



THE URBAN PAGE

Newsletter of the City of Lincoln - Urban Development Department - Spring, 2009

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You think YOUR life is complicated?!

A redevelopment project is complicated; the people, the process, and the details. Consider the complications of three redevelopment projects closely intertwined!

Phase I - Antelope Valley Parkway Plaza Triangle (aka Assurity)

Location of this site is strategic to both Antelope Valley and Lincoln Center redevelopment plans. Bounded by Q Street, Union Plaza Park (under construction), and the future Antelope Valley Parkway, Assurity's exemplary mixed-use office building will "set the tone" for the future of both redevelopment areas.

The City Council-approved Redevelopment Agreement will allow up to \$7.2 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds and a public land contribution to be used to complement about \$50 million of private investment. Private funds will construct the mixed-use office building and parking facility. TIF funds will be used for public improvements, including:

- design and relocation of utility improvements,
- demolition, site preparation, and remediation,
- right-of-way and public easement improvements,
- reimbursement for a gray-water recycling system,
- reimbursement for LEED certification improvements,
- reimbursement for façade upgrades, and
- acquisition of a parking license, for public use of the Assurity garage on weekends and during events.

Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach

However, for Assurity to "happen" without disruption of services to some of Lincoln's most vulnerable people, Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach needs to be relocated from its current location at 19th and R Streets, to the NeighborWorks@Lincoln (NWL) site on N. 27th Street.

Efforts are underway to designate the existing NWL building, a former Carnegie Library, as a Historic Landmark. This will help ensure preservation of the building as it leaves city ownership.

As the new home of the MTKO, the old library will remain and receive some necessary repairs. A new building, about 9,000 square feet, will be added. It will connect to the library and be designed by Sinclair:Hille Architects to respect the library's historic character.

The new building will house a larger dining area, offices for outreach workers, and the kitchen area. The library building will be used for offices. Construction is expected to begin in July with completion in March, 2010.

City Council approval of the Redevelopment Agreement allows TIF funds to be used for:

- site preparation,
- repair and rehab of the interior and exterior façade of the library building,
- façade treatment of the new building to make it compatible with the library,
- geothermal heating/cooling, and
- enhanced landscaping within the public right-of-way.

NWL & Antelope Village

However, to make MTKO's move possible, NWL needs a new location! They've outgrown their current location in the old library (some staff work from a satellite office), so they've been working on a new project - Antelope Village.

Located between P and Q, 23rd to 24th Streets, Antelope Village's first phase will include a mixed-use office building and six townhomes along P Street. The office building will provide space for *all* of NWL staff, as well as ground-floor retail and eight two-story condominiums.

The second phase includes twelve additional townhomes. All town-



Architect's rendering of Assurity building, from southeast



Architect's sketch of new MTKO - existing building (right) and addition



Architect's rendering of Antelope Village development, from southwest

homes and condominiums will be for sale, either as affordable housing or at market-rates.

A parking lot west of the office building will serve the offices and provide public parking for Union Plaza Park during non-business hours.

The City Council-approved Redevelopment Agreement allows TIF funds to be used for:

- extension, relocation and connection of water mains, sanitary sewer lines and utilities,
- site preparation including property acquisition and grading,
- streetscape landscaping, and
- installation of a geothermal heating and cooling system.

Interested in Antelope Village homeownership opportunities? Contact Bill at NWL, 477-7181.



Photo courtesy of City Parks & Recreation Dept.

Trago Wins 2009 Award

As part of National Community Development Week celebrations, *Lincoln's 2009 Community Development Week Award* was presented for *Trago Park & Sprayground*.

The expanded, renovated Trago Park re-opened in last August, with a water "sprayground" and new playground that quickly became a community "hit." Located near 22nd and U Streets, Trago is unique, free, and accessible. Nineteen water spray features surrounded by innovative playground equipment allow park guests of all ages to keep cool and play, both in and out the spray!

Funding for the renovation of Trago Park was provided by City of Lincoln Antelope Valley funds (Keno revenue), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the Lincoln Cares program, and the Cornhusker Kiwanis Club.

CD Week is also a great time to appreciate the community commitment that keeps Lincoln strong -- from individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, and government agencies. It's a time to appreciate the work done here in Lincoln by federal CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership Act (HOME) funds. Using federal funds to leverage private investments, housing has been built and repaired, workers have been trained, parks and community centers have been built, and jobs created. While federal funds are targeted to benefit low to moderate-income persons, the whole community gains indirectly every time these funds help improve a home, a block or a neighborhood.

For more about CDBG- and HOME-funded programs and projects, contact the Urban Development Department, urbandev@lincoln.ne.gov or call 441-7852.

FREE TO GROW.. GROWS!

As a neighborhood-based revitalization program, *Lincoln Free to Grow* builds on resident participation and civic partnerships to target small areas for high impact. For over four years, *Free to Grow* has operated very successfully in the Clinton neighborhood. Now, while continuing to work in Clinton, *Free to Grow* has expanded their efforts to include areas in the Hartley, Malone, Near South, and Everett neighborhoods.

In each of the areas, *Lincoln Free to Grow* staff and many partners are making strategic and concurrent investments – of time, effort, and money – to improve the physical environment, increase resident leadership and social cohesion, and develop strong families. Investment strategies include:

- Building more effective and efficient public/private partnerships to address family and community development barriers,
- Increasing enforcement and expanding resources to reduce property deterioration and blight,
- Developing neighborhood leadership to identify, drive, and sustain improvement,
- Connecting residents to each other and to a broad array of community partners, and
- Providing accessible resources for families that strengthen their ability to handle issues arising from mental health problems, substance abuse, parenting, and home improvement.

A partnership of 17 private and public organizations is being forged to implement the investment strategies. Representatives of 14 organizations meet once a month as a *Core Team* that assigns tasks, reviews progress, and coordinates strategies. The *Core Team* includes representation from:

- Residents, tenants and property owners,
- Neighborhood organizations: Clinton, Hartley, Malone, Hawley, Everett, and Near South,
- City of Lincoln departments: Mayor, Police, Urban Development, Building & Safety, and Health,
- Lincoln Housing Authority,
- Non-Profit Organizations: NeighborWorks@Lincoln, City Impact, and Cedars.

To be effective, the investment strategies *need* neighborhood residents to be full participants in activities that help improve the quality of life where they live. Neighborhood residents:

- Host block parties,
- Establish Neighborhood Watch groups,
- Support/participate in neighborhood clean-

ups or organize block clean-ups,

- Scan and observe their neighborhood to identify code violations, poorly maintained properties, and other detractors in the neighborhood, then report scan results directly to appropriate City departments that can help correct the particular issue, and
- Participate in the Lincoln Policy Network to help change policy and create effective tools to help support neighborhood revitalization efforts.

In addition, neighborhood organizations will now be asked to build an *Action Team* consisting of landlords, property owners, and tenants to help report code violations and other health/safety issues. *Action Teams* will be invited to bring problems to the *Lincoln Free to Grow Core Team* at least once a month.

For more about *Lincoln Free to Grow*, call 434-5490, or contact either Shawn Ryba, sryba@nwlincoln.org, or Pat Anderson-Sifuentes, panderson@nwlincoln.org.

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WELL-TIMED WORDS

Havelock Façade Update

The City of Lincoln received 32 applications for the Havelock Façade Program, including more than \$520,000 in requests for improvements. More than 90% of eligible property owners completed applications.

The program's review committee will evaluate applications based on four criteria:

- visual impact,
- structural and maintenance need,
- architectural significance / potential, and
- energy and operating cost improvements.

In April, UDD staff will meet with individual property owners to review grant amounts, private financing commitments, and to complete Memorandums of Understanding. Construction will begin this summer, with all improvements slated for completion within twelve months.

Focus Groups Advise

The Customer Advisory & Marketing Committees of the Greater Lincoln Workforce Investment Board held customer focus groups in March, facilitated by Board member Dick Harding of Kenexa, Inc. The purpose of the focus groups was to understand what it takes to successfully use the One Stop Career Center. Focus group members all had a recent successful experience at the One Stop, which led to current employment. They advised One Stop users to:

1. Get to know the staff, and *someone* on the staff very well.
2. Ask questions and then ask some more.
3. Be persistent and focused -- do not get discouraged.

4. Be open and let the staff know you.
5. Trust the staff *and* the procedures -- let both work for you.
6. Be open-minded to new opportunities.
7. Communicate what you need in support mechanisms as early in your job search as possible.
8. Surround yourself with support -- staff, others going through what you are, family, and friends.
9. Expect the unexpected -- roll with it and get back on track.
10. Consider this process your job and commit to success.

One Stop staff are planning to use these ideas in their marketing and recruitment strategies, as well as in the customer orientation sessions. As one staff member commented, "These are valuable tips to help job seekers put themselves in the driver's seat."

N. 50th Street

Construction on 50th Street, from O to R, is nearing completion. Weather permitting, the contractor, K-2, will complete the project in mid-June. The project was initiated as part of the redevelopment of 48th and O Streets and the new Hy Vee grocery store. Currently, 50th is not a through street because it's blocked by a large drainage ditch. The project will both rebuild the existing street and provide a new connection between O and R Streets with the installation of a storm sewer to replace the ditch. Other improvements include: a water line, grading, paving, sidewalks, ornamental street lights, and street trees. When completed, the new 50th Street will improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation in the area.



The Lincoln Flats/Bank of the West Redevelopment Agreement was approved by City Council in March. The agreement will allow use of up to \$764,000 of Tax Increment Financing funds for public improvements on the north side of O Street, between 13th and 14th Streets, in Downtown Lincoln. This project will strengthen Downtown as a 24-hour livable community by creating 24 new condominium units in an existing under-used building while retaining commercial uses on the first floor. Private investment is estimated at over \$5 million. Public funds will pay for design and construction of utility improvements and pedestrian alley improvements, construction of façade enhancements, and interior demolition.

A Bigger Little Saigon

The owners of Little Saigon, 940 N. 26th Street, have been developing plans to expand their business. They are working on a total remodel of their existing building and construction of a new 8,400 square foot building immediately to the south of their current location. The new building will be the home of the new Little Saigon restaurant as well as five bays that the owners plan to lease to small businesses.



Washington Square townhomes, at 1525, 1529, 1533, and 1537 S. 19th Street in the Near South neighborhood, will be ready for occupants this coming summer. Each townhome includes three bedrooms, four bathrooms, a private balcony, and an attached garage. Starting at \$154,900, the townhomes are being marketed specifically to first-time homebuyers. Display units will be featured in the May Tour of Homes. You can find floor plans and other information at nebhomesales.com.

Return Service Requested

Summer Youth Jobs

The City of Lincoln will be operating a **Summer Youth Employment Program** beginning in May 2009. The Summer Youth program will provide temporary employment for low-income youth, ages 14 – 24, who reside in the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, or Saunders County.

Youth applications are currently being accepted and are available online, by telephone request, or in person:

- go to www.lincoln.ne.gov, keyword “Summer Youth Jobs,”
- call 402-441-4922, ask for an application, or
- visit the Workforce Development Center in Lincoln at 1010 N Street, Suite 150.

Requests from public and private non-profit organizations wishing to participate as work sites for the Summer Youth program are also being accepted.

Work site applications are available online or by telephone request:

- go to www.lincoln.ne.gov, keyword “Summer Youth Jobs,” or
- call 402-441-4922, ask for an application.

For further information about the Summer Youth Employment program, call 441-4922.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

Nebraska’s Department of Economic Development received \$19.6 million of the federal NSP fund after the State’s plan was accepted by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. NSP funds must benefit areas of the state with the “greatest need” -- areas with foreclosed, blighted or abandoned properties. As a result, it is anticipated that Lincoln and Omaha will receive the majority of the funds.

The purpose of the fund is to purchase and redevelop and/or rehabilitate foreclosed residential properties and return them to owner-occupants with incomes below 120% of the area median income (AMI).

The City of Lincoln will apply for both the special set-aside fund to benefit households below 50% AMI and the part of the NSP fund which can benefit households up to 120% AMI. We will focus our efforts in the Malone, Near South, and Everett neighborhoods.

The State is currently conducting a series of informational meetings with an application deadline of May 6, 2009. Funds should be available this summer.

STIMULUS FUNDS & UDD

The Urban Development Department will be administering some of the funds received by the City from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Specific projects to be funded with these stimulus funds have not all been finalized yet as we wait for federal rules and guidelines. However, we do know the amount of funds we will be receiving and the broad uses:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Existing program enables local governments to undertake a wide range of activities intended to create suitable living environments, provide decent affordable housing and create economic opportunities, primarily for persons of low and moderate income. Projects must be under contract within 120 days.	\$474,644
Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)	Preventing homelessness and enabling the rapid re-housing of homeless families and individuals, helping them reenter the labor market more quickly and preventing the further destabilization of neighborhoods. HPRP is focused on housing for homeless and at-risk people. It will provide temporary financial assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services to individuals and families who are homeless or would be homeless <i>but for</i> this assistance.	\$726,148
Adult Job Training	Workforce Investment Act (WIA) employment and training services including supportive services and needs- based payments. Funds are allocated through the State of Nebraska.	\$146,292
Youth Job Training	A summer youth program. Funds are allocated through the State of Nebraska. <i>See related article, above & left.</i>	\$408,803
Dislocated Worker Assistance	WIA re-training services including needs- based payments. Funds are allocated through the State of Nebraska	\$370,011

In addition, Urban Development will be applying for competitive grants available through the Recovery Act, including:

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	Second phase of a program to mitigate the impact of foreclosures through the purchase and rehab of foreclosed, vacant properties to create more affordable housing and renew neighborhoods devastated by the economic crisis. <i>See related article, left.</i>
Brownfields	Competitive grants to evaluate and clean up former industrial and commercial sites.