, etc. (48%)
5. More neighborhood retail and services, such as grocery, daycare, doctors' offices, veterinarian, etc. (47%)



April Open House

April Open House Summary

A public open house was held at the Rococo Theater on April 10th. Over 220 attendees signed in at the event. The open house included a presentation on Global Trends for Downtowns across the U.S. and the implications for Lincoln. Four breakout stations were set up where attendees were able to visit about Transportation and Parking, Housing and Downtown Amenities, Urban Design, and Economic Development/Innovation. A summary of the input received is below:

Transportation and Parking Break-Out Station

PARKING AND VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

- Need better timed lights when heading North from K St.-O St. on 14th. 13th Street should be two-way from K St. to UNL.
- Convert one-way streets to two-way.
- Cost of special event parking is too high.
- Provide residential parking on-street after hours.
- Provide later enforcement of meters for turnover.
- Southeast downtown/Capitol area needs more parking (State has hundreds on a waiting list).
- Federal garage is a waste of space, needs to be replaced.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

- N Street Bikeway is a positive, provide more protected bike lanes.
- Add more painted bike lanes for safety of bicyclists.
- Improve 14th St N-S signal timing as well as others for pedestrian/ bicyclist traffic.
- Make it easier and safer way to walk from schools to downtown.
- Need additional secured bicycle storage downtown, secured lockers, well-lit and approachable.
- Add two-way bike lanes on 13th Street.
- Improve pedestrian crossings to Haymarket on 9th and 10th Streets.
- Jamaica north trail extends 100+ miles to Marysville, KS. Can't we complete 3 blocks to N Street?

EXISTING TRANSIT ROUTES

- Support autonomous shuttle proposal-similar to elevators without operators.
- Provide a continuous open-air Downtown/Haymarket Trolley on weekends and make it free.
- Build a Downtown multi-modal hub for local & interstate buses with bike lockers and other travel information.
- Expand bus service to 7 days/week.
- Implement an Omaha to Lincoln shuttle, particularly on Husker game days.
- Provide additional ways to transfer bikes on public transit.

Housing and Livability Working Group

Housing and Downtown Amenities Break-Out Station

DESIRED AMENITIES DOWNTOWN

- Secure, well-lit bike parking – also indoor bike parking in office and residential buildings.
- Full service grocery store.
- Indoor family friendly entertainment with bowling, corn hole.
- Recreation center/gym.
- Outdoor basketball courts.
- Green space/play areas for children, festival space for music events – amphitheater – ideally in central downtown.
- Additional small scale/boutique retail.
- Medical offices, dental, chiropractic.
- Community garden and dog park.
- Improved lighting for pedestrians throughout downtown.
- Downtown police station.
- 21st century library.
- Gas station.
- Shade throughout downtown – trees and shade structures.
- Design for ethnic variety.
- Programming of existing open space, particularly Centennial Mall and Tower Square.

HOUSING NEEDS & IMPROVEMENTS

- Housing type preference voting exercise: amongst eight housing types, (1) townhomes and (2) historic lofts/rehab were the top two receiving votes.
- Need a wider range of housing options. Specifically:
    - Ownership housing under $250,000 (and under $150,000).
    - Affordable housing – more and better located.
    - Need private courtyard housing options – ability to bring the family, the dog downtown.
    - Active senior housing options (especially in close proximity to UNL campus) and multigenerational "independent living".
    - Housing options for UNL graduate students – most campus housing isn't built for this and the new off-campus private developments cater to undergraduates.
- Plan for children and the elderly: "If you make it work for young and old, it will work for everyone".
- Integrate downtown with south of downtown neighborhoods (those between K and A St.).
- Affordable housing -provide incentives for developers to build.

Urban Design Break-Out Station

- O Street should have wayfinding and gateway elements to encourage the turn into Downtown and UNL.
- 9th and 10th are pedestrian barriers between downtown and Haymarket. 9th St travel lanes should be reduced and pedestrian space and crossings should be increased.
- Create a safe and legible downtown for seniors.
- Revitalize Streets south of O Street, more like P Street.
- Need more/ better open space downtown.
    - More family amenities.
    - Dog parks and dog friendly businesses.
    - Walkable, comfortable open space with shade and trees.
    - Provide downtown community gardens.
    - Create active open space for sports.
    - Re-design/ improve Tower Square, activate.
- Bike facilities should be incorporated into new Library site, supportive facilities.

April Open House

Economic Development/Innovation Break-Out Station

IDEAS FOR RETAIL & SERVICES

- Daily needs:
  - Grocery store, drycleaners, doctors' offices, daycare, hair and beauty salons, dog daycare/dog bar.
  - Green open space, more places for kids to play, use alleys as green spaces.
- Unique and creative retail:
  - Multicultural open-air market (or closed air).
  - Public market – small rentable spaces for entrepreneurs.
  - Pop-up shipping container shops (like 24th and Lake – in Omaha).
  - Small shops with hip and stylish clothes.
  - Fill empty storefronts.
  - More retail, dining, bars, breweries in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown proper.
  - More Retail/food trucks.
  - Bowling alley.
- More diverse dining options:
  - Provide a more open environment for unique dining options (e.g., food trucks)
  - Deregulate food trucks and create a night market with food trucks.
- New central library with meeting space.
- Addressing manageable/rentable spaces for the young/millennials to spread wings in small business. If they are turning away from college, then they are our new business owners that need space in our downtown. (The rent is too high.)

IDEAS FOR JOBS/INNOVATION

- Lincoln is a music city – can we work on developing a specified area that is designated for music/art. It truly already exists.
- Use rooftops for green spaces, lounges, outdoor working spaces.
- More shared offices/ coworking spaces.
- Live/work spaces.
- How can we make our downtown businesses more accessible to millennials to open smaller home-grown businesses? That way we can keep our talent in our own town.
- Use perimeter parking with shuttle or tram type service (especially the Haymarket).
- Provide a Winter Haymarket event with temporary shops with crafty things for the holidays.
- Joint use of churches/faith-based organizations.
- More business friendly – taxes are too high; disincentivizes.
- Make downtown brighter and well-lit so it feels safer.
- Support small businesses.
- Internship/volunteering opportunities.

May Charrette

Charrette Summary

A 3-day design charrette (workshop) was held May 22-24, 2018. Community members were encouraged to stop in for informal participation and input as well as attend scheduled presentations. The charrette concluded with a public open house on May 24. There were over two hundred attendees in the course of three days.

FRAMEWORKS: Preliminary framework plans and design ideas illustrated on the following pages began to take shape and were presented and discussed with the community, Steering Committee, Project Committee, Working Groups, Downtown Lincoln Association Board, Mayor Beutler, City Council members, Planning Commission, and City Staff.

The main discussion of the charrette revolved around Connectivity and Catalytic Development. The Frameworks help to guide project development, planning, and decision making over the next five years. The framework summaries are described below and further refined and illustrated in detail in the Urban Design Opportunity chapter.

URBAN DESIGN AND CONNECTIVITY IDEAS:
The Urban Design and Connectivity Framework includes recommendations for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and parking improvements.

- All streets in the study area should be pedestrian oriented streets with a primary focus on 11th, 12th, 13th, O, M, L, and K streets
- Primary bicycle improvements should occur 11th, 12th, 13th and M streets
- Improved pedestrian crossings of 9th and 10th Streets at M, N, O, P, and Q streets
- A major consideration for 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th is to convert these streets back to 2-way streets
- Parking management should be significantly improved and a new public parking structure(s) should be built for downtown employee parking

CATALYST DEVELOPMENT IDEAS: The Catalyst Development Framework identifies development opportunities throughout the study area that are either vacant properties/buildings, underutilized existing buildings, surface parking lots, and are either private or publicly owned. The potential development/redevelopment sites discussed during the charrette included:

- The Pershing Center as a modern library redevelopment site
- West Park in South Haymarket
- Police Property in South Haymarket
- Vacant blocks between L, K, 17th and 20th streets
- Predominantly vacant block between 9th and 10th and N and M Streets
- The Federal parking structure
- 11th, 12th, and 13th Streets as linear greenways and north-south bicycle connections
- Post office site
- Current library site if a new library is built

Additional Outreach to Neighborhoods and Underrepresented Populations

While the 3-day design charrette was underway, P.U.M.A.'s Senior Strategist met with dozens of community members to facilitate candid and honest conversations to gain perspectives about downtown from underrepresented populations, which include immigrants, refugees, people of color, and those without homes. A commonly shared sentiment amongst these community members was that they did not feel welcome in Downtown Lincoln.

Meetings and discussions were held with and at the following locations:

- Several businesses located at 11th and G Streets.
- Midwestern African Museum of Art, Culture & Resource Center (MAMA). Attendees represented:
    - MAMA
    - The Malone Center
    - Lincoln Appleseed
    - El Centro de las Americas
    - Resident from neighborhood south of downtown
    - Commission on Human Rights
    - Southeast Community College
- A small group of teenagers near F Street Recreation Center
- A service provider at Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach
- F Street Church
- F Street Rec Center

Below is a summary of positives, challenges, and desired improvements in and around Downtown discussed during these meetings.

DOWNTOWN POSITIVES

- Walking access – sidewalks are wide and inviting, pedestrian travel on P Street is good
- The City is doing well with bike lanes and they like the bike share- reduced price for students is good
- For the size of the city, it is relatively safe and navigation is easy
- Like events such as First Friday's, the Art Walks, Jazz in June, Farmer's Market
- Preservation of the old buildings is good
- Like the downtown fountains
- Like and appreciate public art
- Arts and Culture: History Museum, Sheldon Art Museum

DOWNTOWN CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

- Lack of available parking particularly around Pinnacle Bank Arena during events.
- Safety in the south side neighborhood
- Aside from restaurants and museums, there are not many activities and events focused on kids
- Price points for existing restaurants are high
- Lack of access to healthy and affordable food
- Large homeless population – Do not agree with the way that the city is dealing with them
    - Where are they supposed to go?
    - Housing that they used to live in is now converted
- Lack of affordable housing – Antelope Valley Project demolished homes; People are being treated like trash
- Lincoln is becoming really diverse but Ethnic businesses are not locating Downtown
- Lincoln has the largest Sudanese population outside of Africa - Due to cost, they will not live Downtown. There are not enough activities to get these folks to feel more at home
- Not culturally specific - There is hardly any diversity in what we do have, no Sudanese or African restaurants
- If you go to the UNL campus you must have your "N-Card – The Almighty card that gives you access."
- No outdoor basketball courts
- Public transportation is a problem - kids can't use it and get to school on time due to infrequent bus service
- There is nothing for young people (teens, pre-teens) to do - Kids need positive outlets

- Health care – no emergency or urgent care clinics
- "We are all paying to support Pinnacle Bank Arena, but not all of us use it" - many community members felt left out of the decision-making process
- The cultural organizations feel taken for granted. The city borrows the trust of these organizations when convenient or needed. The cultural organizations are playing a key role in breaking cultural barriers and reducing crime

DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS TO DOWNTOWN

- Universities could promote their programs to the public
- Improve downtown for non-English speakers, i.e., signage
- Make parking meters first 2 hours free at a minimum
- Maybe have a circulator shuttle between parking garages and a partnership with the Post Office, a location with ample parking
- Include cultural and ethnic influences when adding amenities or enhancing downtown spaces
- Embrace other populations besides UNL (Red flags for UNL are everywhere) especially given that Lincoln is a refugee resettlement community with significant immigrant populations, why not have flags to other countries?
- Have UNL make their sports fields available for soccer, the most popular sport in the world.
- Make public spaces/parks free for kids athletic leagues to use
- Recreational options targeted to teenagers
- Create new soccer fields and basketball courts - recreational "safe space"
- The City should assist to stabilize Mid-Western Museum of Art
    - City should provide some support, even if it's simply hosting meetings in the space
    - City should include the museum and other spaces as part of a budget line item and ear mark money to support
- City should get more financially involved with the cultural institutions and organizations
- Provide civic education
- There needs to be more engagement with the police officers
- Citizens Academy is only teaching a few people at a time, it is a very slow process
- Need a grocery store downtown
- City should provide resources to help sustain the cultural center

Neighborhood Outreach

October Open House Summary

An open house was held on October 30 to unveil the draft plan concepts to the public. The open house began with the presentation of a project video followed by breakout stations focused on different concepts in the plan. The boards from each breakout station can be reviewed in the Appendix. Public comments and questions are summarized below.

- Why can't existing sidewalks be used for bike traffic rather than taking away vehicle lanes? Reduce the sidewalk size or add bile lane lines to sidewalk.
- Dedicated left turn slots are necessary for two-way conversion.
- No bikes on sidewalks.
- This plan needs to positively impact the people who currently live in the neighborhoods south of downtown, many of whom are renters or low income, people of color, migrants, both domestic and international.
- Bring back Ribfest to downtown, maybe to the Music District.
- What about the needs of the Mon-Fri folks?
- Work to emphasize the east side of downtown - Pershing is a great start.
- Two-way streets are great if supported with greater downtown garage loop transit.
- Implement the Idaho Stop for bicyclists.
- Most ash trees downtown are on O Street.
- A trolley on tracks would be great from Telegraph District to Haymarket along N Street.
- New central library is important.
- Need adequate parking options for patrons at 11th Street businesses.
- What is the price range for what is considered affordable housing?
- In order to retain young people, Lincoln will need to address making Lincoln welcoming to a diverse population with protections for our LGBTQ citizens.
- If you want events on the street (such as Music District), make sure other amenities don't obstruct the event areas.
- Dog park and tot area are great ideas for West Park.
- In West Park, the bigger dog park the better.
- O Street bar area needs to be prettier.
- Antelope Park is a good model for a park.
- Old parking garages that are too short (floor to floor and stall depth) for large vehicles should offer lower rates and allow small cars only.
- Use trolleys and bike lanes for Haymarket access, or underground parking.
- I love the music scene idea!

October Open House

Core Values

All of the public input from the Committees, the Working Groups, meetings with stakeholders, Planning Commission briefings, public open houses, charrette, and the online survey was collected and organized into five core values which represent the community's vision for Downtown Lincoln. Each core value is described below and is interwoven into each section of the Downtown Master Plan. This approach demonstrates the value of public outreach in the process of creating this document.

LIVABLE: An overarching theme heard during public outreach was to continue making Downtown Lincoln more livable. This includes adding different types of housing units, more usable open space, and additional amenities to meet the daily needs of current and future Downtown residents. This also acknowledges the importance of the neighborhoods surrounding Downtown.

INNOVATIVE: Downtown Lincoln continues to incorporate technology in job growth and in public improvements. Downtown Lincoln should continue to be forward thinking when making investments in technology and should serve as a role model for peer cities. This also includes developing opportunities with the University as a supply for future talent and therefore local job growth.

WELCOMING: Lincoln should celebrate its diversity of cultures. Downtown Lincoln is host to many University athletic events, but should also build upon the strengths of diversity to create a place for everyone.

CONNECTED: Downtown Lincoln should be a place that's easy to move around, whether by foot, bicycle, transit, or car. Downtown Lincoln should also be connected to destinations within and across Downtown as well as to the adjacent neighborhoods.

DESTINATION: Downtown Lincoln should continue to expand on its entertainment, university athletic, and multi-cultural offerings. These entertainment options should be inclusive of everyone including families and diverse populations.

Public Hearings

The plan was unanimously recommended for approval by Planning Commission (9-0) on November 28th, 2018. It was unanimously approved by City Council (6-0) on December 17th. Minutes for both hearings are available in the Appendix.

City Council Hearing

04

Downtown Master Plan & Development Strategy

4.1 Neighborhood Opportunity
4.2 Urban Design Opportunity
4.3 Mobility Opportunity
4.4 Economic Development Opportunity
4.5 Arts & Culture Opportunity
4.6 Catalyst Projects

4.1 Neighborhood Opportunity

Goal

The goal of this plan is for Downtown to become the "center of opportunity" that is livable for everybody. Throughout the public process, numerous participants expressed the desire to live Downtown if the right services, housing types, price points, family-friendly spaces, and connections existed.

Why It's Important

Propelled by national demographic and lifestyle trends, and evidenced by local market data, residential is the strongest market opportunity in Downtown. Downtown housing enhances the region's competitive edge by helping to retain and recruit both young and highly skilled labor. In addition, more residents will make Downtown more vital and support other sectors, including retail and employment.

The online survey indicated that there is a sizeable demand and desire to live downtown if new improvements were made. Of the 81% of respondents who said they would consider living downtown the following are preferred amenities and services:

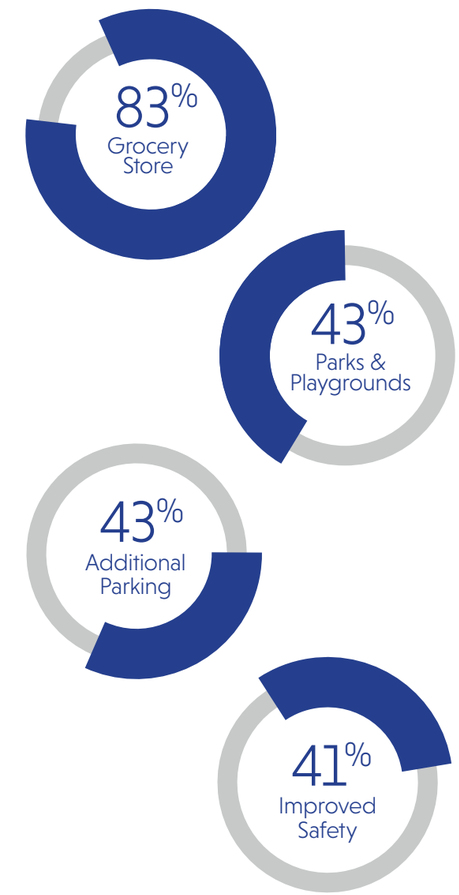
- a full-service grocery store (83% of respondents)
- parks and playgrounds (43% of respondents)
- additional parking (43% of respondents)
- improved safety (41% of respondents)

The most desirable housing types respondents would live in include:

- owner occupied condominiums (29%)
- owner occupied townhomes (18%)
- rental apartments (16%)

This section identifies key recommendations for neighborhood linkages, housing, and new services and amenities that could attract new residents Downtown and improve Downtown for existing residents and visitors.

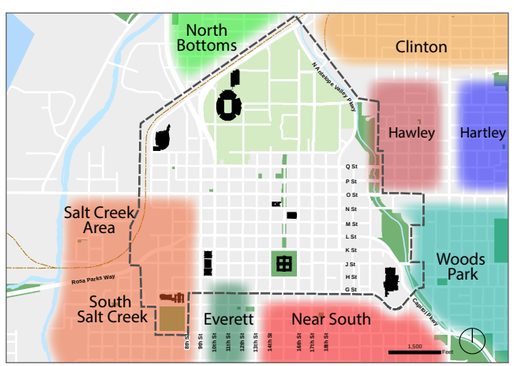
DESIRABLE DOWNTOWN AMENITIES



LINKAGES WITH ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown is surrounded by diverse neighborhoods whose residents are an integral part of the Downtown economy. People who live in these neighborhoods work, visit and play, and shop in Downtown. Some pass through Downtown on their way to the University of Nebraska, and some rely on transit stops that converge Downtown. While proximity to Downtown is convenient, Downtown may not feel accessible or welcoming to all neighbors.

Downtown is stronger when the surrounding neighborhood residents have easy connections to jobs, services, and retail. Getting around by bike and on foot is an increasingly important quality of life consideration. Millenials and Gen Z, are much more likely to live and work in places that are easy to access with or without a car. Connecting the more affordable neighborhoods like South Salt Creek, Everett, Near South, and Capitol View south of Downtown through street improvements to 8th, 11th, 13th, 16th, and 17th, as well as G Street, will be vital to further integrating residents into the Downtown economy. Neighborhoods to the east, including Malone, Hartley, Hawley, and Woods Park rely on east/west roadway connections. While the completion of the N Street protected bikeway improves connectivity, there are many street and entryway improvements that could further improve connectivity. Clinton and North Bottoms Neighborhoods have more distance and barriers between Downtown and those neighborhoods, and could benefit from larger connectivity projects that create trails surrounding Downtown.



Map of Adjacent Neighborhoods

The diversity of people from various economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in these neighborhoods also creates an opportunity to make Downtown more interesting and inviting. Services and retail that cater to a broader populations would make Downtown more welcoming, not only to neighbors, but international students on campus and visitors outside the City, as well. Signage and City services, like bike share, would benefit from incorporating translated text.

Safely connecting adjoining neighborhoods to the core enables workers to live near jobs without having to live in the Downtown Core. Adjacent neighborhoods offer a range of housing including more affordable options for the City's workforce. Housing should be monitored in these areas to ensure that affordability is maintained, while allowing for a transition between higher density Downtown redevelopment and the medium- to low-density housing of these neighborhoods. Improvements to homes in these neighborhoods may increase housing values, but can also preserve the housing stock that might be vulnerable to redevelopment to higher density, lower quality housing. There is a delicate balance to maintain affordability and quality.

The neighborhood located northeast of Downtown and centered around N. 22nd and Y Streets is a unique area located in close proximity to UNL and other Downtown destinations. A variety of land uses exist including industrial, commercial, public and residential. In addition to the local road network, transportation facilities in this area include the MoPac, Antelope Valley, and John Dietrich Trails, and the Omaha, Lincoln & Beatrice Railroad and adjacent rail spurs. This area is recommended for a future subarea study in order to guide its future vision.

Wayfinding Signage on O Street

Strategies and Action Items

Mid-term 18 mos. – 5 years

1. Strengthen physical connections for surrounding neighborhood residents to better link to Downtown by converting S. 13th Street to two-way vehicle traffic between K and O Streets and add bike lanes.
2. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to UNL, Haymarket, Antelope Valley, multi-use trails and surrounding neighborhoods and improve wayfinding signage to the existing trails.
3. Complete a study of the Y Street subarea.

Several detailed recommendations for linking adjacent neighborhoods and UNL are provided in section 4.3 Catalyst Projects.

HOUSING

Market trends are supporting housing development in downtowns throughout the nation, and Lincoln has an opportunity to capture its share, as described in Chapter 2, Market Assessment Summary. The results of the community outreach found that the most desired units for Downtown Lincoln are townhouses and condominium units. Housing with diverse price points that include affordable and market rate will invite a wide variety of skill sets, including both professionals and service workers that can support the city's economic growth. Many cities across the country are providing incentives to stimulate the housing market in downtowns, particularly for mixed-income and affordable housing.

The City is beginning to explore a comprehensive affordable housing strategy and will include multiple stakeholders in the process. Downtown is unique so specific strategies will be explored, such as existing or new incentives to stimulate mixed-income and affordable residential development.

The southern portion of the Downtown Study Area (south of L Street to G Street) has potential to serve as an attractive location for mixed-use and a variety of housing types. It is lower-density, more affordable, further removed from UNL apartments and Downtown nightlife, while still being very connected to Downtown. However, any reinvestment needs to be balanced with efforts to maintain current residents and affordability. Price points in this area are currently much lower than the core of Downtown and Haymarket, and current residents are most vulnerable to displacement.

A parallel effort is underway and includes the area from L Street to G Street. The South of Downtown Community Development Organization and the City are leading a process to develop a comprehensive strategy for the South of Downtown Area bounded by A Street, 10th Street, L Street and 17th Street.

A Steering Committee is guiding the process whose purpose is to help collaborate on partnership efforts (private, nonprofit, and public sectors) to enhance South of Downtown attributes and qualities, while addressing important neighborhood concerns and issues.
The process is intended to identify key consensus action strategies and redevelopment projects that can be implemented in the near term. Subcommittees will develop strategies for human and cultural matters; economic, workforce and entrepreneur opportunities; affordable and market rate housing for renters and homeowners; financing and community investing; and property owner investments and initiatives.

An Example of Medium-Density Housing

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 Months

1. Examine existing incentives, such as the City's TIF Policy and Turnback Tax, and develop ways to support a variety of housing types and price points, (affordable, market rate, senior, for sale, high end/ luxury, townhomes, condos) particularly for middle class families.
2. Explore additional incentives to stimulate mixed-income and affordable Downtown residential development such as: tax abatements, land trusts, and down payment assistance. Additional detail is provided in Chapter 5, Implementation.
3. Work with local developers, stakeholders, and non-profits to develop a comprehensive strategy to protect the affordability of adjacent neighborhoods.
4. Support creation of housing at higher densities in Downtown, and include housing as a key component of mixed use developments.

Mid-term 18 months – 5 years

1. Promote moderately priced townhome and condominium development Downtown.
2. Inventory existing buildings and opportunity sites for housing and engage local owners in redevelopment planning. Examples may include Class C office buildings and underutilized historic buildings such as the Golds and Atrium Buildings.
3. UNL and downtown should be looked at as one market for student housing, not as University vs. the Central Business District. UNL and the City/DLA should work together on understanding overall market demand for the student niche and trying to guide the best mix between on- and off-campus housing.
4. The City should work with UNL to understand the potential downtown market demand for graduate students, students with families, staff, and faculty housing.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Throughout the Downtown Master Plan outreach process, both Downtown and greater Lincoln residents and employees expressed the desire for everyday neighborhood services in Downtown that include groceries, medical/dental offices, hardware stores, boutique retail, child care, and dry cleaners, to name a few. These services will not only benefit existing Downtown employees and residents but they will help attract housing development and new residents Downtown. In addition, many participants in the outreach process expressed the desire to live Downtown if it was more family-friendly and included children's play areas, a dog park, a variety of daycare options, and more festivals oriented to children and families. The 11th & M Street Greenways and West Park catalyst projects were developed in response to the interest in increasing green space in Downtown.

An Example of Townhomes

Mixed-use neighborhood retail services

Section 4.5 Economic Development Opportunity provides additional detail about neighborhood serving retail strategies and action items.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Work to attract additional daycare options that are above-and-beyond typical daycare and include experiential learning.
2. Provide new green spaces, such as the Greenways and West Park, which are family and pet-friendly. Additional detail is provided in Section, 4.3 Catalyst Projects.
3. Further focus on new events and activities in Tower Square and Centennial Mall with activities that are inviting to people from all races, cultures, and ethnicities such as daytime music events, fitness groups, food trucks, pop-up events, art, and moveable seating, tables, and shade structures.

Lincoln Children's Museum Event

4. Identify locations for small urban parks throughout Downtown. Analyze policy changes to develop smaller urban parks, such as encouraging smaller greenspaces to be incorporated as private properties redevelop.
5. Work with the Children's Museum as they develop their outdoor space plan adjacent to Centennial Mall.

Pop-up greenspace

Mid-term 18 months – 5 years

1. The City and DLA should work together to attract neighborhood services such as grocery, a year-round indoor/outdoor market, medical, hardware, daycare, boutique retail, full-service restaurants, pop-up shops, and experimental and signature retail.
2. Encourage partnerships among Lincoln Public Schools and other organizations to enhance education opportunities in Downtown. Downtown could include unique schooling options such as additional magnet or specialty schools.

4.2 Urban Design Opportunity

Goal

As the "center of opportunity," Downtown should be the place people desire to be and businesses desire to invest. Enhancing existing public spaces, including streets, within Downtown will provide additional destinations for people. This plan aims to improve the quality of the public realm within the existing right-of-way, including pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements, through context-sensitive design, targeted investment, and regular maintenance.

Why It's Important

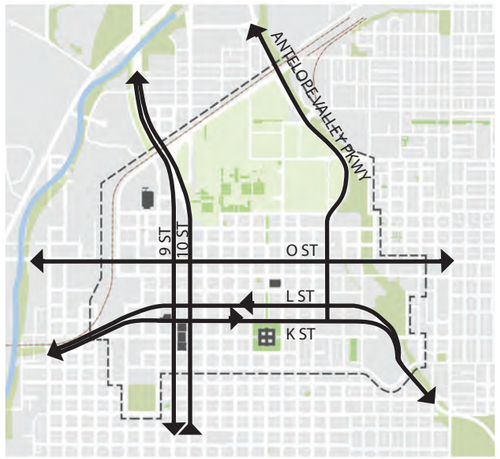
There is a great deal of hardscape and pavement in the downtown core. Encouraging people to linger and enjoy a place is an important aspect of creating a neighborhood. Existing public spaces and streets should be activated with a variety of programming elements so they can be enjoyed by all. Enhancing downtown's outdoor spaces is a way to create a more appealing place that will attract more people, activity, and new investment to capitalize on the amenities.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

The Urban Design Opportunities focus on public space and street improvements that are necessary to support future development in Downtown Lincoln. Often public investment in the form of streets, streetscape, façade improvements, parks and other improvements are necessary to spur private investment.

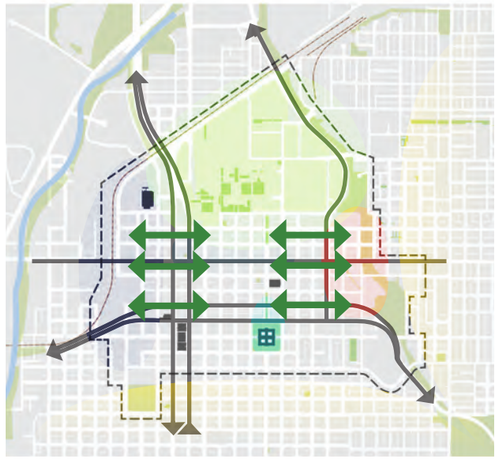
In the case of Lincoln, the market and the momentum already exist to support private investment, but more importantly the public improvements are intended to create a more people friendly downtown environment. This plan is rooted in the belief that Downtown is a people place that through the implementation of its concepts can foster incremental growth and create economic value over time. All future capital projects and public realm improvements within Downtown should be studied for consistency with the vision and goals of this plan.

Primary Streets



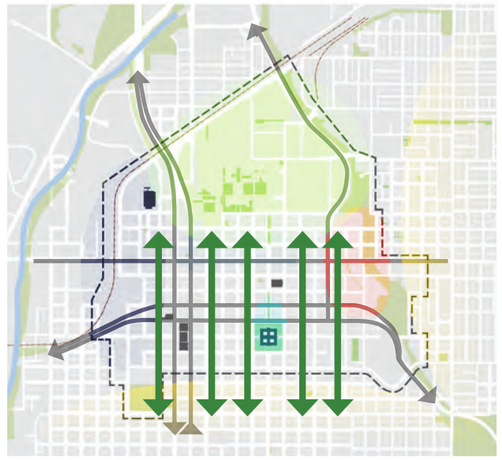
Existing primary thoroughfares are barriers that sub-divide downtown.

Bridge the Gaps



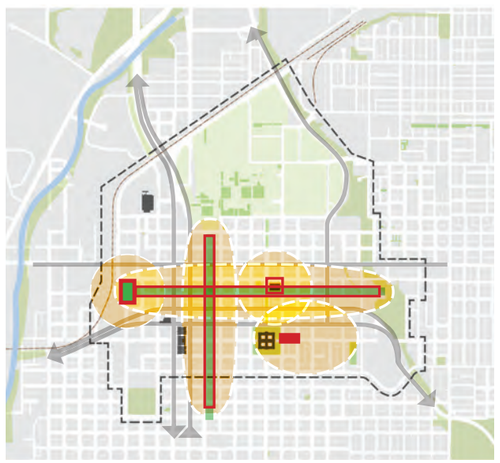
Improve east-west connections to link existing energy zones at the edges of downtown to the center.

Connect to Neighborhoods



Create north-south connections to stitch adjacent residential neighborhoods, the Downtown core, and UNL together.

Catalyze Change



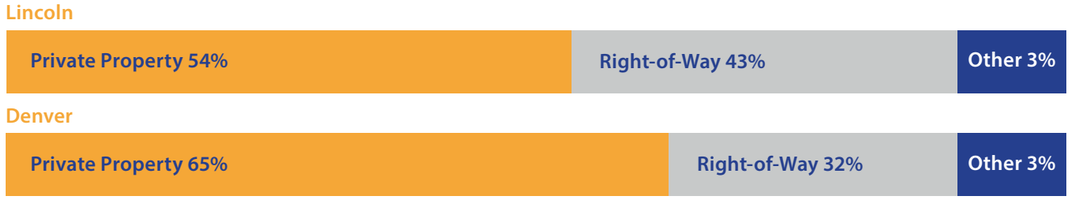
Invest in strategic catalyst projects to spur private development and encourage more people to live downtown.

Downtown Lincoln has an opportunity to reimagine the use of its right-of-way. The Lincoln grid has a generally consistent 300 foot by 300 foot block size and mostly 100 foot wide rights-of-way that provide ample room for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

In addition, some of the rights-of-way could be reimagined for amenities such as greenspace or public art corridors while having minimal impacts to the overall transportation system. These ideas are further described in section 4.3, Catalyst Projects, and throughout the Master Plan.

As a comparison, 32% of Downtown Denver is public right-of-way whereas 43% of Downtown Lincoln is public right-of-way.

Private Property vs. Public Right-of-Way



Character Areas and Subareas

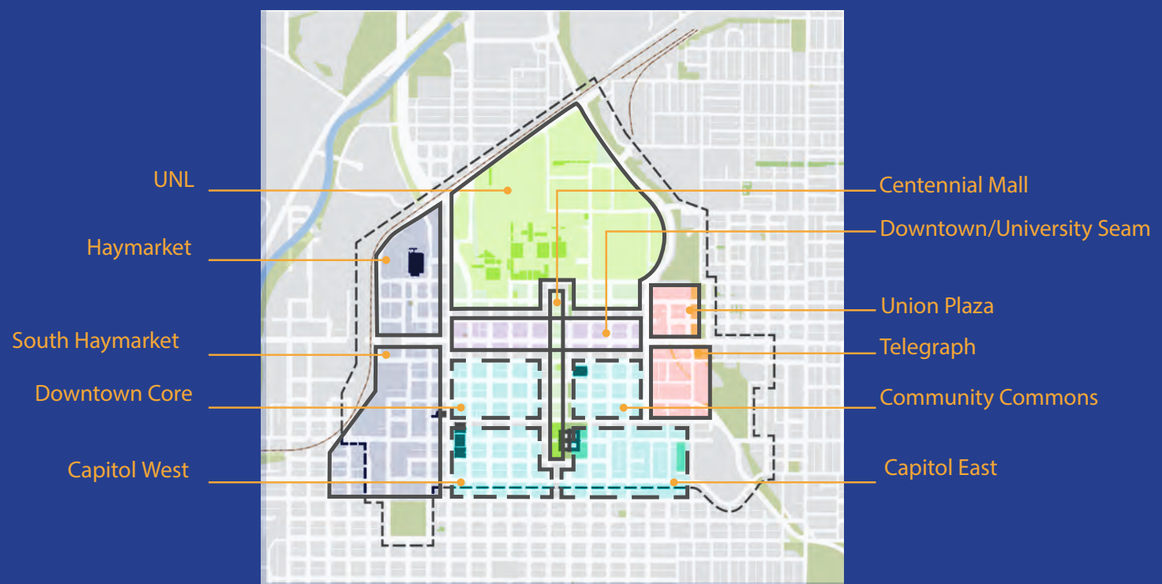
Downtown includes a variety of areas that have differing characters. For example, the Capitol Core is predominantly a traditional central business district that includes City and State Government, financial institutions, traditional office buildings, and a variety of supporting uses. Each of the areas has, or needs, a center of activity and supportive development patterns.

The continued development of Downtown Lincoln should not use a "one size fits all" approach. To create a thriving downtown that serves the population of Lincoln, unique places must be built upon or created that will attract a broad cross section of people. The creation of these different places allows Downtown to capture different uses, forms, and styles of development. The differences of these places is also what causes them to be supportive of one another. The character areas include:

- University of Nebraska
- Haymarket
- O and P Streets
- Telegraph/Union Plaza
- Surrounding Neighborhoods (Everett, Near South, South Salt Creek, North Bottoms, Hawley, Clinton, and Woods Park)
- Capitol Core

Character Areas

Sub Areas



DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

Downtown streets are comprised of vehicular lanes, parking, bicycle lanes in some locations, and pedestrian space. The character of a street is typically formed by its visual elements known as streetscape. The streetscape may include a mixture of elements including but not limited to sidewalks, parking, outdoor dining, benches and other amenities, and trees and other plantings. This interface between the public space and private buildings is the heart of Downtown's charm.

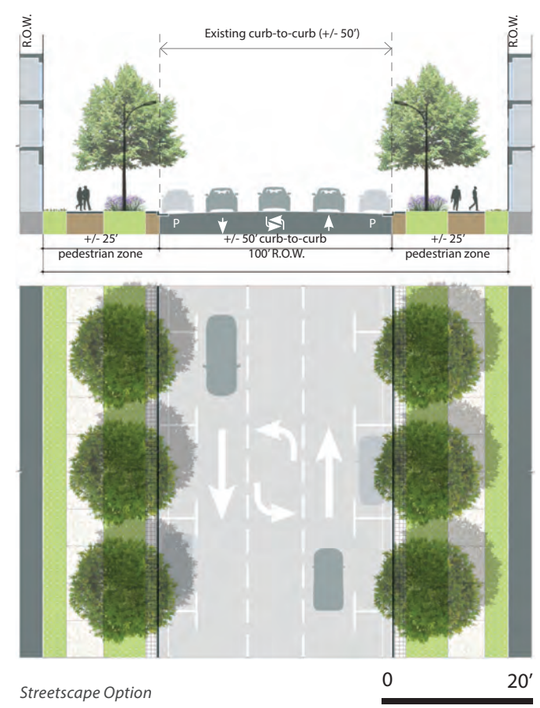
It is desirable in Downtown Lincoln to have consistent streetscape elements. Most people experience Downtown on foot to get to their destination, no matter what mode is used to arrive Downtown. While some streets in Downtown, such as P Street, have a special streetscape design, all other streets in Downtown should include a consistent streetscape as well. In order to accomplish this, the City should develop standards that incorporate the following elements for all streets in Downtown:

- Well maintained concrete sidewalks clear of obstructions
- Consistent street trees between the curb and the sidewalk
- Planting in containers, raised planters, or cutouts to soften and complement the sidewalks
- Trash and recycling receptacles
- Benches and other types of seating
- Bicycle racks
- Pedestrian scale lighting oriented towards the sidewalks
- Wayfinding elements
- Locations for public art
- ADA accessible ramps at all intersections
- Stormwater mitigation

P Street

An Example of a Model Streetscape

The cost to install and maintain these streetscape improvements can range significantly. The P Street streetscape improvements and Centennial Mall improvements would be considered the high end of improvements. These streets include high end materials and furnishings while incorporating engineered water quality systems that filter stormwater runoff. Less costly streetscape design may include more basic materials and furnishings and traditional curb and gutter stormwater systems.



Streetscape Option

Lower cost strategies may also include the use of paint or plastic bollards to test new street and intersection configurations before committing to substantial capital investment. Some streets in Downtown may identify as special streets such as the proposed "festival streets" on P and14th Streets and may include alternative paving materials. Streetscape improvements on O, M, 11th, and 13th Streets are the highest priority in Downtown.

The consideration of lifecycle maintenance strategies has also emerged as a point of emphasis in recent years, as cities like Lincoln look to preserve their investments in major capital improvement projects. Lifecycle maintenance approaches can be fairly complex, running the gambit from standard maintenance – like trash pick-up and landscape bed care – to proactive repair and replacement strategies for site furnishings, hardscape surfacing, special amenities, and more. The selection of elements and materials that contribute to these points of emphasis should be factored into the design process, as appropriate. The DLA currently has a Maintenance Business Improvement District (BID) that provides landscape maintenance, daily trash removal, and sidewalk cleaning to ensure a clean, safe and inviting downtown. The DLA should study expansion of the Maintenance BID to the other block faces in Downtown, particularly as additional streetscape projects are implemented.

Details for O, M, and 11th Streets are illustrated and described in section 4.3 Catalyst Projects, and 13th, 16th and 17th Streets are discussed in more detail in section 4.4 Mobility Opportunities.

The skywalk system has been part of the streetscape and pedestrian environment since the 1970s. At this time some of the skywalk agreements are beginning to expire, and a plan is not in place to decide the future of the system. This plan recommends a further discussion with the public and private sectors in order to decide the future of the skywalk system.

ANATOMY OF A SAFE INTERSECTION (MAPS BELOW)

A. Curb extensions at intersections shorten crossing distances for pedestrians while also making them more visible to drivers. They also slow vehicle traffic movement around corners while providing room for additional street amenities.
B. Ensure ADA Accessible ramps at all crossings.
C. Create highly visible crosswalks at all crossings.
D. Sight triangles should remain clear of items that would obstruct views between drivers and pedestrians.
E. Bike lanes should be clearly marked and continue through the intersections.

Survey results and discussions held during the outreach efforts recommend making improvements to key intersections in Downtown. These improvements will create crossings safer for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The diagrams below illustrate key components of safe intersections as well as priority intersections recommended for improvements.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0– 18 months

1. Develop and adopt streetscape design standards for Downtown streets.
2. Expand the Downtown Maintenance Business Improvement District to additional block faces in Downtown.
3. Initiate a discussion and process regarding the future of the skywalk system.
4. Program improvements identified at prioritized intersections.

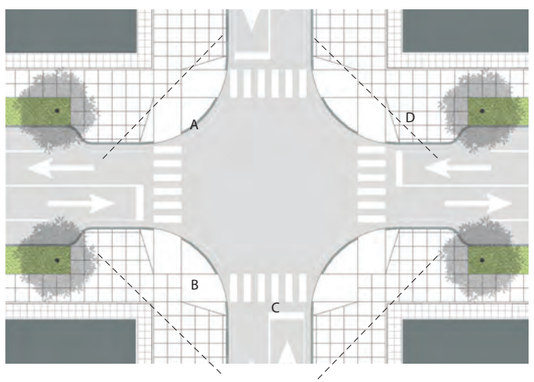
Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Incorporate a system of smart kiosks into the existing wayfinding system of related, attractive signs guiding and orienting motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians throughout the community, and obtain local artist collaboration on the design.
2. Continue intersection improvements at prioritized intersections throughout Downtown.

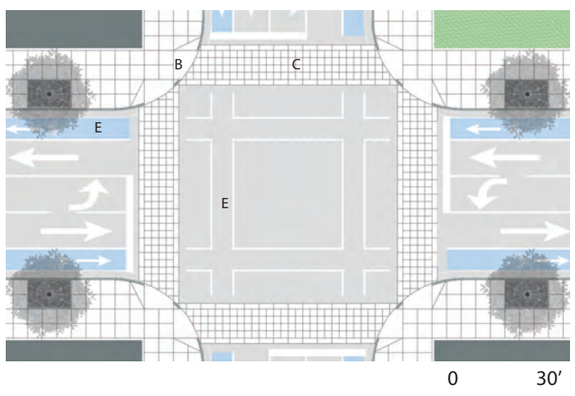
ENTYRYWAYS

Entryways provide an artistic and unique visual cue when entering Downtown. Downtown Lincoln contains a mix of development forms, characters and uses that is unmatched anywhere else in the community. As Downtown continues to grow and evolve, delineation of the Downtown will remain important. Entryways signal recognition of place and often include elements that identify the community's rich history.

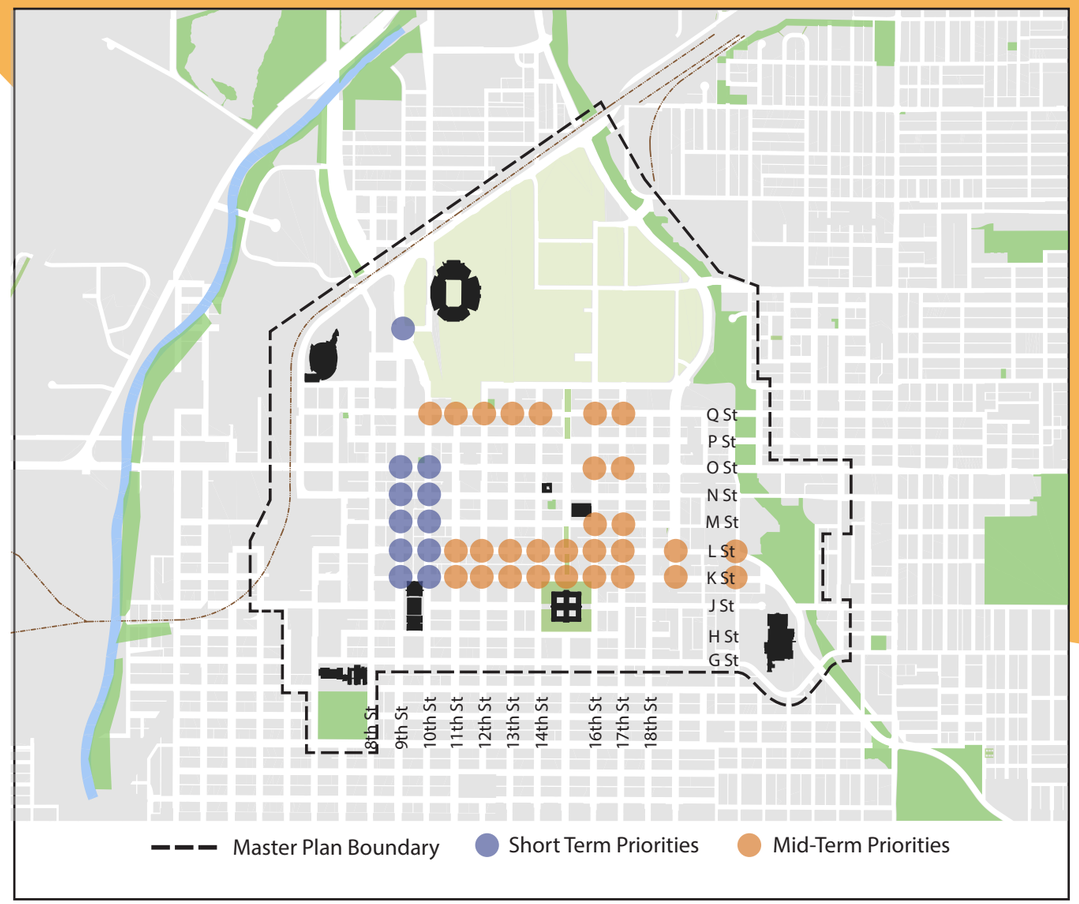
Safe Intersection 1



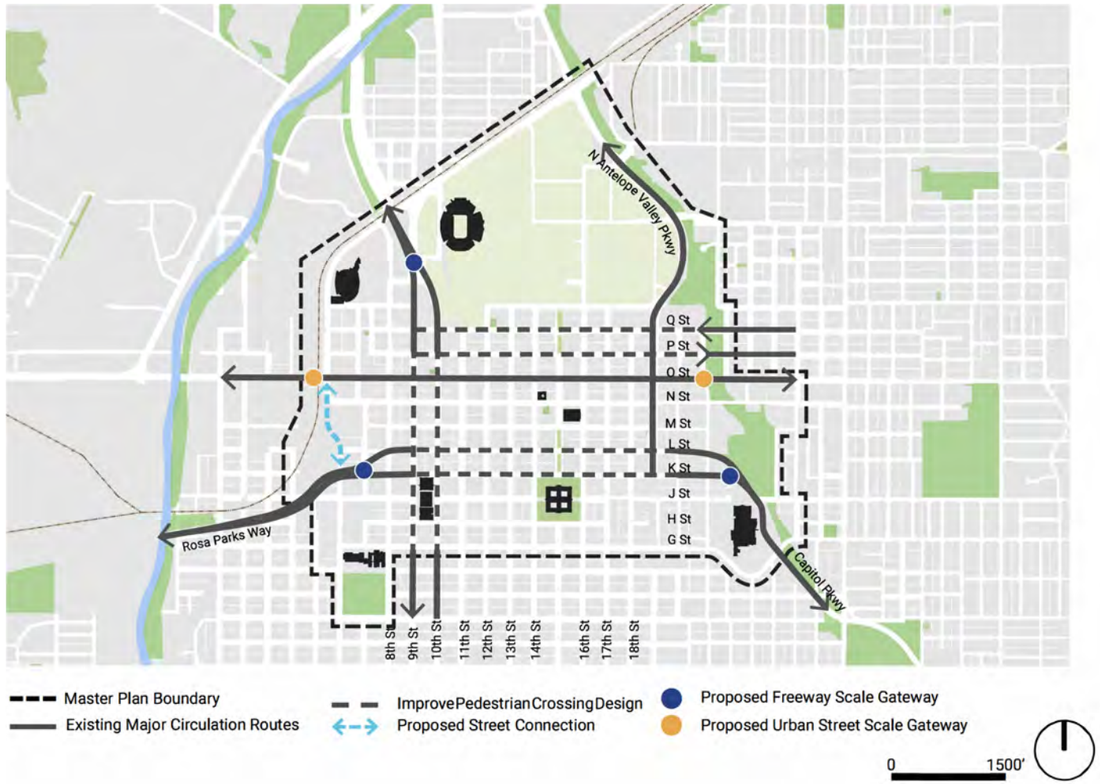
Safe Intersection 2



Priority Intersections



Entryway Map



In Lincoln, entryways could express themes such as indigenous roots, agriculture, UNL, the prairie, the railroad, and other locally relevant historical or cultural references. Entryways can act as an indicator of investment and change Downtown, reinforcing improvements to both the private and public realm. Potential entryway locations are illustrated above and include enhanced landscaping, public art, gateway arches and structures, and respectful development of adjacent properties. Design and implementation of entryway projects should also seek to integrate the talents of local artists with architects, landscape architects, and engineers.

Strategies and Action Items

Mid term 18 months– 5 years

1. Use redevelopment, urban design, and signage to identify major gateway corridors into Downtown. Potential entryway locations include:
   - 9th and R Streets where I-180 ends and the local street system begins – This location is ideal for an improved pedestrian crossing and a signature piece that identifies Downtown and assists to slow traffic through the area.

An Example of a Gateway Feature

An Example of a Gateway Feature

- West and East O Street – O Street is the primary connection through Downtown from the west and east. Downtown should be identified at both ends (9th and 21st Streets) and at several locations along this route to encourage people to stop and visit Downtown.
- Rosa Parks Way/K Street and 9th Street - There is an opportunity at this intersection to provide signature gateways as motorists enter Downtown from the west.

GREEN SPACE

Vibrant public spaces can be created in Downtown using existing parks, existing street right-of-way, and infill development sites. Enhancing Downtown's outdoor spaces is a way to create a more appealing place that will attract more people, activity, and new investment to capitalize on these amenities.

The Downtown Master Plan online survey revealed that people desire more green space in Downtown. Of the most desired new amenities that would make Downtown Lincoln a more attractive neighborhood to live in, Parks and Playgrounds were tied at second in the online survey. Overall there was a strong interest in making Downtown more family and pet-friendly by adding a variety of open spaces throughout Downtown.

Green space and amenities can be added in Downtown through capital projects, by activation of public open spaces, or by creating new City policy. Activation of Centennial Mall could be through programming of City events, casual recreation activities, or by holding private events with the approval of the Parks and Recreation Department. An example of new City policy would be for redevelopment projects to include public open space within their project area or contribute to a parks and open space fund for Downtown.

The overall strategy for adding green space in Downtown Lincoln includes developing a new West Park in South Haymarket, creating linear greenways along 11th and M Street, and incorporating smaller green spaces throughout Downtown as suggested in the Neighborhood Opportunity chapter.

A map of the proposed greenspace network can be found in Section 4.3.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0– 18 months

1. Prioritize the West Park and the 11th and M Streets Greenway projects and complete design work.
2. Expand programming on existing public spaces

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Implement the West Park and 11th and M Streets Greenway projects.
2. Analyze City policies and implement solutions to provide additional smaller-scale green spaces throughout Downtown.

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC WAYS & SPACES PLACEMAKING SKETCHBOOK

The City is currently developing a Placemaking Sketchbook. This document builds upon and further explores recommendations found in the Downtown Master Plan, including recommendations from Urban Design Opportunity, Catalyst Projects, and Arts & Culture Opportunity.

The Sketchbook will provide added definition to the design and programming qualities of identified public way and space projects, including:

- Analysis of the Streets Toolkit and how it may be applied in different character areas or subareas of Downtown. This would also explore plant palettes, gateways, and public art integration.
- Exploration of Catalyst projects including further refining the characteristics, design details, and programming considerations of each identified project.
- Exploration of underutilized public ways and spaces, targeting specific enhancement strategies such as the incorporation of public art, pedestrian-friendly amenities, and enhanced programming efforts.
- Exploration of other identified placemaking opportunities.

Additionally, the Sketchbook will attempt to tackle prioritization, coordination, and anticipated timelines for Downtown's public ways and spaces improvement projects.

FACADES & LIGHTING

Decorative lighting can add a dramatic effect to a streetscape's nighttime experience. Light can make people feel safe, encourage activity, beckon people to walk farther, add interest and whimsy, make food look appetizing, highlight a city's architecture, and add to the overall aesthetic of an area.

Decorative up-lighting and down-lighting, such as casting LED lights on facades or underpasses or projecting on to blank-wall canvases, should be considered as part of a streetscape program.

The City would benefit from a façade lighting program which allows projecting up-lighting or down-lighting fixtures on existing streetlight poles in limited areas of Downtown. Energy-efficient, LED lighting should be retrofitted wherever possible, with adjustments to lumens or filters when appropriate.

Unless unique fixtures are needed, standard fixtures should be used to allow for efficient and quick maintenance of products. Durable and reliable products should be used to reduce potential maintenance costs.

4.3 Mobility Opportunity

Goal

As the "center of opportunity" Downtown residents and visitors should have the opportunity to enjoy multiple travel choices that include driving, bicycling, walking, riding public transit, and ride hailing. Downtown should be accessible for drivers with vehicle parking available in well-marked parking structures, as well as convenient on-street parking spaces. There should be multiple low-speed and low traffic volume routes for bicyclists with ample, convenient bicycle parking near destinations, and the sidewalk network should be well-connected, well-maintained and comfortable for pedestrians. Once Downtown, it should be easy for people of all ages and abilities to move about.

Why It's Important

Automobiles have dominated the transportation system for the past 60 years, not only in Lincoln, but in most communities and downtowns throughout the United States. In the past several years a change has occurred from a focus on strictly moving automobiles to a multimodal network accommodating all modes of transportation including automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles and transit. Results of the community survey showed that most people (67%) experience Downtown Lincoln on foot.

As young professionals and empty nesters continue moving back to downtowns and urban areas they often look for alternative modes of transportation including walking and cycling. Cycling is becoming increasingly popular within communities and Lincoln benefits from a backbone bicycle network leading to the Downtown including the N Street Cycle Track (recommended in the 2005 Master Plan and 2012 Update), the Antelope Valley Billy Wolff Trail, Salt Creek Levee Trail, MoPac Trail, John Dietrich/Murdock Trail, and the Jamaica North Trail. Connections to these great Downtown amenities should be made to further enhance the Downtown bicycle and pedestrian system for commuting and recreation. In addition, the 2018 installation of BikeLNK bike share stations throughout Downtown has increased bicycle use in Downtown.

CONNECTIVITY AND SAFETY

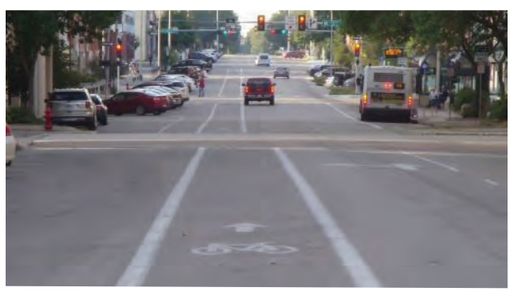
To expand its multimodal transportation system, Lincoln needs to focus on its existing assets: its street grid and public space systems. These elements provide the necessary foundation for a well-connected system for all modes to provide access throughout Downtown. A connected network starts with the street system that is in place. Downtown Lincoln benefits from the original platted grid network, mostly intact, that provides redundant connections and convenient access throughout Downtown and to the surrounding areas. The system also provides smaller, shorter blocks that are ideal for walking. While the street network is typically prioritized for automobile connections, the space adjacent to the roadway provides the pedestrian space necessary to encourage walking. The Lincoln grid has a generally consistent 300′ x 300′ block size and mostly 100′ wide rights-of-way that provide ample room for the creation of a multimodal network that enables drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders to connect between the Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

LincolnBikePlan
On-Street Bicycle Facilities Plan

LINCOLN BIKE PLAN

The Lincoln Bike Plan is a parallel planning effort to the Downtown Master Plan. The Lincoln Bike Plan identifies an on-street network that builds on the City's trail network and provides safe and low-stress bicycle commuting and recreational opportunities. Although the Lincoln Bike Plan is a community-wide document, special consideration was given to coordinate recommendations for facilities in Downtown with the Downtown Master Plan.

The on-street bike facilities in Downtown are anticipated to evolve over time as streets are converted from one-way to two-way, as the catalyst projects of the Downtown Master Plan are implemented, and as the bicycling demand in Downtown strengthens to support higher quality facilities. The following steps describe the proposed evolution facilities on 11th, 13th and 14th Streets in Downtown. Additional detail can be found in the Lincoln Bike Plan.



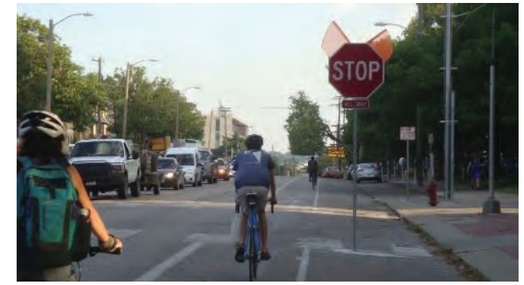
11th Street

Move the transition point of the bike lane on 11th Street from L Street to M Street and provide a clearly delineated conflict zone with green paint and corresponding signs to facilitate the transition of the bike lane from the east side of the street to the west side of the street.

When 11th Street is converted to two-way operation and/or when the 11th Street Greenway is constructed, the bike lane could be eliminated. At that point, 11th Street should be considered a bike route as the traffic volumes and speeds are anticipated to comfortably support shared lanes.

Convert 13th Street between K and O Streets to two-way operation, and add bike lanes (one in each direction) from J Street to R Street. Once this project is completed the bike lanes on 11th and 14th Streets could be eliminated. The ultimate recommendation on 13th Street is to upgrade the bike lanes to separated bike lanes, one in each direction, between the parking lane and the curb. Ideally the separated bike lanes would be in place before 11th and 14th Streets are converted to two-way operation.

Both the Downtown Master Plan and the Lincoln Bike Plan envision 16th and 17th Streets as biking corridors. Existing conditions for 16th and 17th Streets mostly include four directional traffic lanes with an occasional turn lane and parallel parking. 17th Street north of R Street has been vacated and sold to UNL. At the same time, 16th Street was converted to two-way traffic between Vine and Q Streets, and north/south bike lanes were added on each side of 16th Street north of R Street. The following steps describe the proposed evolution of bike facilities for these streets and reflect on how these corridors have recently changed.



16th Street

• Add buffered bike lanes on 16th and 17th Streets. Each street would include a one-way buffered bike lane between G Street and R Street.
• Upgrade 16th and 17th Streets to separated bike lanes when funding is available and when bicycle demand supports the project.
• If 16th and 17th Streets are converted to two-way operation, upgrade to separated bike lanes on 16th Street. Bicycle facilities are preferred on 16th Street as it provides a direct connection to the bike lanes north of R Street through the UNL campus.

Strategies And Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 Months

1. Continue to expand bike share in Downtown. (A Nebraska Environmental Trust grant has been submitted for Phase II funding.)
2. The DLA and Complete Streets Committee should partner with employers and property owners in Downtown to add more bike racks.
3. Address the transition of the bike lane on 11th Street.
4. Add bike lanes to 13th Street once it becomes two-way operation.
5. Add buffered bike lanes on 16th and 17th Streets.
6. Add signage to better direct traffic to parking garages during arena and Haymarket events.
7. Continue to improve key intersections throughout downtown, particularly on 9th and 10th streets to and from the Haymarket District, to include pedestrian bump outs, enhanced paving and/or street markings. This is further described in section 4.2 Urban Design Opportunities.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Enhance alleys to improve pedestrian connectivity and access to local businesses and major destinations. Enhancements could include upgrades to drainage, the installation of pavers, pedestrian-scale lighting, planters, signage, seating and art.
2. Construct bump outs at intersections throughout downtown where on-street parking exists.
3. Construct retractable bollards and advance variable message signing at key intersections within the Haymarket area to secure blocks with high-pedestrian activity during the Farmers Market, Pinnacle Bank Arena events, and other large gatherings.
4. Construct a slip-road on the north side of L Street between 8th Street and 9th Street to provide an alternate less congested route into the Haymarket area.

Long term 5 – 10 years

1. Upgrade 16th and 17th Streets to separated bike lanes when funding is available and the bicycle demand in Lincoln supports this project, or upgrade 16th Street to both northbound and southbound separated bike lanes, if 16th and 17th Streets convert to two-way operation.

COMPLETE THE LINC

The LINC (Linking Innovation, Neighborhoods and Campus) is envisioned as a multiuse path that stiches together the landmarks, schools, spaces and distinct neighborhoods that make up Downtown Lincoln. Prioritizing pedestrians and bicycles, the LINC creates a continuous, off-street multimodal path that allows residents to safely commute back-and-forth to their daily destinations, or provide locals and tourists with a user-friendly route to explore Downtown. Modeled after the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, the LINC should strive to celebrate the people and culture that make up each community.

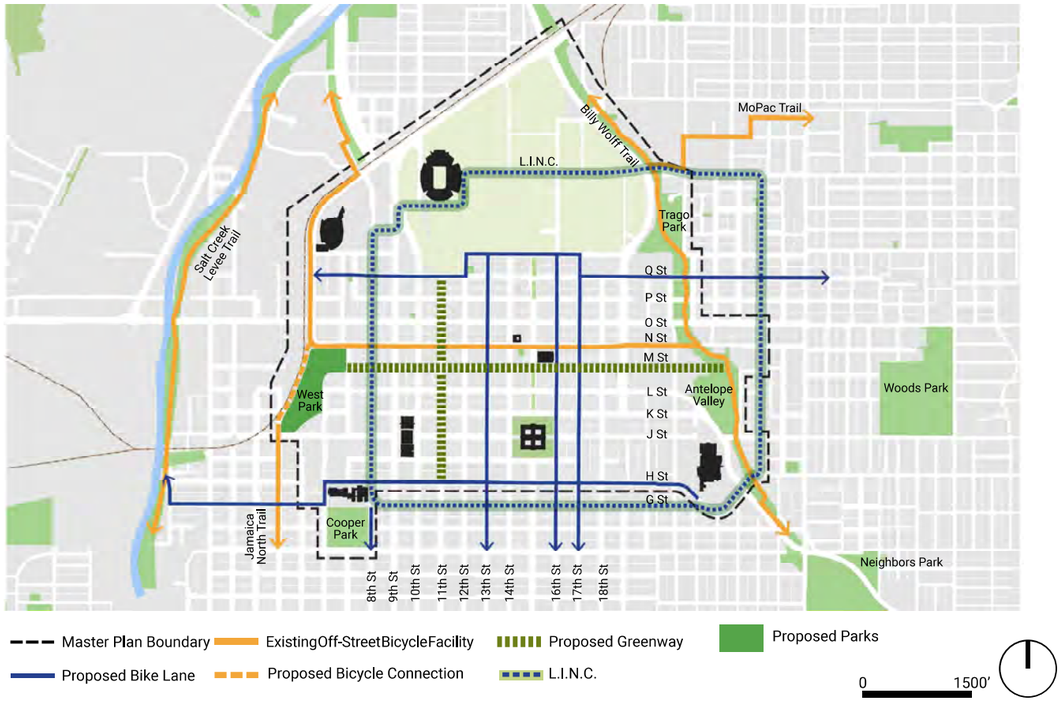
Several national studies have shown the many economic benefits of this type of facility, particularly for businesses and homes adjacent to the Indianapolis Cultural Trail.

Portions of the LINC can utilize existing trails, such as the Billy Wolff Trail in Antelope Valley. Providing wayfinding signage and perhaps some additional paving treatments at intersections and connections to the trail would make this existing trail part of the LINC.

Indianapolis Cultural Trail

Similarly, on the south side, G Street could be designed and incorporated as part of the LINC with similar treatments. On the west side of Downtown, the Jamaica North and Arena Drive trails could be the first phase to be designed and constructed, and a future phase could be the 8th Street bike route as noted in the On-Street Bicycle Facilities Plan. A connection should also be developed through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln flagship campus. Such a connection would link bicyclists and pedestrians to key destinations and should also connect to the potential Cultural District as discussed in the Arts & Culture Chapter.

Greenspace Network Map



StarTran

Strategies and Action Items

Short term (0 -18 months)

1. Work with DLA, businesses, neighborhood associations, State, and UNL to identify the best route and design for the LINC.
2. Prioritize the route sequencing based on the Lincoln Bike Plan recommendations and planned street and public improvements.

Mid term 18mos. – 5 years

1. Coordinate design and construction priorities to implement the LINC design.
2. Develop identification signage for the LINC including biking and walking distance and time markers for key destinations throughout Downtown.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public transit is critical to building a strong multimodal transportation system, consistent with the goals of this Plan. The 2005 Downtown Master Plan and 2012 Master Plan Update recommended building a streetcar circulator on P and Q streets. This concept was reevaluated in the 2012 Downtown Master Plan Update. The significant cost and route inflexibility of the streetcar suggests the Downtown Transit system would be better served in two ways:

- Enhancing the existing bus transit system by balancing geographic growth in demand with the economic need to safely and efficiently move residents, visitors and employees to and through commercial and entertainment districts, like Downtown Lincoln.
- Continuing to test the autonomous shuttle circulator. This type of circulator will have much more flexibility with the route, stop locations, and area of service in Downtown. It will also have the opportunity to connect many more Downtown destinations.

StarTran is greatly enhancing its bus service by introducing trolleys to its downtown circulator route. The trolleys offer a unique transportation service for Downtown patrons and visitors to Lincoln. The route currently serves all major employers, including State and City governments, the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Downtown Corporations, and several hospitality, restaurant and entertainment venues. The clean, quiet, CNG-fueled vehicles help ease congestion and promote air quality. For only a quarter per ride, they offer all the charm of service a century ago with all the modern conveniences and amenities of a modern bus, including bike racks and open air seating when the weather is nice. With only a 15-minute wait between buses on weekdays and a seven-minute wait between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. starting in December 2018, riders can quickly make it to lunch and back to work in one hour. Compared to a street car, the Trolleys allow route versatility at a lower capital cost. StarTran will continue to assess the demand for Star Shuttle service on Saturdays.

The autonomous shuttle will complement the existing Downtown transit service with a demand-responsive system, with the shuttles only operating and making stops if there is a direct request from a rider through a smartphone app or kiosk. The kiosks would be stand alone or combined with other bus route, parking, hotel, entertainment, and wayfinding information. Shuttles will travel in open traffic on Lincoln's Downtown streets along a predefined route, making pick-ups and drop-offs at predefined stops at a user's request.

Autonomous Shuttle

Vehicles typically can carry from 8-16 passengers, and travel at average speeds from 15-20 miles per hour. The final selected route is intended to serve the highest concentrations of people and attractions in Downtown. It is intended to be easy to use, easy to understand, and provide enough stops to be easily accessible.

The long-term goals of the project include:

- Easing traffic congestion and preserving air quality in response to a growing population.
- Providing safe and efficient transportation systems for Lincoln residents and visitors.
- Accommodating evolving rider needs and new technologies in StarTran's strategic plan.
- Attracting new businesses, residents and visitors to Lincoln and Nebraska.

StarTran is working to develop a multi-modal transportation facility in Downtown to replace the current operation on 11th Street adjacent to the Gold's Building. StarTran submitted a request for a federal BUILD grant for a new facility in the summer of 2018. As of the drafting of this plan, StarTran's funding award had not been announced. As part of the Downtown Master Plan process, several discussions took place regarding the new multi-modal transportation facility. The Master Plan recommends continued coordination with StarTran and other Downtown stakeholders when the project is awarded funding. The following points reflect the input received on this topic during the Downtown Master Plan process.

- Provide a connecting hub allowing flexibility for persons working, living, or coming downtown for entertainment to choose the most efficient and affordable travel mode for a particular trip
- Centrally locate the facility between downtown core, UNL, and Haymarket with convenient access to

Trolley

downtown access area destinations

- Provide an opportunity for mixed-use development or affordable housing
- Maintain strong access to bicycle system
- Include all modes – bike share, pedestrian access, autonomous and taxi vehicle drop off/pick up, etc.
- Include ground floor transit supportive uses – day care, coffee shop, bike repair shop, showers, bike lockers
- Locate buildings on the edge of the site oriented towards 'primary streets based upon existing neighboring context so that the site stitches into the community
- Incorporate traffic calming measures at transit center to facilitate safe and easy connections to adjacent uses/neighborhoods to make using transit easy and accessible – measures include curb extensions, improved pedestrian cross walks, improved crossing timing
- Locate autonomous shuttle stops on site or immediately adjacent to the transit facility
- Provide ticket and information counter/kiosk with explanatory maps and services related to StarTran and other alternative transportation options
- Consider open space component with potential dog relief/park area

The recommendations below are consistent with the 2015 Lincoln Transit Development Plan.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 Months

1. Coordinate with StarTran on final location and design elements of the multimodal transportation facility (as of the publication of this document the BUILD Grant has been submitted).
2. Improve existing high use transit stops to include shelters, route and schedule displays, benches, bike racks, and trash and recycling receptacles.
3. Launch the trolley on the Downtown circulator route.
4. Explore enhancements to existing StarTran service including increased frequencies, increased hours of service and more efficient route alignments as well as the potential for new circulator routes to serve Downtown.
5. Implement the autonomous shuttle to connect Downtown with UNL, the State Capitol, and the Haymarket.

An Example of a Bus Stop

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Explore additional parking opportunities outside of Downtown as park and rides for transit routes that serve Downtown. Similarly, opportunities should also be explored to utilize the bike share system for 'park and bike'.
2. Consider collocating the multimodal transit facility, such as with the future parking structure at 14th and M Streets.
3. Provide additional autonomous shuttles Downtown as funding becomes available.

PARKING

Through this process, parking was discussed frequently and was described by many as a distribution issue rather than a supply issue. In most of Downtown, parking supply is adequate, however, there are areas particularly in the southeast quadrant of Downtown and near the State Capitol that do have a supply issue. On-street parking should continue to be maximized wherever possible throughout Downtown.

A review of the public parking structures Downtown shows most of the facilities east of 10th Street at their practical capacity (90%). The three West Haymarket Joint Public Agency (JPA) facilities (Red, Blue, and Green), with a total of 2,600 spaces, have available capacity for 1,100 vehicles on a typical weekday. It is expected that these vacancies will be filled in the mid term as West Haymarket redevelopment is completed. Currently, those spaces are required and frequently filled on evenings and weekends with Pinnacle Bank arena events.

The available West Haymarket spaces could be shared in the short range with daytime users, primarily office employees, which have non-concurrent peaks with entertainment. However, they could not satisfy residential user demand that require a 24-hour, 7-day commitment. The City should explore strategies to offer spaces to daily users during non-concurrent peaks with entertainment.

The current greatest unmet demand for daytime parking is in the southeast part of Downtown Lincoln around the State Capitol and State Office Building, where the latest available information shows a 300-350 space waiting list for the state garages alone. The State is evaluating potential sites for additional employee and officials parking. The waiting list for state employee parking would likely be significantly lower if their rates were raised to the market rate elsewhere in Downtown. The State is constructing a surface lot on the block at 17th and K Streets along with subsurface geo-thermal wells. Footings are being installed to accommodate a future parking garage and offices on the block.

On September 10, 2018, The City Council approved resolutions to acquire land and structures at 14th & M Street for a new parking garage. A new garage at this location will add much needed parking to this area of Downtown. The new garage should include a mix of uses, similar to the Larson Building.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 Months

1. As an interim solution for State employees, consider ways to enhance parking by using shuttles between existing public and private parking structures and fringe parking lots for employees and visitors.
2. Work with employers on travel demand management programs and solutions that reduce parking demand, educate the parking public about alternatives to driving alone and provide greater options to businesses and employees.
3. Provide and manage easy-to-use and convenient bicycle parking that adequately accommodates existing and future demand.
4. Continue to explore ways to incorporate technology into the Downtown parking system such as using parking sensors, parking apps, and additional electronic vehicle infrastructure (i.e. autonomous shuttle parking and vehicle charging).

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Move forward with building the 900-space public parking structure and purchase the Eagle Parking garage at 1330 North N Street to renovate the existing 326 space. In addition, renovate the ground floor retail space where Eagle Printing is currently located with the goal of keeping them as a tenant.
2. Consider collocating the multimodal transit facility, such as with the future parking structure at 14th and M Streets.
3. Coordinate with the State on the construction and design of the future parking garage at 17th and K Streets.

ONE-WAY VS. TWO-WAY STREETS

Many of the streets in Downtown were converted from two-way streets to one-way streets beginning in the 1950s as a way to move vehicular traffic into and out of downtown as quickly as possible during the morning and evening peak hours. Many cities across the U.S. are now converting one-way streets back to the traditional two-way streets. Ample data exists that shows that two-way streets balance traffic flow, improve the pedestrian walking environment and typically reduce traffic speeds without reducing vehicular capacity.

Bicycle Parking

An Example of a Parking Structure

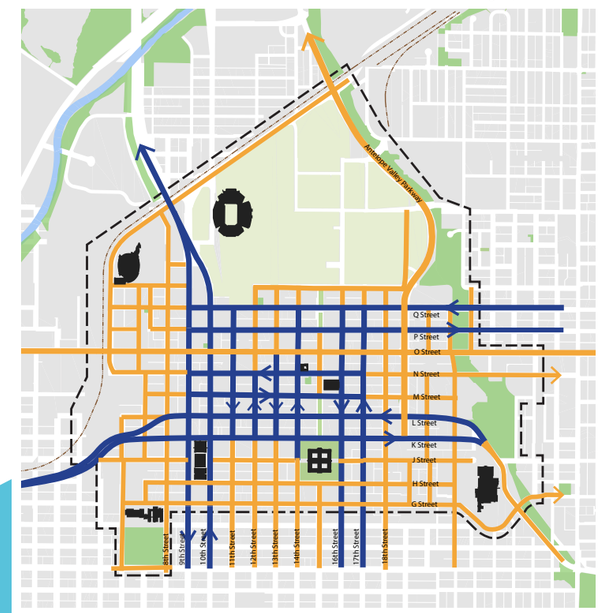
Two-way streets increase the economic benefit of the street due to better exposure and access of ground floor uses such as retail and commercial businesses, parking structures, and other land uses. They also provide a friendly walking environment for pedestrians. O Street is a good example of a successful two-way street in Downtown.

Many streets in Downtown are candidates for converting to two-way traffic operation capacity due to the existing and projected traffic volumes (less than 6,000 vehicles per day). These streets are expected to maintain favorable operations under two-way operation with one lane in each direction and left turn lanes at the signalized intersections. Other streets with 6,000-10,000 vehicles per day should also be evaluated for conversion to two-way traffic operations on a block by block basis, with due consideration for queuing between intersections, turning conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles, as well as ability to receive peak parking garage exit traffic.

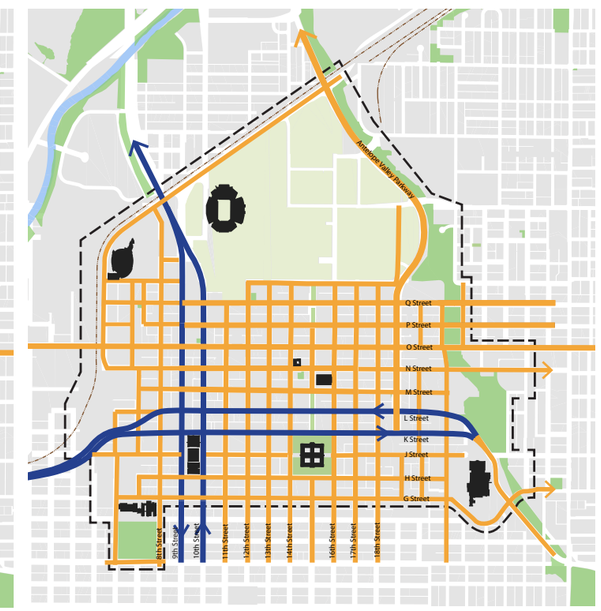
Some of these conversions can be accomplished through restriping without moving the curb and gutter, while longer term solutions involve moving the curb lines. A number of potential options exist for street conversions including sections with left-turn lanes at intersections, provisions for on-street bike lanes, separated bike lanes, and various on-street parking configurations. A sample of illustrations depicting options include:

1. One-lane in each direction with left turn lanes at intersections.
2. One-lane in each direction with bike lanes on both sides and left-turn pockets at intersections.
3. One-lane in each direction with protected bike lanes on each side.
4. One-lane in each direction with a raised cycle track on each side.

Existing Operations



Future Operations



One-Way Two-Way

The Downtown Master Plan proposes a phased approach to converting the streets to two-way traffic operations. This strategy is a multi-phased approach that would occur over time in order to make logical changes to the traffic patterns in Downtown. Any implementation would require a further, detailed traffic analysis to evaluate concepts and operational/safety considerations.

Several of the major Downtown streets that carry significant volumes (>10,000 vehicles per day) should remain one-way streets but may be candidates for a reduction of the number of lanes such as 9th, 10th, K and L Streets at specific locations. Currently 10th Street between L and N Streets has 6 vehicular lanes with on-street parking on the east side from L to M (except between 7-9 am and 4-6 pm). The sidewalk on the west side between M and N narrows to approximately 6 feet wide. A short term action item on 10th Street could include a demonstration project that restripes the west lane between L and M as parking. This recommendation should be carefully studied before making adjustments.

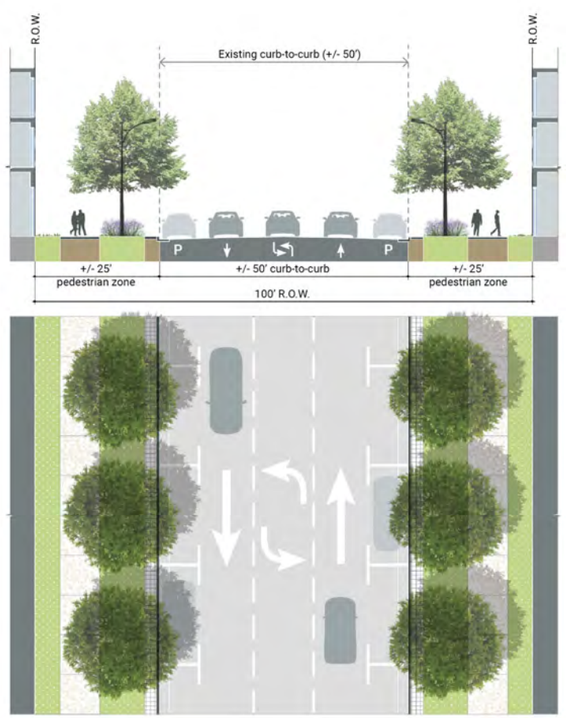
The Phasing for Converting the Streets to Two-Way

Near Term
13th Street from K to O Streets

Mid Term
11th, 12th, 14th, M and N Streets

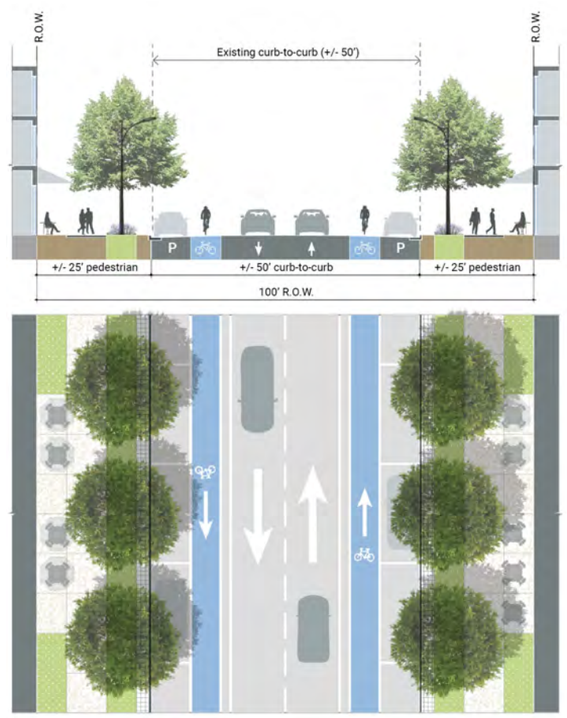
Long Term
P, Q, 16th and 17th Streets

**9th, 10th, K & L Remain one-way



Option 1

0 20'



Option 2

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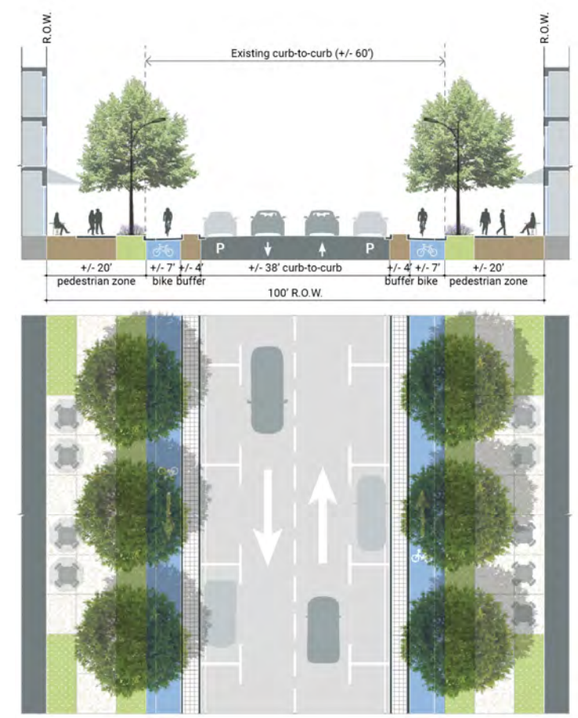

Option 3

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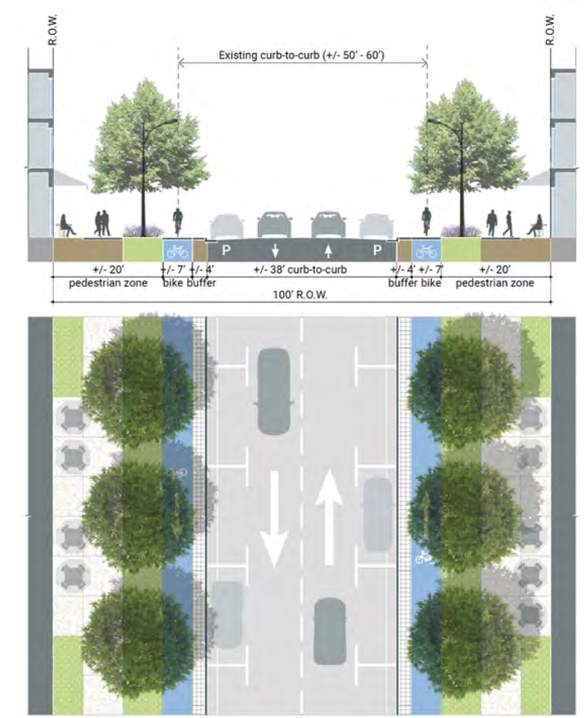

Option 4

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Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 Months

1. Complete a study of converting one-way streets to two-way throughout Downtown.
2. Solicit a request for proposal to design and complete the two-way conversion for 13th Street between O and K Streets.
3. Restripe the west travel lane of 10th Street as a parking lane between L and M Streets as a temporary demonstration project.

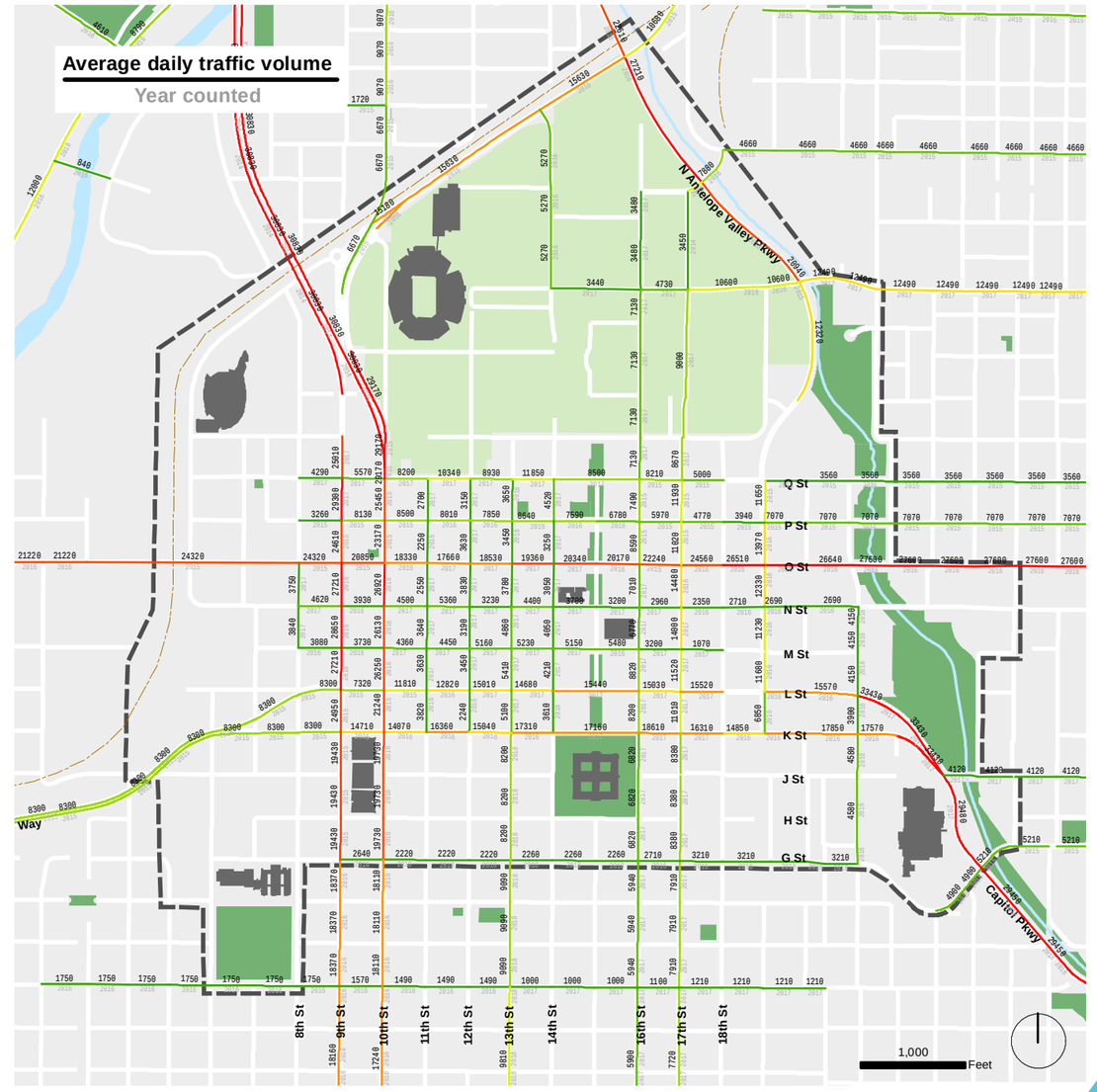
Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Implement Phase II of the street conversions: 11th, 12th, 14th, M and N Streets
2. If the 10th Street demonstration proves successful relocate the curb to provide on-street parking and pedestrian bump outs.

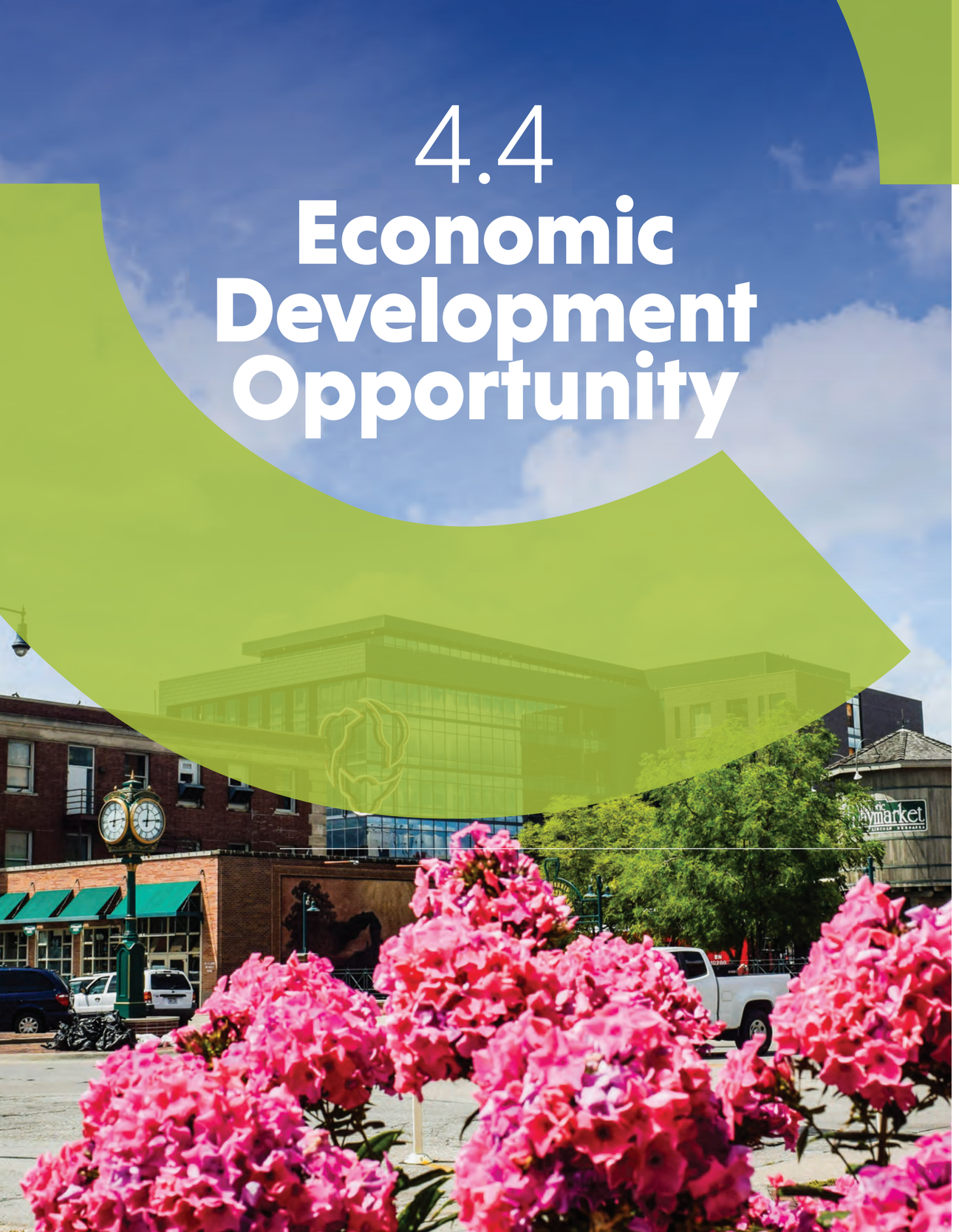
Long term 5– 10 years

1. Implement Phase III of the street conversions: 16th, 17th, P and Q Streets

10th Street



4.4 Economic Development Opportunity



Goal

Downtown is the economic center of Lincoln, with over 40,000 workers. Job growth is central to the long-term prosperity of Downtown, Lincoln, and the region. This plan aims to:

- Maintain Downtown as the economic engine and employment hub for the greater Lincoln region.
- Position Downtown as a center for innovation and entrepreneurship, while continuing to support the public sector and higher education as anchors of the Downtown economy.
- Establish stronger linkages between Downtown and the University.
- Improve Lincoln's ability to attract and retain talented workers by providing high-quality jobs in diverse fields and offering the amenities that appeal to a new generation of workers.
- Reinforce the City-County Comprehensive Plan by preserving Downtown's role as the center of all levels of government.

Why It's Important

Cities across the country are now competing to attract young skilled workers to fuel economic development and prosperity. Where skilled labor chooses to live is increasingly the key decision factor for business growth and relocation. High-growth companies have said they value a talented employee base as the most important business-related resource that cities can offer, outranking access to customers and suppliers, low tax rates, and business-friendly regulations. Talent attraction and retention has regularly been identified as a chief economic challenge for the Lincoln region. Downtown Lincoln can play a critical role in addressing this challenge and establish an edge in attracting this young skilled workforce that is predisposed to urban living and experiences.

Furthermore, a nascent trend finds increasing numbers of young professionals moving from top-tier "superstar" cities to smaller markets in search of affordable living and quality of life. If varied attractive jobs can be offered, Downtown Lincoln has the chance to capitalize on this trend as an "opportunity city."

Pershing Centennial

JOBS & OFFICE: PROTECTING THE FUNDAMENTALS

Downtown should not forget its long-standing strengths. The Downtown economy has been built on the success of the government, higher education, finance, and insurance sectors. Maintaining and supporting these fundamentals, as well as the variety of small businesses and services that support them, will remain important moving forward. Downtown continues to be the largest single concentration of office space and government services. Public sector employees add significantly to the number of employees in Downtown.

Per the Downtown Market Assessment's Development Forecast, Downtown should establish a goal to grow its workforce by 10% over the next ten years to ensure that Downtown remains the economic engine of the region. In accordance with this job growth, Downtown should aim to absorb at least 533,000 square feet of office space in both existing and new buildings over this same time period.

Assurity

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Work with existing Downtown businesses that are interested in relocation or expansion to ensure they are able to remain in Downtown.
2. Continue to coordinate the City's Economic Development efforts with the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development (LPED) and UNL.
3. Work with the State and UNL to develop a "Downtown First" policy that aims to keep and expand all levels of government in Downtown. The policy would require that government agencies provide an economic case statement or justification that compares the benefits of a Downtown versus non-Downtown location.
4. Partner with surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and youth organizations to expand summer work and internship programs in Downtown.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Explore strategies to attract Boomerangs back to Lincoln – those who leave for college or jobs but then return to their hometown as their lifestyle and priorities change. Partner with UNL's Alumni Office and the Lincoln Young Professionals Group to target and market to former students.
2. Partner with community colleges and workforce training agencies to create the best skill match to Downtown jobs.
3. Explore initiatives to support minority- and women-owned business development in Downtown.
4. Encourage a mix of uses near or within government facilities to create pedestrian traffic beyond regular business hours.
5. Work to develop additional housing opportunities and quality of life amenities as an attractor for potential Downtown employees.
6. Develop a strategy to encourage renovation of existing office space.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION: GROWTH IN THE MODERN ECONOMY

The technology and innovation sector drives economic growth in the modern economy. Downtown Lincoln has a burgeoning tech and innovation sector that exists primarily in the Haymarket. This ecosystem should be expanded by creating better linkages to UNL and its constant pipeline of talent, the Nebraska Innovation Campus, and Downtown's major corporations and investors. As startups and small businesses are successful and grow, a variety of flexible modern office spaces are needed throughout Downtown to ensure these success stories stay and flourish in Downtown.

Innovation Campus

Smart City technology includes a myriad of devices that communicate with each other to deliver a variety of different benefits – the range of scale and connectivity and complexity can vary greatly and lead to a variety of different outcomes.

Improved technology in downtown includes the concept of creating a "Smart City". Smart City technology includes a myriad of devices that communicate with each other to deliver a variety of different benefits – the range of scale and connectivity and complexity can vary greatly and lead to a variety of different outcomes. Smart City technology is not only what we see in the streets and buildings, but it is really the infrastructure that we do not see that is the glue that binds all this together. In some ways the quality and performance of the hidden infrastructure is more important than the individual buildings that it serves. In addition, the development of a Smart City is more than just incorporating technology into the physical landscape – the data collected is only useful if it's organized, analyzed and used in daily operations to make the City more resilient, sustainable and efficient. Additional details and principles for creating a Smart City can be found in the appendix.

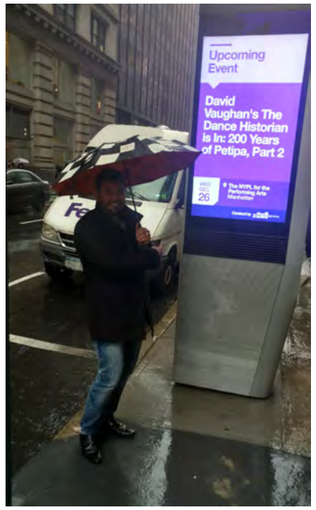
The City of Lincoln is undertaking a project to provide fiber optic-based infrastructure throughout the city. This network will provide faster broadband speeds, including 1-gigabit service to every home and business in Lincoln. Fiber is now connected to nearly all Downtown buildings.

The fiber investment in Downtown Lincoln can be used in many different ways, in addition to broadband internet service. Upcoming projects include a phased plan for public Wi-Fi and a research project involving real-time streaming of information with Lincoln Police Department, Lincoln Fire & Rescue, and UNL.

Additional uses for the fiber infrastructure include digital kiosks, monitor systems for public infrastructure (i.e. water, wastewater & stormwater), real-time parking applications, and air quality censors. The digital kiosks could include information such as wayfinding, advertising for Downtown activities and events, and could also be used to request a ride on the driverless shuttle. The design and placement of kiosks or other infrastructure in the right-of-way should be reviewed within the context of the overall streetscape design.

The City has also been working with private telecommunication companies to install small cell wireless facilities in Downtown. At this time, 23 facilities are installed with up to 200 total facilities anticipated over the next several years. Each small cell facility provides enhanced service for mobile devices and also includes a public attachment port that can provide a connection for public equipment such as cameras, Wi-Fi, or weather censors. These public attachment ports provide additional opportunities to connect Downtown as a Smart City.

The City of Lincoln does not have an overall plan on how this key infrastructure should be used. An important first step should be to engage City staff and stakeholders to begin developing a plan to build up Downtown as a Smart City. Potential funding for projects include the Smart City Challenge Grant, the National Science Foundation, and other federal grant programs.



LinkNYC Kiosk

Allo

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Encourage existing property owners to modernize Class B and C space into flexible, open format work spaces by providing examples and best practices of successful conversions in other cities.
2. Maintain an inventory of available below-market-rate spaces throughout Downtown for growing startups and small businesses to expand into. Use the inventory to encourage property owners to fill gaps along the continuum of office space needs for growing businesses.
3. Establish social activities and events for Downtown workers to support talent retention and recruitment.
4. Draft a technology master plan for use of the fiber infrastructure Downtown.

Fuse Coworking Space

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Expand new non-traditional office formats such as co-working spaces, incubators, accelerators, and maker spaces.
2. Target companies in the technology and creative fields, or with a substantial young workforce for Downtown relocation or expansion.
3. Utilize the fiber infrastructure for technology applications in Downtown such as wireless research, vehicle to infrastructure components, and smart cities applications. These applications should also consider the needs of businesses and entrepreneurs of all sizes.
4. Encourage better physical and economic connections between the Haymarket, UNL, the Nebraska Innovation Campus, major tech employers, and co-working spaces. An example is to use a shuttle circulator to connect these destinations as well as provide easy connectivity during startup events and competitions (i.e. The Inside/Outside Innovation Summit).

LINKAGES WITH UNL

The University of Nebraska is providing a continuous pipeline of young skilled talent that can fuel the regional economy. Stronger relationships between Downtown and UNL can create an enhanced sense of pride for the community, engage young people in Downtown, and provide a reason for graduates to remain in Lincoln.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Encourage collaboration between Downtown business leaders and UNL to create a local pipeline for job opportunities thereby capturing university-trained talent and helping UNL in its overall recruitment of students, faculty, and staff.
2. Work with UNL and Southeast Community College to establish a range of internships, externships, and co-ops in targeted growth sectors in Downtown such as technology and innovation.

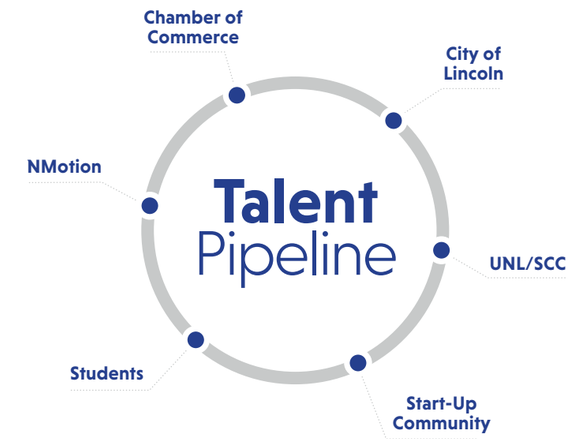
Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Continue to encourage economic and physical linkages between Downtown and UNL.
2. Ensure that UNL is a partner in a downtown-wide innovation sector strategy that includes creating better linkages between UNL, the Nebraska Innovation Campus, the Haymarket, and corporations through a shuttle circulator, startup events and competitions.
3. Integrate UNL curriculum and facilities into new Downtown Music District.

LINKAGES WITH THE STATE

The State completed a Comprehensive Capital Facilities Plan in 2018 that provides a vision for development of the Capitol Campus over the next 20 years. The Plan identifies key issues that need to be addressed including office space needs, parking needs, and an aging staff.

> **"Consolidating space, moving agencies and employees closer to the Capitol and providing a more attractive work place would make the Capitol Campus more vibrant and help with recruiting new staff to take the places of retiring State employees and retaining existing staff."**
> *- State Comprehensive Capital Facilities Plan*



According to the State's Plan, over the next 5 years approximately 60 percent of state employees will be entering or will already be at retirement age. As the State begins to implement recommendations in the plan, key Downtown stakeholders should be involved to coordinate the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan.

Linkages should also be developed with State agencies to assist with implementation of the Downtown Master Plan. For example, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development offers several resources for businesses and housing.

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Coordinate with the State as the recommendations of the Capital Campus Master Plan are implemented.
2. Establish linkages with State agencies.

RETAIL, DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

In a changing retail environment, Downtown Lincoln can capitalize on national preferences for brick-and-mortar stores that offer one-of-a-kind products and experiences. The food and drink sector will continue to anchor the retail environment, and Downtown should ensure it serves not just college students but also professionals and residents as market-rate housing grows in Downtown. Entertainment is anchored by the Pinnacle Bank Arena and surrounding venues in West Haymarket, the Lincoln Grand Movie Theater, and various athletic facilities. The proposed Music District will further celebrate the live music scene in venues found in the heart of Downtown, as further described in Catalyst Projects.

Retail was a key component of the 2005 plan and 2012 update. This plan reaffirms this with some modifications:

1. Dining and entertainment are viewed as part of the overall retail experience;
2. The proposed music district is viewed as strengthening the retail vision of the 2005 and 2012 plans; and,
3. The O Street improvements identified in this plan should strengthen and extend the retail, dining and entertainment segments.

The retail segment in Downtown is dominated by food and drink establishments now more than ever. This segment encompasses 68% of the retail businesses

Food Trucks

in Downtown. Future opportunities will likely include food and drink establishments as well as a continuation of unique and local-independent concepts. The 11th Street corridor between K and M Streets has been evolving recently. This organic evolution is supported and encouraged. The 11th Street Greenway described in Catalyst Projects will provide a unique amenity for these businesses.

A full-service grocery store is by far the most desired new amenity for Downtown amongst stakeholders. The recently opened Canopy Street Market contains approximately 8,000 square feet. While this grocery intends to serve residents throughout Downtown, it is located on the western edge of Downtown. Given the footprint of Downtown Lincoln and as additional residential units are constructed, a second small or mid-sized (8,000 to 15,000 square feet) grocery store located to serve the eastern portion of Downtown and its surroundings remains a possibility. Several smaller specialty markets exist in and adjacent to Downtown and should also be supported.

Canopy Street Market

Food trucks have been discussed for Downtown as a way to activate spaces and offer additional food options. Food trucks could be regularly programmed on closed City streets for events such as "Food Truck Fridays". Also, the current food truck ordinance should be revised to allow for more flexibility in allowing food trucks.

Overall, Downtown should aim to absorb approximately 150,000 square feet of retail space in both existing and new buildings over the next ten years, per the Downtown Market Assessment's Development Forecast.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Focus retail recruitment efforts on resident-serving amenities, such as grocery stores and markets, hardware stores, pet stores, and pharmacies.
2. Develop new and support existing "Shop Local" promotions that encourage Lincolnites to spend dollars locally in Downtown. An existing example of this is the DLA's Shop the Blocks event.
3. Develop a program to allow food trucks on public streets in Downtown. Review the existing food truck ordinance and create a permit system to allow food trucks (and if desired, other mobile retailing trucks) to occupy public parking spaces throughout downtown, particularly along and adjacent to Centennial Mall.

Retail Corridors

Shop the Blocks

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Continue to focus retail efforts, including other active uses, on 14th Street, P Street, and the O Street Corridor.
2. Encourage a well-balanced mix of restaurant and retail with offerings for both professionals and college students.
3. Encourage small-format and unique spaces for retail that allow for shared use, pop-up shops, retail incubators, and other experiential retail.
4. Pursue an incremental strategy to attract grocery retailers to Downtown, focusing on small-format stores.
5. Consider advancing a public market that can address the need for fresh food year-round and showcase Lincoln's agricultural heritage.
6. Reuse or redevelop vacant or underutilized spaces as opportunities arise

Hospitality & Convention Space Locations

HOSPITALITY & CONVENTION SPACE

Downtown is the premier location in the region for visitors to stay, shop, dine, and enjoy entertainment, and should be marketed as such. Although there is currently no dedicated convention center, Downtown has a strong collection of event and meeting spaces spread across hotels, the UNL campus, and Pinnacle Bank Arena. These spaces and Downtown's amenities should be leveraged collectively to attract additional regional conferences, meetings, and events, to further develop the visitor market.

Downtown's hotel market is soft with occupancies averaging 66%. With just under 1,200 hotel rooms, Downtown already has a higher than average number of hotel rooms as compared to peer cities. Short-term opportunities for hotels include small, boutique additions to the market. One example of this is the Kindler Hotel, with 45 rooms in a high-end boutique setting. Mid-term opportunities are dependent on the growth of Downtown employees, residents, and attractions.

While not a near-term opportunity, the Downtown Market Assessment's Development Forecast suggests that growth in the residential and office sectors will elevate the demand in the hospitality and convention sector over time. Initial analysis of convention center fundamentals in Lincoln suggests that approximately 150,000 square feet of space would be appropriate to attract additional regional events. However, Lincoln's upside in the convention market is limited in part by its close proximity to Omaha which has much stronger fundamentals (such as population and air service) and an existing convention center.

Although the 2005 Downtown Master Plan recommended a Convention Center be developed on the Post Office site, the 2018 Plan does not suggest a specific location. Before any decisions are made, it is imperative that Lincoln conduct an in-depth feasibility analysis, including an analysis on location. If the Post Office site redevelops in the future, a mix of uses is encouraged including commercial, residential, open space, and other uses that create synergy with the Pinnacle Bank Arena and surrounding development.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Work with the Chamber and Convention & Visitors Bureau to develop strategies to attract regional conferences utilizing existing meeting spaces.
2. When additional hotels are proposed and request TIF assistance, the City should require a market study as part of the application from the developer.
3. Continue and expand marketing Downtown as the premier location in the region for visitors to stay, shop, dine, and enjoy entertainment.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Better utilize and leverage Downtown's supply of meeting space in hotels, Pinnacle Bank Arena, and on the UNL campus.
2. Conduct a comprehensive feasibility analysis of Downtown's meeting space and convention center needs.

Kindler Hotel

4.5 Arts & Culture Opportunity

Goal

Continue to strengthen Downtown's position as the center for arts and cultural expression within the region. By continuing to ensure a diversity of art and cultural offerings and venues, Downtown will create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

Why It's Important

Arts and culture provide a differential advantage for Downtown by creating the place where local creativity thrives. Arts and culture support economic development in a variety of ways, not just in ticket sales, but also in spending money at local businesses before and after art and music events, as well as purchasing local art. These events can have a positive impact on other Downtown sectors and can be a cultural draw for potential students as well as a way to attract young professionals to Lincoln.

A public/private supported creative arts scene can also retain talent for a wide variety of sectors, as many artists and musicians also work in other fields such as business, healthcare, retail, and education, to name a few. Arts and culture also can provide an important common ground for bringing diverse populations together as well as providing family friendly events for all ages.

Downtown 101 Event

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The live music component of Arts & Entertainment is one of the six catalyst project recommendations described in the Catalyst Projects section. This section focuses on other aspects of arts and entertainment.

Lincoln already has an impressive collection of arts and cultural institutions that add to its authenticity and distinctiveness as a destination. The University of Nebraska has multiple arts and cultural institutions on campus including the Sheldon Museum of Art, Lied Center, Great Plains Art Museum, and other facilities. Downtown also has a wide variety of art galleries and smaller performance venues. Designating a geographic area as a Cultural District would further recognize and promote the concentration of cultural facilities, activities, and assets. The Cultural District in Pittsburgh, PA may serve as a good example for a similar district in Downtown Lincoln.

Since many cultural institutions in Downtown are on the University of Nebraska campus, further development of a Cultural District should be coordinated with the future UNL Master Plan. Important connections should be made between the Cultural District and Downtown Lincoln, such as integrating the proposed L.I.N.C. multi-use path. Promoting arts and culture can help to redefine an area's identity and further boost its appeal. Whether through performance or visual arts, or celebrating heritage and history, programming activity in public spaces enlivens Downtown by offering experiential and memorable attractions for both local residents and out-of-town visitors, including families.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Collaborate with local arts groups to promote, increase, and enhance creative, multi-cultural, and arts programming in Downtown.

Park(ing) Day Event

2. Compile a full inventory of special arts events currently taking place in and around Downtown Lincoln. Utilize this information to explore opportunities for the City, DLA, Chamber of Commerce, non-profits, arts organizations and special event organizers to collaborate and combine efforts to maintain consistent activation in Downtown.
3. Explore opportunities to incentivize additional innovative art and multi-cultural events in public and private spaces throughout Downtown (e.g. provide barricades/temporary bollards, partner to promote events such as Park(ing) Day).
4. Work with the Lincoln Arts Council to bring the Southpointe Mall Art Fair Downtown and locate it in spaces that activate Downtown such as Tower Square, P Street or Centennial Mall.
5. Explore options to bring UNL programming and events into the Downtown core.
6. Work with existing University and Downtown arts and cultural institutions to identify a champion to coordinate development of a Cultural District. Development of a Cultural District should be included as an element of the future UNL Master Plan.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Encourage, promote, and assist art and cultural retailers to locate in Downtown. Financial assistance may include incentives or short-term, low-interest loans.
2. Promote live-work space for artists as well as temporary art residency programs.
3. Evaluate whether publicly-owned buildings in Downtown could support additional arts or cultural organizations.

PUBLIC ART

Downtown is the region's center for culture and arts and should be enhanced by promoting arts, culture, heritage, history and preservation. Promoting arts and culture can help to redefine an area's identity and further boost its appeal. Whether through performance or visual arts, or celebrating heritage history, programming activity in public spaces enlivens Downtown by offering experiential and memorable attractions for both local residents and out of town visitors.

The 2005 Master Plan supported the Lincoln Arts Council 12th Street Corridor Plan to create "a signature street that promotes a public art, cinema and performance arts identity in downtown". This plan supports the notion of a designated arts corridor and also encourages public art opportunities throughout Downtown.

"Ascent" in Tower Square

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

1. Develop a plan to better use public spaces, such at Tower Square and Centennial Mall, (parks, streets, alleys) to support arts and culture related uses.

Gallery Alley Mural

2. Continue to encourage public art that is playful, fun for all ages, promotes social interaction, multifunctional, multicultural, and engaging.

Chamber of Commerce Seasonal Signs

3. Explore ideas and locations to improve underutilized spaces with public art such as on blank walls, in alleys, underpasses, and on parking structures. This could be in the form of projection art, lighting, murals, and other types of installations. Treatments should be selected with the goal of using experimental placemaking to activate the spaces including scrim, decorative panels and lighting.
4. Continue to program The Cube as a digital art display and encourage outreach to surrounding high school and UNL arts programs for content.

Projection Mapping Image

5. Clarify responsibilities of the required maintenance for public art pieces that were in place prior to the current permitting process.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Showcase the creativity and culture of Lincoln through public art, signage, banners, and other visible elements.
2. Explore ways to collaborate with resident and arts groups in surrounding neighborhoods to develop public art.
3. When creating new streetscape improvements, particularly on 11th, M and O Streets, provide locations to display public art. Work with Public Art Lincoln group to identify a public arts corridor.
4. Create an incentive program for public artworks on private property.
5. Engage the local arts community during the design process for capital improvement projects by including them as members of the design teams.

An Example of a Festival Street

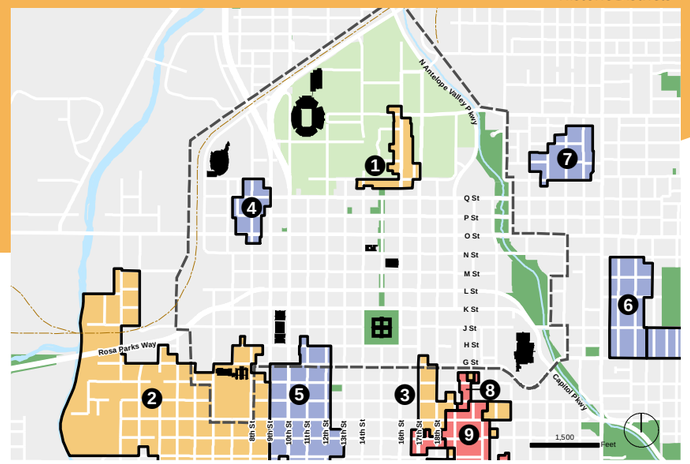
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

To a large extent, historic character and properties define Downtown. These historic properties are one of the elements than make Downtown unique from the rest of the community. The State Capitol Environs and the Haymarket Landmark District are the two most significant and visited historic districts in Downtown. The Capitol Environs has significant regulations to maintain the importance of the Capitol. When successful, historic preservation makes a community more enjoyable for residents, more attractive to visitors, and more competitive in drawing new businesses and retaining existing ones.

Several additional Historic Districts exist within Downtown that should remain in place and continue to be managed by the City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Commission.

Old City Hall

Historic Districts



National Register
1: Greek Row Historic Dist
2: South Bottoms Historic Dist
3: Mt Emerald/Capitol Historic Dist

Local Landmark
4: Haymarket Landmark Dist
5: Everett Historic Dist
6: E Lincoln/Elm Park Historic Dist
7: Hawley Landmark Dist

Local Lmrk / National Reg
8: Clark Leonard Historic Dist
9: Capitol Additon Historic Dist

Properties located within National Register Districts are eligible for tax incentives for qualifying improvements. These projects do not require review by the Historic Preservation Commission. Two National Register Districts within the Downtown Master Plan Study Area are:

- Greek Row
- South Bottoms

Alterations to properties located within Landmark Districts require review by the Historic Preservation Commission. Five Local Landmark Districts within the Downtown Master Plan Study Area are:

- Mt. Emerald
- Capitol Addition
- Everett
- Clark-Leonard
- Haymarket

Throughout Downtown within and outside of these districts, there are many historic buildings, some that have been well preserved, and others have been refaced over the last several decades with non-historic façade treatments. Many historic buildings present a design challenge as they age due to the number of additions over the years.

K Street Building

Adaptive reuse of older existing buildings is typically the most sustainable approach to accommodating changing purposes and functions of Downtown properties. Adaptive reuse can restore an old building not only for the new use, but also for the community to continue appreciating the building's historical significance and maintaining links to the past.

Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 – 18 months

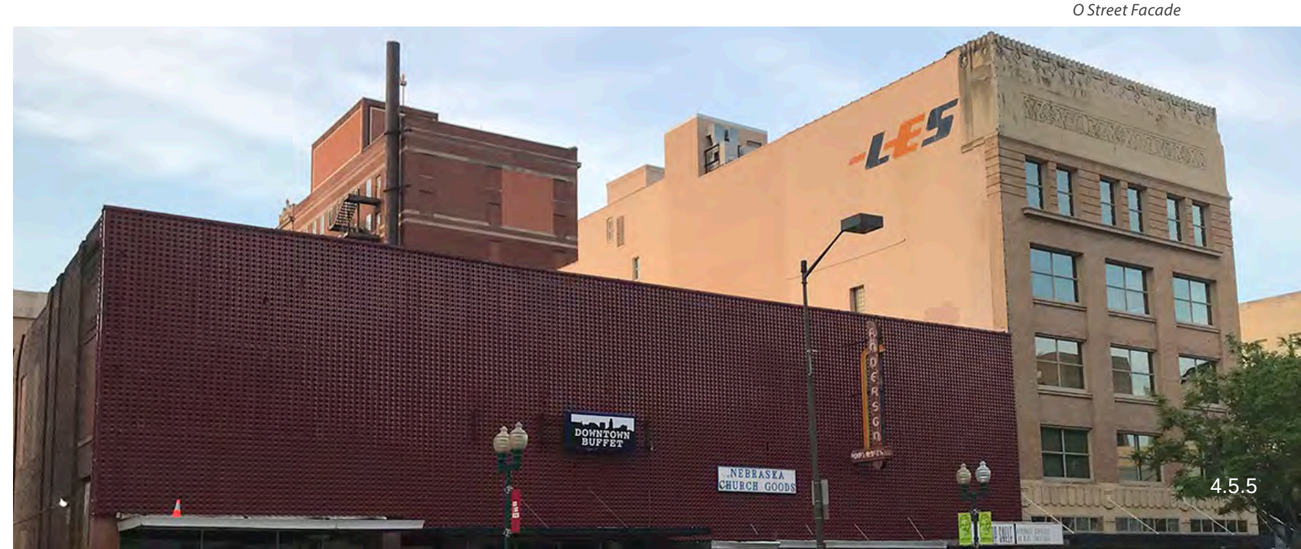
1. Create an O Street Redevelopment District as a funding mechanism for improvements.
2. Respect historic properties and encourage reuse instead of demolition, wherever possible.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Develop, fund, and implement an O Street façade rehabilitation program for exterior building improvements.
2. Provide and promote funding mechanisms for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures through available national, state, and local sources.
3. As proposed in the 2005 Downtown Plan and the South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan, continue to work with the Public Building Commission to relocate records storage and rehabilitate the K Street Power Station into a residential building.
4. Work with owners of the Gold's Building, the Terminal Building, the LES Building to rehabilitate the buildings into mixed use office and/or residential.
5. Provide appropriate maintenance to historic buildings, such as Old City Hall, to sustain their useful life.

Gold's Building

O Street Facade



4.6 Catalyst Projects

Goal

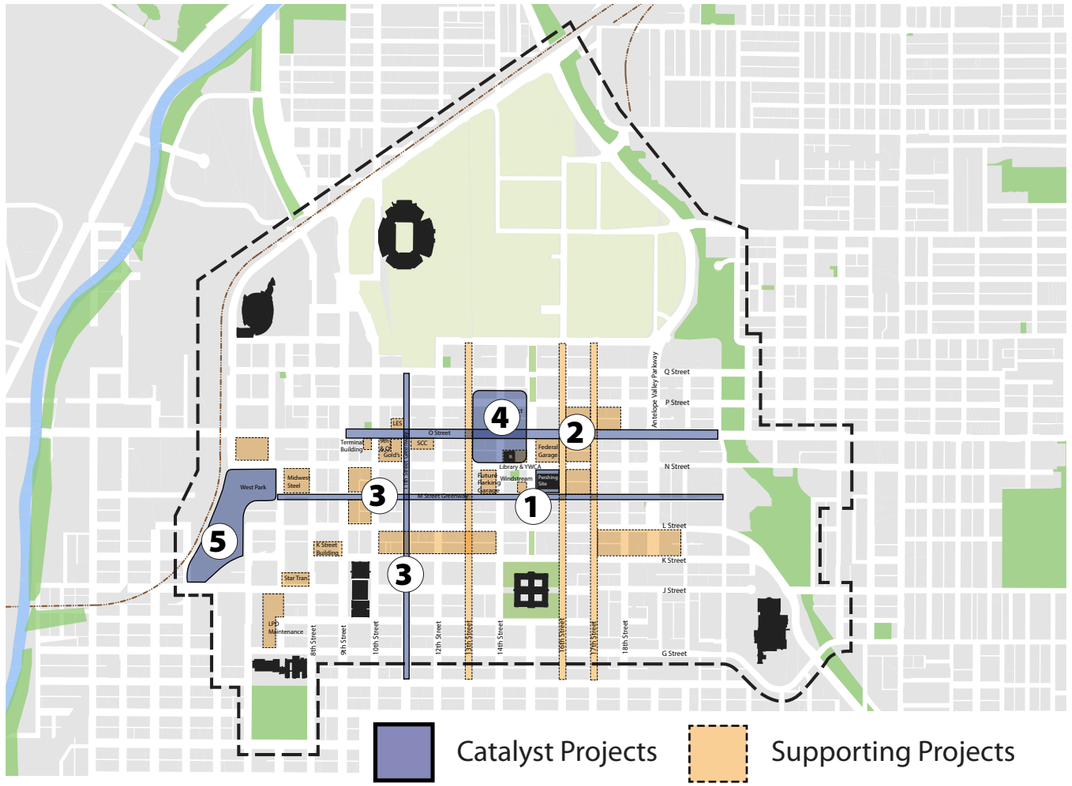
The major goal of the proposed catalyst projects is to support Downtown as the "center of opportunity". These catalysts involve investment in public spaces that will catalyze surrounding development and private investment. As described in Chapter 3, extensive community input guided the formation and selection of these projects.

Outdoor Seating on Centennial Mall

Centennial Mall Fountains

Why It's Important

The following six sites, corridors, and/or areas have opportunities to become activity centers and cultural destinations for people that can catalyze redevelopment, stimulate economic growth, and enhance cultural amenities. Many of these sites are either vacant properties, underutilized existing buildings, surface parking lots, and publicly owned right-of-ways or properties.



Catalyst Projects

1. Create a Community Commons
2. Enhance the Front Door to Downtown
3. Create Greenways that Connect Districts & Neighborhoods
4. Celebrate the Local Music Scene
5. Create a Signature Urban Park
6. Complete Projects from the 2005 Downtown Master Plan

SUPPORTING PROJECTS

Southeast Community College
Gold's Building
Post Office
YMCA
Midwest Steel
Multi-Modal Transportation Facility
K Street Building
LPD Maintenance Facility
Federal Parking Garage
13th, 16th, & 17th Streets
LES Office Building
Various Blocks along K & L Streets
9th & O Site
14th & N Future Parking Garage

Create a Community Commons

The intent of this project is to capitalize on the opportunity to reinvigorate Downtown through public investment based upon principals of placemaking. The City of Lincoln has a tremendous opportunity to not only improve one entire City block, but to also ignite the spark that catalyzes investment in the center of Downtown. Creating a center for people, families, and social and cultural connections will energize the N Street corridor and bridge central Downtown with the Telegraph District, creating new opportunities for residential redevelopment.

The Pershing Center, the Federal parking garage, and the blocks that surround them have the potential to become a thriving active area that will contribute to revitalizing the Capital Core. Consideration should be given to relocating or reconfiguring the existing Federal parking garage to activate Centennial Mall and O Street.

There has been much interest by the community to redevelop the Pershing Center site. As of the writing of this plan, the City has reissued an Invitation For Redevelopment Proposals (IFRP) to solicit prospective projects from the development community for private, public, or mixed-use redevelopment.

The following pages illustrate five conceptual ideas that include a combination a new civic and private uses. There has been ongoing interest to construct a 21st Century library in Downtown, specifically on this block. In addition to a new library, additional civic uses could include a community center, new Southeast Community College, new parking structure, and public park space. The private uses could include residential, office, and retail.

Design of all improvements within the Capitol Environs District, including the Pershing Center or the Federal parking structure sites, require additional review and consultation. The following design principles should guide any redevelopment of this catalyst project.

PERSHING BLOCK DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- As a prominent site in the Capitol Environs District, design of all improvements on the Pershing block is subject to the approval of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission. Early consultation with the Commission will facilitate its approval.
- The zoned maximum building height for the Pershing block is 57 feet, excluding necessary and well-screened mechanical appurtenances.
- The Capitol Environs Design Standards provide guidance on the community's high expectations and the Commission's requirements regarding materials, permanence, and design quality.
- Redevelopment of the block should recognize and take advantage of its placement on Centennial Mall through its entrance features, forecourts, fenestration, or other design elements.
- All sides of the block are important pedestrian routes, so minimizing vehicular conflicts is essential. All necessary vehicular access should be off 16th Street or M Street.
- The Pershing block may develop with one or more principal structures, but should be conceived as a unified design concept including any open space which must in materials, design, and maintenance incorporate the same superior quality as the architecture.

Pershing Center

Option A

The Pershing Block is shown as redeveloped with a civic use and a public park. The civic use could include the new library, Southeast Community College, or other public use. The public park would occupy the east half of the block and would catalyze redevelopment on blocks to the east. The existing Federal parking garage is shown relocated with a mix of residential and active uses on the existing site.

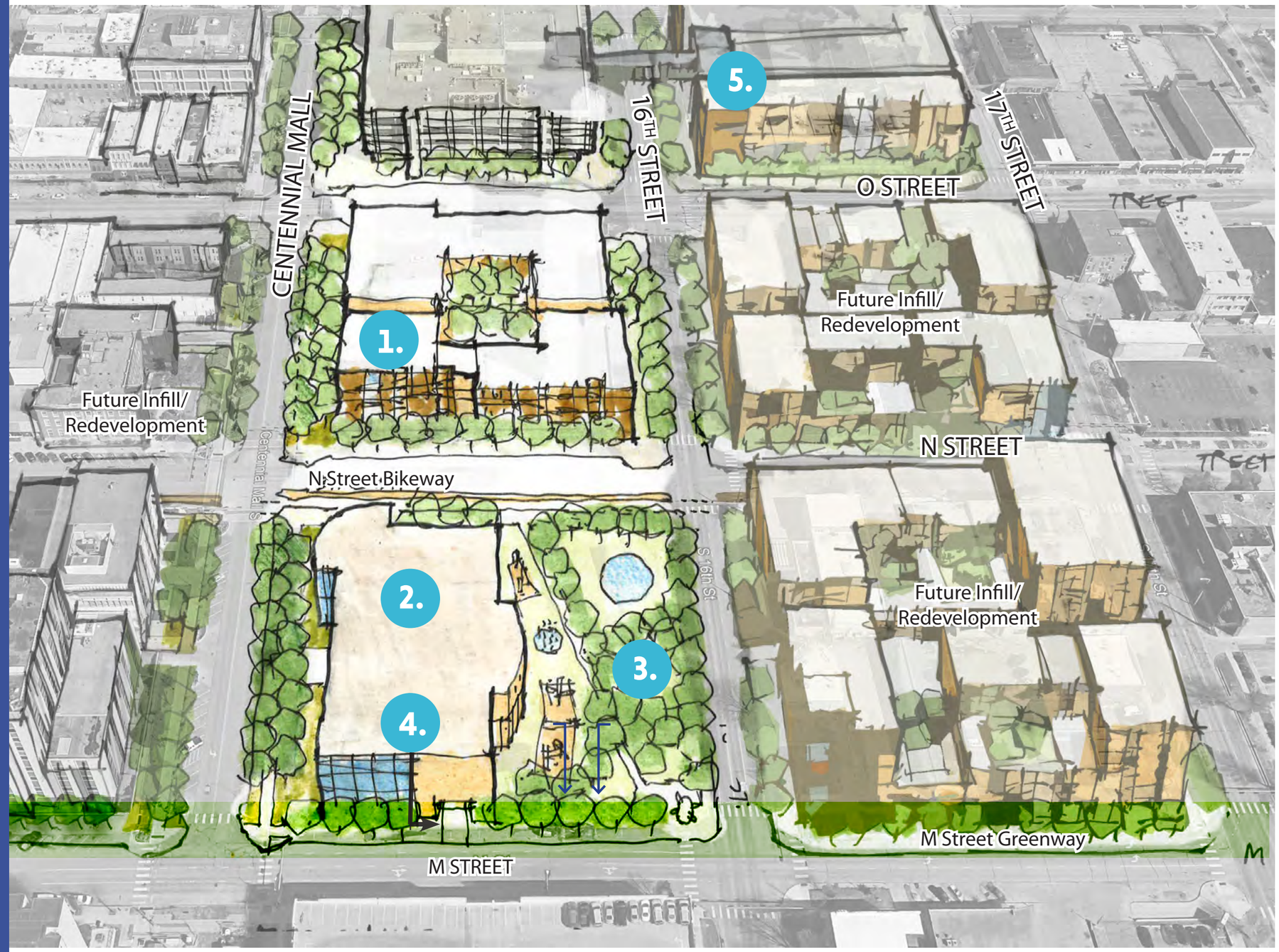
1. Mixed Use Residential
   - Ground Floor Retail or Active Use (7,000 square feet)
   - Residential (5 levels, +/- 200 dwelling units)

2. Civic Use
   - 3 levels
   - 40,000 square feet per level
   - 120,000 square feet total

3. Signature One Acre Park

4. Service and Vehiclular Access to Below Ground Parking (potential to share parking in existing structure south of M Street)

5. New Federal Parking Garage (maintain existing facades and uses along O Street)



Option B

Half of the Pershing Block is shown for civic building programming with the other half shown for office and park uses. Small, supporting retail development can help activate the space and supplement development. The existing Federal parking garage is shown relocated with a mix of residential and active uses on the existing site.

1. Mixed Use Residential
   - Ground Floor Retail or Active Use (7,000 square feet)
   - Residential (5 levels with 200 dwelling units)

2. Civic Use
   - 4 levels
   - 40,000 square feet per level
   - 160,000 square feet total

3. Service and Vehiclular Access to Below Ground Parking (potential to share parking in existing structure south of M Street)

4. Office Use
   - 4 levels
   - 80,000 square feet total

5. Signature Half Acre Park

New Federal Parking Garage (maintain existing facades and uses along O Street)

Option C

The Pershing Block is shown redeveloped with two structures oriented east and west. A mix of civic, office, and retail uses occupy the site. A public plaza is located between the two buildings to connect Centennial Mall with the blocks to the east. The existing Federal parking garage is shown relocated with a mix of residential and active uses on the existing site.

1. Mixed Use Residential
   - Ground Floor Retail or Active Use (7,000 square feet)
   - Residential (5 levels with 200 dwelling units)

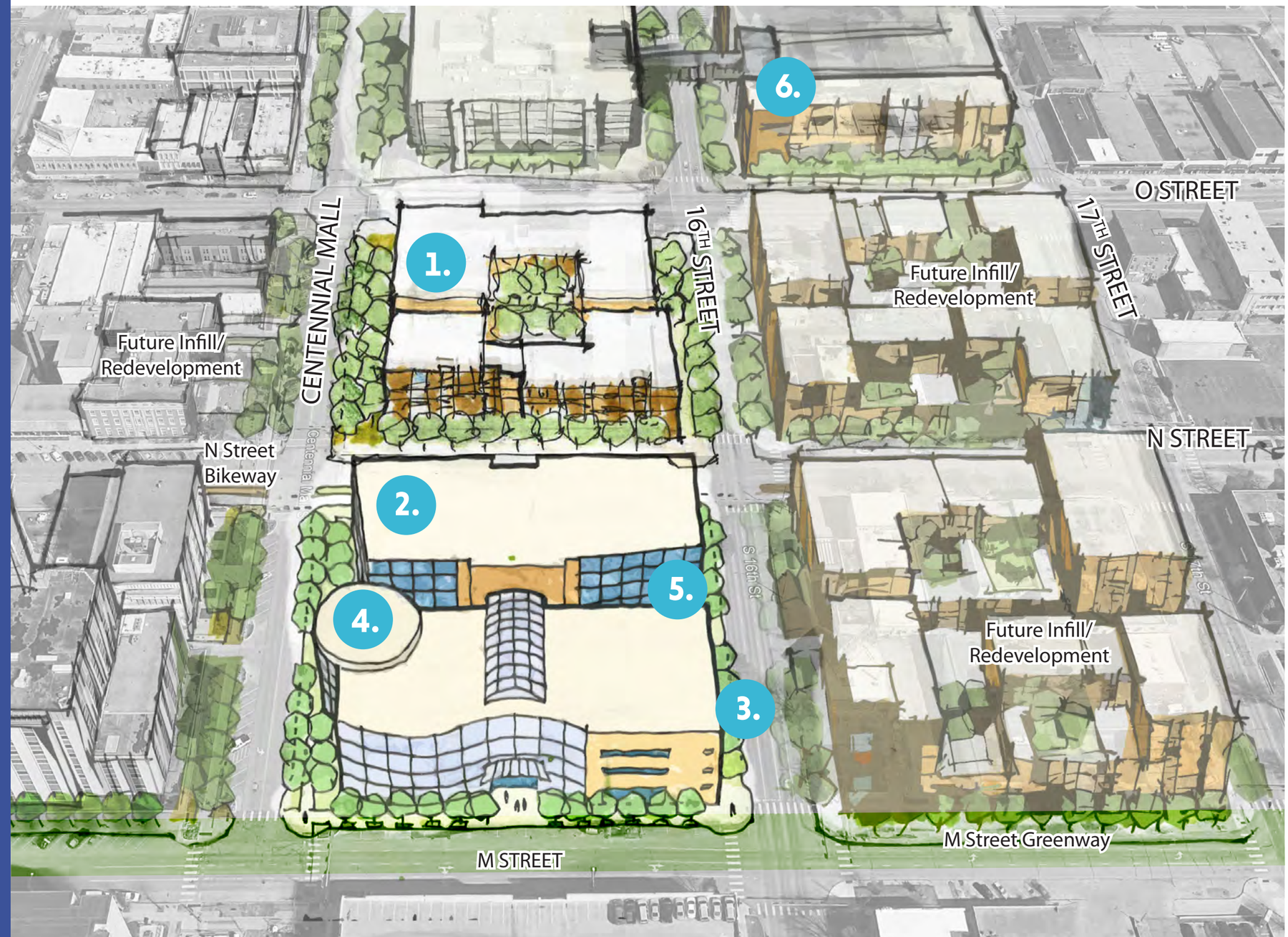
2. Civic Use
   - 4 levels
   - 40,000 square feet per level
   - 160,000 square feet total

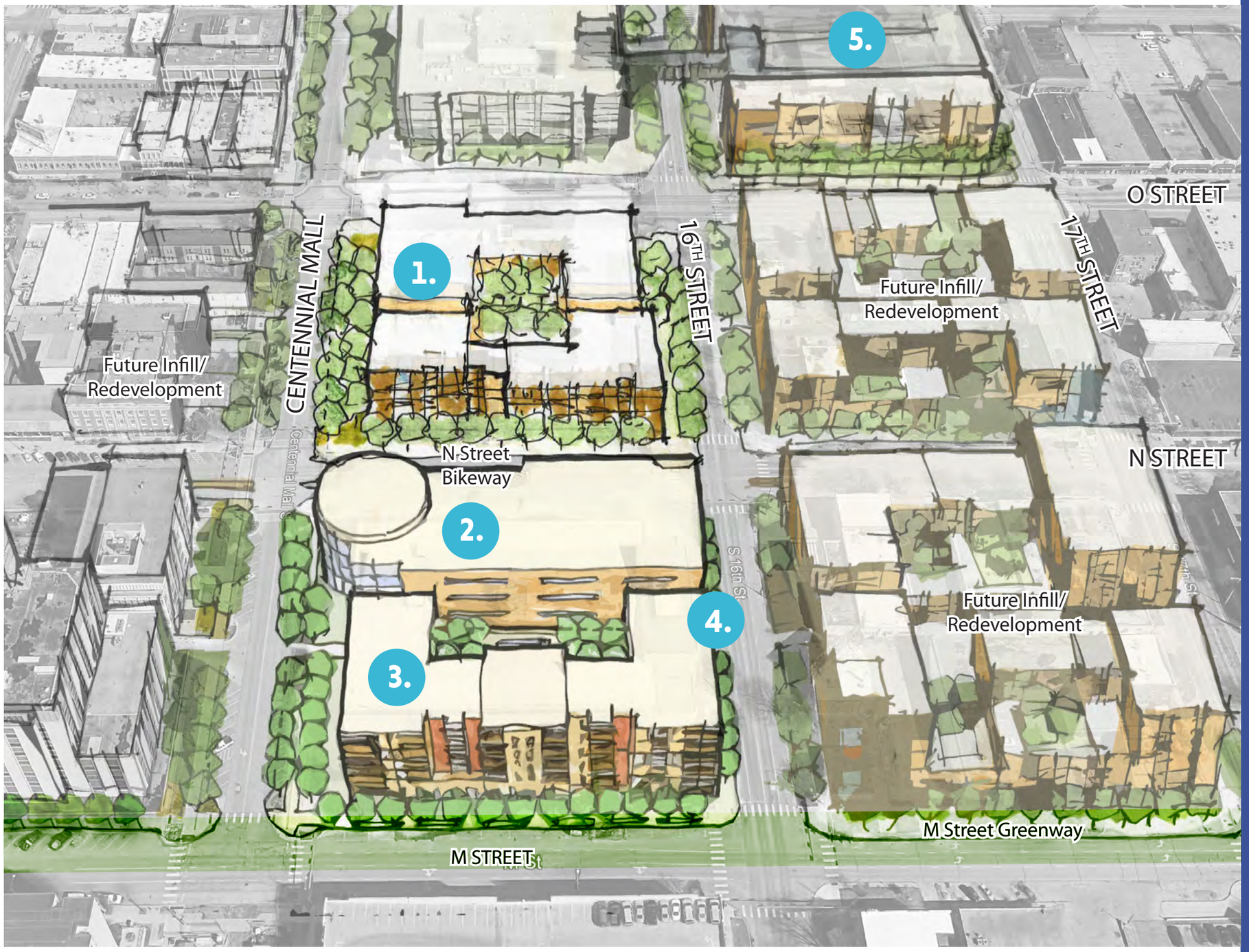
3. Service and Vehiclular Access to Below Ground Parking off 16th Street (potential to share parking in existing structure south of M Street)

4. Mixed Use Office/Civic Use
   - 4 levels
   - 160,000 square feet total

5. Public Plaza Connecting Centennial Mall to 16th Street

6. New Federal Parking Garage (maintain existing facades and uses along O Street)





Option D

Half of the Pershing Block is shown for civic building programming and half is shown for private residential development. A small footprint of supporting retail is shown on the southern half of the block. The existing Federal parking garage is shown relocated with a mix of residential and active uses on the existing site.

1. Mixed Use Residential
   - Ground Floor Retail or Active Use (7,000 square feet)
   - Residential (5 levels with 200 dwelling units)

2. Civic Use
   - 4 levels
   - 40,000 square feet per level
   - 160,000 square feet total

3. Mixed Use Residential
   - Ground Floor Retail or Active Use (7,000 square feet)
   - Residential (4 levels with 80 dwelling units)

4. Parking and service accessed from 16th Street

5. New Federal Parking Garage (maintain existing facades and uses along O Street)

Option E

The Pershing Block is shown redeveloped with a 5-story residential building and associated structured parking. This concept also shows civic, park and mixed uses on the current Federal parking garage site. Civic uses could include a new library, Southeast Community, or other public uses.

1. Civic Use
   - 4 levels
   - 40,000 square feet per level
   - 160,000 square feet total

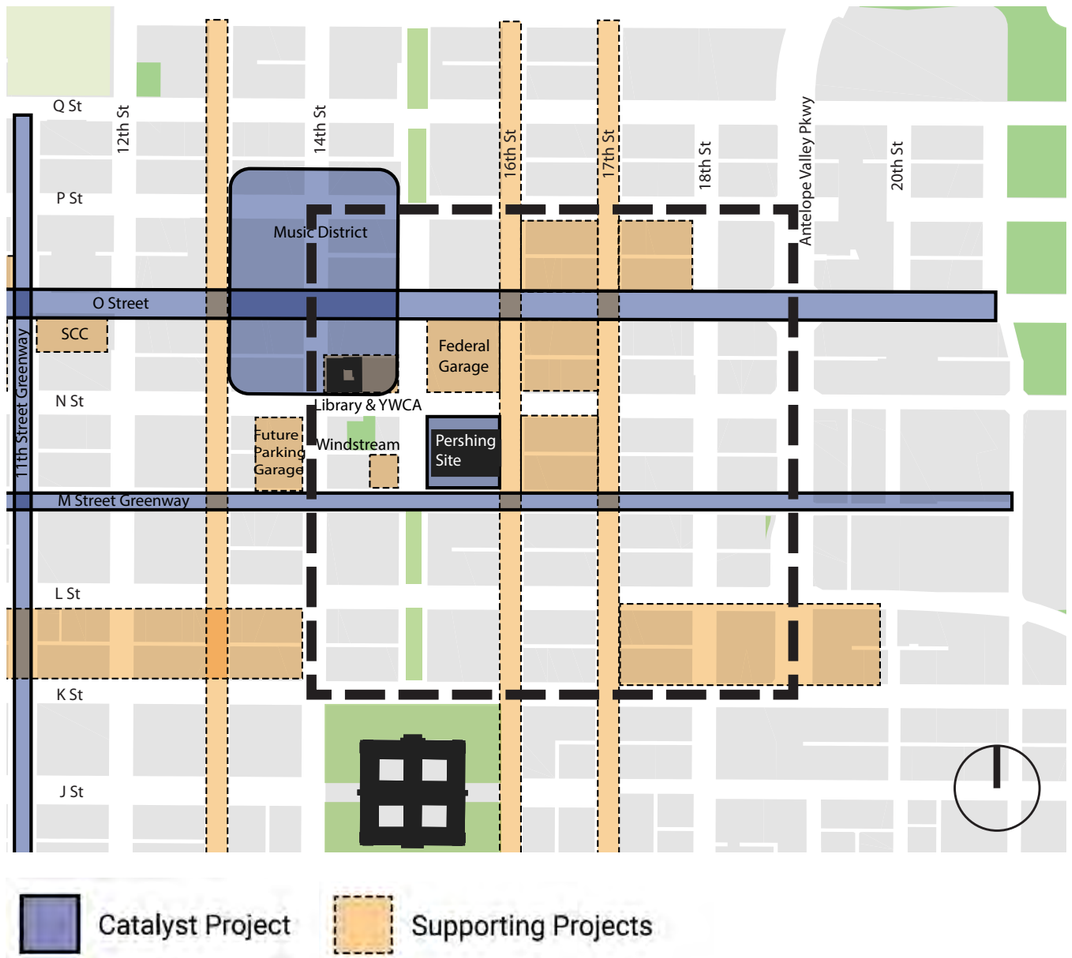
2. Mixed Use Office/Civic Use
   - Ground Floor Active Use (7,000 square feet)
   - 4 levels
   - 160,000 square feet total

3. Mixed Use Residential
   - Ground Floor Active Use (7,000 square feet)
   - Residential
     (5 levels with 200 dwelling units)

4. Parking and service accessed from 16th Street

5. New Federal Parking Garage (maintain existing facades and uses along O Street)

Project Impact Area



STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Short term 0 - 18 months

1. Continue coordination with the federal government staff on redevelopment and/or relocationof the federal parking structure.
2. Review development proposals for the Pershing Block, per the design recommendations outlined in this plan.
3. If the decision is made to construct a new headquarter library, conduct a design process that reflects the expected level of quality Lincoln desires and deserves for such a facility.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Engage in a public-private partnership to design and construct the new civic uses and surrounding private development.

Project Impact

The redevelopment of the Pershing Center and federal parking garage could have a tremendous impact in this area such as:

- Catalyzing private development on several of the underutilized surrounding blocks.
- Activation of a portion of the Centennial Mall which is predominantly surrounded by 9-5 government and other institutional uses.
- Creating a new destination for Lincolnites, particularly families, to come downtown.
- Creating new opportunity for people to live downtown.
- Activating spaces that are currently underutilized and not pedestrian friendly, particularly those along O Street and Centennial Mall.

O Street

An Example of an Active Streetscape

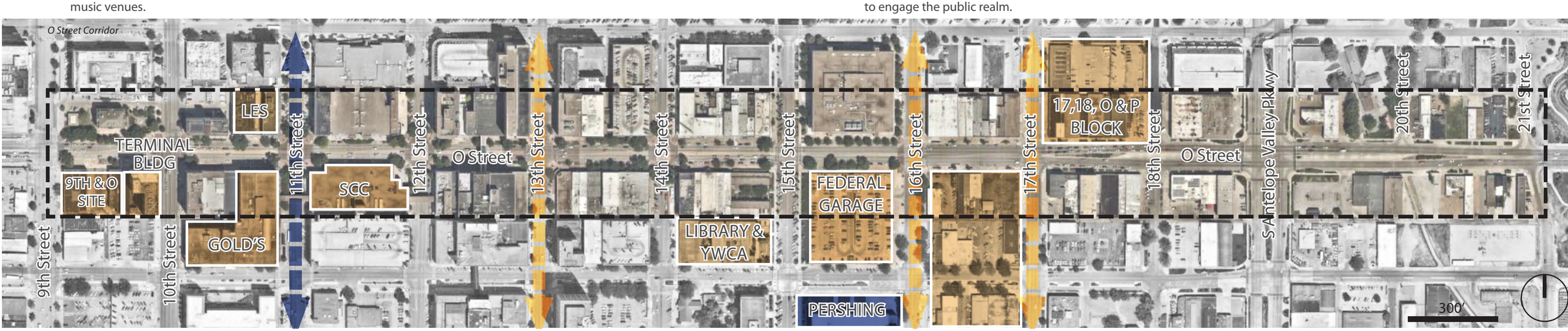
Enhance Front Door to Downtown

O Street is the only continuous street through Downtown that connects destinations and districts as well as the neighborhoods to the west and east. O Street is one of the most active streets in downtown with a variety of public and private uses such as Southeast Community College, theaters, restaurants, bars, and live music venues.

This project will include a façade improvement program, streetscape enhancements, and supports reuse and rehab of underutilized or vacant spaces. Several of Downtown's most significant buildings front the street, such as the Terminal Building, Gold's, LES, Centerstone, Wells Fargo, and Miller & Paine buildings.

In addition to these buildings, there are several single-story buildings that have the potential to be redeveloped into higher density uses to better activate the street and provide options for new residences, office, and retail uses. Any future buildings along O Street should respect the existing character, and active uses should be encouraged on the ground floor of buildings to engage the public realm.

Streetscape improvements should be made to O Street to create an even more vibrant and lively street. These improvements will attract more people Downtown and will provide a great environment for people already living and working in Downtown.



The streetscape design should include a cohesive plan for street trees, enhanced pedestrian and street lighting for pedestrians, well-maintained planting areas and medians, amenity zones for seating, entryway enhancements, improved pedestrian crossings, and up-lighting on buildings. The façade program should include lighting, awnings and overhangs, signage, and window displays.

STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Short term 0 -18 months

1. Create an O Street Redevelopment District as a funding mechanism for improvements.
2. Create and implement a street tree, landscaping, and irrigation plan for O Street in conjunction with the removal and replacement of Ash trees.
3. Develop a façade rehabilitation program.

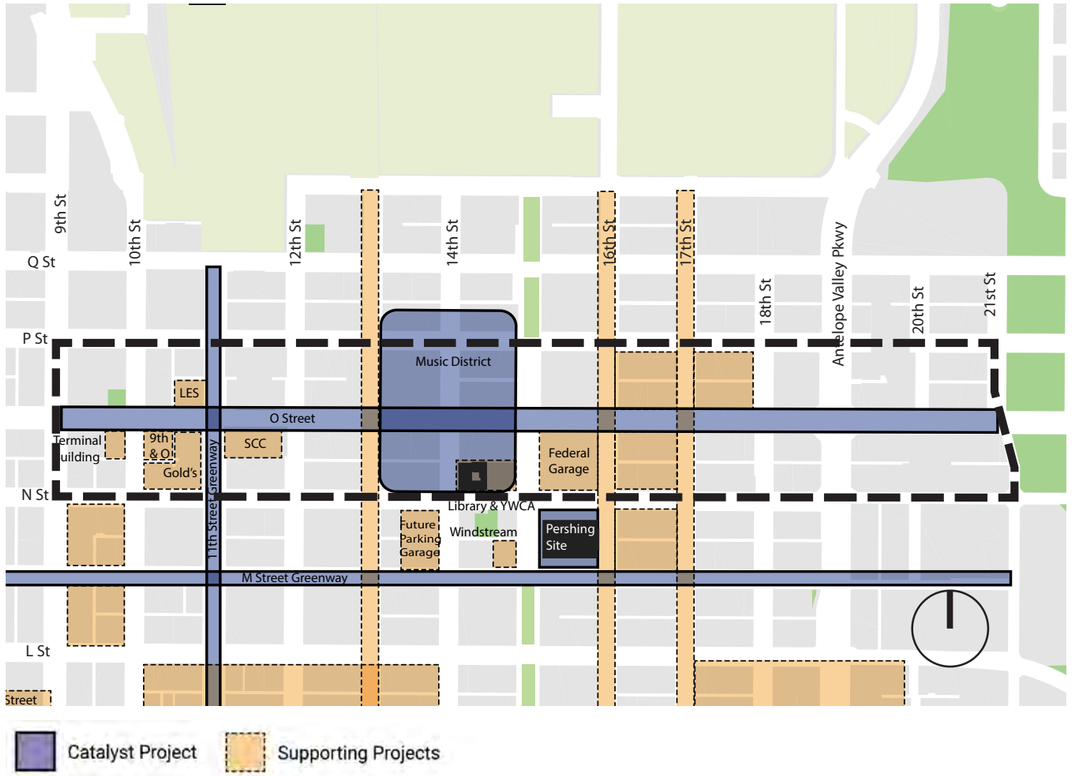
Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Implement streetscape enhancements and façade rehabilitation program along O Street.
2. Identify buildings that have redevelopment opportunity and work with private developers to encourage redevelopment, particularly for residential uses.
3. As described in section 4.2, create entryways at the west and east edges of Downtown on O Street (9th and 21st Streets)

Project Impact

- Public streetscape and facade improvements will catalyze private investment such as new uses along O Street similar to what occurred on P Street after the new streetscape was implemented. These improvements will increase pedestrian traffic and will provide more eyes on the street to enhance safety.
- The O Street Streetscape and Façade Improvements will create a renewed sense of community identity and pride along Downtown's front door for both residents and visitors.

Project Impact Area



O Street Corridor

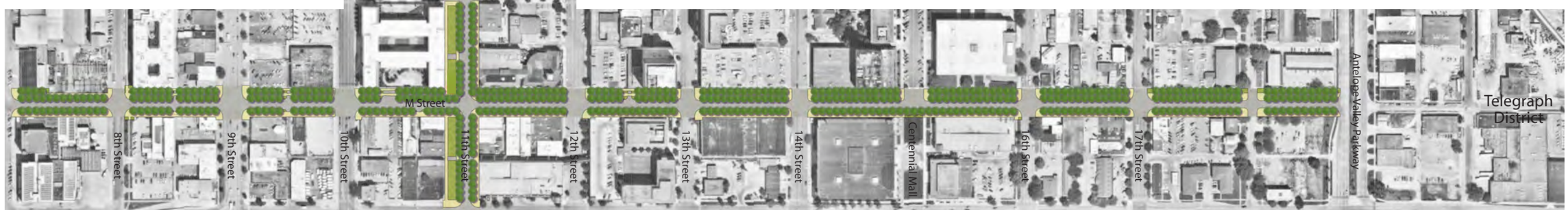
Create Greenways that Connect Districts & Neighborhoods

Downtown Lincoln's platted rights-of-way are wider than most peer cities, with typical widths of 100 feet and some at 120 feet. This amount of right-of-way comprises 42% of land area in Downtown and provides an opportunity to create new green space. Since all improvements could occur within the existing right-of-way, no additional land will need to be purchased. The greenways are thought of as linear parks that build upon and celebrate the City's identity as an urban arboretum, provide much desired green space and shade, and create an 'address' for the adjacent properties.

Examples of Park Space Amenities

The 11th Street right-of-way is 120 feet and currently has two vehicle travel lanes and a bike lane. Improvements on 11th Street will provide a much needed north-south connection between UNL and the Everett neighborhood. 11th Streetwould be converted from one-way to two-way travel with a 57 foot wide linear park on the west side between Q Street and the Lincoln Mall. This design maintains two vehicular travel lanes on 11th Street. Once 13th Street is converted to two-way operation and includes bike lanes, the 11th Street bike lane would transition to a signed bike route. The 11th Street Greenway design should also tie into the recent improvements on 11th Street south of the Lincoln Mall.

The 11th Street Greenway is for lingering and gathering and is envisioned as a linear park that includes clusters of trees and pockets of sun, rather than a linear street tree planting scheme. The understory may be a mix of native grasses and plants, turf grass, and hardscape. The function of spaces should reflect the adjacent land uses and the intensity of amenities within the greenway should generally transition from more intense to the north and less intense to the south.



Both M and 11th Streets were identified as priority corridors in the 2005 Master Plan and the 2012 update. These streets are still major priorities and have the potential to be catalyst with the following recommendations. During design of these facilities, a block-by-block analysis should be conducted to evaluate the impacts to on-street parking, access to adjacent properties, and traffic flow.

M Street right-of-way is 100 feet and varies between 2 or 3 vehicular lanes and turn lanes with a mix of angled, parallel or no parking. Improvements on M Street will provide a much needed east-west connection across Downtown South Haymarket to Antelope Valley.

The M Street Greenway would have a 37 foot wide linear greenway on the north side between South Haymarket and Antelope Valley. This will create energy that will radiate to adjacent blocks, particularly to the south, and throughout downtown to enhance the City core. The design for M Street is about creating a procession lined with shade trees that will connect to the new West Park, the Pershing Block redevelopment, the proposed 900-stall parking garage at 14th & M, Centennial Mall, the Telegraph District, and Antelope Valley. M Street at Antelope Valley Parkway should be examined to see if a pedestrian activated signal is feasible to provide a safe pedestrian connection to the Telegraph District to the east. In the short term, M Street would remain a one-way street east. In the mid-term, M Street could potentially convert to two-way.

11th Street Greenway

M Street Greenway

11th Street Amenities May Include:

1. Native gardens
2. Extended plazas with tables, chairs, and benches for outdoor dining
3. Smaller play equipment for children
4. Flexible lawn space for outdoor markets, movies, lawn games, etc.
5. Interactive public art
6. Storm water gardens
7. Bicycle corrals

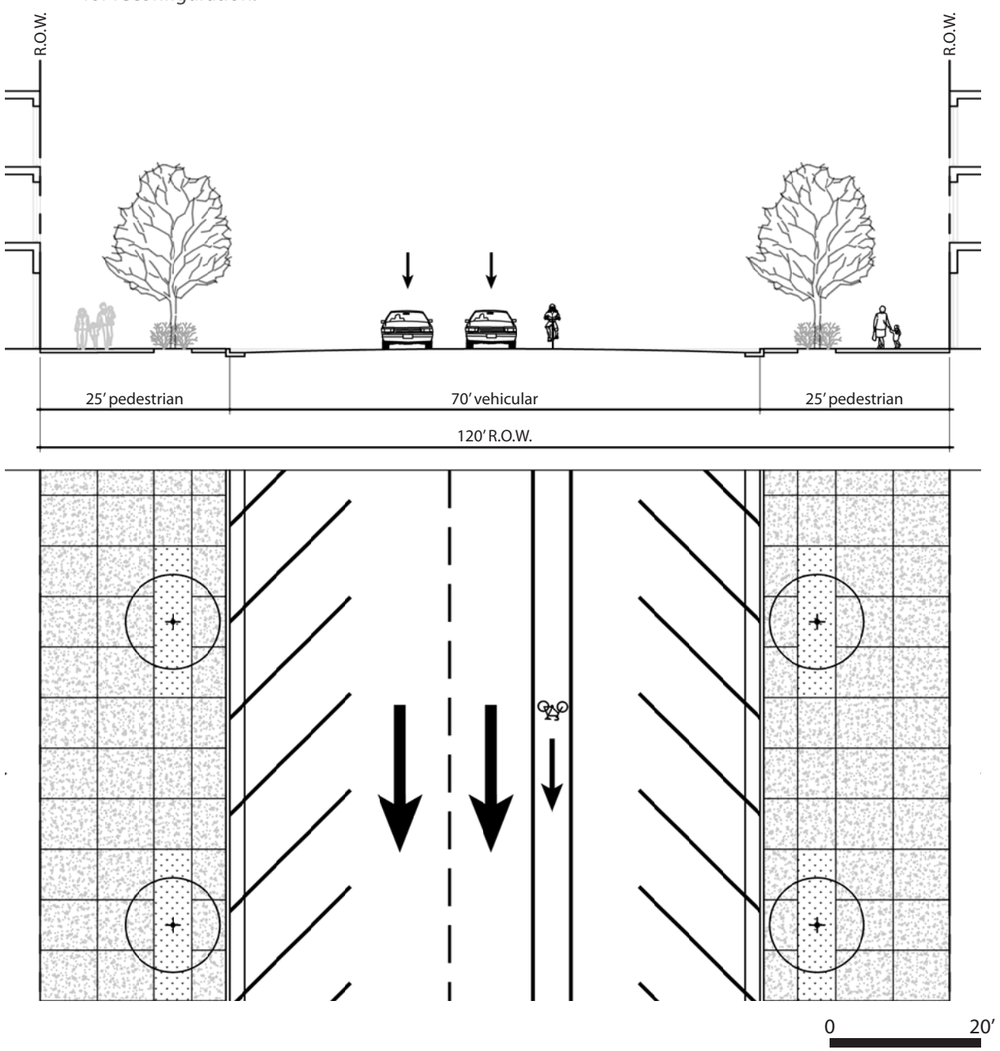
M Street Amenities May Include:

1. Linear procession of trees
2. Extended storefront cafes
3. Formal or community gardens
4. Public art
5. Smaller green spaces with benches

11th Street Existing and Proposed

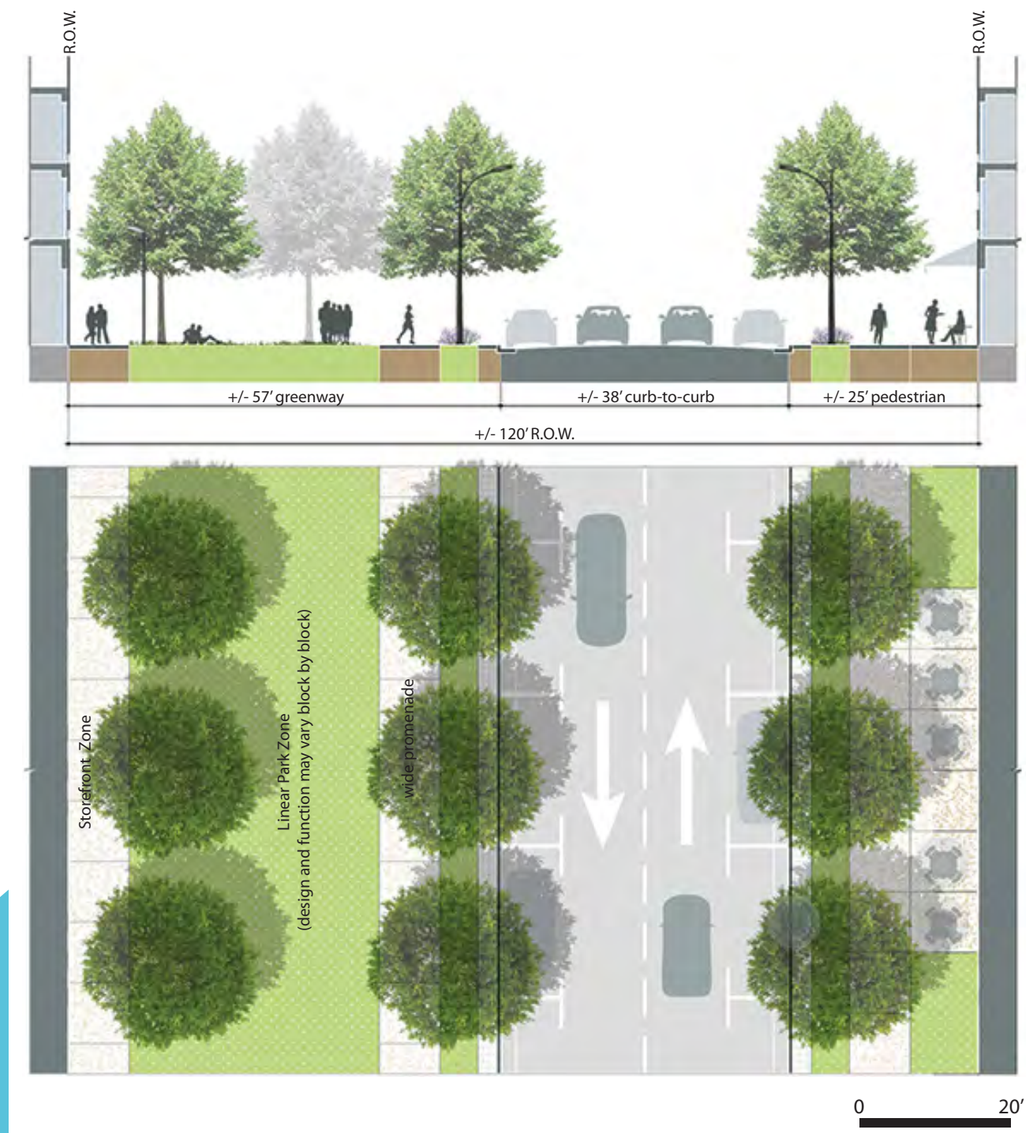
11TH STREET EXISTING

- Configuration of travel lanes along 11th Street currently varies block to block. North of K Street, 11th Street is a one-way street with a combination of angled parking, a bike lane, two travel lanes, and periodic turning lanes. South of Lincoln Mall, 11th Street is a two-lane facility with north/south bike lanes and on-street parking.
- With a right-of-way width of 120 feet and low traffic counts, 11th Street has great potential for reconfiguration.



11TH STREET PROPOSED

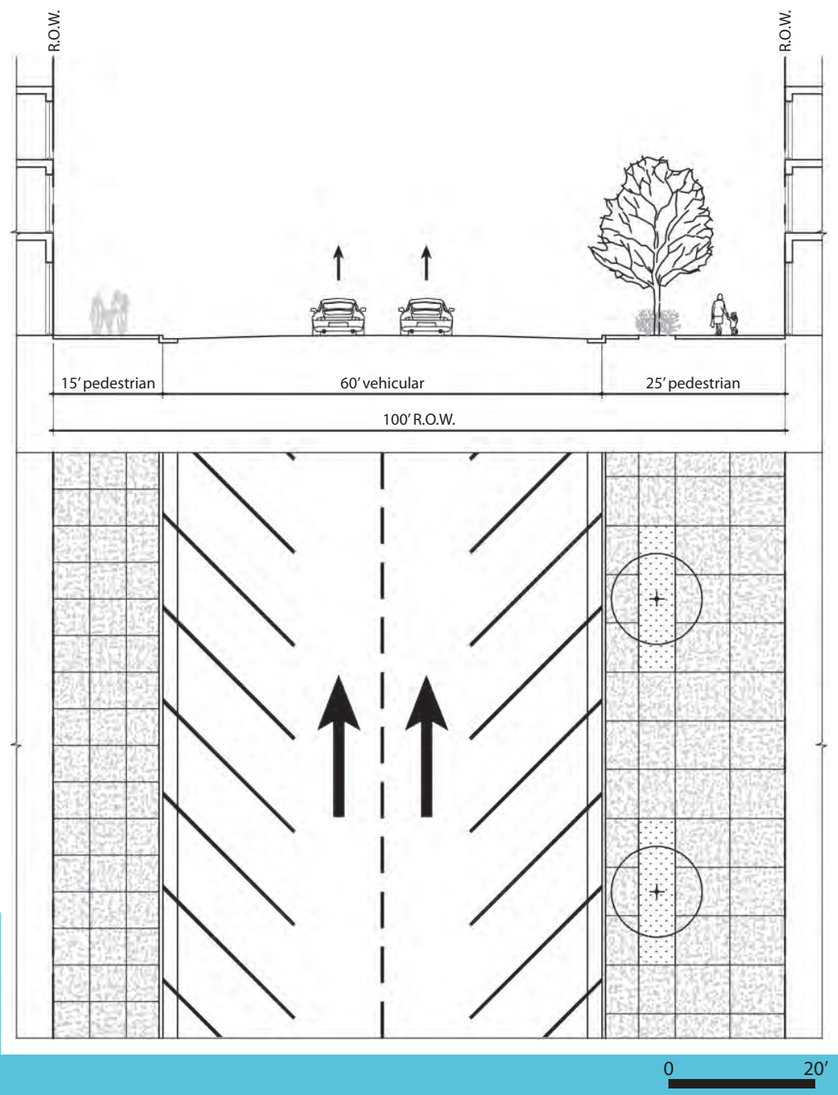
- Creating a consistent two-way street with continuous on street parking opens up valuable right-of-way to create a wide linear greenway that is a destination for Downtown.



M Street Existing and Proposed

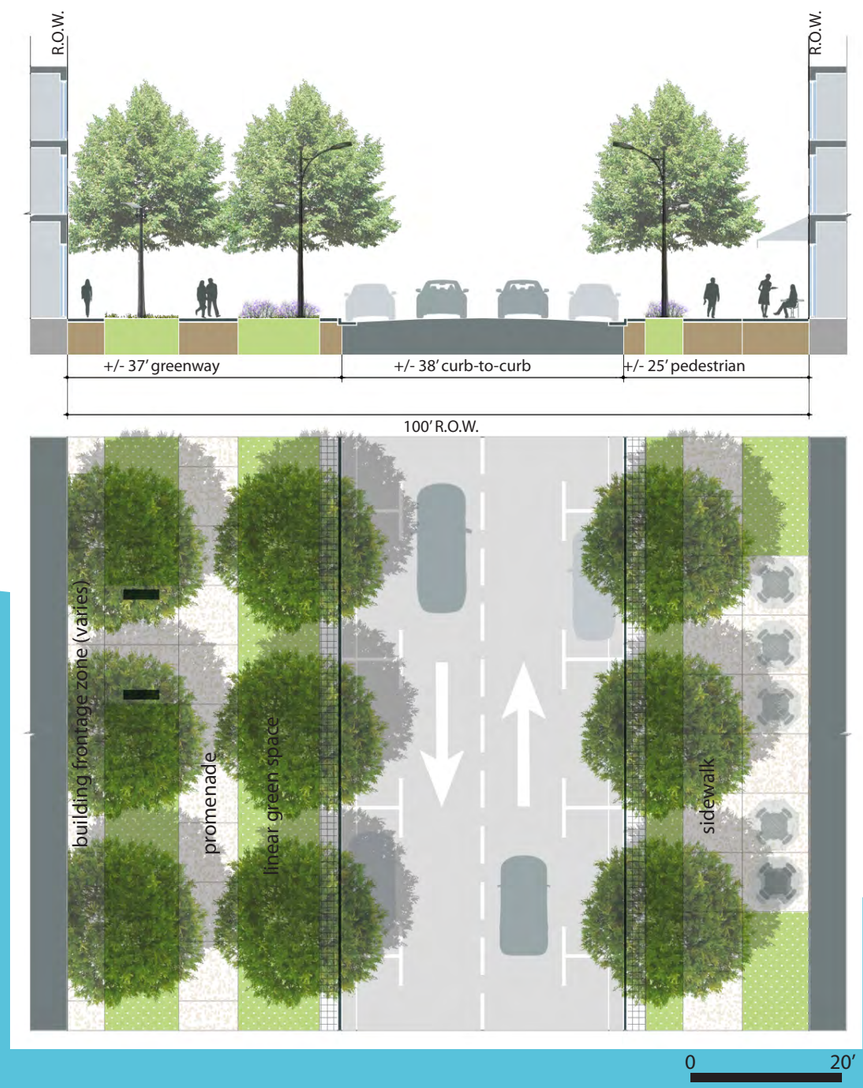
M STREET EXISTING

- M Street blocks vary between two or three vehicular lanes and turn lanes with a mix of angled, parallel, or no on-street parking

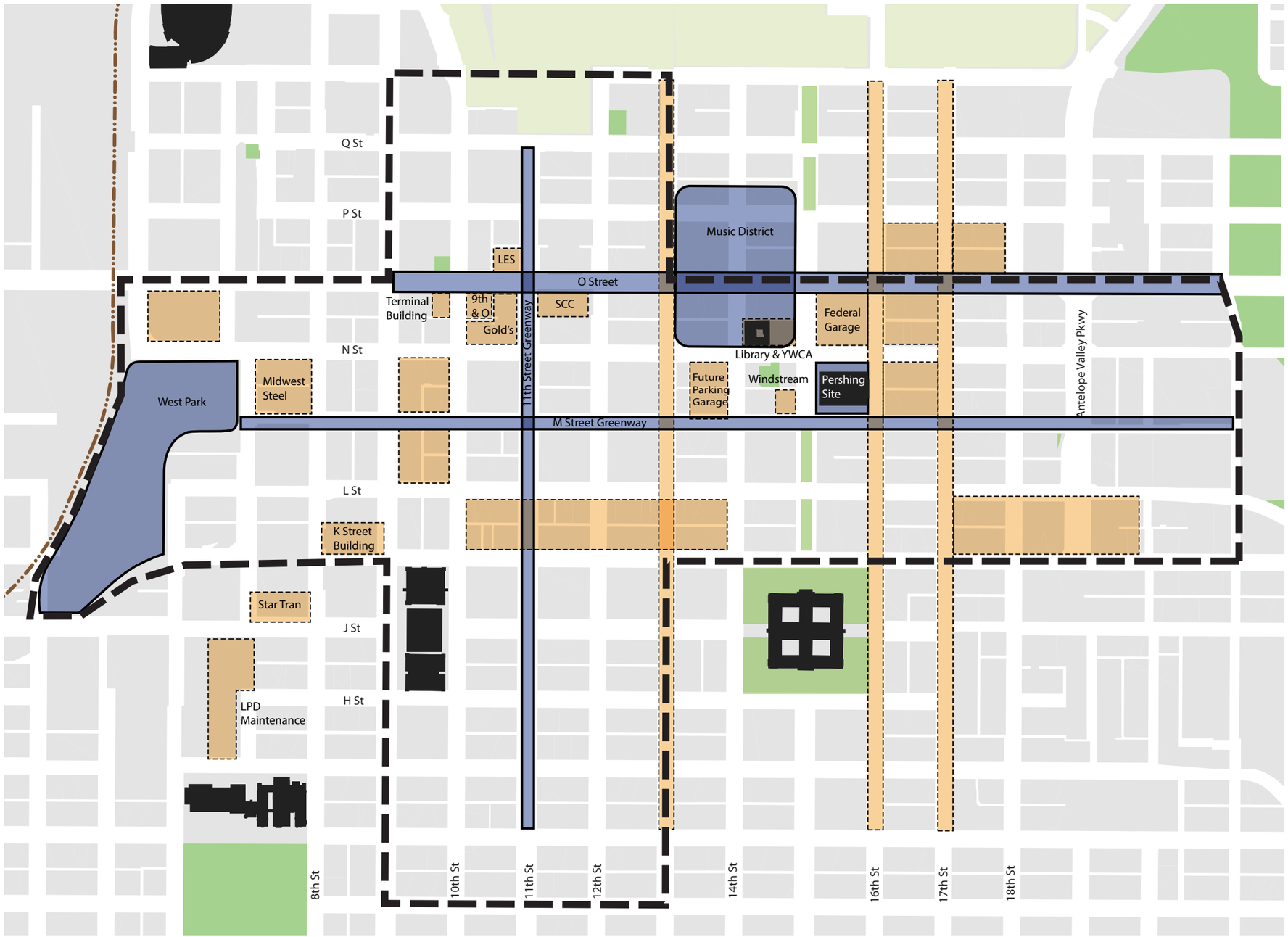


M STREET PROPOSED

- A consistent M Street will improve the character of the street while adding clarity for pedestrians and vehicles.
- The proposed M Street would consist of two travel lanes and consistent on-street parallel parking on both sides of the street.



Project Impact Area



Strategies and Action Items

Short term 0 -18 months

1. Coordinate with the Pershing Center design team to ensure a consistent treatment on M Street adjacent to the Pershing Center site and other redevelopment sites.
2. Prioritize design for both greenways in the Capital Improvements Program.
3. Coordinate with design for 13th Street to ensure that bike lanes are not removed from 11th Street until the completion of 13th Street improvements.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Study the potential to convert M Street from one- to two-way.
2. Solicit a request for proposal to design M and 11th Streets.
3. Construct M and 11th Street Greenways.

Catalyst Project

Supporting Projects

Zoofest

Celebrate Local Music Scene

Lincoln currently has a robust local music scene and it attracts national acts in a variety of genres. A vibrant local music economy fuels job creation, talent retention and attraction, broader economic growth, and tourism. It is a major draw for university student recruitment and for companies to attract new employees to Lincoln, particularly for technology companies seeking new young professionals.

Lincoln is poised to become a national leader and potentially one of the first communities to create a district focused on the live music scene, similar to an arts-centered district. There is a growing "Music Cities" movement nationwide. Beyond Nashville or Austin, cities are now proactively supporting the development of the music ecosystem. Nationally, there are several think tanks, non-profits, and for-profits that are dedicated to expanding the understanding of what makes a Music City and how music can be an economic development tool. These organizations are also putting more thought into bridging the gap between music, urban planning and policy making.

Several communities nationwide have seen an influx of musicians and music-related businesses from across the country relocating there because of the support and platform given to the music economy. These communities include Austin, Texas; Nashville, Tennessee; Fort Collins, Colorado; and Boise, Idaho as well as Lincoln's neighbor Omaha. More detail of what these communities have accomplished can be found in the case study section of the appendix.

There is a natural opportunity in Downtown Lincoln to build on existing assets and grow the local music scene. Many of Lincoln's live music venues and outdoor performance spaces are clustered in a compact area along O, P, and 14th Streets, including the Rococo Theater, Tower Square, Zoo Bar, Duffy's Tavern, the Bourbon Theatre, 1867 Bar, and Bodega's Alley. Additionally, this clustering is the location of three of Lincoln's largest independent live music festivals, Lincoln Calling, Lincoln Exposed, and Zoofest.

In addition to the live music events, P Street between 13th Street and Centennial Mall could become a festival street for art fairs, farmers markets, and other family friendly daytime events.

A Downtown Music District should be established to leverage these existing clustered assets and enhance the local music economy.

When music stakeholders and venues work together in a unified manner, they gain greater legitimacy and give added clout to the local music scene. A Music District is not just physical, but is also organizational in nature.

A Music District Advisory Committee, primarily made up of Music District stakeholders and property owners, should be established to create a unified vision and distinctive identity for the District. The City and DLA should identify a point of contact to serve on the committee and as a liaison between the music community and City departments.

This will allow venues to work more collaboratively with the City and DLA to address issues regarding permitting, parking, loading/unloading, and others that may arise.

This Music District has the potential to become a physical and social linkage between UNL and the core of downtown. The 2012 Downtown Plan update illustrates and recommends 14th and O Streets are part of the primary retail area of Downtown. The Music District and corresponding recommendations below continue to support and expand on this concept.
The City and DLA should work to advance the following strategies.

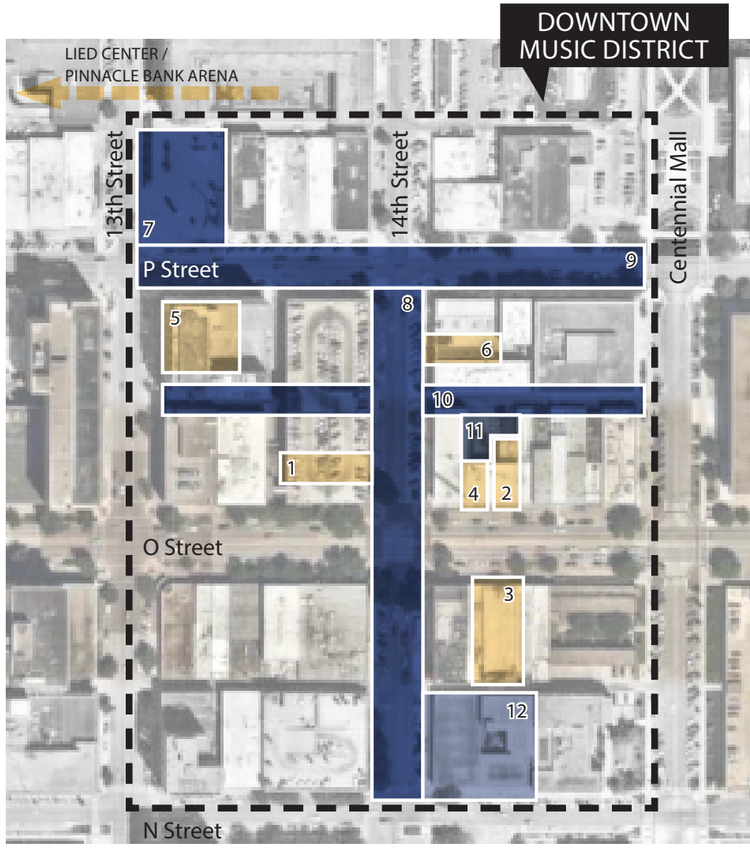
MUSIC DISTRICT ELEMENTS:

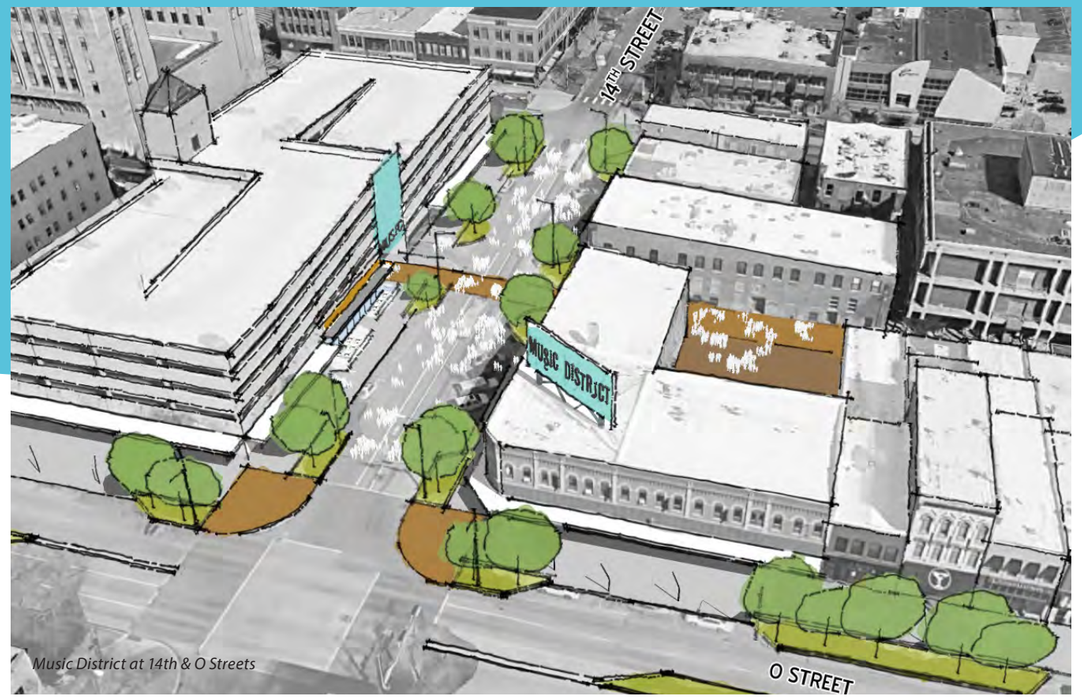
VENUES

1. 1867 BAR
2. BODEGA'S ALLEY
3. BOURBON THEATRE
4. DUFFY'S TAVERN
5. ROCOCO THEATER
6. ZOO BAR

FLEXIBLE OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE SPACES

7. TOWER SQUARE
8. 14TH STREET (N TO P)
9. P STREET (13TH TO CENTENNIAL MALL)
10. ALLEYS (13TH TO CENTENNIAL MALL)
11. PARKING LOT (DUFFY'S / BODEGA'S)
12. BENNETT MARTIN LIBRARY SITE (POTENTIAL FUTURE USE FOR PORTION OF SITE)





Music District at 14th & O Streets

STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Short term 0 -18 months

1. Create a Music District Advisory Committee and complete a detailed asset and needs assessment to better understand and quantify Lincoln's local music ecosystem, its strengths and gaps.
2. Develop unified marketing through brochures and online material for visitors. For instance, a Facebook page or website could be created listing all shows and festivals in one consolidated, user-friendly location.
3. Encourage creative temporary and permanent outdoor enhancement such as public art, murals, artistic lighting, and façade video projections.
4. Streamline the permit and fees structure for downtown music events and provide a dedicated staff person to help navigate the permitting process.
5. Help identify and prioritize infrastructure improvements, such as 14th Street streetscape enhancements, to further develop the Music District and support live music.
6. Continue to work with private companies and corporations to sponsor music events.
7. Connect with do-it-yourself (DIY) community leaders to cultivate local talent and create a pipeline of locals that will feed into the bigger festivals.
8. Work with UNL to identify opportunities to host university music events and shows in the District.
9. Encourage and continue to attract culturally relevant events such as Lincoln Calling, Lincoln Exposed, Zoofest, Jazz in June, and Lincoln Unites. Potentially create smaller art and music events in between these larger events that provide a build-up effect.
10. Provide spring, summer, and fall daytime music events on the Centennial Mall and Tower Square to attract office workers and residents.
11. Work with promoters of the Lincoln Arts Festival to potentially relocate the Lincoln Arts Festival from the SouthPoint Pavilions to Downtown. This could be held on a combination of P Street between and on Tower Plaza and Centennial Mall (adjacent to the Children's Museum). Identify and promote other family-friendly events that could occur in this location.
12. Develop and implement a concept to infill the first floor of the University Square garage with active uses.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Work with the Zoo Bar, Duffy's Tavern, 1867 Bar, and Bodega's Alley to improve the alley and parking lot between 14th, P, and O Streets, and Centennial Mall to create a more permanent outdoor space for outdoor seating and music events such as the Zoofest. 14th Street between O and P Streets should be designed as a temporary festival street with unique paving and streetscape treatments.
2. Work to fill gaps in Downtown's "venue ladder" – the range of venues available in Downtown, spanning from formal to informal, indoor to outdoor, and of all sizes, to meet the needs of artists at each stage of their career.
3. Encourage other music-supporting uses in the District, such as recording studios, rehearsal spaces, retailers (e.g., instrument or record stores), music education and training programs, community radio, and more.
4. Investigate the opportunity for a music hub, incubator or accelerator for artists, musicians, and other entrepreneurs in the music and entertainment sector.
5. Encourage short-term or over-night lodging dedicated to touring musicians performing in Downtown Lincoln.
6. Integrate UNL curriculum and educational programming into the District to engage students in music-related fields.
7. When the new central library is constructed, explore opportunities to reuse the Bennett Martin Library site as a combination of open space that can act as music venue space, as well as reusing a portion of the existing library space for a commercial/retail/public market use.
8. Extend the 14th Street improvements south to N Street to include the future-adapted Bennett Martin space.

The Bourbon Theater

Create a Signature Urban Park

Both the 2005 Downtown Master Plan and the 2015 South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan recommended a public park in The South Haymarket District. This park would provide much needed green space in this dense urban area that continues to infill with new residences and offices. A new park in this location could generally be bounded by the railroad tracks on the west, J Street to the south, S. 7th Street to the east, and N Street to the north.

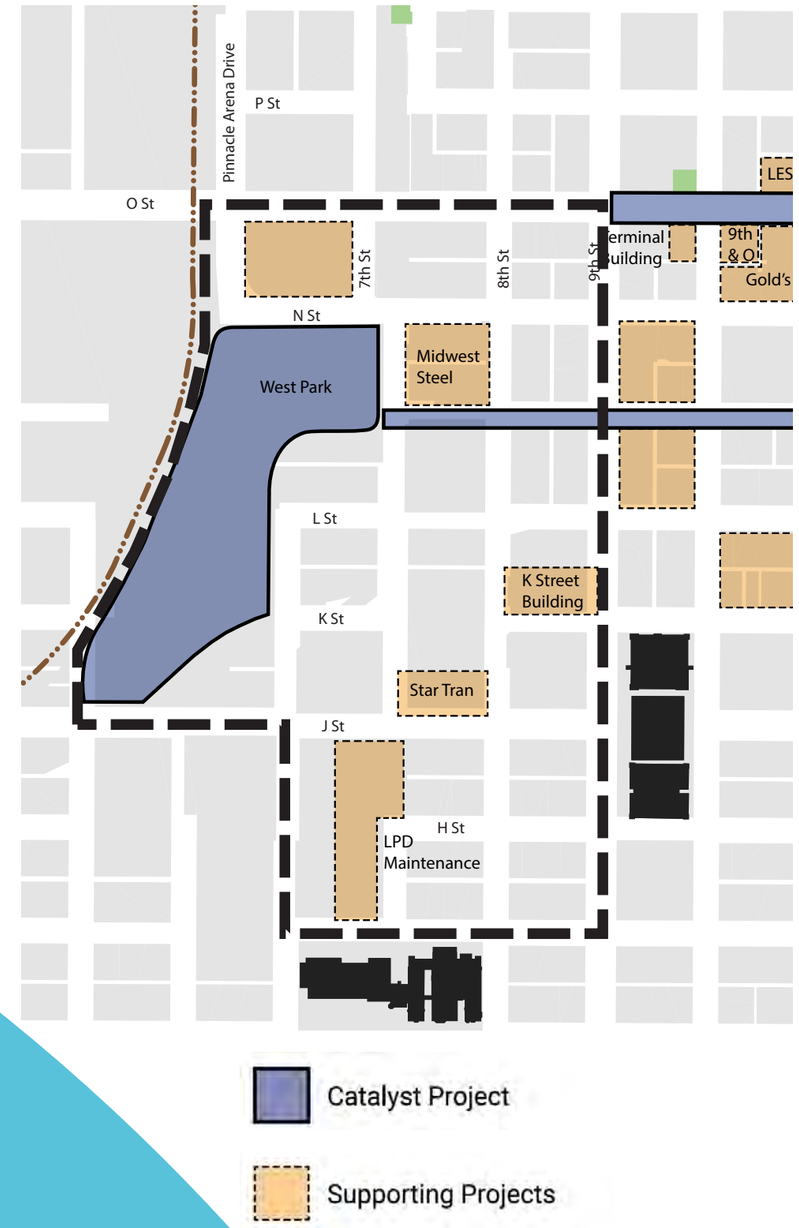
Two options have been created to explore the design and layout potential for West Park and the surrounding blocks. Park amenities could include a multi-purpose lawn space, small playground equipment, skate park, public market, and dog park.

An Example of an Urban Skate Park

An Example of an Indoor Public Market

An Example of an Urban Dog Park

Project Impact Area



OPTION 1

- Create a plaza at the south end of Canopy Street between N and M Street to provide a terminus from Pinnacle Bank Area. This may include a signature sculpture or fountain.
- Create a mixed use development with active ground floor uses on a portion of the JPA owned property along N Street located between the plaza and park.
- Incorporate the Lumber building at 6th and L Streets into the park space which could be transformed into an indoor pubic market with an adjacent plaza.
- Create a Great Lawn as a multi-purpose open space with the ability to host a variety of activities such as public gatherings, pick-up soccer games, etc.
- Create a skate park underneath portions of the Rosa Parks Way Viaduct.
- Utilize the viaduct to create green connections from 8th Street and a potential district parking garage site to the park.
- Extend Jamaica Trail through the park from J Street to N Street, with strong connections to the N Street Bikeway.
- Create an urban dog park at the southern edge of the park.
- Include off-street parking at the southern end of the dog park which could also serve the skate park.
- Provide an area for stormwater quality and flood storage.
- Create a new street that connects N Street to 6th that will provide publicly accessible edge along the East edge of the park.
- The Tot Lot as shown could include neighborhood park improvements such as a playcourt and equipment, and a shelter.
- Develop the park program through a public engagement process.

West Park Option 1

West Park Option 1 - Edge Map

OPTION 2

- Create a plaza at the south end of Canopy Street between N and M Street to provide a terminus from Pinnacle Bank Area. This may include a signature sculpture or a fountain.
- Create a mixed use development with active ground floor uses on a portion of the JPA owned property along N Street located between the plaza and park.
- Create a Great Lawn as a multi-purpose open space with the ability to host a variety of activities such as public gatherings, pick-up soccer games, etc.
- Extend Jamaica Trail through the park from J Street to N Street, with strong connections to the N Street Bikeway.
- Create an urban dog park at the southern edge of the park.
- Include off-street parking.
- Create a public pedestrian/bike access point to the park at the west end of L Street.
- Provide an area for stormwater quality and flood storage.
- Consider future expansion of park to the south as shown in Option 1 as properties become available.
- Develop the park program through a public engagement process.

West Park Option 2

STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

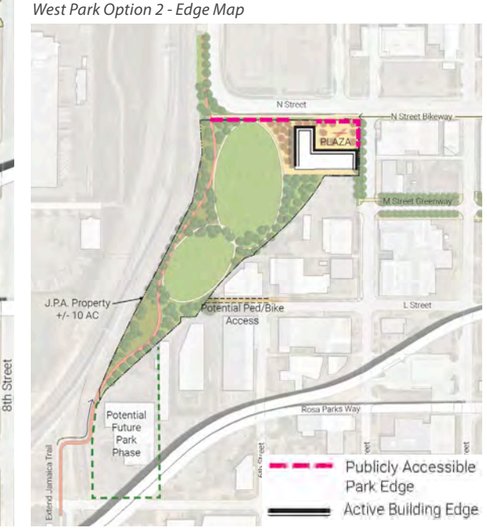
Short term 0 -18 months

1. Work with private property owners to construct the Jamaica North Trail.
2. Identify park configuration and potential development sites.
3. Work with adjacent property owners to identify relationship of park to adjacent properties.
4. Issue a request for proposal for the design of West Park.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Build West Park in phases as properties and funds become available.

West Park Option 2 - Edge Map



Projects from the 2005 Downtown Master Plan

Several projects that were recommended in the 2005 Downtown Master Plan are currently being implemented or will be implemented in the future. It is important to note these projects as they are still significant to Downtown Lincoln and provide a transition between the 2005 and 2018 Master Plans. These projects are highlighted on the map to the right and include:

1. West Haymarket Development Blocks
2. P Street Streetscape
3. K Street Building
4. Two-Way Traffic on 13th
5. Downtown Shuttle
6. Multi-Modal Transportation Center

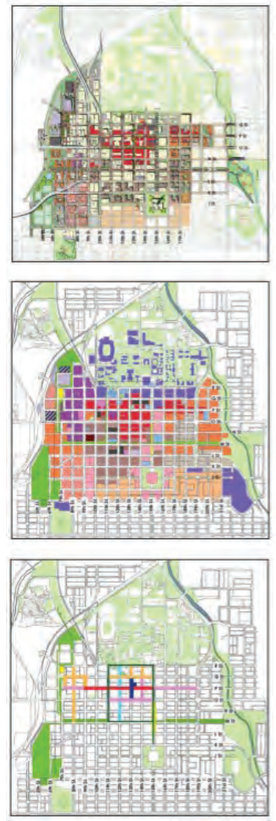
STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Short term 0 -18 months

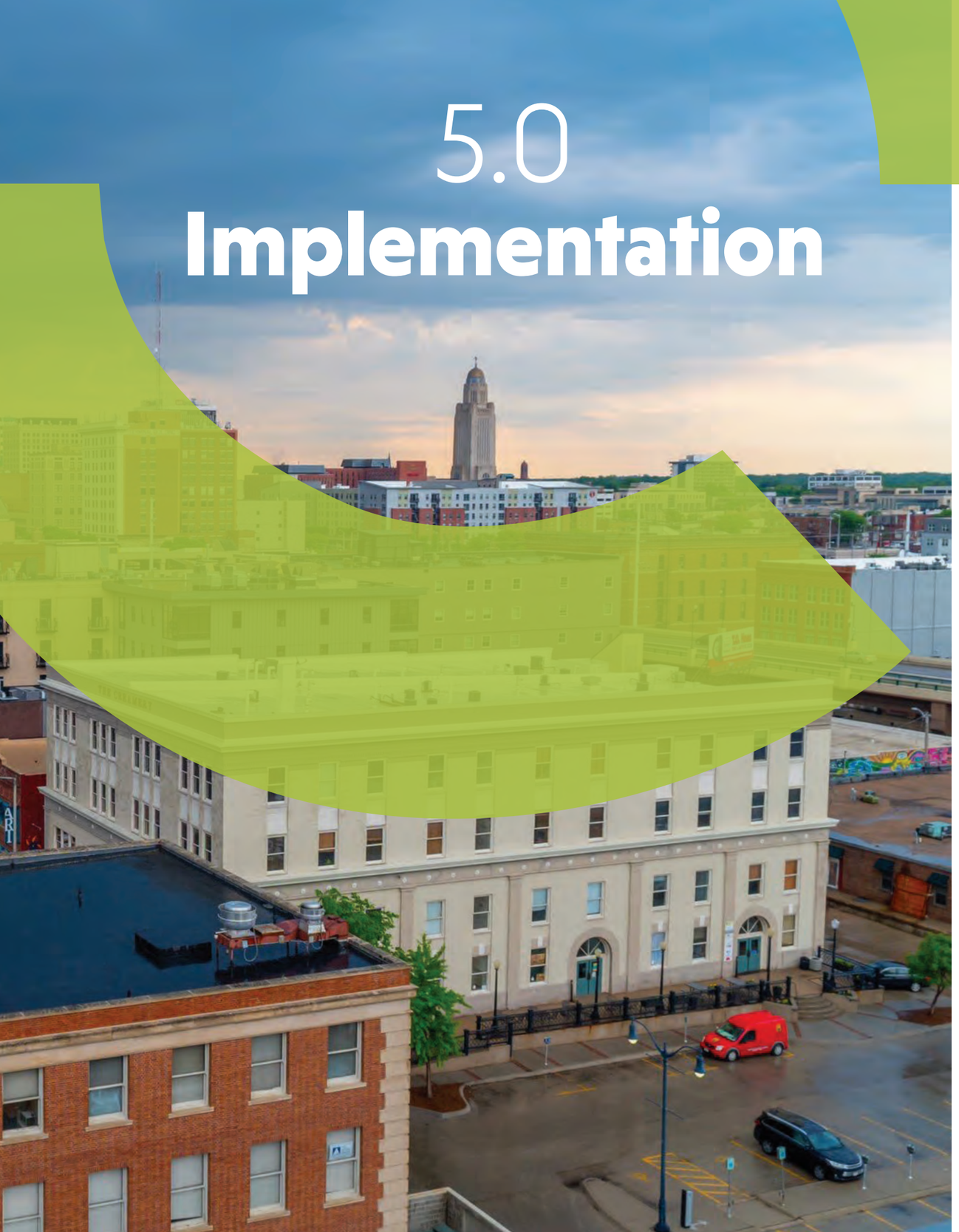
1. Develop a design for the two-way conversion of 13th Street.
2. Complete the P Street streetscape as redevelopment projects continue.
3. Implement the Autonomous Shuttle as funding becomes available.
4. Work with StarTran on the design and location of the Multi-Modal Transportation Center if funding becomes available.

Mid term 18 months – 5 years

1. Work with the Public Building Commission to make the K Street Building available for private development.
2. Continue to develop the remaining West Haymarket blocks.



5.0 Implementation



Implementation

This plan encompasses the Lincoln Community's vision for Downtown's next phase of growth and transformation. Chapter 4 identifies short, medium, and long-term recommendations for improvements, investment, activation, and programming throughout Downtown. Implementation of these varied recommendations will take dedicated leadership, staff, and revenue. This final chapter looks at how Downtown Lincoln can bring this plan to life and is organized into the following sections:

- **Short Term:** Chapter 4 details a wide range of short-term recommendations. This section identifies the top quick wins from amongst that chapter's recommendations – those that should be implemented first to maintain momentum and create an immediate impact on Downtown.
- **Partners and Responsibilities:** Many of the Plan's recommendations and actions require partnerships to move forward. This section identifies responsibilities for the variety of partners that were involved in the planning process and will be needed moving into implementation.
- **Sources of Funding and Supportive Policies:** Implementation will require dedicated effort and resources. This section includes explanations of the varied funding sources and policies to utilize for the Plan's actions, and whether these are initiated by the City, DLA, or other partners.
- **Measuring Progress:** To understand what is working and what needs adapting during implementation, it is important for the City and DLA to track progress. This section discusses how this can be done efficiently and effectively.

Short Term

While the Master Plan and Development Strategy identified a wide range of targeted strategies and action items, these will require sequencing moving forward. The top quick wins are listed below – those top short-term strategies and actions that should be prioritized for implementation within the next 18 months to maintain momentum and partnerships created by the Downtown master planning process.

Neighborhood Opportunity

1. Inventory existing buildings and opportunity sites for housing and engage local owners in redevelopment planning. Examples may include Class C office buildings and underutilized historic buildings such as the Gold's and Atrium Buildings. (DLA)
2. Examine existing incentives, such as the City's TIF Policy and Turnback Tax, and develop ways to support a variety of housing types and price points, (affordable, market rate, senior, for sale, high end/ luxury, townhomes, condos) particularly for middle class families. (City)

Urban Design Opportunity

3. Initiate a discussion and process regarding the future of the skywalk system. (City and DLA)
4. Draft streetscape design standards for Downtown. (City)

Mobility Opportunity

5. Coordinate with StarTran on final location and design elements of the multimodal transportation facility. (City)
6. Implement the autonomous shuttle to connect Downtown with UNL, the State Capitol, and the Haymarket. (City)
7. Launch the trolleys on the Downtown circulator route. (City)
8. Continue to expand bike share in Downtown. (City)

9. Restripe the west travel lane of 10th Street as a parking lane between L and N Streets as a temporary demonstration project and monitor the traffic volumes, speeds, and level of service for 6 to 9 months. (City)
10. Design the two-way conversion for 13th Street. (City)

Economic Development Opportunity

11. Work with the State and UNL to develop a "Downtown First" policy that aims to keep and expand State and UNL facilities in Downtown. The policy would require that the State and UNL provide an economic case statement or justification that compares the benefits of a Downtown vs. non-Downtown location. (DLA)
12. Encourage existing property owners to modernize Class B and C space into flexible, open format work spaces by providing examples and best practices of successful conversions in other cities. (DLA)

Arts & Culture Opportunity

13. Showcase the creativity and culture of Lincoln through public art, signage, banners, and other visible elements. (DLA/City)
14. Work with the Lincoln Arts Council to bring the Southpointe Mall Art Fair Downtown and locate it in spaces that activate Downtown such as Tower Square, P Street or Centennial Mall. (City and DLA)
15. Explore ideas and locations to improve underutilized spaces with public art such as on blank walls, in alleys, underpasses, and on parking structures. (City and DLA)

Catalyst Project 1: Redevelop the Pershing Center

16. Review development proposals for the Pershing Block, per the design criteria outlined in this plan, as they are submitted. (City)

Catalyst Project 2: O Street Streetscape and Façade Improvements

17. Create an O Street Project Area for use of TIF Funding for public improvements. (City)

Catalyst Project 3: Create Green Spines on M and 11th Streets

18. Solicit a request for qualifications to design M and 11th Streets. (City)

Catalyst Project 4: Create a Local Music and Art District

19. Create a Music District Advisory Committee and complete a detailed asset and needs assessment to better understand and quantify Lincoln's local music ecosystem, its strengths and gaps. (DLA)

Catalyst Project 5: Create a Public Park in Haymarket

20. Determine the configuration of the park in relation to adjacent properties.
21. Issue a request for qualifications for the design of West Park. (City)

Partners and Responsibilities

There is an array of partners who were involved in this plan, and will be integral in turning its recommendations into realities. Many of the plan's recommendations require partnerships to move forward. Key partners are sorted into three categories – Primary Partners, Major Anchor Institutions and Influencers, and Supporting Partners.

PRIMARY PARTNERS:

Responsibilities: Primary partners are keepers of the new vision for Downtown Lincoln. They work in close coordination with each other as the primary implementers and funders for plan projects. They regularly measure progress during implementation, communicate success with Downtown stakeholders and are nimble in adapting to changes in Downtown as needed.

- City
- DLA

MAJOR ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS & INFLUENCERS:

Responsibilities: Major anchor institutions and influencers are partners in many policies and programs identified throughout the Plan. They also serve as funding contributors, and given their influence community-wide, advocates for the continued growth of Downtown Lincoln.

- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- State of Nebraska
- Lancaster County
- Public Building Commission
- Major private sector partners

SUPPORTING PARTNERS:

Responsibilities: Supporting partners are integrally involved in policies and programs within their specific niche.

- Lincoln Chamber of Commerce (including the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development, Young Professionals Group, and StartupLNK)
- Southeast Community College
- YMCA
- Lincoln Children's Museum
- Downtown Hotels
- Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries
- Nebraska Innovation Campus
- Neighborhood Associations (NAs) and Community Development Organizations (CDOs), including the Downtown NA, Haymarket NA, Salt Creek Area NA, Everett NA, Capitol View NA, Near South NA, Malone NA, Hawley NA, Clinton NA, North Bottoms NA, and the South of Downtown CDO
- Federal Government (GSA)
- Development Partners
- Nebraska Department of Economic Development
- Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
- Lincoln Haymarket Development Corporation
- Downtown and University Music and Arts Venues
- Public Art Lincoln
- Lincoln Arts Council

Sources of Funding & Supportive Policies

Implementation of the plan will require dedicated effort, partnerships, and resources. Potential funding sources are sorted into two broader categories – funding that can be initiated by the City or DLA, and funding that will require commitments from other partners. Additionally, supportive policies identified throughout the Master Plan are listed in more detail here.

CITY OF LINCOLN AND/OR DLA:

City Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The City should consider prioritization within its CIP to implement Catalyst Projects and other capital recommendations from the Master Plan. This funding source could be appropriate for elements of each of the Catalyst Projects and many other recommendations throughout Chapter 4 of the plan, including enhancements to key streets and installation of connections and gateways for a variety of transportation modes.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
Tax increment financing is a common tool used to help leverage private investment throughout Lincoln, particularly in and surrounding Downtown. Revitalization and elimination of blight is a core purpose of tax increment financing that makes its use fully appropriate to advance the Downtown Master Plan. The current TIF policy should be reviewed for consideration of priorities. Some topics to consider include standardizing incentives and supporting desired housing types.

City General Fund
The City's General Fund is a primary funding source for many City programs and general operating expenses. Funds are allocated during the City's biennial budgeting process. The current adopted operating budget's time period is for 2018-2020. The flexibility of the General Fund makes it ideal to plug gaps or provide matching funds for a variety of public benefit investments (i.e., public realm improvements).

Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF)
The Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund is a resource to help increase the supply and improve the quality of affordable housing in Nebraska. The NAHTF provides matching funds for federal resources and aims to serve the lowest income individuals for the longest period of time. There is also a National Housing Trust Fund which is an affordable housing resource for increasing and preserving decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing for extremely low-income and very low-income households. The federal program is allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Citywide Bond Issue
Other cities have clustered several downtown improvement projects together as part of a citywide bond issue. Examples include Oklahoma City, Phoenix, Denver, and Dallas. In Lincoln, there is a potential that several of the Catalyst Projects could be combined as part of a citywide bond offering. If a new library is pursued, this project will likely require citywide support and could create the premise for adding complimentary public improvements to the mix.

Business Improvement District (BID)
While BID revenue is limited, the Downtown Master Plan may provide new options and priorities on how BID funds are expended. In addition, Downtown property owners should consider future increases in rates and/or bonding BID funds as investment is attracted and values grow.

PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Financing
This program allows the City to establish a clean energy assessment district so that owners of qualifying property can access PACE financing for energy efficiency improvements or renewable energy improvements to their properties located in the City and the extraterritorial jurisdiction. The City Council approved this program on August 27, 2018.

Enhanced Employment Area (EEA)
Nebraska Community Development Law authorized the creation of Enhanced Employment Areas (EEA) where a business occupation tax can be levied to pay for public infrastructure improvements and land acquisition. The tax is agree to by the developers and businesses and is only imposed on those businesses residing within the EEA.

PARTNER FUNDING OPTIONS:

Tax Abatements
Lancaster County, the City, and State could jointly explore and implement a pilot tax abatement initiative. This could be offered during a three-year pilot period and provide a multi-year abatement (5 to 10 years) in which developers and owners of new residential and/or residential mixed-use development pay taxes on an escalating scale. This could be a way to jump start new housing developments and may only be needed for the first couple projects until comparable projects are created so future developers are able to obtain financing. A tax abatement structure also offers many advantages over TIF. To the governing agencies, new tax revenue is recouped quickly in a much shorter term than TIF. For the residential developer or owner, the abatement provides relief when needed most during the initial lease-up or sales period for new units. The City and County should work together in concert with the State to adopt a tax abatement program.

Crowd-Sourcing
Crowd-sourcing platforms, where funds are secured through localized online appeals, could provide resources for low-cost capital and programming ideas that benefit Downtown residents and workers. Recent examples include crowd-sourcing to create a new Downtown dog parks in Cleveland and Reno, or crowdsourcing to secure funding for dedicated bicycle lanes in Downtown Denver. In each case, Downtown residents and businesses matched funds that were put forth by the BID and/or City.

Foundation/Corporate Grants and Sponsorships
Many of the Action Plan capital and programming recommendations may be appropriate for securing foundation or corporate grants and sponsorships. Improvements such as expanding the bike share program or active amenities in parks may be well matched for foundation or corporate sponsorships. Special events will remain a top opportunity for sponsorship.

Historic Property Development Incentives
Federal Tax Incentives: There is a 20% tax credit program on the qualified expenditure of a substantial rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The tax credit applies to the building owner's federal income tax for the year in which the project is completed and approved. The 10% tax credit program is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936. The building must be rehabilitated for non-residential use.

Nebraska Historic Tax Credit: The NHTC provides a state tax credit up to 20% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures. Buildings must be historically significant as defined by Nebraska, and single family detached buildings do not qualify. Annually, $15 million is allocated to the program, and individual projects are capped at $1 million.

Valuation Incentive Program: The VIP freezes the assessed property evaluation for eight years after rehabilitation is completed. Property taxes then increase by 25% each year for four years after the initial eight-year period. Therefore, the building is not assessed at full value until after 12 years. Properties must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places to be eligible.

Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC)
The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, created by Congress in 1986, has been one of the most successful resources for creating affordable housing across the nation. The LIHTC, rather than a direct subsidy, encourages investment of private capital in the development of rental housing by providing a dollar-for-dollar credit to offset an investor's federal income tax liability. LIHTCs are used to finance the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing for low-income households. Rent restriction requirements are placed on the property for no less than 30 years, creating a reliable supply of affordable units. In Nebraska, the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) is designated as the LIHTC allocation agency. To date, the LIHTC program has been the most successful rental housing production program in Nebraska, and can be an important tool to create more affordable units in and around Downtown – a priority recommendation of this Plan.

Federal New Market Tax Credit Program (NMTC)
The New Market Tax Credit program helps economically distressed communities attract private capital by providing investors with a Federal tax credit. Investments made through the NMTC program are used to finance businesses, including manufacturing, office, and retail space. The credit totals 39% of the original investment amount and is claimed over a seven-year period. The entire Downtown Study Area, excluding the UNL campus, is eligible for NMTCs.

Federal Opportunity Zones Program
The Federal Opportunity Zones program was established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. The purpose of the program is to promote investment and drive economic growth in low-income and/or economically disadvantaged communities. Investors can defer short- or long-term capital gains by reinvesting the capital gain portion in a "qualified opportunity fund" that must, in turn, invest the proceeds in "qualified opportunity zone property."

Nearly all of Downtown Lincoln is included within Census Tracts that have been designated as Opportunity Zones. These Tracts include 5, 7, 18, 19, 20.01, 20.02, 21, and 30.03. However, since the program is new and regulations on how it can be used are still being written, implications and impact are still unknown. The City should monitor the program as it's finalized and as investors begin to utilize it nationally.

Credit Enhancements from Large Employers
This is a method whereby large regional employers provide a credit enhancement (or guaranty) to a development company to improve its debt or credit worthiness and help jump-start new projects. Through credit enhancement, the lender is provided with reassurance that the borrower (developer) will honor the obligation through additional collateral, insurance, leasing commitments or a third-party guarantee. Credit enhancement provides leverage to developers creating housing that achieves Lincoln's housing goals. For the large regional employers, the return is in the form of helping to recruit skilled employees that may choose to live in new Downtown housing.

Down Payment Assistance
There are several assistance programs available to qualifying homebuyers in Lincoln. These programs, including those that the City currently runs in partnership with NeighborWorks®Lincoln, can be effective tools to boost homeownership rates and increase attainability in areas in and surrounding Downtown. Additionally, private banks including US Bank and Wells Fargo (both with a strong presence in Downtown Lincoln) are beginning to provide their own down payment assistance programs throughout the country. Plan partners should work with these local banks to encourage the expansion of these programs into Lincoln. A suite of down payment assistance and other homeownership programs could also provide a front-end incentive to developers to build ownership condominiums and townhouses in the core of Downtown – two of the most desired housing types according to community outreach during the master planning process.

Catalyst Project	Lead Agency	Key Funding Sources
1. Redevelop Pershing Center	City	Public-Private Partnership; TIF; Citywide Bond Issue (Library); New Market Tax Credits; various housing development incentives
2. O Street Streetscape and Façade Improvements	City	CIP; Commercial Façade Improvement Program; Tax Abatements; Historic Property Development Incentives; BID
3. Create Greenways on M and 11th Streets	City	CIP; Citywide Bond Issue; BID
4. Create a Local Music and Art District	DLA	Foundation/Corporate Grants and Scholarships; Crowd-Sourcing; BID; UNL
5. Create a Public Park in South Haymarket	City	CIP; Citywide Bond Issue; Public-Private Partnership;
6. Remaining 2005 Downtown Master Plan Projects	City	Foundation/Corporate Grants CIP; TIF; BID; Public-Private Partnership

Turnback Tax
Nebraska state law allows cities that have applied for state financial assistance to help in the construction of an arena and/or convention center to collect state sales taxes from on-premise retailers, ticket sales, and nearby hotels. Under this law, Lincoln can use 70% of state sales taxes generated by the on-premise retailers, ticket sales, and hotels located within 450 yards of the Pinnacle Bank Arena toward bond repayment on the Arena. The law also allows the City to use up to 10% of these turnback taxes toward the financing of low-income housing projects once enough funds have been collected to pay ongoing debt obligations. In Lincoln, the turnback tax has been utilized to pay back the bonds for the Pinnacle Bank Arena until the revenue from the turnback tax reaches the total annual principal and interest payments for the bond. The City Council has found that current revenue from the turnback tax is sufficient to meet ongoing principal and interest payments, which allows for 10% to be utilized for low income housing purposes.

SUPPORTIVE POLICIES:

Community Land Trust (CLT)
CLTs are nonprofit, community-based organizations whose mission is to provide affordable housing in perpetuity by owning land and leasing it to those who live in houses built on that land. CLTs are a common tool used nationwide to maintain affordability. While CLTs typically focus on the development and stewardship of owner-occupied housing, some are now broadening their focus to opportunities in non-residential development.

Commercial Façade Improvement Program
The revitalization of a neglected building or storefront has multiple benefits. It creates a more attractive streetscape for the community and signals positive change that can spur improvements to nearby buildings, while also creating a more effective real estate asset for the owner. Many times, façade improvements are cost-prohibitive to building owners.

A commercial façade improvement program can incentivize action by providing funding to private property owners to redesign, renovate, or restore commercial (or industrial) building façades. Often, façade improvement programs provide matching funds to owners, with minimum and maximum caps establishing limits. Successful façade improvement programs typically are restricted to downtowns and adjacent targeted neighborhoods in need of a revitalization boost.

Measuring Progress

Annual Key Indicator Tracking will be used to measure progress on implementation. Progress tracking on the implementation of the Master Plan will be overseen by the City and DLA. Strategies, action items, and catalyst projects have been identified to move Downtown Lincoln forward toward the community's vision for Downtown. In order to connect the specific activities to the larger vision, the City and DLA can track measurable indicators annually that offer information about how closely Downtown resembles the desired core values of Livable, Innovative, Welcoming, Connected, and Destination.

The City and DLA should establish a baseline upon adoption of the plan and then use the suggested key indicators below to measure progress toward the core values:

Livable
- Number of Downtown residents
- Downtown resident demographics
- Downtown housing by type
- Number of affordable housing units
- Median home price and rent by Downtown sub-area

Innovative
- Job growth, total and in target sectors
- Number of new businesses
- Jobs diversity by industry and skill level
- Education rates for Downtown residents
- Wages for Downtown workers
- Office inventory and vacancy by type

Welcoming
- Feedback from Downtown visitors, via a Downtown Perception Survey
- Return customers, both local and out of town
- Racial/ethnic mix of pedestrian and park user counts
- Street-level vacancy rates
- Number of outdoor seats
- Reduced police calls

Connected
- Linear feet of new sidewalks
- Linear feet of new bike facilities
- Pedestrian counts along sidewalks, intersections, and pedestrian malls
- Bike share ridership
- Transit (bus) ridership
- Autonomous vehicle ridership
- Improved Walk and Bike Score
- Parking occupancies

Destination
- Annual attendees at Downtown events and attractions
- Pedestrian counts at a variety of locations during the evening and on weekends
- Number of retail, dining, and entertainment establishments
- Hotel room average daily rates, RevPAR, and occupancy

DLA should also utilize these metrics and indicators to create a "Downtown Scorecard" that can be used to promote Downtown and also be provided to the development and business community in its economic development efforts.