MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY
August 11, 2014

Tracy Corr opened the meeting on Monday, August 11, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room, City/County/Building, in Lincoln, NE.

Attendance
Fourteen citizens and five staff attended:

Tracy Corr – 40th & A NA
Rifka Keilson – Country Club NA
Paula Rhian – Everett NA
Larry Evermann – Irvingdale NA
William Carver – Near South NA
Wynn Hjermstad – Urban Development Dept.
Adam Rhoads – Health Department
Mike Renken -- Neighbor®Works-Lincoln
David Cary – Planning Department
Mayor Beutler
Jeff Schwebke – Arnold Heights NA
Paul Johnson – East Campus CO
Myrna Coleman – Highlands NA
Dennis Hecht – Meadowlane Area RA
Bill Vocasek – West A NA
Russell Miller – Lincoln Neigh. Alliance
Sheree Goertzen – Neighbor®Works-Lincoln
Christy Eichorn – Planning Department
Carl Eskridge – City Council

Welcome & Introductions, Volunteer to Take Notes
The meeting was called to order at 5:30 by Chairwoman Corr. Everyone introduced themselves. Adam Rhoads agreed to take notes.

Mayor's Comments
The ***2014 – 2016 Budget*** is in the approval process. The Mayor is pleased to get some funding into areas that had previously been cut or were lacking necessary funds.

The sales tax increase that would have helped fund streets, sidewalks and parks has been tabled, as the City Council could not reach an agreement that put a proposal on the November ballot. It may be a couple years before this proposal comes back into play. In the meantime, less funding will be going into those community improvement areas.

The Problem Property ordinance passed on a 7-0 vote.

reFORM Proposal
Christy Eichorn, Lincoln-Lancaster Co. Planning Department

reFORM is a set of design standards for achieving consistency with redevelopment in the community. It includes some necessary zoning changes. An example of the positive impact of the program can be seen in recent downtown development.

To find out more information on **reFORM** go to lincoln.ne.gov and type "reform" in the search box (or use this link: **http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/long/reform/reform.htm**). Details now available include:

1. *Executive Summary:* proposed and recent changes are included. Changes were made to the B1 zoning district "Neighborhood Commercial District" around neighborhoods. This limits business types by being prescriptive and will help provide wanted retail services in neighborhoods. In addition, old B1 zoning becomes B3.
2. *Legislative Changes:* shows all changes in City Code.
3. Commercial Design Standards Handbook. This is a visual handbook that illustrates the preferred standards compared to development without design standards.

These new standards are secondary to standards that cover health, safety and welfare.

Comments from the public are needed by the end of the summer. Meetings with those who are affected by zoning changes will take place in September. **Also see Attachment 1.**

Proposed *2014/15 – 2019/20 Capital Improvement Program* (CIP)

David Cary, Manager, Long Range Planning Division, Lincoln-Lancaster Co. Planning Department

This CIP is for 2014/2015 – 2019/2020. It follows the ***LPlan 2040***, the City's comprehensive plan, and is an outcome-based budgeting process. Projects are all evaluated based on conformity to ***LPlan 2040***. The first two years of the CIP are also the actual capital budget.

The CIP is overseen by an advisory committee, which sends proposals to the Planning Commission for review. Projects are divided between public works and non-public works categories. Public works projects include: StarTran, streets & highways, broadband infrastructure, watershed management, water supply, wastewater, and solid waste. Non-public works projects include: Pershing demolition, public safety (911 system), libraries, LES, Urban Development, and Parks & Recreation.

This CIP has been produced in a new format. It is a better, more readable document and is available online, with good interactive mapping through the CIP viewer.

See http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/long/cip/2014-20/index.htm.

Next Month

Possible topic for the September meeting: Lincoln's homeless population and the resources available to balance homeless population needs and neighborhood/community needs, especially in the public interface – i.e. panhandling on public sidewalks and/or occupation of City parks.

Submitted by Adam Rhoads

reFORM
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A package with several interlocking pieces

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the creation and enhancement of active, interesting and safe places requires guidance through the adoption of new design standards. Clear and consistently applied design standards for future commercial and mixed use projects can clarify and streamline the development process for developers and neighbors alike, both of whom have a shared stake in protecting the value of their properties. The proposed code revisions are meant to realign standards and processes to be more consistent with the vision expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Four inter-related goals guide the development of the reFORM package. They are: 1. reMOVE zoning barriers; 2. reESTABLISH a sense of place in our commercial centers; 3. reINFORCE landscape/screening requirements; and 4. reALIGN the city zoning map with development and design goals

Each of the four goals is summarized in this document with specific objectives identified for each. Strategies associated with each objective are then provided to further explain in more detail how the objective can be met.

What's new and different from the original 2013 reFORM proposal?

Planning staff met with neighborhood groups and business associations throughout the summer of 2013. In the fall of 2013, an advisory committee made up of neighborhood representatives, development attorneys, developers, architects and Planning Commission members met to learn about the reFORM proposal and to discuss its merits. Based on the feedback we received from both our interaction with the advisory committee and the neighborhood and business organizations, several changes have been made to the proposal.

- Properties zoned B2 and H4 with approved site plans will be exempted from the new proposed Commercial Center Design Standards. Many of these centers already have their own design standards and are currently being developed. Applying new center standards to developed centers that are not likely to redevelop in the near future became less of a priority related to the goals and objectives of the reFORM project.
- The idea of administratively approved use permits was found to have little value since existing approved shopping centers would be exempted from the new standards and few new centers are expected to be developed in the next several years. There was also neighborhood concern about this idea. Therefore this proposal was removed.
- The proposal to allow 1 acre Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) were very concerning to neighborhood representatives. It was decided that each idea should be a topic unto itself and should be discussed with the community on its own at a later date and not as part of this package.

- The committee was supportive of developing a new district that would cater to neighborhood retail and services, but would also be a more compatible neighbor then some more intense commercial districts. A new B-1 Neighborhood Business District is being proposed to replace the existing B-1 district. The new B-1 would be a Commercial Corridor Design Standards district and would have limited uses, smaller ground signs and no off-premises signs.
- While the feedback Planning staff received from the advisory committee and outreach efforts was generally positive, it was acknowledged that the "devil is in the details." Planning staff spent the winter of 2014 reviewing feedback from our outreach and incorporated that feedback into a legislative draft of the proposed changes that provides the details needed to better understand how these new standards will be implemented. In addition to the legislative draft of changes and additions to the design standards, a "sketchbook" illustrating the proposed design standards with pictures and exhibits has also been developed to provide a visual explanation of the proposed standards.

1. reMOVE Zoning Barriers

The Zoning Ordinance is a set of rules that the community has agreed to abide by when developing and using land. These rules not only promote the health, safety and welfare of this community, but also provide predictability and set expectations for development. The existing zoning ordinance was developed over 35 years ago at a time when infill and redevelopment was not emphasized. It promoted separation of uses and established height and area regulations more conducive to developments on the edge of town rather than in the existing developed areas. The Comprehensive Plan directs us to *"Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide more flexibility, particularly in commercial districts."* This part of reFORM reviews existing zoning regulations and proposes how they might be modified to encourage infill and redevelopment while still protecting the integrity of surrounding neighborhoods.

Objective A. Relax height and setback requirements

Strategy A1. Facilitate 3 and 4 story buildings to encourage a mix of commercial and residential uses. Increase the maximum building height in the B-2, B-5 and the B-3 zoning districts and lower building height in H-2 for consistency and to be more compatible to nearby residential.

Strategy A2. Create a pedestrian oriented environment in proposed corridor design standards districts by reducing the front yard in the H-2 Highway Business District and the B-1 local business district from 20 feet to 0 feet. To create pedestrian facilities in Centers, define Pedestrian Oriented Route and clarify that the front yard adjacent to a Pedestrian Oriented Route in B-2, B-5 and H-4 is reduced to 0 feet.

Strategy A3. Provide a STEP BACK transitional setback on residential block faces instead of maintaining the residential front yard setback through the commercial district.

Strategy A4. Allow developers to count ½ of alley right-of-way towards the required side and/ or rear yard setback requirements allowing for more flexibility in site design.

Strategy A5. Provide for waivers to Height and Lot Regulations through an optional Use Permit process in zoning districts that have adopted commercial design standards.

Strategy A6. Increase the side yard setback for the B-3 Corridor from 5 feet to 10 feet, if adjoining a residential district, and reduce the side yard in the H-2 Corridor from 20 feet to 10 feet, as in B-3, if adjoining a residential district.

Strategy A7. Allow parking in the side yard setback in the B-1, B-3 and H-2 districts with increased screening adjacent to residential zoning districts.

Objective B. Revise Parking Standards

Strategy B1. Establish clear provisions for and expand shared parking provisions in all commercial zoning districts and allow an administrative approval of parking reductions if an analysis of the site can demonstrate less parking is needed, based on factors such as available on-street parking and a mix of uses with different peak hour demands.

Strategy B2. Allow doctors and dentists to have the same parking requirement as other office uses in the district.

Strategy B3. Allow for offsite parking in B-5 and H-4 zoning districts and increase offsite parking options in all districts by allowing off street parking within 600 feet of a site instead of 300 feet.

Strategy B4. Reduce required parking in the B-5 Planned Regional Business District from 4.5 stalls per 1,000 square feet to 1 space per 300 square feet of commercial space. The B-5 is a regional commercial District and is not a district with likely spillover parking in residential areas.

Strategy B5. Change the required parking in H-2 and the proposed repurposed B-1 district from 1 per 300 square feet to 1 per 600 square feet to be consistent with the existing parking requirements of the B-3 Commercial district.

Strategy B6. Allow parking garages and parking lots as a permitted main use in all B, H and I zoning districts.

Objective C. Streamline the Project Review Processes

Strategy C1. Convert all Special Permits for Planned Service Commercial into Use Permits. This includes changing broadcast stations, churches, post secondary and industrial trade schools and motorized vehicle and truck wash facilities from special permitted uses to permitted uses with the elimination of the Planned Service Commercial Special Permit. Private schools would change from special permitted to conditional use. A corresponding change to the Subdivision Ordinance will be made to facilitate this change: Title 26 Section 23.140 (g) to remove reference to "Planned Service Commercial under Chapter 27.63."

Objective D. Allow More Opportunities for Residential Uses In and Near Commercial Zoning

Strategy D1. Allow residential uses on the first floor of commercial buildings in business districts but set back 40 ft within buildings along arterial or collector streets.

Strategy D2. Allow residential uses in H-2 and H-4 districts by special permit, recognizing its appropriateness is situational.

Strategy D3. Eliminate the small Community Unit Plan (CUP) "penalty" provision that reduces the allowable density on tracts less than 10 acres in size.

Objective E. Create a new business district with lower intensity retail/service uses and signage that is more compatible with nearby residential

Strategy E1. Revise the sign regulations for the proposed repurposed B-1 district to be more compatible with surrounding neighborhoods by adopting the sign regulations used for the O-3 Office Park district.

Strategy E2. Reduce the Front yard setback in the proposed repurposed B-1 district from 20 feet to 0 since commercial corridor design standards are proposed for this new district.

Strategy E3. Revise the list of allowed uses in the proposed repurposed B-1 district to be more prescriptive, limiting auto oriented other uses that are less compatible with nearby residential.

Objective F. Update the Zoning District Uses to reflect the intent of reForm

Strategy F1. Rename B-1, B-2, H-2 and H-4 zoning districts to better describe their purpose.

Strategy F2. Add new Design Standard reference in zoning district chapters to H-2, B-1, B-3, H-4, B-2 and B-5.

Strategy F3. Eliminate the H-1 district by rezoning all existing H-1 areas to H-3.

Strategy F4. Remove Truck Wash facilities as a permitted use in the H-2 District since no other truck service uses are permitted in this district.

Strategy F5. Eliminate the 30,000 square foot limitation on retail in the H-4.

Strategy F6. Marinas are being added as a permitted use to the B-3 since they will no longer be a permitted use in the B-1.

2. reESTABLISH a Sense of Place in Our Commercial Centers

Many communities have realized that the creation and enhancement of special "places" throughout a City, through careful design and arrangement of new and old buildings and spaces, can be an important economic development tool. Offering more options to live and work and shop and recreate is important

to attracting and retaining the kinds of businesses and workers which are fueling this century's post-industrial economy.

The 2040 Lincoln Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the creation and enhancement of special "places" requires guidance through the adoption of new design standards. The plan recommends more attention to the design of new and redeveloping commercial and mixed use projects. The proposed Commercial Design Standards address the site development and building design necessary to achieve enhanced aesthetics, functionality, and pedestrian accommodation in commercial and mixed use areas along major roadways and near residential neighborhoods. Clear and consistently applied design standards for future commercial and mixed use projects can clarify and streamline the development process for developers and neighbors alike, both of whom have a shared stake in protecting the value of their properties

Objective G. Establish design standards to encourage commercial and mixed use developments that are attractive, pedestrian oriented, and enhance nearby neighborhoods

Strategy G1. Designate specific areas where design standards will apply. There are two different types of design standards. Commercial Corridor Design standards will apply to the B-3, H-2 and the new B-1 Neighborhood Business zoning districts. Commercial Center Design Standards will apply to larger B-5 regional center developments as well as to the B-2 and H-4 commercial zoning districts. Existing B-2 and H-4 districts that already have an approved site plan are exempt from these standards.

Strategy G2. Establish standards that make commercial and mixed use development more walkable. The first step is to require a 16 foot wide streetscape area between buildings and the street curbs that include an 8 foot planting area including room for street trees and an 8 foot area that incorporates a 5 foot sidewalk. Good streetscapes are also influenced by building placement which is discussed in the attached Commercial Design Standards Sketchbook.

Strategy G3. Create building design standards that make development more aesthetically pleasing. Building design standards address elements of a building such as articulation, transparency, materials, equipment screening and entrance design. Each of these elements are discussed and illustrated in the attached Commercial Design Standards Sketchbook.

Strategy G4. Establish a process that integrates the new Commercial Design Standards with existing design standards. This is accomplished by modifying Chapter 1.00 Section 2.5 to create one unified process (including appeals, time line and procedure for potentially aggrieved parties) for the existing Downtown and Neighborhood design standards and for the new Commercial Design Standards.

3. reINFORCE Landscape/Screening Requirements

Although the Comprehensive Plan encourages mixed use development, it also recognizes that a diversity of land uses requires buffering, screening and maintaining the character of a block or neighborhood. Today's Design Standards address adjacent uses and zoning districts of substantially different character, but these standards could be enhanced by requiring more and taller screening of taller buildings from

abutting residential districts, and by requiring solid screens plus dense landscaping to buffer more intensive commercial uses. The streetscape and hence the character of a business area will be enhanced by eliminating current exemptions to parking lot screening.

Objective H. Achieve desirable and permanent screens and buffers

Strategy H1. Require street trees with new developments at permitting stage, not just with new subdivisions. (Only applies to Commercial Design Standards Districts)

Strategy H2. Require more parking lot trees. Add 1 parking lot tree for the first 2000 square feet of parking lot and 1 additional tree for every 6,000 square feet after that.

Strategy H3. Require a 6 foot solid screen plus trees between residential and adjacent B-1, B-3 or H-2 zoning districts. This screening requirement may be located on the abutting residential property with the consent of the property owner. Trees required for residential buffers that are on the edge of a parking lot can also be counted toward the parking lot tree requirement.

Strategy H4. Eliminate current parking lot screening exemptions, specifically the exemption for shallower lots in older zoning districts.

Strategy H5. Apply current parking lot screening requirements to auto display areas.

4. reALIGN the City Zoning Map with Development and Design Goals

Today's zoning map is somewhat haphazard, with different zoning districts applied to similar situations, and the same district applied to very different situations. Layering new commercial design standards requires a rethinking and re-orienting of some previous zoning decisions.

Aligning design categories with certain zoning districts makes the proposed Commercial Design Standards easier to follow and easier to enforce. To do this will require some "re-mapping" of various business and highway commercial zoning districts. The result of this re-mapping will be a broader range of allowed uses for business areas that are more highway oriented and remote from residential neighborhoods, and slightly more limited range of uses with new design standards for locations on the edge of neighborhoods. However, the proposed relaxation of other zoning standards in those locations such as reduced parking and setbacks, increased height, and more opportunity for mixed use should compensate for any new limitations.

Objective I. Align zoning with desired design context

Strategy I1. Rezone most existing B-1 zoning to B-3 or other districts as appropriate for design context.

Strategy I2. Rezone all H-1 to H-3 and eliminate the H-1 district from the code.

Strategy I3. Rezone some H-3 zoned commercial properties at the edge of residential neighborhoods to H-2, which will eliminate some more intensive uses and require development to follow Commercial

Design standards. Rezone other properties that are more highway oriented and not adjacent to neighborhoods to different classifications that would not be subject to the new proposed design standards (H-4 to H-3).