

RESIDENTIAL

The community relies on the interdependency of existing and new neighborhoods. Each resident today is the beneficiary of investments made by past generations. New neighborhoods bring new residential opportunities and additional support for obtaining the community's goals. Existing neighborhoods remain vital and interesting places that provide the majority of the community's affordable housing. These neighborhoods are also home to an increasingly diverse population.

Some of the signatures of established neighborhoods are the local parks, business districts, neighborhood shops, and schools. These key features are typically centrally located, have good transportation connections, and provide for public meeting spaces. Their scale and location are such that they are an integral part of their neighborhood community. Often residential uses were incorporated above local stores. The net effect is to create a neighborhood with a scale appropriate for walking and designed to be time, transportation, and cost efficient. City and county governmental policies should promote the retention of these aspects in older neighborhoods and their development in new neighborhoods.

OVERALL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the region to be near job opportunities and to provide housing choices within every neighborhood. Preserve existing affordable housing and promote the creation of new affordable housing throughout the community.

One of Lincoln's most valuable community assets is the supply of good, safe, and decent single family homes that are available at very affordable costs when compared to many other communities across the country. Preservation of these homes for use by future generations will protect residential neighborhoods and allow for many households to attain the dream of home ownership.

A safe residential dwelling should be available for each citizen: the efficiency apartment and the country estate, the small single family "starter" home and the large downtown apartment suite, the most affordable and the most expensive dwelling unit, completely independent living and living within the care of others. Provision of the broadest range of housing options throughout the community improves the quality of life in the whole community.

Yet this diversity of housing choices directly depends upon achieving affordable housing. Housing affordability is not merely important for the community, it is imperative. Lack of affordable housing directly impacts citizens' assets and opportunities, which in turn shape the community's assets and opportunities. Failure to achieve housing affordability reduces the quality of life for income groups disproportionately, creates widespread hardships and stress, and retards the City's collective abilities to address community problems and objectives.

New residential development is generally discouraged in areas of environmental resources such as saline wetlands, native prairies and in floodplain corridors.

Provide different housing types and choices, including affordable housing, throughout each neighborhood for an increasingly diverse population.

Encourage convenient access to neighborhood services (stores, schools, parks) from residential areas.

Create housing opportunities for residents with special needs throughout the city that are compatible with residential neighborhoods.

Special Needs -- generally include, but are not limited to the following uses: elderly housing, assisted living centers, group homes, domestic shelters and single room occupancy housing.

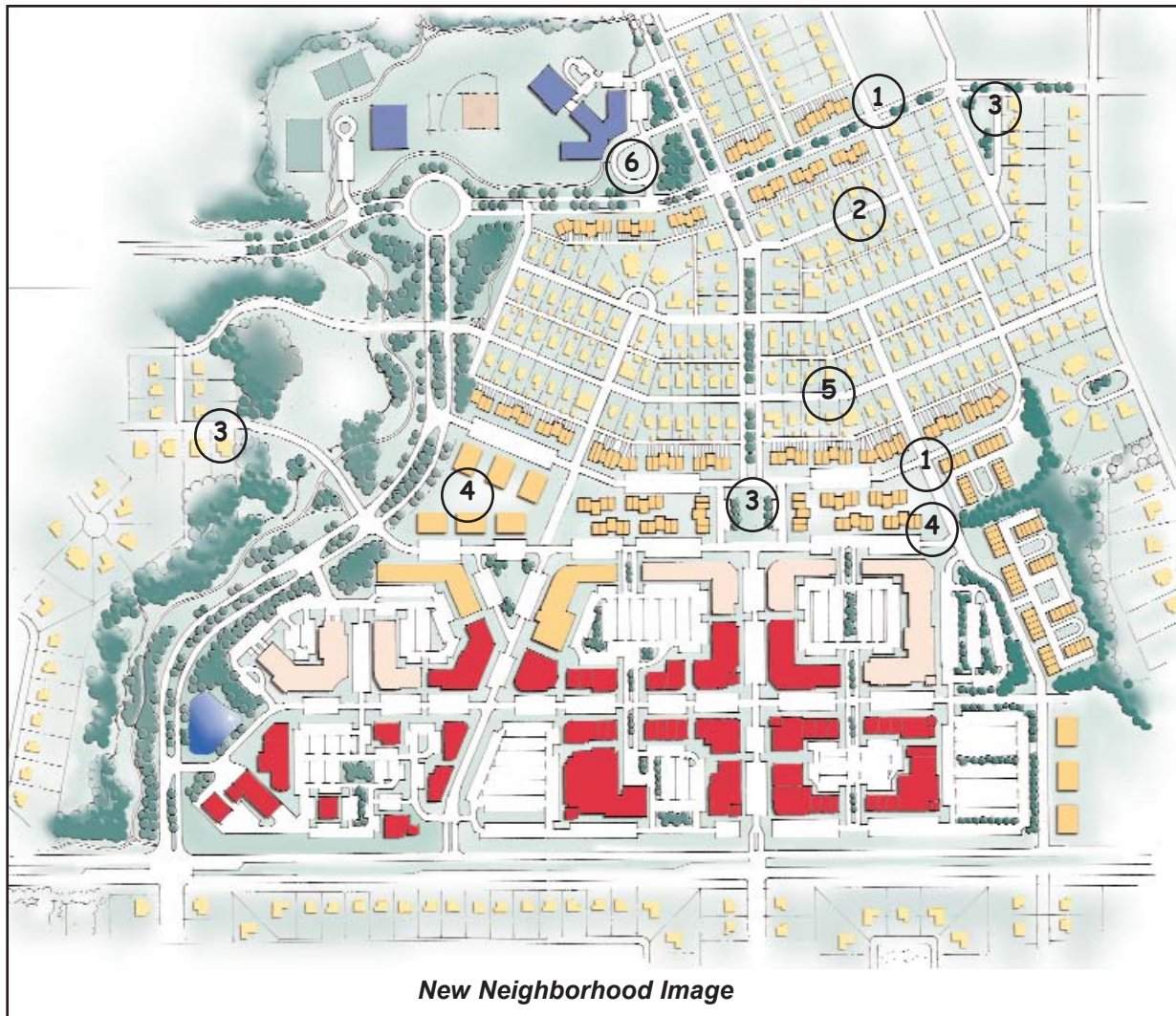
Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle networks should maximize access and mobility to provide alternatives and reduce dependence upon the automobile. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of all streets, or in alternative locations as allowed through design standards or the Community Unit Plan process.

Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance. Neighborhoods should include homes, stores, workplaces, schools and places to recreate.

Interconnected networks of streets, trails and sidewalks should be designed to encourage walking and bicycling and provide multiple connections within and between neighborhoods.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

The guiding principles for new neighborhoods are a combination of principles found in this section in addition to the principles for all other sections within the plan, such as Business and Commerce and Mobility and Transportation. A neighborhood is more than housing – great neighborhoods combine all the elements of parks, education, commercial areas, the environment and housing together in one place.



The image is an example of how the principles might work together in a neighborhood, including the following principles:

1. Encourage a mix of housing types, single family, townhomes, apartments, elderly housing all within one area;
2. Similar housing types face each other: single family faces single family, change to different use at rear of lot;
3. Parks and open space within walking distance of all residences;
4. Multi-family and elderly housing nearest to commercial area;
5. Pedestrian orientation; shorter block lengths, sidewalks on both sides of all roads;
6. Public uses (elementary schools, churches) as centers of neighborhood – shared facilities (city parks & school sites).

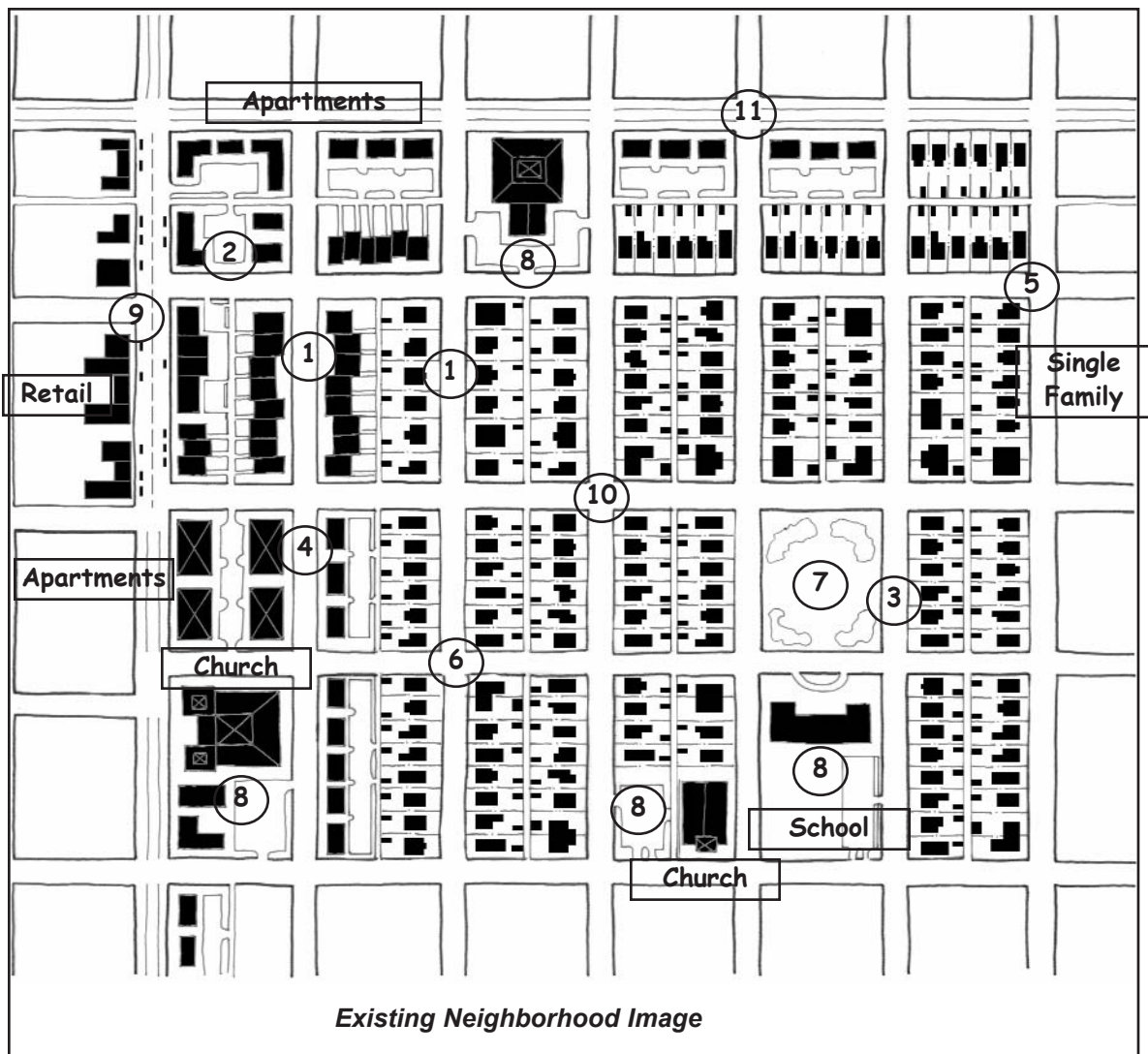
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

Promote the preservation, maintenance and renovation of existing housing and neighborhoods throughout the city, with special emphasis on low and moderate income neighborhoods. Maintain and enhance infrastructure and services in existing neighborhoods.

Preserve, protect, and promote city and county historic resources. Preserve, protect and promote the character and unique features of rural and urban neighborhoods, including their historical and architectural elements.

Promote the continued use of single-family dwellings and all types of buildings, to preserve the character of neighborhoods and to preserve portions of our past. Building code requirements for the rehabilitation of existing buildings should protect the safety of building occupants, while recognizing the need for flexibility that comes with rehabilitating existing buildings.

Preserve the mix of housing types in older neighborhoods.



Existing Neighborhood Image

The image is an example of how these principles might work together in an existing neighborhood, including the following principles:

1. Encourage a mix of compatible land uses in neighborhoods, but similar uses on the same block face. Similar housing types face each other: single family faces single family, change to different use at rear of lot. Commercial parking lots should not intrude into residential areas where residential uses predominate a block face. More intense commercial uses (gas stations, big box stores, car wash, fast food, etc.) may not be compatible due to impact on nearby housing. Expansion in existing centers should not encroach, or expand to encroach, on existing neighborhoods, and commercial areas must be screened from residential areas.
2. Encourage pedestrian orientation with parking at rear of residential and neighborhood commercial uses.
3. Require new development to be compatible with character of neighborhood and adjacent uses (i.e., parking at rear, similar setback, height and land use).
4. Encourage a mix of housing types, including single family, duplex, attached single family units, apartments, and elderly housing all within one area. Encourage multi-family near commercial areas.
5. Encourage retention of single family uses in order to maintain mix of housing.
6. Encourage historic preservation and the rehabilitation and maintenance of buildings.
7. Maintain small parks and open space within walking distance of all residences.
8. Support retention of public uses (elementary schools, churches) as centers of neighborhood – encourage shared parking whenever possible — permit minor incursions of accessory parking for public/semi-public uses into neighborhood if properly screened.
9. Transit stops integrated into commercial center, near arterial.
10. Maintain existing pattern of streets.
11. Arterial streets compatible with the existing character with two through lanes and a center turn lane.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RURAL AREAS

Rural Lancaster County is in transition from an area of predominantly agricultural uses to an area which includes more residential uses. Balancing the strong consumer demand for country style living and the practical challenge of integrating acreages with traditional agricultural land use will continue. Lands previously designated in the Comprehensive Plan or zoned for low density residential development must be recognized.

Future challenges may arise when a growing city or town needs to annex rural acreage areas, such as; acreage infrastructure systems that are not compatible with urban standards, the potential change in the lifestyle of rural acreage owners, financial implications of higher property taxes, and impact on acreage parents and children when the annexation leads to a change in school districts.

A variety of housing choices should apply to acreage residential development as well as urban areas.

Currently, acreage development has occurred under two development scenarios: AG - Agricultural District (minimum of 20 acres per lot area) and AGR - Agricultural Residential District (minimum of 3 acres per lot area) with the possibility in both AG and AGR zoning districts of clustering units together in order to preserve more open space and agricultural areas and/or receive additional density bonuses under a community unit development. The complex issue of acreage development and other public objectives requires a large array of land use strategies.

Acknowledge the “Right to Farm” and preserve areas for agricultural productions throughout the county by designating specific areas in advance for rural residential so as to limit areas of potential conflict between farms and acreages.



Specific areas will be designated so that approximately 6% of the total population in the County can be accommodated on acreages. Grouping acreages together in a specific area enables services to be provided more efficiently, such as reducing the amount of paved roads, fewer and shorter school bus routes and more cost effective rural water district service. Grouping also reduces the amount of potential conflict points between farm operations and acreages.

Preserve areas for the future growth of incorporated towns. In accordance with town plans, preserve additional areas in agricultural use, outside of the town’s current one mile zoning, for future town growth.

Direct and support residential, commercial and industrial growth in incorporated towns.

In determining areas of higher density rural acreage (200 units or more per square mile), numerous factors will be reviewed, such as but not limited to water and rural water districts, soil conditions, roads, agricultural productivity, land parcelization, amount of existing acreages, and plans for urban or town development. Acreages should develop in areas that best reflect the carrying capacity of that area for acreages. A performance criteria should be developed to review requests for acreage zoning and to determine where these standards can best be met.

New urban acreage development is not encouraged in the Plan Vision Tier I areas for Lincoln, except for areas already zoned, previously designated for acreages or under development, in order to provide areas for future urban growth and to minimize the impact on new acreage development. This will reduce the number of acreage homeowners who would be impacted by annexation in the future. Even though acreages can be designed with infrastructure to city standards, there is still an impact on acreage owners and their families during annexation in terms of changes in school district, the character of the surrounding area and financial implications. Impacts to the acreage homeowners and to the City of Lincoln can be avoided by locating acreages in areas outside of the Tier I areas.

Individual towns determine whether acreage development should be permitted within their one mile jurisdiction. Some towns have established plans and zoning to permit acreages within their one mile area, such as Denton, Bennet, Firth and Malcolm.

These principles are embodied in the following Acreage Development Policy.

Retain the current overall density of 32 dwellings per square mile (20 acre) for all agriculturally zoned land. Provide for an ability to divide two 3 acre lots per “40” acre parcel with conditions and administrative review and right of appeal. This would allow more flexibility for parcel size while retaining the overall density and assist in retaining farmable units of land.

Provide more bonuses and a lower threshold size (not below nominal 40 acres) for the proven technique of “cluster” development using the Community Unit Plan. This technique has been successful in providing flexibility while preserving both farmland and environmental resources at the same time.

Development of a performance standard “point system” will allow the location of higher density rural acreage development in either “AG” or “AGR” where the review criteria can be met. This allows equal treatment across the county, maximum freedom of determination of marketing and sale, while locating those developments only in those areas where sufficient “points” can be accumulated to justify the development at the requested location.

New ‘urban acreage’ development should only be permitted in Tier II and Tier III areas of Lincoln and near towns under higher design standards based upon a “build-through” model and without use of sanitary improvement districts. The “build-through” design standards should address, along with other items deemed necessary by the study;

- a preliminary plan lot layout that accommodates first phase low density acreages with rural water and sewer systems. The preliminary plat would also show future lot splits as a second phase to permit the urban infrastructure to be built through and urbanization to occur if and when annexed by a city or town is deemed appropriate. The future lot splits will increase density in an urban form and provide income to property owners to defray the increases in city taxes, services and infrastructure costs;
- a lot layout that meets the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan; and
- a development agreement that runs with the land and acknowledges that the acreage development (i) is not entitled to extra buffering protection greater than the acreage property lines from existing agricultural practices and from future urbanization and (ii) waives any future right to protest the creation of lawful centralized sanitary sewer, water and paving special assessment districts or other lawful financing methods at a later date when urbanization is appropriate.

As called for in the adopted Comprehensive Plan, an independent study to quantify the economic impacts of acreage development has been completed. The County and City shall continue to look at ways to contain public costs and coordinate public resource allocation, especially in the area of road construction. A variety of management techniques could be used, including the shared engineering and funding of road projects that aid urban expansion and adoption of rural land use policies that minimize future capital and operating costs.

STRATEGIES FOR NEW & EXISTING URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

The key to both new and existing urban neighborhoods is diversity. For new neighborhoods, it is having a greater mix of housing types and land uses. New neighborhoods should have a variety of housing types and sizes, plus commercial and employment opportunities. Developing a pedestrian orientation of buildings and streets is also a priority for new areas.

For existing neighborhoods, the diversity is often already in place, but efforts must focus on maintaining this balance and variety. The diversity of architecture, housing types and sizes are central to what makes older neighborhoods great places to live. New construction should continue the architectural variety, but in a manner that is sympathetic with the existing neighborhoods. Infill development also needs to respect the street pattern, block sizes and development standards of the area, such as having parking at the rear and front porches, windows and doors on the front street side. The diversity of land uses, including commercial and congregate living facilities are important to the diversity of any area, provided they fit within the character of the block and neighborhood.

Single family homes, in particular, add opportunities for owner-occupants in older neighborhoods and should be preserved. The rich stock of existing, smaller homes found throughout established areas, provide an essential opportunity for many first-time home buyers.

Plan for sufficient and varied choices for the location of elderly housing. Encourage elderly housing to locate in areas designated for mixed-uses where the elderly housing would serve as a transitional use to less intensive residential development.

There are notable differences between elderly housing and traditional multiple-family residential developments. Typically, elderly housing will have fewer occupants per unit and will generate less traffic than housing built for the general marketplace. Thus, a location that is deemed appropriate for elderly housing may not be deemed appropriate for other types of higher-density housing such as multiple-family or town homes.

Evaluate the provisions for accessory dwelling units in residential areas.

Revise standards to ensure that residential and commercial development more efficiently provide night time lighting without intruding on adjacent uses or casting significant lighting skyward.

Encourage public/private partnerships with housing entities including Lincoln Housing Authority, Nebraska Housing Resource, and Neighborhoods, Inc.

Revise the congregate living facility codes and regulations in order to continue to provide housing opportunities for residents with special needs throughout the city that are compatible with residential neighborhoods. Congregate facilities should be designed and located to enhance the surrounding neighborhood. Reasonable spacing, design, and operational requirements should be created for all congregate facilities to preserve the neighborhood character while providing for those with special needs.

Support policies that encourage affordable housing in all areas. Look at options such as incentives to encourage housing or a program to allow density to be transferable between properties.

STRATEGIES FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Structure incentives to encourage more efficient residential and commercial development to make greater utilization of the community's infrastructure. Incentives may include financial, process and/or regulatory conditions.

Revise pertinent codes and regulations in order to remove impediments to achieving mixed-use residential and commercial development.

Develop standards for residential, commercial and industrial development along entryway corridors into Lincoln.

Develop new design standards that encourage density, optimize infrastructure costs, and help lower the overall cost of property development.

Provide for an adequate supply of affordable land, and timely infrastructure improvements.

STRATEGIES FOR EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Implement the housing and neighborhood strategies as embodied in the City of Lincoln Consolidated and Annual Action Plans and subsequent housing and neighborhood plans. These plans provide the core for affordable housing and neighborhood preservation actions for public and private agencies.

In existing neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown, retain existing **predominately single family blocks** in order to maintain the mix of housing types. The current mix within each neighborhood provides ample housing choices. These existing neighborhoods have significantly greater populations and residential densities than the rest of the community. Significant intensification could be detrimental to the neighborhoods and be beyond infrastructure capacities. Codes and regulations which encourage changes in the current balance of housing types, should be revised to retain the existing character of the neighborhoods and to encourage maintenance of established older neighborhoods, not their extensive conversion to more intensive uses.

Encourage a variety of housing types in the Downtown and Antelope Valley area.

Develop and promote building codes and regulations with incentives for the rehabilitation of existing buildings in order to make it easier to restore and reuse older buildings. Encourage reconversion of single family structures to less intensive (single family use) and/or more productive uses.

Modify design standards and code requirements that impede affordable housing development, while remaining consistent with the character of the existing neighborhood.

Structure incentives to preserve the existing housing stock.

STRATEGIES FOR RURAL AREAS

An acreage annexation policy should be included in the Comprehensive Plan that is clear on when and how acreages will be annexed.

The City and County, in cooperation with other cities and towns, should undertake an independent study to quantify and qualify the positive and negative economic (e.g. cost of services, tax base, multiplier effect opportunities for future employment) and quality of life impacts associated with acreage development and other land uses (e.g. commercial, industrial, agricultural acreages and farm residential) both within and outside the extra-territorial area of cities and towns within Lancaster County. The study should include a review of policy issues and options such as the build through concept, lot size, acreage standards, acreages and town relationships, acreages and sensitive areas, agriculture, acreage clusters, desired acreage population, acreage size and land use consumption and AGR zoning. The study should be used as a tool to better manage acreage policy. The study should be finished one year after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Town plans should be acknowledged in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan should acknowledge the “Right to Farm.”

Increase incentive bonuses for environmental and historic resources.

Future Conditions - Residential

Use GIS data, and other sources, to help develop performance standards for determining land usages (e.g adopted county zoning policy criteria).

Acreages shown (designated as Low Density Residential in 1994 Comprehensive Plan), platted or zoned (AGR Agricultural Residential) shall remain.