

DOWNTOWN LINCOLN MASTER PLAN

CHARRETTE SUMMARY NOTES, MAY 22-24

The project team met with a variety of groups and individuals as well as the general public over the course of 2 ½ days May 22 -24, with over 200 participants. In addition to the public open house, meetings included: 1) Project Committee 2) DLA Board 3) Core Staff 4) DLA Maintenance Staff 5) Focus Group of Downtown Residents and residents from neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown 6) Mayor Beutler 7) Public Art Lincoln 8) Federal Parking Garage building manager 8) SPARKLY 9) Bicycle Master Plan Team 10) Library Board 11) Planning Commission and 12) Steering Committee. The combined comments from these meetings are summarized on the following pages.

Housing:

- Major question: "What will bring the missing middle housing to downtown and why has it not happened yet"
- Housing discussion – 1,000 vacant dorm rooms on campus – can these be used for faculty housing? Service workers, affordable housing?
- Concern about the neighborhoods south and southeast of downtown. Don't want to create more unaffordable housing, but can see the attraction to creating holistically, a better downtown. There is a disconnect between the density of student housing and the other goals. Worries about creating a downtown that is catering to 19 and 20-year olds. This isn't family friendly. Transient students don't have the same commitment to downtown as someone who lives there. There is an excessive amount of partying happening downtown.
- Downtown is about how the core improves but also the neighborhoods around it are important to its success
- Additional density bonuses may not be an incentive here as developers are not building to maximum density anyway.

Parks:

- Staff hearing there needs to be more places to play; for kids.
- Open space south of 5th and N is designated for future greenspace/active space/music venue/sports fields/dog park/play areas.
 - This space is publicly owned.
 - Northern part is buildable; southern piece is not due to contamination.
- Want to add bocce courts; something Lincoln hasn't tried yet.
- The terminus of Canopy St – near 7th and N - idea of a public plaza space, also the lot at 7th & Q could be a public plaza.
- 50 ft x 80 ft – minimum size for a playground (with all pieces); you could bring this down if you take out certain play elements.
- No designated funding source for acquiring land for new parks; there is a Parks and Rec CIP, but no room in it for acquisition.
- Interest in a skate/bike park potentially under the Rosa Parks viaduct.
- The fountain/play at north end of Centennial Mall is popular for kids.
- Ideas on block 5 in West Haymarket – idea is to build 2-3 buildings surrounded by green space and a park that can handle festivals (similar to Commons Park in Denver).
- Park ideas: dog park, skate park, park under viaduct (which gives shade).
- 50 ft x 80 ft standard small park size.
- Need space for kids and dogs.
- Outdoor play - Ping pong, large chess, bocce court, etc.

Schools:

- Potential for a bond issue for schools; likely in 2020; most of this will be dedicated to the city's fringe; includes new high school (currently 6 high schools and need for a 7th – 105% capacity).
- Student body has grown by about 1000 kids per year.
- No active discussion about a Downtown school; though there is conversation about how LPS could be involved in STEM, college overlap, specialty, etc.
- Two schools in study area are unique – community learning centers at both of these.

YMCA:

- Aging facility – should the building be renovated or should a new facility be built?
- Want to be family-friendly and they want to continue to have a downtown presence.
- 55,000 SF currently in downtown, the space is not efficient, they could do a new space in the 40,000 sq. ft range is designed efficiently and includes community rooms.
- Mostly serve retirees, business, swimmers; not children.
- Student body is great for their hiring.

Library:

- Would be thrilled to have partners on a project or site.
- Shared meeting spaces for evening and weekend uses.
- Typically, the City owns the property – they own ¼ of the current city block.
- Looking for places with a lot of daytime activity.
- 57 ft. height restrictions along Centennial Mall.
- Both the YMCA and Libraries serve the senior community well.
- Library needs about 100K sq. ft. in 3 -stories with about 100 parking spaces which could be underground/building.
- Would like to have outdoor open space incorporated into the design.
- Not much support to save the Pershing Center – the building is not conducive for a 21st century library, the rehab would as costly as a new facility, also there are no historic tax credits available as the building would have to be significantly retrofitted.
- Is there any way to have a combined facility for SCC, Convention Center, and Library?

Transportation:

- Autonomous shuttle is piloting this summer
- 9th and 10th, Antelope Valley, 16th and 17th, K and L – these are primary connectors to the rest of the city
- Wrapping up citywide crash data effort – aware of bike and ped safety
- Bike facility connections – the trail at 4th and J should extend north to future Haymarket Park – this is a big missing link – 4th south of J is a great off-street bikeway (Jamaica North Trail that extend 100 miles to the Kansas Border
- There is a great opportunity to reduce the lanes on 13th St. south to connect to the neighborhoods and continue the bike lanes to UNL – convert to two-way north of K street
- 11th, 12th and 13th are important N-S connections between UNL and southern neighborhoods and these are the best potential bike streets
- 12th has a better bike/ped entrance into UNL – could be a good bike route to/through campus
- Need for more protected bike lanes
- 16th & 17th also have potential to be converted to two-way with addition of bike lanes (Confirm with Jenny – she said these should remain one-way pairs with bike lanes)

- FHU is proposing the 13th St. be converted to 2-way north of K street and convert from 4 lanes to 3 with a center turn lane and bike lanes – 13th also connect to
- 8th could also have bike lanes
- An argument for 2-way streets is redundancy in the system make it easier to get around for all modes
- 11th in downtown has 120 ft. of ROW, wonder if this could be taken advantage of. Also note the historical significance of 11th as the gateway to the university.
- 13th St. should be a special street to connect to/through downtown and connect to the rec center to the south
- Could there be a figure 8/bi directional shuttle downtown?
- Bus routes need to be spread out – not all concentrated on 9th and 10th.
- The bike light timing on N St. is not good.

Parking:

- Federal garage in good shape. Designed to accept more levels. It has no underground levels. It serves the Federal Court House. It is a secure garage. No after-hours activity. Only Federal uses allowed – parking and possibly some offices. No residential and/or retail mix allowed.
- 57 ft height limit along Centennial Mall is a factor in garage construction.
- Land swaps involving the Federal garage have been discussed in the past.
 - Block 65 at 13th/14th and N is the future site of a City parking garage (just east of DLA)
 - In the long term, cannot run shuttle from the Haymarket parking structures to the state as these are designed for future development – this could be a short-term solution but unlikely to be successful.
 - Potential parking structure site between 7th/8th and L&K next to/under Rosa Parks Way.

Economy:

- Technology companies need new talent – work with existing companies, internships, job programs, etc.
 - Convention Center? – Should a new convention center should be co-located near the Arena/Post Office or should it be closer to the University to spread the convention oriented facilities?
 - A convention center is a catalyst. But then it has spurts of no activity and whatever it draws in, has to be supported when the center isn't buzzing with people. What is the success rate of convention centers?

Art:

- Public Art Lincoln is looking for a street or place where art - primarily big sculpture but could be projection art - could be displayed and be for sale. Exhibits would be yearlong, they could include two types of art: High Art, and Community Art – playful, engaging. Montreal is a good example of public temporary art. Ft. Collins not so good example – too much art, and not well related.
- Lincoln Arts Council puts on an annual art fair at the Gateway shopping center .
- 12th street is favored as an art street because it is anchored by the Sheldon Art Gallery. 12th Street, however, is a is a dead street in terms of activity. Q street is also dead.
- 13th St. could be a candidate for an art street. Close to Sheldon. Terminates at Love Library. Theater and Tower Square on it. Could include performance areas music. Needs shade!
- 14th St. is also a possibility. Active street with restaurants. 2-way traffic.
- P Street from Tower Square to Centennial Mall is also a possibility for an art street.
- Art could be clustered rather than scattered to act as generators of activity.
- Art should be interactive, playful, fun for all ages, promote social interaction, engaging and multifunctional.
- Could there be projection art? Art on screens along parking garages.

Streetscape:

- O Street Ash Tress have an Ash Borer issue –these are being removed, not cost effective to treat anymore
- Downtown Lincoln is an urban arboretum.
- 13th Street could be a 2-way street, as could 16th and 17th streets. Park zone in a wide sidewalk would have to be 15 ft wide minimum - 20 ft better. Need 6 ft safety zone around equipment (play equipment?).
- City could close down streets for public events.
- Need SHADE in public realm.

Downtown and Surrounding Residents Focus Group – Positives and Challenges of Living in Downtown

Positives	Challenges
Lot of places to go out and socialize	Perception of bikes/bike lanes from outsiders
Growth	Perception that parking is too difficult
Entertainment – lots of options; variety	Lack of disabled parking
Bike lanes	Pedestrian crossings (too auto-oriented; turn on red)
P and N Street	Crossing at 9 th and 10 th
Good community of residents	Timing of the traffic lights
Have UNL connected to Downtown	Too many businesses that cater to students
New and emerging districts – 11 th Street	Property taxes and BID assessments
Events – good mix of weekly, monthly, annual	Not enough greenspace
The live music scene	Lack of response from the Police
Startup community; good work ethic	Transients
Affordability	Bike share cost
Bike share	Railyard is too expensive for businesses
Brick streets in Haymarket	Not enough investment/maintenance in surrounding neighborhoods
	Dress code in Haymarket is too restrictive
	Fear of property values increasing surrounding downtown, particularly for renters – a lot of speculation happening
	Railyard competition hurts O Streets
	Fear that downtown will become only for the wealthy